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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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Phase II Ground Water Management Area Declared for Richland/Schuyler

New Requirements Take Effect for Producers

The Richland/Schuyler area became a Phase II Ground Water Management Area on January 1, 2004, due to increasing nitrate levels in groundwater.

Over the past few years, over half of the wells sampled in the Richland/Schuyler area have shown nitrate levels above 8 parts per million — the trigger level for entering Phase II.

The Richland/Schuyler area is the second Phase II area in the NRD. The Bellwood area entered Phase II in January 2003.

High nitrate levels in drinking water can be dangerous for infants, pregnant or nursing mothers, and people with respiratory or immune problems. The district's GWMA is intended to help prevent nitrate contamination of groundwater.

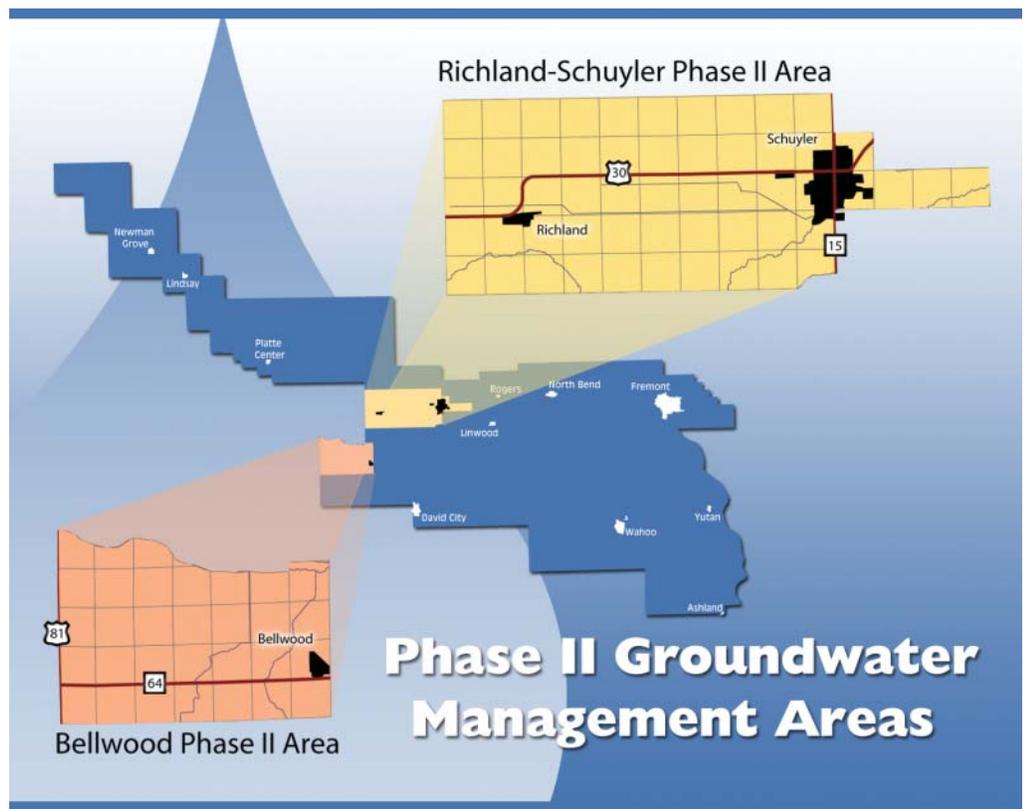
Under the Phase II designation, there are new requirements for producers who apply nitrogen fertilizer:

- Groundwater analyses, deep soil samples and fertilizer application reports required annually.

- Commercial nitrogen fertilizer permitted on non-sandy soils from Nov. 1 to March 1 only if an approved inhibitor is used at recommended rates (operators must furnish certification from their dealer that an approved inhibitor was used).

- Water applications must be monitored to allow for better management of fertilizer application and to control leaching of nitrate (phased in over 6 years).

- Amount of organic fertilizer (liquid or dried manure, sludge, or composted organic waste) allowed per acre per year will be based on: method of collection and storage; land application method; types of crops or cover crop; soil



types; landscape features; source of manure; and previous manure application rates. Amount and timing of applications must be adjusted to the nitrate concentration in the soil profile and groundwater content. Application allowed on frozen soils on a site-by-site basis only.

Producers are also required to become certified in nitrogen management once every four years, as they were in Phase I of the GWMA. Free certification classes are held each spring.

