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LOWER PLATTE NORTH NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
Dedicated to the conservation, preservation and wise use of our natural resources

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Lower Platte River Basin Not Fully-Appropriated, State Says

After several months of uncertainty, landowners in the Lower Platte North NRD have an answer - they will still be able to develop land for new irrigation, at least for the time being.

The Nebraska Department of Water Resources (DNR) announced in early October that the Lower Platte River Basin, among others, is not considered "fully-appropriated." The department assessed water conditions in all of Nebraska's major river basins as part of LB962, a major overhaul to the state's water law that went into effect in 2004.

The state's ruling means that landowners can still drill wells within the Lower Platte North NRD without the need for 'offsets' for new water uses or new acres placed under irrigation.

However, this may only apply until April 1, 2006. Each year DNR will be reviewing the status of different river basins. If the Lower Platte is designated as fully-appropriated on or before January 1, 2007 (or in future years), the NRD may require offsets on wells drilled up to nine months previous to the "date of declaration."

The NRD continues to urge all well owners to register their wells and ensure that all pertinent information is up to

date. This includes current owner, correct legal description, irrigated acres, change of use, well construction information, etc. Wells that are not properly registered could be declared illegal if the river basin is declared fully-appropriated in the future. You can check your well registration on-line at: <http://dnrdata.dnr.state.ne.us/wellssql/>, or visit the NRD office at 511 Commercial Park Road in Wahoo.

Because of the possibility that the basin will be declared fully-appropriated in the future, the NRD has placed a condition on well permits for new water uses, effective Oct. 1, 2005. To receive permits for new water uses (*see sidebar*) on wells pumping more than 50 gallons per minute, owners will be required to install flow meters or time totalizers and then report the total water pumped during the calendar year by January 31 of the following year. This applies to wells for new water uses only; a replacement well that supplies water to the same acres and same field location as the original well will not be subject to this permit condition.

For more information on well permitting and LB962, please visit our website at www.lpnnrd.org or call us at (402) 443-4675, toll-free 1-888-764-0543.

NEW WELL PERMIT CONDITIONS EFFECTIVE OCT. 1, 2005

For permits for NEW water uses in the Lower Platte North NRD, owners must:

- Install flow meters or time totalizers on their wells
- Report total water pumped during the calendar year by January 31 of the following year
- conditions apply only to wells pumping more than 50 gallons per minute

Examples of NEW water uses are:

- new irrigated acres or expansion of existing irrigated acres
- establishment of new industry
- new commercial use
- new livestock use, including expansion of existing facilities
- new municipal use

ONLINE RESOURCES

Well Registration Status:

- <http://dnrdata.dnr.state.ne.us/wellssql>

Well Registration, Change of Ownership, & Other Forms:

- www.dnr.state.ne.us/docs/wellforms.html

NRD Well Permits:

- www.lpnnrd.org/downloads/forms.html

Rural Water Systems Now Set for 2006

A rural water system linking David City and Bruno in Butler County will be constructed in 2006, with a similar system from Wahoo to Colon in Saunders County to follow.

Contracts for the David City-Bruno system have been signed, engineering plans are complete, and a contractor (Rutjens Construction from Tilden, NE) has been selected. Construction should begin in spring 2006.

Engineering plans for the Wahoo-Colon project are being finalized and are expected to be completed by the end of this year. The project will be let for bids in early 2006, with the NRD hoping to have construction completed by the end of 2006.

Construction on both projects was originally planned for this fall, but a series of minor delays moved them into 2006.

The NRD will operate both of the rural water systems. The district will purchase water from the larger communities (David City and Wahoo) and deliver it to the smaller communities (Bruno and Colon). In Bruno's case, the NRD will deliver water to the local water utility, who in turn will deliver it to local customers. In Colon, the local water utility is dissolving, and the NRD will deliver water directly to individual residents.

Both systems are being constructed using a combination of grant funds and local matching funds from the NRD and the affected communities. The Butler County system will cost \$838,100 and is receiving a \$626,000 grant from USDA, leaving \$212,100 in local costs. The Saunders County system will cost \$915,000 and is receiving a \$250,000 Community Block Development Grant and a \$500,000 USDA grant, leaving \$165,000 in local costs. (Despite being 4 miles shorter, the Saunders County system costs more than the Butler County system because the pipeline has to cross a creek, and the first mile out of Wahoo will have a larger-capacity pipe to serve new development.)

The Butler County system is designed to serve up to 357 rural customers in addition to Bruno; residents along the pipeline can tap on to the system for a fee and purchase water from the NRD. Details for rural hookups on the Saunders County system are still being determined.

