

NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCES DISTRICTS

ANNUAL REPORT



2016

NARD PRESIDENT

J I M B E N D F E L D T



Jim Bendfeldt

The Natural Resources Districts System here in Nebraska is a Proven Success

We know the Natural Resources District (NRD) System is a proven success because the health of our natural resources continue to improve year in and year out, even as we put more and more pressure on them. Our soils continue to produce food for an ever growing population, and our water is as abundant and pure as any found around the world.

We know the NRD System is a proven success because many other states are asking us how we do it. The state and national news outlets mention the success of Nebraska's basin approach with the NRDs. Our natural resources are the most productive in many categories nationally, and yet we seem to be able to increase their productivity while improving their health time and time again.

This is no coincidence. I ask you to look at the accomplishment highlighted in this year's Annual Report, and think about how much human effort went into each. We are where we are because of the Nebraska people who understand natural resources and who make good things happen.

Look at the success of the NRDs involved in the Platte River Recovery Program. The districts included in the effort have meet their individual goals while protecting the resources and economy of the basin. The Niobrara Basin NRDs came together with the Nebraska Game and Parks and Nebraska Public Power District to help resolve a long-standing water legal battle which will protect all water uses and the economy well into the future. The Republican Basin NRDs have worked with parties from all three states involved with the compact to come up with a common sense approach to the contentious legal issues. Individual projects in each NRD help protect lives, property and the future for the residents all across the state.

This proven success record begins at the local level where NRD employees work tirelessly to educate, promote, and implement good and workable programs. They have the support of local communities, and the system is blessed with support at the regional and state level.

Our efforts must continue. Very talented people have come and gone here in the NRD System, and it has been my privilege to recognize a few of them and their accomplishments, but the system is made up of many, many good and talented people, and that is our strength. Thank you each and every one, at every level.

Because of the successful efforts of all involved with the NRDs, I am fortunate and honored to serve as the President of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts. There have been so many proven accomplishments. Let's continue to work hard and protect our natural resources with common sense programs that protect lives, protect property and protect the future.

NARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) executive committee consists of the NARD board officers and the chairs of the Information and Education and Legislative committees. The NARD board consists of representation from each of the local 23 NRDs. The board members meet five times throughout the year and help guide the association.

Jim Bendfeldt from the Central Platte NRD is the current NARD President. Bendfeldt has served 13 years on the CPNRD Board. He has served five years as an NARD Board representative. Bendfeldt previously served as the NARD Board Vice-President and Secretary/Treasurer.

Larry Reynolds from the Tri-Basin NRD is the current Vice-President. Reynolds has been on the Board for four years. Reynolds previously served as NARD Board Secretary-Treasurer.

Terry Martin from the Upper Republican NRD is the current NARD Past President. Martin has served on the Upper Republican NRD board for 15 years, on the NARD board for eight years and previously held the President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer positions.

Jim Meismer from Twin Platte NRD, serves as the chair of the Legislative Committee and Jim Johnson from South Platte NRD, serves as the chair of the Information and Education Committee. Currently, the position of Secretary-Treasurer is open but will be filled at the NARD Board meeting immediately following the 2016 conference.

NARD FOUNDATION



Nebraska FFA



Nebraska Envirothon



LEAD Program



ACE Camp



NE Foundation for Ag. Awareness

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) Foundation mission is to provide natural resources awareness, education and leadership opportunities for Nebraskans through partnerships with other organizations, foundations and the private sector. The priority is to improve the positive image of Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) by providing funding for natural resources awareness, education and leadership opportunities for Nebraskans. The NARD Foundation provides the conduit for funding those opportunities that have state-wide audiences and participants.

Your contribution to the NARD Foundation will help provide support and opportunities for students to continue their education in natural resources. The programs also provide paths to career opportunities in this rewarding field.

In FY 2015-16, over \$115,000 were raised for the NARD Foundation to support programs where people of all ages can learn more about natural resources. Funds were raised through a variety of activities including the Ron Bishop Memorial Golf Tournament, a 5K run, a live and silent auction at the Annual Conference, and contributions from local NRDs. Over \$105,000 was dispersed in FY 15-16 to fund the following programs:

- Nebraska Educational TV History of the NRDs program called: “Keeping Nebraska Local; A unique approach to resources management”. The hour-long program aired eleven times on NET2 that explains how the NRDs were created, how they evolved and how they continue to protect lives, property and the future for all Nebraskan’s. The program is also available online at <http://netnebraska.org/nrd>.
- The Nebraska Envirothon, an agriculture, wildlife and science competition for grades 9-12 is designed to test students’ knowledge in seven areas of ag and natural resources studies. The top three teams at the state level were also provided \$3,000 to support the program at their local schools. The winning team was also provided funding to compete at the National Envirothon.
- The Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute is a weeklong conference held each July for high school juniors and seniors to learn more about agriculture and natural resources in Nebraska.
- Ag Day on the Hill. The foundation sponsors five Nebraska college students to attend National Ag Day in Washington D.C. learning about federal policy, trade, agriculture and natural resource issues.
- Sponsored Annual State FFA Convention held in Lincoln, providing assistance for the natural resources programs.
- The Nebraska Foundation for Agricultural Awareness to spread a positive agriculture message to teachers, students and parents about the importance of agriculture.
- Sponsorship of the Nebraska Groundwater Foundation which provides educational and community-based action programs to protect and conserve groundwater.
- Contributions to the Nebraska FFA Foundation to support the Blue Jackets-Bright Futures program. The foundation provides assistance to the FFA programs in schools throughout Nebraska.
- Adventure Camp about the Environment (ACE). The camp is open to sixth through eighth graders and focused on exploring and learning about natural resources. The camp consist of four days of outdoor fun at Halsey 4-H Camp.
- The Nebraska LEAD (Leadership, Education, Action and Development) Program strives to provide young men and women with skills and experiences needed to become leaders and advocates for agriculture.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 10

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

ERIKA HILL



Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) are pushing the limits, thinking big and being creative as we continue to increase our presence through public relations efforts and grow our educational programs in rural and urban classrooms. The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) is ready to assist all 23 districts interested in highlighting NRD successes through press releases, television coverage, radio interviews, newspaper articles, press conferences and media strategy plans. The NARD estimates it gained well over \$25,000 in earned media (free coverage) in 2015 – 2016 through its public relations efforts in television coverage alone. The NARD has assisted multiple NRDs with press releases and encouraged each Information and Education (I&E) specialist to go the extra distance in gaining increased positive media attention for their NRD.

A handful of NRDs are putting more resources into their social media campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube than ever before. They're putting ads together, picture montages and are even utilizing drones to capture pictures and video footage of NRD sites and projects they can promote on social media. These ventures have been proven to be increasingly successful in the last six months. Along with creating videos for the NRDs to use year-round, the NARD has helped teach interested I&E specialists how to shoot, write, and edit videos to better assist their local districts with educating the public on important conservation programs and projects.