For more information about Phase II requirements and the Ground Water Management Area, contact the NRD at (402) 443-4675.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at www.lpnrd.org or call 402-443-4675 for more information on the Ground Water Management Area and Phase II requirements.

Area Conservationists Honored at NRD Annual Banquet

Area conservationists were honored at the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District's Annual Recognition Banquet Monday, Dec. 8, at the Fremont Golf Club.

Each year, the NRD gives awards for outstanding efforts in conservation, tree planting, water resources management, education, and volunteerism. Award winners are chosen by NRD staff and directors.

The **2003 Tree Planter of the Year Award** went to **Larry and Terry Novak** of David City. The Novaks got started with tree planting in the early '90s by transplanting 60 cedar trees to their land from a neighbor's property. Since then, they have planted an estimated 3,000 trees with seedlings purchased from the NRD. In addition to tree planting, Larry and Terry have participated in variety of programs to enhance wildlife habitat on their property. "We take a lot from the land, so we need to do something to replenish the land. I may not see the results in the future, but I enjoy planting and the trees will be here for someone else."

Eugene Divis, David City Water and Sewer Supervisor, was named the **2003 Water Cooperator of the Year**. Gene got his start with the city in 1968 as a part-time employee. In 1973 he began working full-time for the street department. Since 1979, he has worked in the water and sewer department. Gene was a driving force behind the city's waste water treatment plant, completed in 1998. Gene has also worked closely with NRD staff on the Wellhead Protection Program and the planned rural water system. "Gene is very knowledgeable and well-respected, not just in his own community but also by the NRD staff and directors he's worked with," said Larry Angle, NRD Water Resources Manager.

Richard and Robert Paseka of Prague were named **Outstanding Conservationists of the Year**. The land they farm near Prague has been in their family since the early 1900s. Richard began farming in 1971 and Robert joined him in 1979. Today they farm over 800 acres and pasture an additional 100 acres for an 80-head cow/calf operation. The first terraces were put on the Paseka land in the late 1950s by their father. Richard and Robert have carried on this work, installing a small dam, more than 48,000 feet of terraces, more than 16,000 feet of tile, and more than 4 acres of grassed waterways. "Our main purpose is to leave our farms in as good or better condition to our families as they were when we received them," said Robert.

The **2003 Educator of the Year** was **Mark Seier**, a biology teacher at Newman Grove High School. Mark was recognized for organizing a project to monitor water quality along a stretch of Shell Creek. Under his supervision, Newman Grove students sampled the creek throughout the summer in 2002 and 2003. They presented their results to the NRD Board of Directors in November, impressing both directors and staff. "The best teachers are the ones who are willing to go beyond the textbook and the classroom to really get their students involved and excited about the subject matter. Based on this project, it was clear to us that Mark is one of those teachers," said Troy Thompson, NRD Information/Education Specialist.

The Newman Grove students who participated in the Shell Creek Watershed Project were named the **2003 Volunteers of the Year**. They included **Courtney Bennett, Katie Dunlap, Amanda Gasper, Melissa Gasper, Sarah O'Brien, Anjuli Mostek, Brittany Pieke, and Katie Stone**. The students volunteered their time during the summer to conduct the project, and several of them that will be graduating next spring still plan to help with the project again next summer. "This is one of the best examples of a natural resources related student effort that I am aware of during my career. This group displayed tremendous dedication and pride while undertaking this project," said NRD Assistant Manager Tom Mountford.



TOP: Terry Novak (L) and Larry Novak (R) accept the 2003 Tree Planter of the Year Award from NRD Operations & Maintenance Manager Bob Heimann (center).



BOTTOM: Wellhead Protection Coordinator Mike Sousek (L) and NRD Water Resources Manager Larry Angle (R) present Gene Divis (center) with the Water Resources Cooperator of the Year Award.

TOP: L-R: NRD Special Projects Coordinator Eric Gottschalk presents Richard and Robert Paseka with the 2003 Outstanding Conservationist Award.

BOTTOM: NRD Information & Education Specialist Troy Thompson presents Mark Seier with the 2003 Educator of the Year Award.





TOP: Newman Grove High School students. Back Row, L-R: NRD Assistant Manager Tom Mountford, **Melissa Gasper**, **Brittany Pieke**, **Sarah O'Brien**, **Katie Dunlap**, **Mark Seier**. Front Row, L-R: **Anjuli Mostek**, **Katie Stone**, **Courtney Bennett**, and **Amanda Gasper**.



BOTTOM: L-R: NRD Assistant Manager Tom Mountford presents Brian Hagerbaumer with the 2003 Outstanding NRCS Employee Award.

