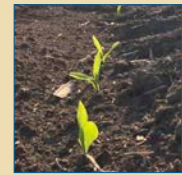




Wanahoo  
Update  
Page 3



Nebraska  
Tree-A-Thon  
Page 4



Proper Nitrogen  
Management  
Page 4

# the VIADUCT

Lower Platte North Natural Resources District  
Summer 2020

## Wahoo Creek Watershed Moves to Phase Two

In 2013, the LPNNRD—in a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Nebraska Dept of Environment and Energy (NDEE) and cooperation with the UNL Extension—implemented a voluntary program with landowners to decrease sediment loads within the Wahoo Creek Watershed. The National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) Phase 1 was a great success, below are highlighted statistics:

- Over \$2.7 million allocated
- 204,000 feet of terrace constructed
- 260 Water and Sediment Control Basins installed
- More than 5000 acres of cover crops planted

All these practices, and more, contributed to an overall reduction in sediment loads within the Wahoo Creek Watershed. Why is that

important? Water is one of the key foundations for life as we know it. By doing our part at decreasing sediment loads in runoff, we increase the total water quality which has a positive effect throughout our ecosystem.

Earlier this year, the same group of partners began planning on moving from NWQI Phase 1 to Phase 2; this next step will sharpen the focus of water quality from total sediment loads to microscopic aspects of water quality, i.e. bacteria and synthetic chemicals. NDEE routinely monitors Wahoo Creek for several water quality indicators, one aspect that is becoming clear is that our E. coli numbers could be lower. E. coli is a family of Coliform bacteria found in the digestive systems of all mammals; therefore, they are naturally found within all

environments where mammals live. The concerning issue is there are certain strains of E. coli that can cause severe bacterial infections.

Another pollutant within the watershed is Atrazine, which is a herbicide widely utilized. There is debate about what adverse effects can be specifically attributed to atrazine, it is widely accepted that any compound designed to kill carbon-based life forms is not good for any carbon-based life form.

Through the continued support of our local shareholders, producers and community, the partnership of LPNNRD, NRCS, NDEE and Extension services will continue to provide top quality technical and financial assistance to implement the best management practices to address the resource concerns within the watershed.



## Clear Creek Levee Repairs On Track for Completion

The aftermath of last year's historic flooding still lingers throughout the Lower Platte North NRD area. At the Clear Creek Levee between Ashland and

Yutan, temporary repairs were completed last year to help stabilize the breaches until more work could be completed.

*continued on page 3*

# THE VIADUCT

vol 29 issue 1  
Summer 2020

## Lower Platte North NRD Board & Staff

<b>Board Member.....</b>	<b>Subdistrict</b>
Lon Olson, Fremont .....	1
Kelly Thompson, Fremont .....	1
Frank Pollard, Fremont (Vice-Chairperson).....	2
Bill Saeger, Fremont .....	2
Dave Saalfeld, North Bend.....	3
Larry Feala, North Bend (Secretary) .....	3
Chris Yosten, Schuyler.....	4
Matt Bailey, Schuyler .....	4
Mark Seier, Newman Grove .....	5
John Hannah, Columbus .....	5
Joe Birkel, David City.....	6
Robert Hilger, David City (Treasurer).....	6
Nancy Meyer, Cedar Bluffs.....	7
Ryan Sabatka, Weston.....	7
Jerry Johnson, Wahoo .....	8
Alex Kavan, Wahoo .....	8
Don Veskerna, Ashland.....	9
Robert Meduna, Wahoo .....	9
Gene Ruzicka, North Bend (Chairperson)....	at large

<b>Staff Member.....</b>	<b>Position</b>
Daryl Andersen.....	Water Resources Manager
Tyler Benal .....	Water Resources Specialist
Jill Breunig .....	Bookkeeping Dept. Head/ Admin. Assistant
Will Brueggemann .....	Water Resources Technician
Rob Christian .....	NRD/NRCS Technician
Duke Dokulil .....	O & M Technician
Sean Elliott .....	Projects/Rural Water Manager
Eric Gottschalk.....	General Manager
Bob Heimann .....	O & M Manager
Tom Mountford .....	Assistant Manager
Dave Moore .....	O & M Technician
Russell Oaklund....	Lead Water Resources Specialist
Dave Odvody .....	Recreation Facilitator
Chris Poole .....	Grants/GIS Dept. Head
Karen Rezac.....	Dept./Admin Assistant
Lacey Sabatka .....	Info & Ed Coordinator
Bret Schomer .....	Wanahoo Recreation Supervisor/ Water Resources Specialist