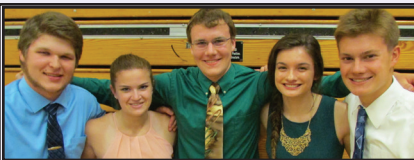
NARD is currently assisting the I&E Committee with updating the Conservation Tree Program and NRD Recreation booklets with the most current and accurate information. Expect to see both booklets soon!

NARD was invited to speak at a National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) meeting in Wichita, KS about the Association's successful public relations operations and is proud to report they received a lot of positive feedback.



UBBNRD's Rod DeBuhr in PURE Nebraska, 10/11 News TV Interview

Concordia High School competed in the 2016 NCF Envirothon in Ontario, Canada. This program is one the NARD Foundation supports! In 2020, the NARD/NRDs are looking at hosting the NCF Envirothon here in Nebraska! This will be an amazing opportunity to showcase our unique NRD system in the great state of Nebraska! Nebraska has participated in the NCF Envirothon for 24 years! Join us!!!



The Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) came together to fund a one-hour, in-depth television program on the NRDs on Nebraska Educational Television (NET) this year. NARD was a co-producer on this project titled "Keeping Nebraska Local; A Unique Approach to Resource Management". NARD assisted NET with coordinating interviews, video shoots, writing and editing scripts and final approval of the product.

NET estimates in just three months, up to 80,000 viewers could have tuned in to watch this program with potential for more viewership as the show continues to sporadically run on NET2 and www.netnebraska.org.



The Natural Resources Districts love Nebraska's Huskers! Tune in to the Big Red Wrap-Up

on NET where for the first time ever, the NRDs are sponsoring the show and airing two separate television spots to raise awareness about how the NRDs protect lives, property and future and will showcase our recreation areas across the state!

CONSERVATION TREE PROGRAM



Bessey Tree Nursery
Halsey, NE

As the Emerald Ash Borer begins to invade Nebraska's communities and as many Nebraskans prepare to lose valuable ash trees, a new wave of appreciation for trees is sweeping across the state. The appreciation for what trees can do for the Nebraska landscape is never far from the minds of those who have made Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts Conservation Tree Program so successful throughout the years.

With more than 750,000 trees and shrubs sold through the NRD tree program this past year, the NRD tree program has now assisted Nebraska landowners in planting nearly 96 Million trees and shrubs across the state! The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) remains dedicated toward continuing to work with the districts to expand the far-reaching impact of this remarkable program.

NRD / NDNR LIASON

DUSTIN WILCOX



As spring brought flood inflicting releases from Lake McConaughy; which some feared would never fill again, Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) worked diligently with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to again divert and store excess flows. These efforts generated future retiming benefits while also mitigating flooding impacts. The management challenges and opportunities of this year's excess flows again served as a reminder of the vast variability Mother Nature presents to water managers in our state.

The diversions and retiming projects also served as a reminder of how fortunate we are to live in a state where our water management system isn't one-size-fits-all, but rather inspires management appropriate for local geography and adaptable to fit the mood of Mother Nature. The local NRDs continue partnering with the DNR to engage local stakeholders and develop adaptive management techniques that work locally to protect the economic viability and long term sustainability of our integrated water resources. Working to ensure these partnerships continue and are strengthened remains a fundamental priority for the Association.

We are proud to have assisted the NRDs and the DNR in working to engage stakeholders for Integrated Management Plans (IMPs) for nearly the entire state. We can all also be proud of the efforts and partnerships underway to facilitate water management planning discussions on the basin wide level. Adaptive and opportunistic water management is constantly evolving. With variable supplies, changing demands and evolving science, the process of planning is never complete and must remain comprehensive.

From the Upper to the Lower Platte, the Niobrara to the Republican, over the past year, the Association has supported the NRDs and DNR in continuing the effort of engaging stakeholders to identify priorities and projects that promote efficient water use and improve water supplies. Some of these areas are in their first round of integrated water management planning, such as the Lower Platte Basin, where NRDs and DNR continue to work towards developing a basin wide plan that protects existing uses while working to facilitate demands for future growth. In the Niobrara basin, NRDs worked this year to achieve legislation and worked to reach an agreement with local partners for the purchase of the basins largest water right, admirably working towards the goal of protecting all water users in the basin. Others, such as in the Upper Platte, have already met or exceeded goals of initial planning efforts developed more than 10 years ago, but are now beginning the process of working on the next phase of planning.

Regardless of the challenges Mother Nature's variability presents, active partnerships between Nebraska's NRDs and DNR continue to promote collaborative planning and inspiring innovative management tools capable of capitalizing on opportunities. We look forward to continuing to serve as a partner and facilitator with the NRDs, DNR, partner agencies, and stakeholders across the state. Working together we can be confident these collaboration efforts will continue to protect a sustainable future for all Nebraskans.

NRD / NDEQ LIASON

JENNIFER SWANSON



The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) Water Division has numerous programs available with a goal to protect the surface and groundwater resources in Nebraska. Nebraska has some of the best water resources in the nation and the world and Nebraskans face many challenges when trying to protect this valuable resource. These programs are in place to help natural resources districts with financial and regulatory assistance to protect our water resources. Programs in the Water Quality Division the NRDs work closely with are: Chemigation, Groundwater Management Area (GWMA), Underground Injection Control (UIC), Wellhead Protection, surface water monitoring and assessment programs, 319 Nonpoint Source Management and Source Water Protection.

Many NRDs are in the process of developing Basin Management Plans under the 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program. In the past, 319 grants have supported the development of watershed management plans but recently a shift has been made to also develop entire Basin Plans that cover an entire NRD district. Once an NRD has an approved Basin Management plan, they are eligible for additional 319 funding to implement projects within the plan that restore or protect water quality. The NRDs must come up with 40% non-federal match of the total project cost and complete the project within 3 years.

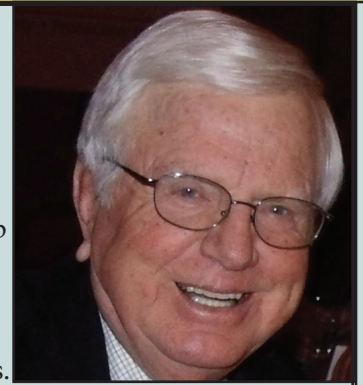
In addition to working with the NRDs and NDEQ on numerous water quality programs this position sits on the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance Recreation Advisory Committee, Nebraska Trust Species and Habitat Working Group, 319 and source water grants selection committee, and several other working groups. Additionally, the liaison coordinates enough Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for NRD staff to meet the requirements of their water well monitoring or groundwater technician license through the Department of Health and Human Services.

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICTS HALL OF FAME

CLASS OF 2016

Hall of Fame inductee, James Irwin was nominated for the Natural Resources Districts Board member category by the Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District.

He's been an elected Director of the UNWNRD for almost five decades from 1972-2013. His service through water policy formation, water conservation and soil health is evident throughout the decades. In the 1960s, Irwin was instrumental in the formation of the Box Butte County Irrigation Association. Irwin has helped educate landowners about the nature of water use and water ownership in Nebraska and supports the chemigation program. Irwin was not afraid to vote in favor of unpopular policy where ground water declines needed to be addressed even though the actions impacted his neighbors as well as himself. He's also developed the Irwin No-Till Demonstration site on the North edge of Alliance to help local producers and partners adapt to more progressive agricultural practices.



