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VIADUCT

LOWER PLATTE NORTH NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
Protecting Lives • Protecting Property • Protecting the Future

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Fall/Winter 2009
www.lpnrd.org

Lake Wanahoo Dam 90% Complete

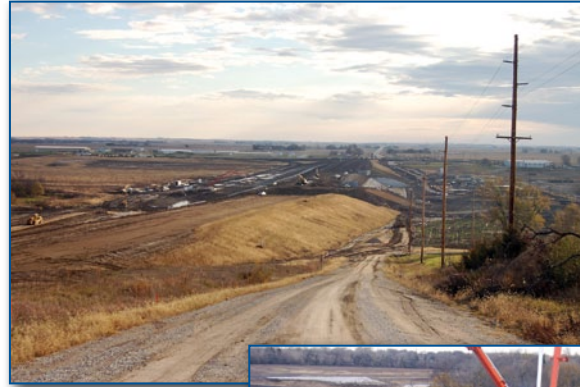
Frequent visitors to the Wahoo area over the past year may have noticed some big changes taking place north of town at the Highway 77-92 junction, as the Lake Wanahoo dam has taken shape.

Construction on the dam began in October 2008 and a year later had progressed to a point where outlets and diversions could be removed to allow the lake to begin to fill. Water has been pooling in the lakebed since then, and it's anticipated that one large rain event (3" or more in the watershed) could fill the 637-surface-acre lake completely.

The Highway 77-92 junction was also reshaped so that it will eventually be able to link with the planned Highway 77 bypass that will run across the front face of the dam. The junction, closed for much of 2009 to accommodate construction, was reopened in November.

Good weather helped speed construction throughout much of the year, and the dam was approximately 90% complete in December, when crews temporarily shut down due to freezing temperatures. The major remaining item on the dam is concrete work on the emergency spillway, and that should be completed in 4-5 weeks once temperatures warm up again this spring, leaving the project well ahead of schedule.

With the dam nearly complete, project sponsors have been focusing on recreation plans and other components of the project that will be built in 2010-2011, including seven smaller upstream dams along Sand and Duck Creeks. A 2012 grand opening is planned for the Lake Wanahoo Recreation Area.



The Lake Wanahoo dam site, looking east along the former County Road M. ◀



▶ This forest of rebar waiting for concrete is the emergency spillway below the dam as it looked in early November.



▶ The dam was closed in October and water began pooling immediately. With snowmelt and spring rains, the lake should be full by summer 2010.



NRD Budget, Fiscal Year 2009

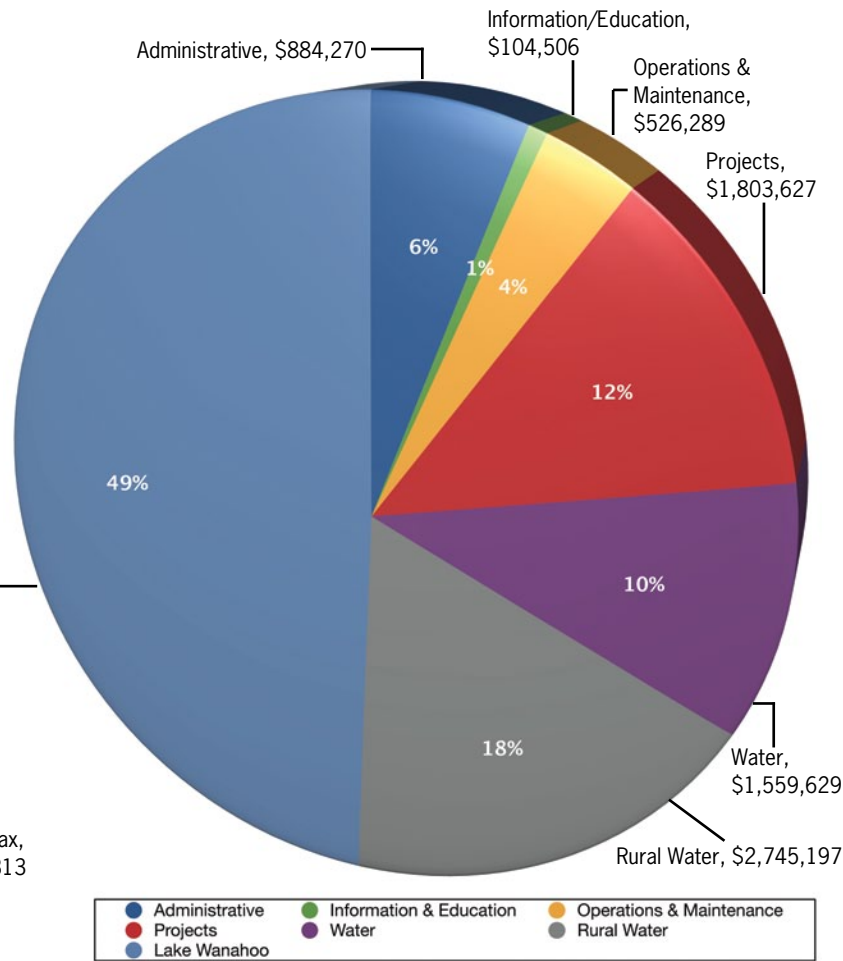
The Lower Platte North NRD is funded by a combination of property taxes and grants from local, State and Federal sources. For fiscal year 2009 (July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010), the district's overall budget is \$15,023,519.

