



An Explosive Situation

Abandoned Concrete Railroad Piers Dynamited Out of the Platte River Near Cedar Bluffs

Removing ice hazards from the Platte River turned out to be a real bang for the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District and the Union Pacific Railroad.

Eighteen concrete railroad piers, each 12 feet high and 35 feet long, were dynamited out of the river north of Cedar Bluffs in December and January. In all, nearly two tons of explosives were used.

The piers were remnants from a railroad line constructed in the late 1800s by Chicago-Northwestern Railroad. The line, later owned by Union Pacific, was taken out of service in the late 1970s or early 80s, but the enormous concrete piers were left behind.

In the springtime, debris and ice often piled up on the piers, causing flooding in the Cedar Lakes Housing and Cabin Area. With the main channels of the river now clear, flood problems should be diminished, said Bob Heimann, NRD Operations and Maintenance Manager.



Boom!

Concrete railroad piers are exploded in the Platte River north of Cedar Bluffs. Each pier required 200 pounds of explosive.

The pier removal project was spurred by a request from home owners in the Cedar Lakes area in the wake of 1996 flooding. The NRD researched the history of the rail line and contacted Union Pacific, the last

owners of the line.

The railroad agreed to fund the project and hired Lunda Construction Company of Wisconsin to demolish the piers. The demolition

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Skull Creek Site #55 Reaches Goal

A proposed flood control project near Bruno came another step closer to becoming reality in December.

As the year wound down, the NRD reached its goal of 75% land treatment in the watershed above the proposed Skull Creek Site #55.

The land treatment was required before the Nebraska Natural Re-

sources Commission would consider the project for state funding, said Tom Mountford, NRD Assistant Manager.

Now, with terraces and other conservation measures in place, the district stands a good chance of receiving state funding for the project

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Area Cooperators, Staff and Directors Recognized at Annual Banquet Dec. 14

Area conservationists were honored at the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District's Annual Recognition Banquet at the Fremont Golf Club on Dec. 14.

Each year, the NRD recognizes outstanding efforts in conservation, tree planting, water protection, environmental education, and volunteer work. Staff and directors also are recognized for their accomplishments.

The 1998 Educator of the Year Award was given to Bob Meduna, Saunders County Extension Educator. Meduna has played an important part in organizing the NRD's Spring Conservation Sensation, an annual natural resources festival for elementary students.

1998 Volunteers of the Year were Joe Baldassare, a former Ashland-Greenwood school teacher, and Jim Angell, a teacher at David City. For a number of years, Baldassare and Angell have volunteered their time to tabulate scores for the East Central Land Judging Contest.

Eldon Thielen of Schuyler was named the 1998 Water Resources Cooperator. Thielen helps collect rainfall information for the NRD's precipitation gauging network.

The George Nygren family of Ashland was honored as the 1998 Tree Planter of the Year. The Nygrens have planted thousands of trees on their land for shelterbelts, wildlife habitat, and other purposes.

The 1998 Outstanding Conservationist Award went to the Don Svoboda family of Bruno. The Svoboda family has added many improvements to their farmland, including terraces, ponds, and other conservation measures.

Don Bohaty was recognized as the Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee of the Year. Bohaty, a technician in the Colfax County field office, has worked with the

NRD on many projects, including land treatment work on the Don Svoboda farm.

A special report was heard from Schuyler Schmid, an 8th grade student at Trinity Lutheran in Fremont. Schmid spoke about his experiences at Groundwater University, an educational camp devoted to teaching students about water and natural resources, and Groundwater Grad School, where students work on a project with a water resources professional. NRD staff helped sponsor Schmid's project.

Don Kavan of Morse Bluff was named the 1998 Director of the Year. Kavan has served on the NRD board since it formed in 1972 and is a member of the Projects and Executive committees.

Bob Heimann, Operations and Maintenance Supervisor, was named 1998 Employee of the Year. Among many other accomplishments in 1998, Heimann secured a \$136,000 grant for the NRD to restore wetlands around Czechland Lake near Prague.

Other staff and directors awards are listed below.