James Irwin

Hall of Fame inductee, Glenn Johnson was nominated for the Hall of Fame Natural Resources Districts (NRD) Staff category by Papio-Missouri River NRD and Lower Platte South NRD.



Glenn Johnson

Johnson grew up on a no-till farm near Wakefield, Nebraska. When Lower Platte South NRD opened in 1972, he was one of three employees. Johnson will retire this year as LPSNRD General Manager after 44 years of service. Johnson's accomplishments include the Weeping Water and Stevens Creek watershed projects, use of conservation easements, the Antelope Valley Project, rural hike and bike trails and the voluntary Integrated Management Plan. He's credited with lead roles in forging the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance, the Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership, the Joint Antelope Valley Authority and the NRD/City of Lincoln Stormwater partnership. Johnson also showed great support for the formation of a three-NRD project to combat phragmites on the lower Platte River and for a joint integrated management plan between seven NRDs. He will always be passionate about protecting our natural resources.

Hall of Fame inductee, Dayle E. Williamson was nominated for the Hall of Fame category, Individual Outside the Natural Resources Districts (NRD) System, by Little Blue NRD.

Williamson was born and raised on a family farm near Ohiowa, Nebraska. He served in the U.S. Army and was a member of the Nebraska National Guard for 30 years. As a leader of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, he worked diligently with the State legislature to form Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts. Williamson was Director for the Commission until 2000 when he retired. He continued to assist in forming the Department of Natural Resources. In total, Williamson served Nebraska's natural resources agencies for 42 years. He was a great friend and energetic advocate for the NRD system, working closely with the districts in their project and program development and touting their value wherever he went.

In 2001, he was appointed by U.S. Senator Ben Nelson as the Nebraska Agricultural Representative, working diligently on agriculture and military issues, a position he retained until 2013.



Dayle Williamson

NARD CONSERVATION AWARD WINNERS

Director of the Year: Richard Hadenfeld - Nominated by Lower Loup Natural Resources District

Outstanding Tree Planter of the Year: Robert Price Family/Gracie Creek Ranch - Nominated by Lower Loup Natural Resources District

Educator of the Year: Ken Malone - Nominated by Nemaha Natural Resources District

Outstanding Grassland Conservation: Lemoyne Dailey - Nominated by Upper Loup Natural Resources District

Outstanding Community Conservation: Mullen Public Schools - Nominated by Upper Loup Natural Resources District

MASTER CONSERVATIONIST AWARDS

Community Award - City of LaVista/John Kottmann - Thompson Creek Watershed Project

Agriculture Award - Ken Seim Family of Chapman

NRD EMPLOYEE YEARS OF SERVICE!

CONGRATULATIONS to Natural Resources Districts' Board of Directors and staff on 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 plus years of service! Your hard work and dedication to conserving Nebraska's natural resources is truly appreciated!

NRD BOARD MEMBERS – Larry Baumeister (25) – LNNRD, John Burke (20) – UNWNRD, Joseph Citta (25) – LLNRD, Duane Sugden (25) – NNRD, David Olsen (25) – TBNRD, David Raffety (20) – TBNRD, Merlin Volkmer (35) – UBBNRD, Ron Svoboda (25) - LPSNRD

NRD STAFF – Mary Tidyman (20) – MRNRD, Galen Wittrock (25) – SPNRD, Brenda Schnell (25) – UNWNRD, Edward Drozd (20) – LLNRD, Cheryl Hornickel (35) – LLNRD, Daniel Ray (40) – LLNRD, Nancy Thomas (20) – UBBNRD, Nancy Brisk (35) – UBBNRD, Vernon (Junior) Speers (35) – NNRD, Mark McDonald (35) – NNRD, Tammy Fahrenbruch (20) – TBNRD, John Thorborn (20) – TBNRD, Dianne Miller (45) – CPNRD, Dennis Schueth (30) – UENRD, Larry Angle (30) – LPNRRD, Bob Heimann (30) – LPNRRD, Glen Bowers (25) – TPNRD, Emmett Egr (40) – Papio, Darlene Hensley (35) – Papio, Terry Keller (30) – Papio, Al Langdale (30) - LPSNRD, Jeff Hegy (25) - LPSNRD



The 2016 Nebraska Natural Resources Districts Basin Tour was one of the largest tours to date with more than 80 people. Three Natural Resources Districts participated this year. They are Lower Big Blue NRD, Little Blue NRD and Upper Big Blue NRD. Each NRD showcased conservation techniques, programs, flooding projects, recreation areas, water quality challenges, new technology and much more.

NRD EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PROGRAM

Thanks to the hard work of the NARD/NRD Employee Benefits Committee, the NRD Employees Retirement Program continues to grow and make improvements. The program is governed by the NARD Board of Directors. The NRD Employee Benefits Committee meets four times a year to review details of the program and suggest changes in investment options to the NARD Board. This committee is made up of the NARD Executive Committee and 13 NRD employees representing all areas of the state.

The NARD 414(h) retirement fund equity grew to \$29,758,415 as of June 30, 2016. The defined contribution program allows each employee to determine their own investments, providing the flexibility for the employee to determine the amount of risk and potential rate of return they feel most comfortable with.

The voluntary NARD 457 program equity grew to \$3,133,522 as of June 30, 2016. The program allows NRD employees to set aside additional pre-tax income for retirement and has the same investment options as the NARD 414(h) plan.

Mark Geist and Jonathan Beukelman with UBS Financial Services provide the Nationwide investment platform for the plans. Since they have been involved, the NARD investment levels have increased almost four-fold.

Benefit Plans Inc., of Omaha provides the reporting and compliance work for the plans.

NEBRASKA'S NATURAL PROTECTING LIVES, PROTECTING PR

The Middle Niobrara NRD planted 60,971 trees, checked static water levels at 58 monitoring wells, interpreted over 370 nitrate samples, and conducted around 300 chemigation checks. The MNNRD also began a Woody Biomass Utilization Study recycling trees, by turning them into wood chips to be used for beneficial purposes in improving soil health in cropland fields and degraded areas. The NRD's studying degradation in the Long Pine Creek Watershed to reduce erosive forces, turbidity, and pollutants in order to improve water quality for habitat, and stabilize flow within the stream.



The Upper Elkhorn NRD is a member of the Niobrara River Basin Alliance that helped in the development of LB1038. This legislation paved the way for surface water appropriations for manufacturing of hydropower to be transferred to an instream basin-management appropriation which can be held jointly by the NGPC and NRDs or combination of Natural Resources Districts. The NRBA, NGPC and NPPD are currently working together to transfer the Spencer Hydro Facility and its surface water appropriations to the NGPC and NRBA.

Upper Niobrara White NRD is collaborating with an Advisory group for a White-Hat Watershed Management Plan and is committed to the Niobrara River Basin Alliance and instream flow acquisition from the purchase of Spencer Dam by the Niobrara River Basin. The District is moving forward with water modeling efforts and re-grouping of the Citizen's Advisory Committee to aid in the progress of board decisions.