This is significantly higher than normal due to the construction of Lake Wanhoo, which accounted for just under half of the district's total budget. Despite this, the district's property tax rate is actually 2% lower in FY2009 than FY2008.

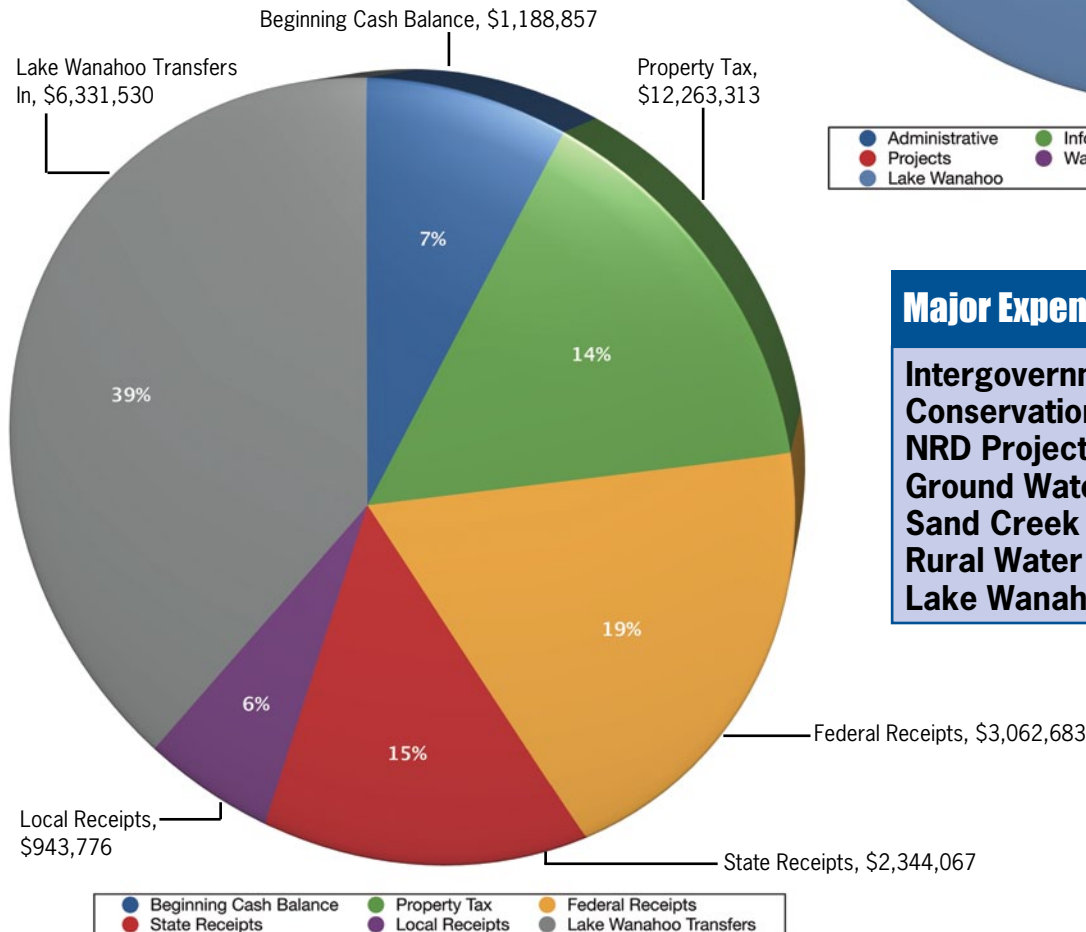
State statute allows NRDs a maximum property tax rate of .055000. At the FY2009 rate of .044775, the NRD is at 81% of the allowable rate. This equates to \$44.76 in property tax for a \$100,000 home or farm.