IN BRIEF

Get Your Tree Orders In Now for the Spring

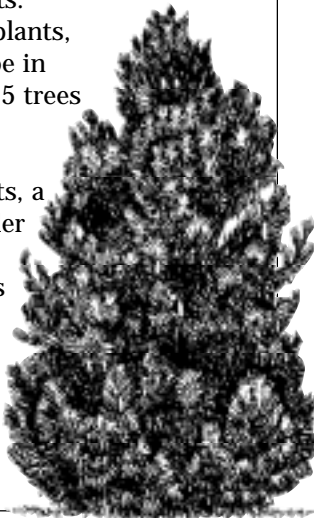
Now is the time to submit your tree orders to the NRD so you can be ready to plant in the spring.

One new tree variety is available this year, Norway Spruce.

Prices for trees have increased from .45¢ to .50¢ for handplants and from .80¢ to .85¢ for machine plants.

For handplants, orders must be in multiples of 25 trees or shrubs per species. For machine plants, a minimum order of 150 trees and/or shrubs is required.

For an order form, call the NRD at 443-4675.



Customer Service Award:

Jill Breunig, Administrative Assistant

Circle of Excellence Awards:

Shane Buscher, GIS/Computer Specialist

Ron Chadek, Recreation Facilitator

Joe Sabata, Field Technician

NRCS/NRD Employee of the Year: Susie Leu, Butler County Field Office Clerk

Special Recognition Awards:

Sam Barlean, Field Technician

Frank Albrecht, Lead Water Resources Specialist

Staff Recognition Awards:

Entire Staff (Conservation District of the Year Award)

5 Years of Service:

Greg Wilke (Director)

Ann Brodd and Tom Mountford (Staff)

10 Years of Service:

Dave Shelso (Director)

Susie Leu (Staff)

15 Years of Service:

John Miyoshi & Sam Barlean (Staff)

25 Years of Service:

Ervin Bull & Ron Sabatka (Directors)

Outgoing Directors:

Joe Matulka (1972-1998) & William Petersen (1998)

Outgoing Chairman:

Dave Shelso, 1997-98

New Faces at NRD

The Lower Platte North NRD has bid goodbye to several old friends and said hello to some new faces recently.

Two new directors joined the NRD board in January, and three new staff members have been hired in recent months.



Langemeier

Chris Langemeier of Schuyler was elected to fill the Board of Directors At-Large seat. Langemeier, a realtor, replaces Bill Peterson of David City, who was appointed in 1998.

Langemeier said his priorities as a board member would include "continued monitoring of ground-water levels and preservation of water quality."

Annette Mastny of Bellwood was elected to represent Subdistrict 6. Mastny replaces Joe Matulka, who decided to retire from the board after 26 years of service.

Mastny, who helps run her

family's cow/calf operation, said the district's land treatment programs would be one of her priorities as a director.

Mike Murren of Colon was hired by the district in November as the Lake Wanahoo Coordinator. Murren's duties include representing the NRD in all Lake Wanahoo-related matters.



Murren

Murren, a lifelong Saunders County resident, also runs a farming operation near Colon. He said he is enjoying his new position at the NRD.

"I think Lake Wanahoo will be a great asset for our NRD, Saunders County, and Wahoo," he said.

Profiles of the two new Water Department staff members are in Ground Water Management Area update on the back page.



Mastny

Pier Removal cont. from page 1

process required approximately six hours of work per pier. Each pier had to be laced with 200-250 pounds of explosive, inserted into approximately two dozen drill holes.

Twenty-three piers remain, but none are in the main channels of the river. The initial plan was to remove 21 of the original 41 piers, but the project was scaled back to 18 piers because of financial concerns.

"With almost half of the piers removed, the main channels are open and that should help prevent ice jams," Heimann said.

"The railroad has been more than accommodating in working with us on this project," he added. "We appreciate their willingness to help."

Site #55 cont. from page 1

later this spring, Mountford said.

If state funds are allocated as expected, the district hopes to begin land rights negotiations in the late spring or early summer. If all goes as planned, construction should begin in the year 2000.