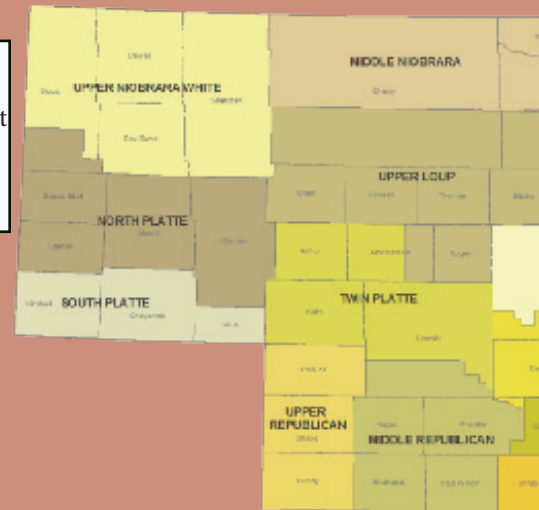


This year, Upper Loup NRD completed the 10th year of Earth Day and Arbor Day presentations at area schools. The Voluntary Integrated Management Plan for the Loup River Basin was completed and signed by DNR on May 31, 2016. The Upper Loup NRD received a grant from Nebraska Environmental Trust for \$95,000, for "investigating the spatial and temporal characteristics of groundwater discharge in the Loup River Basin." The 7th Annual ACE Camp was yet another success, with plans already in the works for next year.



The North Platte NRD has instituted a Telemetry program to producers/landowners free of charge, with the goal of reading ground water flow meters remotely. The units will provide real-time information to aid producers in their water management decisions, aid the NRD in water management actions, and expands the data used in the NRD's ground water model. A majority of the funding has come through grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Department of Natural Resources.

South Platte NRD set irrigation allocations for the next allocation period of 2016 - 2018 and is adding data from logs provided by the Nebraska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission with the assistance of the Conservation Survey Division as part of the "Hydrogeology of Western Nebraska" project, funded by a Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) grant. Irrigation and Nitrogen Certification classes and online training were completed for owners and operators of irrigated acres in the District. Improvements at Oliver Reservoir Recreation Area continues. The nearly 1.2 million dollar East Sidney Watershed project moves forward to mitigate storm water runoff and protect property in Sidney.



The Upper Republican NRD helps keep the State of Nebraska in compliance with the Republican River Compact. NCORPE's helped prevent an irrigation shutdown on about 300,000 acres. The URNRD implemented fully automated soil moisture probes on approximately 25,000 acres in 2015-2016 to reduce water use by an average of 2" per acre. The URNRD also partnered with the University of Nebraska to purchase a center pivot that will be used to research potentially water-saving equipment and farming methods. The URNRD was also awarded a federal grant to help make the District more drought resilient.

NCORPE provided water to the Republican Basin for the URNRD, MRNRD and the LRNRD. This water ensured producers were able to irrigate on over 300,000 acres this year. NCORPE also completed the seeding of the largest Sandhill restoration project in history. You can hike and bike on 11 miles of trails and hunt too.



The Twin Platte NRD is working with landowners and irrigation ditch companies to develop storage locations for excess flows. When excess flow events occur, the District wants to be ready to maximize the recharge potential of every event no matter the size. This a great way to work with landowners and make a positive impact in the District.

The Middle Republican NRD has recently completed their Medicine Creek Groundwater Model which will allow the Board to make more science-based decisions. Examples: being able to evaluate future management strategies that support groundwater allocations that minimize declines in aquifer water levels, maintaining compliance, and optimizing the use of the surface water or ground water resources within the basin. We also completed our Culbertson Canal Recharge Study which evaluates the aquifer recharge benefits along the Culbertson Canal between the Frenchman River diversion and Blackwood Creek.



The Lower Republican NRD water usage for 2015 was 7.27 acre inches. The LRNRD in conjunction with the MRNRD and URNRD was approved for a 2.1-million-dollar Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grant through the U.S.D.A. The N-CORPE wells are now off but have pumped 35,000 acre feet of water for compact compliance in 2016. The LRNRD and Tri-Basin NRDs are working on a project to divert excess flows from the Platte to the Republican River.

Tri-B...
ed a s...
station...
Creek...
district a...
interl...
Lower...
to exa...
of div...
from...
the R...
Centr...
and I...
E-65...
and th...
to pay...
high f...
River...
charg...
acre-f...
divert

RESOURCES DISTRICTS

PROPERTY, PROTECTING THE FUTURE

The Lower Niobrara NRD has completed the construction phase of the new wellfield for the West Knox Rural Water System and will bring it on line late this summer. As a member of the Niobrara River Basin Alliance and the passing of LB 1038, we continue to move forward in bringing local management of the Niobrara River back to the Basin. The Board passed water quality improvements to the Phase II and new Phase III rules and regs for nitrogen management.



The Lewis and Clark NRD has been awarded a Water Sustainability Fund grant to conduct Aero-Electromagnetic (AEM) Surveys of the sub-surface geology on a 3-mile grid in southern Cedar County. A detailed survey will be conducted in the Coleridge WHPA, the community also provides drinking water to the Village of Belden. The surveys will provide an improved understanding of the geologic and hydrogeologic conditions of the District which will facilitate management of ground and surface water resources.

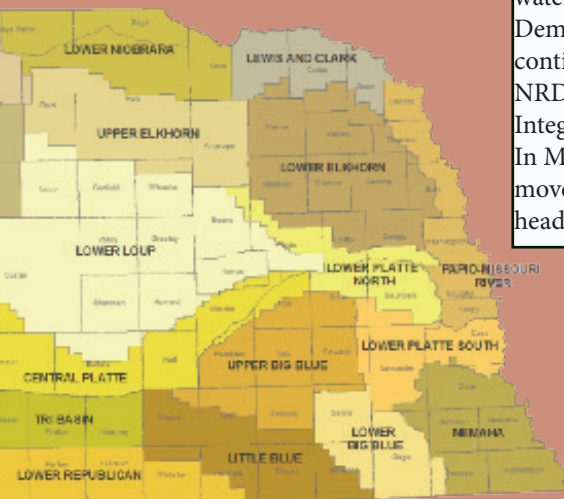
The Lower Loup NRD and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources solidified the joint management of water in the Lower Loup River Basin with the approval of a Voluntary Integrated Management Plan (IMP). The plan will allow the sustainability of the groundwater and surface water supply and maintain a balance between water supply and water use for the long term. It will also allow for new funding opportunities for projects in the District.

The Upper Big Blue NRD experienced an average groundwater level rise of 1.2 feet. District producers were required to install flow meters. One-point-two (1.2) million acres are groundwater irrigated which comprises 1/8 of the state's total. There are 26 communities with Wellhead Protection Area plans. Free water tests were conducted. Demonstrations at CROP-TIP continue. The Upper Big Blue NRD is writing a voluntary Integrated Management Plan. In March 2016, the NRD office moved into a new \$4.5 million headquarters.