TOP: L-R: John Miyoshi, NRD Manager, presents NRD Chairman **Dean Johnson** with the 2003 Director of the Year Award.

BOTTOM: L-R: **Sam Barlean**, NRD Operations & Maintenance Specialist, accepts the 2003 Employee of the Year Award from NRD Chairman Dean Johnson.



The **Partner of the Year Award**, a new award for 2003, was given to **Bill Lindholm**, retired Saunders County Highway Superintendent. During his years as superintendent, Bill partnered on dozens of projects with the NRD, including road structures, drop inlets, silt storage structures, right-of-way solutions, and more. Bill always looked for the most cost-effective solution and was quick to alert the NRD to bargains on materials and equipment. "Besides being a very competent engineer, saving us thousands of dollars, and always being a willing partner, Bill is a good person. We have worked with many individuals over the years, but there are none I would put ahead of Bill," said NRD Manager John Miyoshi.

Brian Hagerbaumer, a Soil Conservation Technician in the Fremont NRCS office, was chosen as **NRCS Employee of the Year**. Brian has been stationed in the Fremont office since 1987, where his duties include assisting landowners in Dodge, Colfax, Platte, Saunders, and Butler counties with planning, layout, survey, design, and inspection of conservation practices. Brian took on several expanded responsibilities in 2003 and completed layout and design of more than 30 terrace systems. "Brian is dedicated to completing quality work and is one of the most conscientious and dependable employees at the NRCS," said NRD Assistant Manager Tom Mountford.

Staff and directors of the NRD were also honored at the banquet. The **2003 Director of the Year** was **Dean Johnson** of Fremont. Dean joined the NRD in 1995 and has served his entire nine years on the Projects Committee, rarely missing a meeting or tour. Dean has served as the District Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-Chairman and is the current Chairman of the Board of Directors. He has also served as Committee Chairman and been involved in National Watershed Conference and National Association of Conservation Districts meetings. His input has been important for the Homestead Lake Recreation Area construction and years of planning on the Sand Creek Watershed Project. "Dean takes the time to be an excellent chairman. He's a class act and we are fortunate to have him as our leader," said NRD Manager John Miyoshi.

Sam Barlean, Operations & Maintenance Specialist, was the **2003 Employee of the Year**. Sam, a district employee since 1985, has a variety of duties for the district, including tree planting, dam and levee inspections and maintenance, recreation area maintenance, and vehicle maintenance. As the district's best "bargain shopper," Sam saves the district countless dollars each year by sniffing out the best price on everything from a tractor-mounted snow blower to an impossible-to-find computer cooling fan. "Sam has a broad base of knowledge, a quick wit and always has an opinion. He's often the first to volunteer, expects a lot from those he works with, but is always willing to give more than what he expects," said NRD Chairman Dean Johnson.

Steve Cacioppo, NRD GIS Specialist, received the **2003 Customer Service Award**. Steve is an excellent teacher and gives extra effort to help staff with problems, and he is always courteous and willing to help external customers over the phone and during office visits, said NRD Director Clint Johannes.

Johannes also presented the **NRCS Field Office Award** to **Susan Leu**, Butler County Clerk. Susie had an exceptional year, acting as secretary/recorder for both the Great Plains RC&D and the newly-formed Purple Loose Strife Weed Management Group, while still giving extra effort when needed while the NRCS office was in the process of training a new Resource Conservationist, Johannes said.

NRD Director Ron Larsen presented **Circle of Excellence Awards** to:

- **Jill Breunig**, NRD Office Manager, for her extra effort in keeping the NRD's accounting and payroll systems going while the regular book keeper, Ann Brodd, was on maternity leave;

- **Troy Thompson**, Information/Education Specialist, for his extra effort given in helping to keep the NRD's computer network up and running;

- and **Russell Oaklund**, Water Resources Specialist, for outstanding effort with the district's water quality sampling program.

Years of Service Awards were presented to:

- Directors **Annette Mastny** and **Chris Langemeier** (Five Years);
- Assistant Manager **Tom Mountford** (10 Years); and
- Manager **John Miyoshi** (20 Years).

is the quarterly publication of the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District and is edited by Troy Thompson, Information & Education Specialist.

