

PRESS RELEASE

Nemaha Natural Resources District

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Nemaha NRD Board Meeting Report

Tecumseh –Nemaha Natural Resources District directors played to a packed house again Thursday night, March 9, as a crowd of over 50 guests showed up to learn the fate of the proposed Pawnee County Lake Project. Three items on the board’s agenda referred to the project, though plenty of comments were also received during the customary open public comment period at the outset of the meeting. Though most spoke in favor the project, two visitors cautioned the board that similar projects near Omaha had not delivered the benefits that were expected.

In the first of the three actions to take place, director and chair of the Pawnee County Lake Steering Committee, Steve Sherrow of Nebraska City, moved to authorize the NRD to negotiate with Pawnee City and Pawnee County to develop an interlocal agreement for the Pawnee County Lake Project. After much discussion and disagreement about the intent of the motion and even regarding the order of the agenda, the motion passed on a 12-9 vote.

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In a subsequent agenda item requested by Falls City director, Tom White, he made a motion simply “to not proceed with this lake project.” A great deal of discussion from directors on both sides of the issue resulted, but the final vote swayed in favor of White’s motion by an 11-9 margin with one abstention.

Following this action, a motion from Chuck Starr which had been tabled at an earlier meeting was renewed for discussion. However, the motion, which was to remove any previous authorization given to the NRD Manager to pursue the Pawnee County Lake Project without authorization of the Board, failed on an 8-13 vote.

In another item of interest to some in attendance at the meeting, the board voted to hold a public hearing as early as possible to receive testimony on recommended revisions to the District’s Groundwater Management Plan rules, which included the Groundwater Management Plan Subcommittee’s recommendation to adopt a two-year suspension on issuing well permits. The public hearing will be held April 6 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the NRD office, and the suspension could go into effect by May 15.

In other action, the board approved entering into a contract with JEO Consulting Group for survey, design, and construction oversight on four grade stabilization structures within the Iron Horse Trail Lake Watershed. Estimated cost for the contract is \$49,602. Designs are scheduled for completion by September 1, 2006. Federal 319 funds will pick up 60 percent of the design cost with the NRD providing the balance.

Bids for two small dam projects were also reviewed by the board. The low bid of \$38,188.35 submitted by Broening Construction, Bennet, for the Dennis Thomas structure in Otoe County was approved contingent upon Broening’s ability to become bonded. Gyhra Construction, Pawnee City, had the low bid for the Paul Phillips structure in Richardson County. The board approved Gyhra’s bid of \$31,973. Both projects are

set for late spring completion.

Board approval was given for the renewal of an irrigation agreement with Kent Krause. He had a 10-year agreement, which had recently expired, for irrigating out of Upper Big Nemaha structure 13-B near Adams.

Action to accept other bids included hay to be harvested at Kirkman's Cove near Humboldt and Iron Horse Trail Lake near DuBois. Leonard Casey, Table Rock, submitted the successful high bid of \$1,406.05 for the 46.1 acres of mixed grass hay at Kirkman's Cove. The sole bid of \$100 received from Vaughn Koester, DuBois, for the 26.1 acres of mixed native and brome hay at Iron Horse was also approved. All hay must be harvested and removed by September 1.

Only two quotes were received for chemicals required for this year's watershed, recreation area, and trail maintenance. J.T. Farm Service, Verdon, received approval of their quote of \$774.98 for the chemicals, which must be delivered to the NRD office within two weeks of approval.

A new boat dock at Kirkman's Cove should be in place and ready for the summer boating season. The board approved the purchase of a 50-foot polyethylene dock to replace the aging wood and metal structure at the lake. Estimated cost of the new dock is \$11,829.55, plus associated costs to remove the old dock, which may be relocated to another location on the lake at a later time.

The next regular meeting of the Nemaha Natural Resources District board of directors will be on Thursday, April 13, 2006, beginning at 8:00 p.m. at the NRD headquarters, 62161 Highway 136, Tecumseh.