<b>NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant.....</b>	<b>County</b>
Kimberly Piitz .....	Butler County
Kristin Miller .....	Colfax County
Ashley Keeler .....	Dodge County
Marla Milliken.....	Saunders County

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## From the Desk of the General Manager



Eric Gottschalk

**What a difference three to four months can make...**

March 1st, 2020, my wife Susie, and I had just returned from a conference in Las Vegas a couple weeks prior and she and I were both getting over a "cold" we must have picked up while traveling. Susie had mentioned her dry cough was lingering, nearly 10 days now, but the headaches and fever she had experienced were gone. My symptoms: stuffed nose, headache, and tiredness, were not the same and not as severe but I still knew I had come down with something...Flash forward to today...Our world has been turned upside down as we all struggle to deal with the first major pandemic in over 100 years. How we conduct our business, our schools, and our leisure time have been dramatically altered and may remain that way for months to come. In a matter of one week in March, our NRD office closed our doors to the public without an appointment, split our staff into two work groups, each working three days in the office and three days from home, and began utilizing internet based video conferencing for all our meetings and group communications.

While it may be easy to look at the negative impacts COVID-19 has had on our world community, the human loss and economic hardships to name just two, I choose to look and focus on the obstacles we have overcome and the human spirit which continues to shine through. In our organization, the professionalism and willingness of our staff to do anything asked, the ability of directors to change how we conduct meetings and business and our dedication to provide uninterrupted, quality outdoor recreation at all our recreation areas provide unbelievable pride and inspiration for me and everyone associated with Lower Platte North NRD.

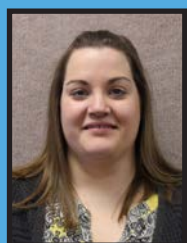
Thanks to our outstanding staff and directors, our district productivity will remain high as we move forward carrying out our mission; "Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future."

COVID-19, thanks to you, the Lower Platte North NRD is better, stronger and more versatile than ever before...And, because of the additional time I spent at home, the Gottschalk household has a better trained, well-adjusted 5 ½ month old Weimaraner named Harper!

Eric Gottschalk, LPNNRD General Manager

## New Faces at the NRD

Please join us in welcoming Ashley Keeler, the new NRD/NRCS Field Office Assistant for Dodge County! Ashley started in the spring at the Fremont office. Stop by to welcome her and visit about NRD and NRCS programs available in the Dodge County area.



Ashley Keeler

LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD

protecting lives | protecting property | protecting the future  
402.443.4675 [www.lpnrd.org](http://www.lpnrd.org)

continued from page 1

In late November, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) had a walk-through with contractors and opened bids for the project. The Lower Platte North NRD worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the Fuse Plug Levee at Camp Ashland and continued working with USACE on permanent repairs to the Clear Creek Levee System. In early January, the repair contract was awarded to the low bid of \$9.199 million to Young's General Contracting of Missouri.

The Fuse Plug Levee at Camp Ashland was one of the priority areas regarding this flood prevention

system. The Lower Platte North NRD shares responsibility of the Fuse Plug Levee area with the Lower Platte South NRD and the Army National Guard. As previously designed, the Fuse Plug washed out during the March 2019 flooding event, allowing water from the Platte River, Salt Creek and Wahoo Creek to pass through.

The Fuse Plug Levee was repaired by early December before ice jam and flooding conditions could occur in February or March. Favorable weather conditions have helped keep the Clear Creek Levee repair project ahead of schedule. By March, the entire levee system

was restored back to full height. Breach holes were fully completed, smaller areas were repaired and the last major repair is the river bank in Thomas Lakes.

April's wet weather and the pandemic caused work to slow down on the project. Rock to be used for rip-rap along the levee was scheduled for delivery by four or five trains from Frontier Co-op in Mead and then hauled to the project site. The contractor estimates the project to be 85% completed as of late April, with hopes to have the project completed by the end of June.

## LPNNRD Awarded Outdoor Fund Grant

The Lower Platte North NRD manages and operates three recreation areas: Czechland Lake, Homestead Lake and Lake Wanhoo. With thousands of visitors to these recreation areas annually, the LPNNRD utilizes special events and education programs to encourage outdoor recreation.