Board Member Subdistrict

Ralph Holstine	1
David A. Shelso	1
Dean Johnson, Chair	2
Marv Eden	2
Dave Saalfeld	3
Ted Bailey	3
Clint Johannes, Vice Chair	4
Lumir Jedlicka, Secretary	4
Ralph Pieke	5
John Hannah	5
Annette Mastny	6
R. J. Sabata	6
Daryl Reitmajer	7
Ronald Sabatka	7
Donald Kavan	8
Ron Larsen	8
Eric Alm	9
Ervin Bull	9
Chris Langemeier, Treasurer	at large

Staff Member Position

Larry Angle	Water Resources Manager
Sam Barlean	O & M Specialist
Jill Breunig	Administrative Manager
Ann Brodd	Secretary/Bookkeeper
Steve Cacioppo	GIS Specialist
Eric Gottschalk	Special Projects Coordinator
Bob Heimann	O & M Manager
Marla Milliken	NRD/NRCS Technician
John Miyoshi	General Manager
Tom Mountford	Assistant Manager
Mike Murren	Lake Wanahoo Coordinator
Russell Oaklund	Water Resources Specialist
Karen Rezac	Secretary/Receptionist
Joe Sabata	O & M Specialist
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Roger Wolita	Recreation Facilitator

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Keeping an Eye on the Ice

The NRD is keeping a close eye on potential ice jams in the district's waterways this spring, after a winter of extremely cold weather and lots of moisture.

Measurements taken in early February at various points along the Platte from Fremont to Plattsmouth showed ice with average depths ranging from 9 to 14.5 inches. With that volume of ice and a lot of snow on the ground, a rapid thaw could lead to more ice jam problems than usual.

The district cooperates with two other NRDs and four counties to monitor ice jam situations on the Platte from Fremont to Plattsmouth. The group will monitor the river throughout the spring thaw in order to stay ahead of any potential problems. If it becomes necessary, the group will break up serious ice jams with fly ash and/or blasting. The last time the group had to break up jams was in the spring of 2000.

The NRD will also be monitoring ice jams upstream of Fremont, although there



are no cooperative agreements in place to permit breaking up any jams. The NRD shares information with local emergency management agencies, who are responsible for keeping residents informed about potential problems arising from ice jams.

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources maintains an ice report from the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency on its website at <http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/ice/icerpt.html>. The report is updated weekly.

For more information about ice jams and/or ice reporting, contact Bob Heimann at the Lower Platte North NRD, (402) 443-4675 or bheimann@lpnrd.org.

Tree Planting for 2004

Spring is just around the corner, so residents who would like to plant trees should get their orders in now.

The NRD offers low-cost tree seedlings to anyone in the district. Seedlings are available as handplants (planted by the purchaser) or machine plants (planted by the NRD).

Handplant trees are available for small planting projects at .50 cents per tree/shrub. A minimum quantity of 25 seedlings is required for each species ordered.

Machine plant seedlings require a 150-seedling minimum order, at .85 per tree/shrub. The NRD will assist landowners with a planting plan.

Many species sell out each year, so you're encouraged to get your order in early. Orders can be placed online at our website at www.lpnrd.org; downloadable order forms that you can print out and return are also available. You can also visit your local NRCS office to place your order, or call (402) 443-4675.





Here Come the Judges

Left:
One hundred and seventy-four students from nine area schools competed in the East Central Land Judging Contest at Camp Cedars in October.

Below, Top:
The 1st Place team, from Norris: (L-R) Brandon Niemeyer, Derrick Moormier, Hillary Schlake, and Anna Russell.

Below, Middle:
The 2nd Place team, from David City: (L-R) Jimmy Schultz, Ryan Hassebrook, Jed Struck, and Clayton Peterson

Below, Bottom:
The 3rd Place team, from Prague: (L-R) Eric Paseka, Alison TePoel, Brent Paseka, and Jeff Snitily

Norris, David City, Prague Take Top Honors at Land Judging Contest

Teams from Norris, David City and Prague brought home top honors in the East Central Land Judging Contest, held Oct. 8 at the Camp Cedars Boy Scout facility near Cedar Bluffs.

The 1st place team from Norris scored 876 out of a possible 1,200 points, beating out 45 other teams. Team members were Brandon Niemeyer, Derrick Moormier, Hillary Schlake, and Anna Russell. Two of the team members also placed in the top 10 in individual competition, with Hillary coming in 3rd and Anna taking 7th place.

In 2nd place with 863 points was the David City team of Jimmy Schultz, Ryan Hassebrook, Jed Struck, and Clayton Peterson. Ryan also placed 4th in individual competition.

The Prague team of Eric Paseka, Alison TePoel, Brent Paseka, and Jeff Snitily took third place with 857 points. Alison took 8th place and Eric took 10th place in individual competition.