Nebraska's Natural Resources Commission approved nearly \$11.5 million in projects through the new Water Sustainability Fund, with \$900,000 being awarded to the Lower Elkhorn NRD for water and soil conservation. The LENRD will provide a match of \$600,000. This will allow the District to have \$1.5 million available for cost-share assistance on irrigation flow meters.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD continues to actively pursue additional flood protection for the Papillion Creek Watershed in the Omaha metro area and along the Missouri River south of Bellevue in Sarpy County. Papio Creek Dam Site 15A is under construction while two additional small reservoirs are being designed and land purchased. Improvements to Levee Units R-616 and R-613 are being planned to protect Offutt Air Force Base, the Omaha Wastewater Treatment Facility and critical infrastructure along the Missouri River.



The Lower Platte South NRD continued prioritizing needs for keeping Lincoln's Salt Creek Levee in reliable working order for another 50 years. A recreational trail segment was opened and another is planned along the levee, near the UNL campus and Haymarket Park. Paul Zillig became the District's third General Manager since 1972, upon the retirement of 34-year GM Glenn Johnson.

Lower Platte North NRD completed the Schuyler Levee project. The Western Sarpy Clear Creek project near Ashland was also completed. Lake Wanahoo received new additions. Changes were made to the LPNNRD Groundwater Quality Phase Areas. The two Groundwater Quantity Areas began usage restrictions; a first for this NRD. Work continues on the Voluntary-Integrated Water Management Plan with completion and adoption planned for 2016.

Basin NRD completed streamflow augmentation well on Turkey Creek in 2016. The District also entered into an agreement with Republican NRD to examine the feasibility of diverting high flows from the Platte River into the Republican basin via a local NE Public Power Irrigation District's canal. The District and the DNR continued to work with CNPPID to divert flows from the Platte River for groundwater recharge. More than 12,600 acre feet of water were diverted during 2015.

Central Platte NRD's initiated the first Groundwater Exchange to allow producers to put their groundwater to beneficial use by leasing water for one growing season. An algorithm selects best matches based on information entered by the sellers and buyers. A second Groundwater Exchange is planned for this fall and will include the Loup Basin influence within the CPNRD.

The Lower Big Blue NRD completed several large projects in 2016. Construction of the last structure on the Lower Turkey Creek Watershed Project was completed. This was the final dam of seven in this project. The District installed 40 dedicated monitor wells and equipped several on them with continuous monitoring equipment for groundwater readings. The wells will also be used for groundwater sampling. Tornado shelters were built at the Willard Meyer Recreation Area and the Big Indian Recreation Area. These shelters also serve as restrooms and will provide park users a safe place to go during storms.



After more than a decade of planning, construction of the Duck Creek watershed dam near Peru was completed in December, 2015, at a cost of \$1.1 million in Nemaha NRD. At normal pool, the 61-acre reservoir will store 600 acre feet of water and has a flood storage capacity of 1,300 acre feet. Construction of the public recreation component is now underway with opening anticipated in the fall, 2017.

The Little Blue River Basin is a watershed that is shared between the jurisdictional boundaries of the Little Blue NRD and Tri-Basin NRD. The Districts have requested the Nebraska Department of Natural Resource to assist in the development of Voluntary Integrated Management Plans (VIMPS) for the Districts. The ultimate goal of the process is to plan for management of resources in such a way to achieve and sustain a balance between water uses and water supplies for the long term.

NARD HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) has operated a licensed health risk pool for Natural Resources Districts (NRD) employees since FY 2006-07. The program is governed by the NARD Risk Pool Board of Directors, which are the same as the NARD board members. The NARD Risk Pool Stop/Loss Committee meets four times a year to review details of the program and suggest changes to the program. This committee is made up of the NARD Risk Pool Executive Committee and 13 NRD employees representing all areas of the state.

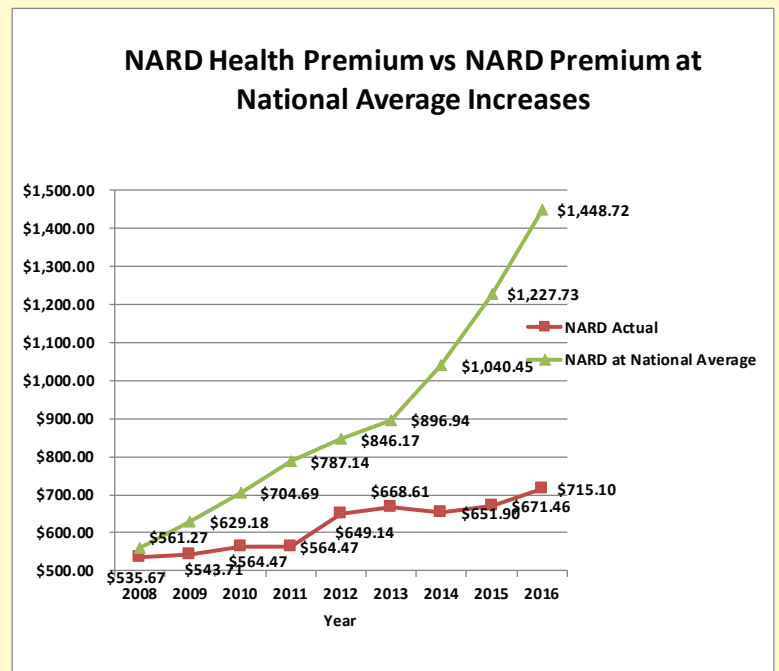
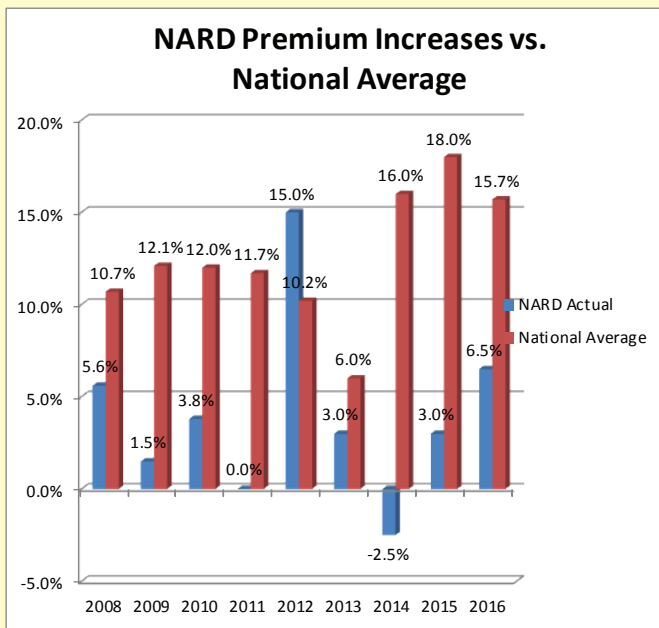
Over the last ten years of the program, the average annual health insurance premiums increases have been 4.49% while the national annual averages have been 14.5%. This is very rare in the insurance industry. If the premium changes followed national averages, the premiums would almost be double what they are today. In FY 2014-15, premiums were decreased by 2.5% as the previous fiscal year netted a \$1.2 million gain. The board used those additional reserves to keep premiums increases down and pay claims in 2014-15 and 2015-16. After year-end adjustments, the program showed a loss of just over \$600,000, using more than half of the profits from 2014-15.