Earlier this year, the LPNNRD was

graciously awarded a \$2,000 grant thanks to the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund. Over 2,000 youth—ages 3 to 19—are impacted by LPNNRD's yearly educational programs and presentations about the importance and conservation of our natural resources and the environment.

With the increasing number



of youth visitors to the LPNNRD recreation areas, the need for educational activities also increases. With the help of the Outdoor Fund grant, the LPNNRD was able to purchase youth and adult fishing poles, life jackets and fishing nets and will plan to offer new fishing activities to area youth!

## Rediscover the Outdoors with New Updates at Lake Wanhoo

Earlier this year, the Lower Platte North NRD staff renovated the remaining grass camping pads at Lake Wanhoo to white-rocked camping pads. The work was completed just before the early rush of camping started in mid-April.

Whether you are an outdoor enthusiast or wanting to experience camping for the first time, these new primitive cabins at Lake Wanhoo are the perfect gateway to the outdoors.

The six 10-foot by 12-foot primitive cabins

complete with a petite front porch have a great view of the lake!

These one-room cabins include:

- 30 amp power
- window air conditioner
- table
- three foot counter with wash basin (no running water)
- six-foot by ten-foot sleeping loft
- two single drop-down bunks

Fresh water is available at the nearby shower house. Bedding and mattresses are not provided. The cabins also include two 110-volt outlets inside.



One of the cabins during construction

To make reservations, please call the NRD at 402-443-4675 or visit [lpnnrd.org](http://lpnnrd.org)





## Boosting Yields Through Proper Nitrogen Management

It's that time of year when crops are being planted and lawn care begins. What you do now can have a lasting effect in the groundwater or surface water.

Surface water runoff from lawns, urban streets and farmland can increase algae blooms, which can be harmful to aquatic habitat. As a majority of Nebraskans use groundwater as a drinking water source, leaching of fertilizer and chemicals can result in health effects along with expensive cleanup.



Sprouting corn

In some areas more than others

across Nebraska, nitrates have increasingly become a concern for groundwater quality. Practicing wise fertilizer application can benefit not only the crop and/or lawn, but can also protect ground water quality.

Applying the necessary amount of fertilizer during appropriate times will increase your fertilizer efficiency. It will increase your chances of boosting yields and your grass growth and it can also decrease your chances of excess fertilizer that could potentially leach into the aquifer system.

When applying chemicals make sure to read the label and follow the application rate guidelines along with safety instructions. Before applying nitrogen, a soil sample is

recommended. Knowing how much nitrogen is in the soil is a valuable tool to reduce over application. The crop and lawn need a certain amount of nitrogen applied before extra nitrogen will not significantly increase yields for the extra cost.

Crop management can involve the practice of split applications. Chemigation—the practice of applying chemicals through an irrigation system—is a good example of an application that is considered a split application. Using inhibitors with your fertilizer application is also beneficial so it slows down the rate at which the fertilizer releases its growth bearing properties to the plant. Overall, if you are efficient with what you apply and when you apply it you can become a guardian on protecting the groundwater.

## Schuyler Afterschool Program Participates in 2020 Nebraska Tree-A-Thon

Trees provide numerous benefits to both people and animals. From protecting crops and livestock to provide food and cover for wildlife and more. The Lower Platte North NRD was excited when the Warrior Academy afterschool program through Schuyler signed up to participate in the 2020 Nebraska Tree-A-Thon!

The Lower Platte North NRD provided pine seedlings and the Papio-Missouri NRD graciously donated Burr Oak seedlings to help fill the requested order. "Our Tree-A-Thon pick up was a total success," said Kimmi Viquez, Warrior Academy After-school Program

Coordinator. "We were able to hand out all 400 trees!" Ten of the trees that had been donated were reserved to plant at the Schuyler Elementary.

By partnering with the Arbor Day Foundation, Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts, Nebraska Audobon, Nebraska Forestry and the University of Nebraska, the Beyond School Bells' statewide challenge helped to provide an estimated 12,700 trees in 65 communities during Arbor Day weekend—April 24-26.

The Lower Platte North NRD's tree planting program is one of the



Students from Warrior Academy planted their new tree in their yard

most visible and popular programs. To learn more about the NRD's program, please visit the Forestry section on the website at [lpnnrd.org](http://lpnnrd.org)