The top three teams advanced to state competition in November.

In individual competition, Chris Meints of Norris took first place with 324 out of a possible 400 points. His team placed 4th overall in the contest.

Other purple ribbon winners were Trent Schaffer, Raymond Central (2nd place, 321 points); Hillary Schlake, Norris (3rd place, 314 points); Ryan Hassebrook, David City (4th place, 312 points); Brett Wieskamp, Norris (5th place, 310 points); Matt Sousek, Prague (6th place, 298 points); Anna Russell, Norris (7th place, 296 points); Alison TePoel, Prague (8th place, 294 points); Chelsea Piitz, East Butler (9th place, 290 points); and Eric Paseka, Prague (10th place, 288 points).

One hundred and seventy-four students on 46 teams competed in the contest. Schools participating were David City, East Butler, Mead, 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.



Conservation

in the INFORMATION AGE

NRD Programs Incorporate Wide Array of Modern Technology

Over the past decade, rapid advances in information technology has made dramatic changes in many fields - including conservation.

Technology has become a vital part of many of the Lower Platte North NRD's programs - particularly Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. With the mapping and database capabilities of GIS, NRD staff have a huge amount of information at their fingertips.

For instance, using GIS software, NRD water technicians can generate custom maps showing a visual representation of well locations, water sampling results, aquifer boundaries, groundwater levels, and many other parameters. Three-dimensional maps can be generated showing well depths and water tables in relation to the ground surface. For the Phase II Ground Water Management Areas (see story on page 1), GIS was used to plan water sampling efforts in the Richland/



Schuyler and Bellwood areas, to plot the results on maps and aerial photos, and to draw the boundaries of the Phase II areas, based on the results of the water sampling.

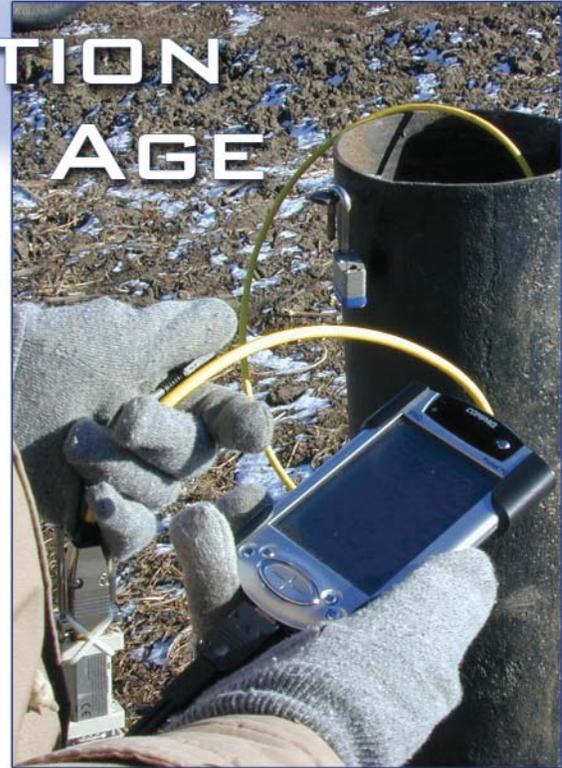
GPS (Global Positioning System) technology goes hand-in-hand with GIS. Portable GPS units can communicate with orbiting satellites to pinpoint the units' position on the Earth's surface. So, using GPS, it's possible to record the coordinates of any point, such as an irrigation well, and enter that information into the district's GIS system, where it can be mapped. NRD staff have been collecting GPS readings from water sampling wells and groundwater level monitoring wells for the past several years, building an extensive database of registered wells in the district.

Even schools have gotten in on the fun. One of the NRD's most popular educational activities for schools in the past several years has been "Geo-caching," where students use GPS units to locate hidden items.

PDA's have also found a place in the NRD's toolbox. Ipaq PDA's are used in the field to download groundwater level data from monitoring wells. Maps generated by the district's

Making Maps

GIS Specialist Steve Cacioppo (right) points out a project site to Operations & Maintenance Specialist Joe Sabata on a custom map generated with the NRD's GIS software.



GIS software can also be downloaded to the PDA's for use in the field. As PDA's become more powerful, they will be used more extensively as laptop replacements for many of the district's needs.

Much of the NRD's geographic data is available to the general public through the NRD MapMaker website. Visitors to the site can view and create custom maps using the variety of geographic information the district has assembled over the years, including aerial photos, roads, cities, topographic maps, and much more. Visit the site at www.nrdmapmaker.org.

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