The NARD Risk Pool Stop/Loss Committee and Risk Pool Board set rates again this year targeting a break-even year. The rates changes for FY 16-17 are set at a 6.5% increase for health and a 3.2% increase in the dental rates. The dental rate increase is the first since FY 2010-11. The national average increase for health insurance is 15.7% this year. The NRD employees' involvement in wellness activities and programs reduces health care costs to local NRDs and taxpayers.

Under ObamaCare, there will be premium taxes that have to be paid to the federal government based on the number of employees and family members under the plan. These taxes will be almost \$60,000 in 2016-17. The NARD Risk Pool Board is paying the taxes out of the reserves rather than assessing each employee or district for the tax.

Chart 1 (below on left) shows the NARD insurance premium increase compared with the national premium average for the past several years.

Chart 2 (below on right) shows the actual NARD insurance premium cost compared to what the NARD insurance premium would be with the national average increases.



The program worked as it was set up to do – work off reserves built up in the “good years” to cover losses in the “bad year”. The program has built reserves of \$3.9 million to allow for annual premium changes to be limited. Mid-American Benefits provided the third-party claims processing. Milt Willnerd, Willnerd and Associates, works with NARD to make sure all state and federal reports are filed correctly and in a timely fashion.

The program is audited annually by independent auditors. In addition, the program is audited by the Nebraska Department of Insurance (NDOI) every four years. The program has been audited twice by the NDOI, most recently in July of 2013. There were no recommendations for changes from the NDOI audits.

NRD WELLNESS PROGRAM

JEANNE DRYBURGH



NARD, Work Well, Inc., and the Nebraska Safety Council offers an employee wellness program to promote a safe and healthy work environment. The wellness program provides tools and resources to NRD employees and Board members to help them be successful in making healthy lifestyle choices.

The wellness program was created as an addition to the NRDs' existing Risk Pool Health Insurance Program administered by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD). NARD Board members and NRD Managers saw the creation of a wellness program as a way to keep insurance premiums low and continue to save tax-payer dollars. NARD provides assistance to the 23 NRD wellness delegates to help coordinate individual wellness programs. The main objective is to create a fun, friendly, non-intimidating wellness program that challenges employees to meet their district wellness goals.



NARD and the NRDs offer a variety of wellness opportunities and challenges for all fitness levels. This is the second year the Wellness Committee sponsored a 5K Fun Run/1 Mile Walk. This year though, a Kids Dash was added. It was a huge success! More than a dozen children participated in the Kids Dash at our 2016 race location at Chalco Hills Recreation Area in Omaha, Nebraska. Overall, more than 50 runners signed up for the event! The event was open to the public and raised more than \$4,740 for the NARD Foundation! Next year, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District in Lincoln has volunteered to host the run on one of their popular trails. NARD is currently looking for NRDs to host the run in 2018 and 2019.



Many of the local district wellness programs promote community involvement through a variety of activities including: toy drive, collection for local food banks and health screenings. The Wellness Committee also has an active Pinterest page if you're looking for some great healthy eating and exercising options. Follow us at www.pinterest.com/nrdnet.

Participants in the wellness program have shown improvements in their health, including weight loss, increase in physical activity, healthier eating habits, increase in health screenings and flu shots. As a result of the success of the NRDs wellness program, many of the NRDs have received the Governors Excellence in Wellness Award. The NRD Wellness Committee is excited to announce future Wellness Awards for our Natural Resources Districts. The focus of these awards will be to recognize either an NRD Wellness Program and an NRD staff/individual who has been a leader or example to others. Recipients will be honored at the 2017 Annual Conference luncheon. More information to come!



Looking ahead, in 2017, Nebraska turns 150 years old and the state's throwing a party all year round to celebrate! The Natural Resources Districts are jumping in on the fun. Any NRD event can be inducted onto the list of Nebraska activities the public can take part in. Each NRD needs to fill out a simple form to be approved and your event will end up on the Nebraska 150 Year Celebration website and you can use their logo when needed! Go to <https://ne150.org/>.

CONTINUE NARD FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

- Supporter of the Nebraska Great Park Pursuit. The Great Park Pursuit promotes active lifestyles while increasing awareness of the nature rich outdoor recreation opportunities at twenty NGPC and NRD recreation sites across Nebraska.
- Funded the NRD Oral History Program to record, store and disseminate interviews with early leaders about the NRDs. The program was started by Jim Baar, Dayle Williamson, Ron Fleecs and Gayle Starr – all long-time supporters of the NRDs. Partners in the program include NARD, The UNL Water Center and the Nebraska Historical Society. The project has recorded and transcribed over eighty individual 45-minute oral histories spanning former and current staff and leadership of all 23 NRDs and key individuals that helped ensure their formation. The interviews are all cataloged and available at <http://nrdstories.org/>.
- Supporter of the Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award Program which recognizes agricultural landowners actively committed to a land ethic. Working with Sand County Foundation and other livestock and conservation groups, the award is presented by Governor Pete Ricketts to showcase the landowners' achievements among their peers.

Thanks goes out to each of you that participate with NARD Foundation events to help with the mission to provide natural resources awareness, education and leadership opportunities for Nebraskans through partnerships with other organizations, foundations and the private sector.



Nebraska Envirothon

LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2016

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) worked together with the Natural Resources Committee and other state senators during the 2016 Legislative Session to protect the future of Nebraska's natural resources. Senators approved and Governor Ricketts signed several bills that the NARD was involved in. The following provides just a few of the key bills related to natural resources enacted this year.

LB 19 -- Change provisions relating to laboratory certification under the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Safety Act. Krist.

Governor Ricketts signed LB 19 into law on March 3, 2016. Senators gave final approval to the bill by a 41-0-8 vote on February 29, 2016. The bill was a carryover bill from the 2015 session and changes procedures for the Director of Public Health to certify and enter into agreements with private laboratories. The bill eliminates the permissive language to enter into agreements with private labs and makes it mandatory.