For the FY2009 budget, each dollar of property tax collected is matched by 6 dollars in outside funding. Property tax receipts accounted for only 14% of the NRD's total budget in '09.

Lower Platte North NRD Total Expenses, Fiscal Year 2009 - \$15,023,519



Lower Platte North NRD Total Income, Fiscal Year 2009 - \$16,331,530



Major Expenditures in FY 2009 Budget

- Intergovernmental Projects - \$160,000
- Conservation Land Treatment - \$225,000
- NRD Projects - \$587,000
- Ground Water Studies - \$1,026,000
- Sand Creek Dams - \$1,070,000
- Rural Water Construction - \$2,800,000
- Lake Wanhoo Construction - \$7,400,000

Prague Team Qualifies for National Land Judging

After taking first place at the regional East Central Land Judging Contest in October, a team from Prague marked a historic first for their school by qualifying for national competition at the State Land Judging Contest.

The team members - Jake Smaus, Nathan Sousek, Sadie Van Norman and Hannah Schaefer - placed third at the state contest at Wolbach in November, qualifying them for the national contest to be held next May in Oklahoma. It was the highest state finish and the first national qualification for a team from Prague.

East Central teams from Waverly and Norris also competed in the state contest, placing 15th and 13th respectively.

The annual Land Judging contests are regional field competitions where FFA students compete to identify soil characteristics and suggested land practices at four different sites chosen by a soil scientist. Students work individually but are scored in teams of four, and the top teams in each region advance to state competition. The regional East Central contest was held October 8 in Butler County.

At the East Central contest, the 1st-place Prague team scored 970 out of a possible 1,200 points. VanNorman also placed 7th in individual competition with 320 out of a possible 400 points, and Smaus came in 1st with 340 points.

The 2nd-place Waverly team of Jessica Smith, Rebecca Rose, Eric Houser and Logan Winter scored 931 points. Winter was 3rd in individual competition, scoring 336 points, and was also on a state-qualifying team in the 2008 contest.

The Norris team of Ali Ganow, Josh Kruger, Maci Lieneman and Samantha Rice took 3rd place with 910 points. Kruger also placed 4th in individual competition with 335 points.

Rounding out the nine purple ribbon winners in individual competition were Colby Kubik of East Butler in 2nd place (340 points), August Kliment of Raymond Central (5th place, 327 points), Tanner Miner of Conestoga (6th place, 322 points), William Salisbury of Conestoga (8th place, 315 points), and Tyler Heyen of Raymond Central (9th place, 312 points).

One hundred and sixty-eight students on 44 teams competed in the contest. Schools participating were Conestoga, 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 Butler County Natural Resources Conservation Service.



From left: The East Central champions & state- and national-qualifying Prague team of Jake Smaus, Sadie VanNorman, Hannah Schaefer and Nathan Sousek.



From left: East Central 2nd place team from Waverly - Jessica Smith, Rebecca Rose, Eric Houser and Logan Winter.



From left: The Norris team of Ali Ganow, Maci Lienemann, Josh Kruger and Samantha Rice took 3rd place in the East Central contest.





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

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Clint Johannes.....	4
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Robert Meduna.....	8
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Ray Casey	9
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Order Your Trees Now for Planting This Spring

With winter weather upon us, we are reminded of the value of trees for protecting humans, livestock and wildlife during storms, says Dennis Adams, forester with the Nebraska Forest Service at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "Most people can feel the benefit of a good windbreak when they stand downwind behind the trees," he said.

Farmers planning to plant trees or shrubs for a windbreak, wildlife habitat improvement, erosion control, water quality or other conservation practices in the spring should order tree and shrub seedlings now, recommends Adams.

The Lower Platte North NRD is accepting tree orders now, and NRD or NRCS staff can help landowners develop tree planting plans. Anyone residing in the district can purchase trees from the NRD. Landowners can browse available species and place their order online at www.lpnrd.org, or contact the NRD or their local NRCS office.

Trees may be purchased as handplants (planted by the purchaser) or machine plants (planted by the NRD).

Seedlings are two years old and approximately 12" to 18" tall, and a variety of species are available. Prices are 65 cents per tree for handplants and \$1.25 per tree for machine plants.