"The opportunity to build this multipurpose dam is only because of the outstanding conservation efforts and support of area landowners," Mountford said. "Without them, this project couldn't become a reality."

In addition to flood control, Site #55 will provide public recreation, including fishing and primitive camping. A steering committee made up of local residents will help guide recreation development at the site.

the VIADUCT

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Board of Directors Sub-District

Dean Johnson	1
Keith Lallman	1
David A. Shelso, Chair	2
Mary Sendgraff	2
Steven E. Grueber	3
Ted Bailey	3
Dave Saalfeld	4
Lumir Jedlicka	4
Greg Wilke, Secretary	5
Clinton Johannes	5
Annette Mastny	6
R. J. Sabata	6
Jane Daufeldt, Treasurer	7
Ronald Sabatka	7
Donald Kavan	8
Jim McDermott, Vice Chair	8
LeRoy Nelson	9
Ervin Bull	9
Chris Langemeier	at large

Staff Members Position

Larry Angle	Water Resources Manager
Sam Barlean	Field Technician
Dan Becker	Water Resources Specialist
Shane Buscher	GIS/Computer Specialist
Jill Breunig	Administrative Assistant
Ann Brodd	Secretary/Bookkeeper
Ron Chadek	Recreation Facilitator
Bob Heimann	O&M Manager
Marla Milliken	NRD/NRCS Technician
John Miyoshi	General Manager
Tom Mountford	Assistant Manager
Mike Murren	Lake Wanahoo Coordinator
Scott Nelson	Water Resources Specialist
Shaula Ross	Water Resources Specialist
Joe Sabata	Field Technician
Troy Thompson	Info/Ed Specialist
Katherine Vasa ..	Special Projects Coordinator

NRD/NRCS Clerks County

Susie Leu	Butler County
Carol Prokesh	Saunders County
Kristin Uhing	Dodge County
Brenda Wardman	Colfax County

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NRD Welcomes New Water Resources Specialists

Two new Water Resources Specialists have joined the NRD's water department.

Scott Nelson, now residing in



Nelson

Wahoo, joined the NRD in September. Nelson replaced Troy Eurek, who took a job with a private firm in Kearney.

Nelson previously worked for the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District in Holdrege.

Dan Becker was hired in December to replace Frank Albrecht, who took a position with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.



Becker

Becker, a native of New Jersey, is now residing in Lincoln. Previously, he worked as a research assistant at the University of Delaware.

Nitrogen Certification Classes

All producers using fertilizer in the LPNNRD must attend nitrogen certification training at least once every four years. Training dates for 1999 are:

- Feb. 23** 7 p.m.
Community Hall, Bellwood
- Feb. 24** 1:30 p.m.
Frontier Coop, Yanka (David City)
- March 2** 2 p.m.
Ag Park, Columbus
- March 3** 1:30 p.m.
Legion Hall, Newman Grove
- March 9** 1:30 p.m.
Western Cafe, Schuyler
- March 18** 7 p.m.
Saunders Co. Extension Office, ARDC (Near Mead)
- March 19** 9 a.m.
Saunders Co. Extension Office, ARDC (Near Mead)
- March 20** 9 a.m.
Saunders Co. Extension Office, ARDC (Near Mead)
- March 23** 9:30 a.m.
Dodge Co. Extension Office, Fremont
- March 23** 7 p.m.
Dodge Co. Extension Office, Fremont

- March 24** 9:30 a.m.
Dodge Co. Extension Office, Fremont

The training is free and no preregistration is required. For more information, contact the NRD at (402) 443-4675 (local) or 1-888-764-0543 (toll-free).

WATER BRIEFS

Chemigation Training

Chemigation certification classes have been scheduled for the upcoming year. Training sites in or near the Lower Platte North NRD include:

- Norfolk** (Feb. 17 and March 3, Lifelong Learning Center);
- Albion** (Feb. 25, KC Hall);
- Columbus** (March 2, Ag Park);
- Fremont** (March 12, Dodge County Extension Office)
- David City** (March 16, David City Library).

Preregistration for the classes is encouraged. Contact the Saunders County Extension Office at (402) 624-8030 for an application form or more information.