NARD Board Meeting
Lincoln, NE

LB 716 - Provide and eliminate provisions regarding pedestrians and bicyclists. Kolowski.
(Speaker Priority)

Governor Ricketts signed LB 716 into law on April 19, 2016. Senators gave final approval to LB 716 on April 13, 2016 by a 38-3-8 vote. The bill makes several changes to traffic laws related to bicycles as follows:

- At or adjacent to the intersection of two highways at which a path designated for bicycles and pedestrians is controlled by a traffic control signal, a pedestrian who lawfully enters a highway where the path crosses the highway shall have the right-of-way within the crossing with respect to vehicles and bicycles.
- Where a path designated for bicycles and pedestrians crosses a highway, a pedestrian who is in the crossing in accordance with the traffic control signal shall have the right-of-way within the crossing with respect to vehicles and bicycles.
- No bicyclist shall suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or ride into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is impossible for the driver to stop.
- A person who is operating a bicycle on a path designated for bicycles and who lawfully enters a highway where the path crosses the highway shall have the right-of-way within the crossing with respect to any vehicle. A bicyclist who enters a crossing with the traffic control signal is lawfully entering the highway. Nothing in the bill relieves the bicyclist or the driver of a vehicle from the duty to exercise care.
- On Select File, Senators adopted AM 2914 offered by Senator Bloomfield to clarify that a bicyclist riding a bicycle on a sidewalk or across a roadway or shoulder in a crosswalk shall have all the rights and duties applicable to a pedestrian under the same circumstances. The bicyclist would also have to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians.
- Eliminates the requirement that bicycles stay off the highways when usable paths are provided adjacent to highways.

The bill was a Speaker Priority Bill for the session.

LB 737 -- Change provisions of the Wastewater Treatment Facilities Construction Assistance Act. Friesen.

Governor Ricketts signed LB 737 into law on February 24, 2016. The Unicameral gave final approval to LB 737 on February 18, 2016 by a 46-0-3 vote. The bill makes a couple changes to loans made under the Wastewater Treatment Facilities Construction Assistance Act made to municipalities or to counties.

First, the bill expands the categories of loan eligibility to include: A) Acquisition of land integral to the treatment process; B) Acquisition of land and interests in land necessary for construction; C) water conservation, efficiency, or reuse; D) energy efficiency; reuse or recycling of wastewater, stormwater, or subsurface drainage water; E) development and implementation of watershed

LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2016

projects; and F) measures to increase the security of treatment works.

Second, the maximum term of the loans are extended from twenty years to thirty years.

LB 876 -- Authorize electronic voting devices for public bodies in public meetings. Murante.

Governor Ricketts signed LB 876 into law on February 24, 2016. The Unicameral gave final approval to LB 876 by February 18, 2016 on a 46-0-3 vote. The bill authorizes all public bodies to use electronic voting for roll call and public votes on motions. The law requires the electronic boards to be readily seen by the public.

LB 887e - Extend sunset of the Petroleum Release Remedial Action Cash Fund. Schilz.

Governor Ricketts signed LB 887e into law on April 7, 2016. Senators gave final approval to LB 887e by a 46-0-3 vote on April 1, 2016. The bill extends the termination date for reimbursements out of the Petroleum Release Remedial Action Cash Fund (leaking underground fuel storage tanks) from June 30, 2016 to June 30, 2020. The bill included the emergency clause so it became effective immediately after Governor Ricketts approval.

LB 958 - Change provisions relating to budgets, the valuation of agricultural land, and levy limitations. Gloor, at the request of the Governor. (Revenue Committee Priority)

On April 19, 2016, Governor Ricketts signed LB 958 into law. Senators gave final approval to LB 958 on April 13, 2016 by a 47-1-1 vote. The bill in its final form provides \$20 million in increased property tax credits for ag land beginning in the 2017 tax year, and freezes credit amounts for all other classes of property.



Niobrara River

LB 1038 – Implement the Niobrara River MOU. Davis. (Natural Resources Priority)

On April 18, 2016, Governor Ricketts signed LB 1038 into law. Senators gave final approval to LB 1038 on April 12, 2016 by a 48-0-1 vote. The bill included the language needed to implement the Niobrara River Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), the Niobrara NRDs and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC). The bill was the Natural Resources Committee Priority Bill for the session.

The bill changes Nebraska water transfer statutes to allow an appropriation for manufacturing of hydropower to be changed in the full amount to an instream basin-management appropriation to be held jointly by the Game and Parks Commission and any natural resources district or combination of natural resources districts.

On September 10, 2015, after many years of legal battles and negotiations, three Nebraska political subdivisions announced they had reached an agreement on the transfer of the controlling water rights to the Niobrara River in northern Nebraska. This agreement effectively paves the way for a dramatic shift in water management in that basin. The water rights at issue command virtually the entire flow of the Niobrara River for hydropower production at a “run-of-the-river” facility (i.e., no water storage is involved), owned by the NPPD. The agreement sets out a roadmap for the transfer and transformation of those hydropower rights from NPPD to the Niobrara River Basin Alliance (NRBA), which is a coalition of NRDs and the NGPC.

Under the MOU, the NRDs and the NGPC would jointly purchase and hold the water rights from the Spencer Hydroelectric generation facility and convert the rights to provide a protected instream flow for the Niobrara River. The agreement also protects all existing uses of domestic, livestock, municipal, surface water irrigation and groundwater irrigation.

On General File, senators adopted the Committee Amendment (AM 2472) by a 37-1 vote and incorporated two other bills. The Committee Amendment also incorporated provisions of LB 711, to reinstate the Riparian Vegetation Task Force. The two other



Larry Reynolds
NARD Board Tour
Nebraska National Guard

LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2016



Managers Retreat Tour
Curtis, NE

bills incorporated into the bill on General File were LB 1019 (AM 2675) by Senator Davis and LB 639 (AM 2688) by Senator Garrett.

The Committee Amendment (AM 2472) replaced the original bill and does the following in regards to the Niobrara MOU:

- Allows an appropriation for manufacturing of hydropower to be changed in the full amount to an instream basin-management appropriation to be held jointly by the Game and Parks Commission and any natural resources district or combination of natural resources districts.
- The beneficial use of such change is to maintain the functional stream flow for conservation of fish and wildlife and for recreation that existed by the manufacturing of hydropower and to assist in the implementation of an approved integrated management plan (IMP) of ground water and surface water resources for each natural resources district within the river basin.
- The Priority Date of the Water right would be maintained so that the instream flow portion for the River is protected by a senior date, i.e., a senior priority. This would also address concerns raised by the National Park Service (NPS) that Nebraska's instream flow laws are inadequate for the Niobrara Scenic River. If the priority date is maintained, the NPS has indicated they will not pursue a federal water right for the Niobrara River. If they did secure a federal water right, all water uses in the basin, including livestock wells and surface water irrigation, would be subject to federal approval and regulation.
- Proposes to provide another reason for the director to approve a transfer of a water right if it is to maintain surface water flows. Current law in this section only provides that it is to augment surface water flows.
- Allows the director to review the new uses, just as it occurs with other water rights, to assure the beneficial uses are still being achieved.
- Requires that the new appropriation shall be subject to condemnation and subordination agreements that exist under the current NPPD hydropower appropriation and that any person who held a subordination agreement or condemnation award prior to the transfer shall be allowed to enter into a new subordination agreement for terms consistent with the original subordination agreement at no additional cost.
- Places limits on the cost of subordination agreements (compensation) to the cost per acre-foot of water subordinated for the hydropower appropriation at the time of approval of transfer. The amount of compensation may be adjusted annually, except that any increase shall not exceed the annual change in the Consumer Price Index from the time of the approval of the change. If the index is discontinued, a comparable index selected by the Director of Natural Resources shall be used. This protects all existing agreements to their current cost and limits future agreements to the hydropower cost.
- Maintains the preference category of manufacturing so the basin-management appropriation remains behind domestic and agriculture in preference. By doing this, both domestic and agriculture uses are protected and the new use would be subject to condemnation.