The systems also may be expanded in the future; currently the NRD is studying possibilities for adding Abie and Linwood to the Butler County system and Cedar Bluffs to the Saunders County system.

For more information about the rural water systems, contact Mike Sousek, Rural Water Manager, at the Lower Platte North NRD: msousek@lpnnrd.org or (402) 443-4675.



Newman Grove Public Schools received the 2005 Master Conservationist Award in the Community - Youth category for a water testing program in the Shell Creek Watershed.

The program began in 2002 to aid the Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group (SCWIG) in assessing water quality in the watershed. Each summer, Newman Grove High School students under the direction of teacher Mark Seier conduct a variety of water quality tests at several sites along Shell Creek. The group was careful in developing their monitoring plan, using nationally-recognized methods to ensure that their work is scientifically sound.

Based on their research, the SCWIG adopted buffer strips and filter zones as two of the "Best Management Practices" they are promoting to area landowners. Continued monitoring from the Newman Grove study group will play an important role in assessing the effectiveness of these methods.

The students have been very active in community outreach, giving presentations on their project to the Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group, the Lower Platte North NRD, and the PrairieLand RC&D on multiple occasions. Their work has been featured on a local radio station, several area newspapers, and The Science Teacher magazine. In 2003 they were named "Volunteers of the Year" by the Lower Platte North NRD.



Newman Grove High School Biology Class

▲ Master Conservationist, Community - Youth



Shell Creek Groups Named "Master Conservationists"

Two groups from the Shell Creek area in the Lower Platte North NRD were honored as "Master Conservationists" for 2005. The awards were presented at the Nebraska Association of Resources District's Annual Conference in Kearney on September 26. The Master Conservationist program is sponsored by the University of Nebraska and the Omaha World-Herald.

Master Conservationist, Community - Public ▼

Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group



The Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group (SCWIG) received the 2005 Master Conservationist Award in the Community - Public category for their work in promoting conservation practices in the Shell Creek area.

Poor water quality and repeated flooding in the Shell Creek watershed throughout the 1990s prompted a group of area landowners and farmers to ask the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Lower Platte North NRD for assistance. As a result, meetings were held in September and October 1999 and the Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Group was formed.

The locally-led group is focused on identifying and promoting needed conservation practices within the watershed, and has worked diligently to educate area landowners and connect them with financial incentive programs for conservation work. The SWCIG has also worked closely with government agencies such as the Department of Environmental Quality and the Nebraska Environmental Trust to secure grant funds for this work.

In 2001 the group was named the Lower Platte North NRD's "Volunteers of the Year." SWCIG was also the impetus for the Newman Grove High School water quality project (see above).



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 Fax: 402-443-5339
 E-mail: lpnnrd@lpnnrd.org
 Web site: www.lpnnrd.org

Order Trees Now for 2006

The Lower Platte North NRD is now accepting tree orders for planting in spring 2006. Prices for 2006 will be 55 cents per tree for handplants and \$1 for machine plants. An updated list of tree species that can be ordered for 2006 is available on the district's website at www.lpnnrd.org. For descriptions, pho-

tos, and other information about many of the tree species the NRD offers, visit the "Conservation Trees for Nebraska" website at www.nrdnet.org/trees.

Orders should be placed early to ensure tree availability. Place your order online at www.lpnnrd.org or fill out and return the form below.



NRD TREE PLANTING PROGRAM - HANDPLANT ORDER FORM FOR 2006

Conifers

- Red Cedar
- Douglas Fir
- Austrian Pine
- Eastern White Pine
- Jack Pine
- Ponderosa Pine
- Col. Blue Spruce
- Norway Spruce
- Scotch Pine

Deciduous Trees

- Crab Apple
- Manchurian Apricot
- Green Ash
- Cottonwood
- Black Cherry
- Russian Olive
- Hackberry
- Hawthorn
- American Hazel
- Honeylocust
- False Indigo
- Silver Maple
- Bur Oak
- Red Oak
- Swamp White Oak
- Black Walnut
- Diamond Willow

Shrubs

- Silver Buffaloberry
- Caragana
- Chokecherry
- Sandcherry
- Cotoneaster
- Golden Currant
- Elderberry
- Honeysuckle
- Lilac
- Amur Maple
- American Plum
- Dogwood Redosier
- Skunkbush Sumac

Total trees and shrubs ordered: _____

Cost per tree or shrub: _____ x .55

Total: _____

x 7% Sales Tax: _____

Total Amount Due: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Deliver to _____ NRCS County Office

Mail order form and check to:

Lower Platte North NRD
 P. O. Box 126, Wahoo, NE 68066-0126
 (402)443-4675 toll-free 1-888-764-0543

David City, Norris, East Butler Qualify for State Land Judging

157 Students Compete in East Central Contest

Teams from David City, Norris, and East Butler are headed to state competition after a strong showing in the East Central Land Judging Contest, held Oct. 5 near Wahoo.