"Well planned windbreaks can provide fuel savings for home or building heating, increase weight gains in cattle, protect calving areas in open range, provide protection and food for wildlife, and increase crop production. Studies show, even considering the cost of land planted in trees and minor yield loss next to a windbreak, that tree protection can result in six to more than a 40 percent yield increase across the entire field, depending on the crop and growing conditions. Windbreaks are particularly beneficial in drought years," said Adams.

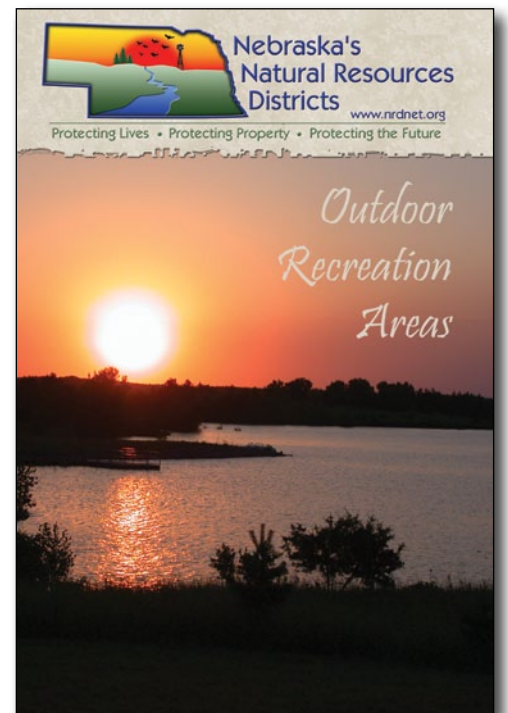
"The best time to plant conservation trees was 20 years ago," Adams said, "the next best time is now."

Shop now for trees at www.lpnrd.org or call the NRD at (402) 443-4675 (toll-free 1-888-764-0543) for more information on tree sales.

New NRD Recreation Areas Brochure

Looking for a place to get away from it all? Whether you're looking for a quiet fishing hole, a hiking area, a place to hunt, or a scenic spot to enjoy a picnic, chances are you can find what you're looking for at one of the many NRD recreation areas across the state.

Now you can find those areas easier than ever, thanks to the popular "NRD Outdoor Recreation Areas" brochure. Completely updated for 2009, with more than dozen new recreation areas and new photos and maps, this oversize full-color brochure has directions and detailed lists of facilities for the more than 60 NRD recreation areas in Nebraska. Best of all, it's free - order online at www.lpnrd.org or call the NRD at (402) 443-4675 ((toll-free 1-888-764-0543) to request your free copy.



NRD Honors Area Conservationists

Outstanding Efforts in Conservation Recognized at Annual Awards Banquet

Each year, the NRD gives awards for outstanding efforts in conservation of our soil and water resources. This year's awards banquet was held November 29 at the Klein Center in Brainard.

Kurt Skillstad of Albion was named **Outstanding Conservationist of the Year**. Kurt operates 680 acres of crop and pasture ground on a farm that his parents purchased in 1952. Like his father LeRoy, Kurt has been an active conservationist, working with Federal, state and local organizations to install CRP, buffer strips, waterways, dams, and other conservation practices across the farm.

The **2009 Water Cooperator of the Year** was **Aaron Nygren**, County Extension Educator for Colfax County. Aaron has done a great deal to help the NRD with its water quality programs, from assisting with the district's annual Nitrogen Management Certification classes to working directly with producers in the district's Richland-Schuyler Phase 2 Ground Water Management Area.

The **2009 Partner of the Year** was **Steve Satra** of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Steve was instrumental in helping the NRD secure more than \$1.3 million in Federal grant funds that were administered by his agency to complete fishery enhancements for the Lake Wanahoo project.

Brach Johnson of the Butler County NRCS office was chosen as **NRCS Employee of the Year**. Brach has been the Resource Conservationist for Butler County since 2005. His leadership skills and management of the Butler County workload has earned him a great deal of respect from his fellow NRCS employees as well as the NRD offices he works with.

Dean Johnson of Fremont was the district's **2009 Director of the Year**. Sadly, Dean unexpectedly passed away on November 20. His wife, Caralee, attended the banquet to accept the award on his behalf. Dean was an NRD director for 15 years and served in all of the board's leadership positions. Dean's financial expertise was particularly valuable to the NRD, and when his term as Treasurer was up, the Board waived their term limit rule for officers to allow him to continue to serve in that capacity. The NRD and its staff will sorely miss Dean's expertise, thoroughness, and dedication, and we would like to extend our condolences to Caralee and the rest of Dean's family.