LB 711 Incorporated into AM 2472

The Committee Amendment also incorporated provisions of LB 711, which reinstates the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force. The Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force, in consultation with appropriate federal agencies, is required to develop and prioritize vegetation management goals and objectives, analyze the cost effectiveness of available vegetation treatment, and develop plans and policies to achieve such goals and objectives. Any plan shall utilize the principles of integrated vegetation management and sound science.

The bill would provide grants only to weed management entities, local weed control authorities and natural resources districts, with

LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2016

priority given to river basins that are subject to an interstate compact or decree.

The bill provides intent language for funding beginning in fiscal year 2016-17 of one million dollars annually for the management of vegetation within the banks of a natural stream or within one hundred feet of the banks of a channel of any natural stream. The funds could only be used to pay for activities and equipment as part of vegetation management programs that have as their primary objective improving conveyance of streamflow in natural streams. The related appropriations bill, LB 1038A, appropriates one million for the program and was given final approval by a 47-0-2 vote on April 12th. Governor Ricketts approved the appropriations bill on April 18, 2016.

An annual report would have to be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature by June 30th each year with the first report due on June 30, 2017. Intent language is added to direct that expenses of the task force not exceed \$25,000 of the total appropriation to the program per fiscal year.

LB 1019 added to LB 1038 with AM 2675

On General File, Senators incorporated provisions of LB 1019 (through AM 2675) into LB 1038 by a 34-0 vote. The amendment makes several changes to the Niobrara Scenic River Council.

First, it makes the four governor appointments to the council subject to confirmation by the Legislature. These are: 1) An individual from each of Brown, Keya Paha and Rock Counties; 2) A representative from a recreation business operating within the corridor; 3) A timber industry representative operating within the corridor; and 4) A representative of a recognized, nonprofit environmental, conservation, or wildlife organization.

Second, it proposes to expand the authorized use of NGPC funds from just administrative support to also include budgetary, operational, and programmatic support. The bill also eliminated the \$50,000 cap on expenditures for such.

Finally, it requires that on December 1, 2016, and on each December 1st thereafter, the council shall electronically submit an annual report to the Clerk of the Legislature and the chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee of the Legislature describing expenditures made pursuant to the Niobrara Scenic River Act.

LB 639 added to LB 1038 with AM 2688

Also on General File, Senators incorporated provisions of LB 639 (through AM 2688) into LB 1038 by a 38-0 vote. The amendment provides authority for the Department of Roads to issue permits to control roadside vegetation. The bill was advanced to General File by the Transportation Committee on February 10th with a Committee Amendment which replaced the bill, which was the same language as AM 2688.

The amendment directs the Department of Roads to create a vegetation control program and to establish a procedure that will allow for the issuance of permits to third parties that authorize the cutting or trimming of vegetation that obstructs or obscures lawfully placed advertising signs or devices.

Term Limited Senators -- Eleven State Senators finished their last session, as they are term limited out. These include: Heath Mello, Tanya Cook, Dave Bloomfield, Ken Haar, Kathy Campbell, Colby Coash, Mike Gloor, Galen Hadley, Beau McCoy, Kate Sullivan and Ken Schilz. All have done a tremendous job serving the State of Nebraska. Thank you for your public ser-

vice!



NARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEAN EDSON

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) staff is honored to be working for the Natural Resources Districts (NRD) directors and staff while celebrating the 44th anniversary of the NRDs. The NARD staff is dedicated to providing assistance to the NRDs with legislation, tree programs, water management, youth programs, benefit programs and public relations. For the 19th year in a row, the NARD has balanced its budget and added to the reserves. This is thanks to member involvement from the NRD Board members and staff. To all of you, thank you very much!

The NARD manages the Health Insurance Risk Pool and Retirement Programs for the benefit of NRD staff. The NARD also manages the retirement program for NRD staff which continues to grow even in a sluggish economy.

The NARD also manages the NARD Foundation which has grown significantly over the past 15 years. What started out as a small foundation in 1997 with \$4,100 in assets, and helped fund only one program, has grown to more than \$105,000 in funding in 2016 to eleven educational programs reaching thousands of individuals. The NARD Foundation owns the NRD Building at Husker Harvest Days which greatly enhances the visibility of the NRDs at the event. The foundation also provided funding to the new Ag Experience Building at the Nebraska State Fair which is a great public showcase for Nebraska agriculture and natural resources.

The fundraisers at the annual meeting and member involvement help grow the program each year. With the help of the NRDs, the foundation provided funding for an hour-long Nebraska Educational TV program on the history and successes of the NRD system. The program has been aired on NET2 eleven times since May, 2016. A copy of the program is included in your registration packet. The project has opened more doors for the NRDs with NET with the sponsorship of Husker Baseball, Softball and Big Red Wrap-up which are aired on both NET and NET2. Sponsorship allows for additional positive messaging about Nebraska's NRDs.

There will be more challenges for the NRDs in the future. However, the local districts are poised to handle them.

Major water infrastructure has been built and rehabilitated by the local NRDs. Thanks to the Republican Basin NRDs and Twin Platte NRD, the N-CORPE project, a \$125 million project was completed in less than three years in the Republican Basin, kept Nebraska in compliance with the Republican River Compact and protected irrigation in Southwest Nebraska. The Central Platte NRD agreements with four irrigation canals in Dawson County to continue to protect irrigators in the area while keeping Nebraska in compliance with the Platte River Recovery Program. The PMRNRD and LPSNRD have built several successful flood control structures that continue to protect lives and property in Nebraska's two largest communities.

The latest historical development led by the NRDs is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was developed for the Niobrara Basin. Under the agreement, the NRDs in the Niobrara Basin will purchase the NPPD Spencer Hydro facility and water rights and work with the Nebraska Game and Parks in a collaborative manner to achieve sustainable water supply within the Basin for the residents of the Basin and all Nebraskans. All parties involved in the MOU recognized the importance of the Niobrara River to the Basin and the State of Nebraska and desire to safeguard sufficient water for the long-term integrity of the Niobrara River that will protect the water in the basin for all users and uses.

That's just a few of the accomplishments of the NRDs. The NARD staff is proud and excited to assist all of the local NRDs to protect lives, protect property and protect the future.



Dean Edson

EVENTS HOSTED BY THE NARD

- ~ Annual Conference
- ~ NARD Board Meetings
- ~ NRD Managers Meetings
- ~ Legislative Conference
- ~ I&E Meetings
- ~ Basin Tours
- ~ Washington D.C. Conference
- ~ Public Relations Trainings
- ~ Technician Trainings

CONTACT THE NARD

Nebraska Association of Resources Districts
601 S. 12th St., Suite 201
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: (402) 471-7670
Email: nard@nrdnet.org
Fax: (402) 471-7677
Website: www.nrdnet.org
"LIKE US" on Facebook and Twitter @nebrnd!