A David City team including Kyle Clymer, Nathan Kershner, Brad Jones and Grant Greenwood took top honors, scoring 848 out of a possible 1,200 points. In individual competition, Greenwood scored 3rd and Clymer scored 4th.

In 2nd place with 822 points was the Norris team of Kyle Locco, Brandon Lesoing, Jon Topp and Ryan Hagan. Topp also placed 2nd in individual competition.

Norris also fielded the 3rd place team, which included Gatlin Schlake, Garret Schrock, Blake Huls, and Baxter Poe. The team scored 804 points and Schlake placed 5th in individual competition.

Only one team from each school is allowed to qualify for the state competition in November, so the East Central District's

third state-qualifying team comes from East Butler, placing 4th overall in the contest. Team members included Matt Komenda, Justin Makovicka, Adam Pekarek, and Tyler Pelan. The team scored 764 points and Justin Makovicka placed 9th in individual competition.

Other top-ten finishers in individual competition included Mitchell Kohout, Wilber-Clatonia (1st place); Wes Niemann, East Butler (6th place); Kaleigh Kaspar, Prague (7th place); Ashley Berggren, Prague (8th place), and Shelby Hagemann, Raymond Central (10th place).

One hundred and fifty-seven students on 43 teams competed in the contest. Schools participating were Conestoga, David City, East Butler, Norris, Prague, Raymond Central, Waverly, and Wilber-Clatonia. The contest was sponsored by the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District and the Saunders County Natural Resources Conservation Service.



David City

The David City team of (L-R) Kyle Clymer, Nathan Kershner, Brad Jones, and Grant Greenwood placed first in the East Central Land Judging Contest.



Norris 1

The Norris team of (L-R) Kyle Locco, Brandon Lesoing, Jon Topp, and Ryan Hagan took second place in the East Central Land Judging Contest.



Norris 2

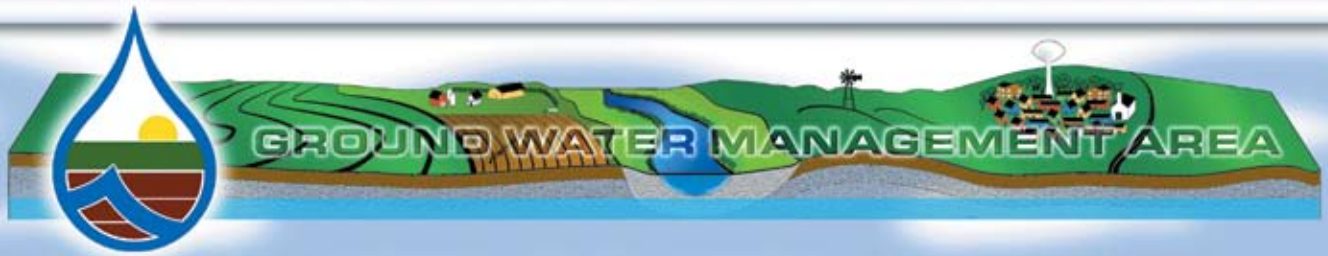
The Norris team of (L-R) Gatlin Schlake, Garret Schrock, Blake Huls, and Baxter Poe took 3rd place in the competition.



East Butler

Taking 4th place overall and the 3rd state qualifying spot was the East Butler team of (L-R) Matt Komenda, Justin Makovicka, Adam Pekarek, and Tyler Pelan.





Ground Water Management Area Phase I and Phase II Reminders

Phase I Reminders:

- Fall application of commercial nitrogen fertilizer is prohibited on non-sandy soils before November 1.
- Fall and winter application of commercial nitrogen fertilizer is prohibited on sandy soils until March 1.

Phase I includes the entire district with the exception of the Phase II areas (see map at right).

Phase II Reminders:

- Commercial nitrogen fertilizer will only be permitted on non-sandy soils from Nov. 1 to March 1 if an approved inhibitor is used at recommended rates.
- Operators applying commercial fertilizer from Nov. 1 to March 1 must furnish certification from their dealer that an approved inhibitor was used as recommended.
- Fertilizer application reports are due to the NRD by December 31, 2005.

For more information on the Ground Water Management Area, visit www.lpnrd.org or call (402) 443-4675.



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