NRD staff were also recognized at the banquet. The **2009 Employee of the Year** was **Troy Thompson**, Information-Education/Computer Specialist. Troy is responsible for the district's educational programs with area schools and community groups, informational efforts such as newsletters, brochures, advertising, and websites, and administering and maintaining the NRD computer network.

Other staff awards included: **Customer Service Award** – Jill Breunig, NRD Administrative Manager; **NRCS Field Office Award** – Brenda Wardman, Colfax County NRCS Clerk; **Circle of Excellence Awards** – Curt Becker, Water Resources Specialist; Russell Oaklund, Water Resources Specialist; and Krystal Sund, Accountant.

L-R: Kurt Skillstad receives the 2009 Outstanding Conservationist Award from NRD Special Projects Coordinator Eric Gottschalk.



L-R: NRD Water Resources Technician Russel Oaklund, 2009 Water Cooperator of the Year Aaron Nygren (UNL Cooperative Extension), and NRD Water Resources Manager Larry Angle.



L-R: NRD Lake Wanahoo Coordinator Mike Murren presents the 2009 Partner of the Year Award to Steve Satra of Nebraska Game and Parks.



L-R: Caralee Johnson and NRD Manager John Miyoshi. Caralee accepted the 2009 Director of the Year Award on behalf of her late husband Dean.



L-R: NRD Chair Dave Saalfeld presents NRD I&E/Computer Specialist Troy Thompson with the 2009 Employee of the Year Award.



L-R: NRD Director Robert Hilger, Circle of Excellence winner Krystal Sund, NRD Director Clint Johannes, Customer Service winner Jill Breunig, NRD Director Dave Vrana, and Circle of Excellence winner Russell Oaklund. Not pictured: Circle of Excellence winner Curt Becker and NRCS Field Office winner Brenda Wardman.





REMINDER: Annual Fertilizer and Water Use Reports Due

All producers who use nitrogen fertilizer in the Lower Platte North NRD's Bellwood and Richland-Schuyler Phase 2 Areas are required to submit annual fertilizer use reports to the NRD **by Dec. 31 each year**. If you haven't submitted your 2009 report yet, please do so as soon as possible to remain in compliance. All producers should have received a report packet in the mail, and forms are also available for download at www.lpnrd.org.

Annual water use reports are also due by **January 31, 2010** for any landowner who:

- received a **new** well permit after October 10, 2005;
- received **any** well permit (new or replacement) after May 2008; and/or
- received an approved variance in one of the NRD's Limited Development Areas.

Anyone who is required to submit a water use report should have received a form in the mail.

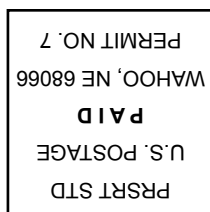
If you have questions about fertilizer or water use reports, please call the NRD at (402) 443-4675, toll-free 1-888-764-0543.

Certification Class Schedule for 2010

All individuals (owners, operators, producers, crop consultants) who engage in production agriculture within the Lower Platte North NRD are required to be certified with the NRD. Certification is valid for four years, after which recertification is required. Uncertified producers are not eligible for any of the NRD's cost-share programs or for irrigated acre certification. Certification classes are held at various locations throughout the NRD January through March each year (see below).

The training is conducted by NRD staff in cooperation with University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension staff. The training sessions are free and no preregistration is required. Producers may attend whichever session works best for their schedule. Training sessions last approximately two hours. For more information, contact Water Resources Specialist Russell Oaklund or call (402) 443-4675.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Wed Jan. 6th	3:00 p.m. (after Corn Expo)	Fremont - Christensen Field
Fri Jan. 15th	1:00 p.m.	ARDC - Mead
Fri Jan. 22nd	3:00 p.m. (after No-Till Workshop)	Columbus - Ag Park
Tues Feb. 9th	1:30 p.m. (Pesticide training classes at 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)	David City - Hruska Library
Thurs Feb. 11th	1:30 p.m.	Lindsay - Village Office
Tues Feb. 16th	8:30 a.m.	Schuyler - Benedictine Center
Fri Feb. 19th	9:30 a.m.	Fremont - Extension Office
Tues Feb. 23rd	9:30 a.m. (Pesticide training classes at 1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.)	David City - Hruska Library
Mon March 15th	7:00 p.m. (Pesticide training class at 1:30 p.m.)	David City - Hruska Library
Thurs March 18th	7:00 p.m.	ARDC - Mead
Mon March 22nd	7:00 p.m.	Columbus - Ag Park



**LOWER PLATTE NORTH
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