

## Retirements and New Staff

Celebrating Dan Clement and Deb Jarzynka on their retirement! After working together for more than three decades at Central Platte NRD, Dan Clement, Water Resources Specialist, and Deb Jarzynka, Secretary/Receptionist, both decided to retire in June.

### Highlighting Dan's 36-Year Career as Water Resources Specialist

Dan began his career as a Water Resources Specialist in 1988, dedicating over three decades to managing and protecting our water resources. Over the years, his responsibilities evolved, encompassing various aspects of well management. He issued groundwater well permits, updated well registrations and provided technical assistance for well decommissioning. He also coordinated the groundwater monitoring well program and vadose zone research projects.

In the field, Dan read irrigation well flows, documented GPS locations and measured surface flow in the NRD's rivers and streams as part of the Groundwater Management Program. Many producers will remember Dan from his extensive work conducting chemigation inspections over his 36-year tenure. Reflecting on his career, Dan said his favorite part of the job was "creating strong working relationships with landowners and well drillers." His dedication and expertise have contributed to the success of our water resource management efforts and we wish him a well-earned retirement.

### Celebrating 36 Years of Dedication: Deb's Contributions to CPNRD

For 36 years, Deb has been a welcoming presence at the Grand Island office, providing support across a wide range of administrative duties. Her responsibilities have included preparing bank deposits, board meeting information and managing quarterly travel and expense reports. Deb also assisted staff with various projects and mailings, documented staff leave, maintained filing and ordered office supplies.

Reflecting on her time at the office, Deb shared, "I truly enjoyed my job, especially visiting with the producers and the public in the office and on the phone." She said she also enjoyed working with dedicated staff. We are grateful for her many years of service and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

### Introducing Carrie Putnam: Integrated Water Programs Specialist



Carrie Putnam has been hired as the new Integrated Water Programs Specialist for the Tri-Basin and Central Platte NRDs. In her role, Carrie works directly with producers to identify agronomic solutions for water quality and quantity issues. She also assists landowners and operators with enrolling in conservation programs.

Conservation cost-share programs are available at federal, state, and local levels, but determining the best fit can be challenging and time-consuming. Carrie will help you navigate these programs and find the right solutions for your needs.

Contact Carrie O: 308-995-6688 | C: 308-708-8359 | E: cputnam@tribasinrd.org

## Take Those Water and Soil Samples!

Producers in Phases II and III of the Groundwater Management Program are required to submit water and soil samples with their annual reports. It's best to take these samples while your pivot is still running and the ground is moist. You'll need to reference and submit the samples for your annual crop report.

- Water Samples: Groundwater analysis for nitrogen content is required for each field.
- Soil Samples: Deep soil analysis for residual nitrogen (NO3-N) is required for each field or 80-acre tract. A composite sample must consist of a mixture from no fewer than one three-foot probe every five acres.

Violations Enforced: In June, the Board approved filing Cease and Desist orders on 56 producers/landowners in Phases II/III of the Ground Water Quality Management Program who are not in compliance with the NRD's rules and regulations. Violations occur when producers fail to submit annual crop reports, do not provide required water and soil samples, or do not maintain their Nitrogen certification requirements.



Dan Clement and Deb Jarzynka pose for a retirement photo their final month at CPNRD.

## Upcoming Events

- July 25 Budget Hearing and Board of Directors Meeting
- August 6, 8 Sentinel Sunset Seminars
- August 6-7 Nebraska Grazing Conference - Kearney [grassland.unl.edu/nebraska-grazing-conference](http://grassland.unl.edu/nebraska-grazing-conference)
- Aug 23-Sept 2 Nebraska State Fair
- August 29 Board of Directors Meeting
- Sept 10-12 Husker Harvest Days

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## Important Dates

- January 1 Nitrogen certification test due
- March 31 Crop Report, water and soil samples due
- June 1 Chemigation renewal permits due
- June 15 CPNRD-Ron Bishop scholarship apps due
- July 4 Office closed
- July 27 2025 Budget Hearing & Board Meeting
- Sept 1 - March 1 Irrigation transfer apps accepted
- Sept 15 Chemigation reinspection deadline
- November 1 - April 1 Order trees and shrubs
- December 25 - January 1 Office closed

## Board of Directors

Subdistrict At-Large Keith Ostermeier, Grand Island (Secretary)

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Jay Richeson, Gothenburg                  | Brian Keiser, Gothenburg             |
| 2 Dwayne Margritz, Lexington                | Tom Downey, Lexington                |
| 3 Marvion Reichert, Elm Creek (Treasurer)   | Steve Sheen, Kearney                 |
| 4 Lon Bohn, Gibbon                          | Ryan Kegley, Kearney                 |
| 5 Deb VanMatre, Gibbon                      | Mike Wilkens, Gibbon                 |
| 6 Jerry Milner, Grand Island                | Mick Reynolds, Wood River (Chairman) |
| 7 Jerry Wiese, Grand Island (Vice-Chairman) | Ed Stoltenberg, Cairo                |
| 8 Todd Arends, Grand Island                 | Kevin Werner, Grand Island           |
| 9 Ed Kyes, Central City                     | Doug Reeves, Central City            |
| 10 Chuck Maser, Grand Island                | Barry Obermiller, Grand Island       |

## Staff

General Manager: Lyndon Vogt  
Assistant Manager: Jesse Mintken  
Administrative Assistant: Kelly Cole  
Communications Assistant: Brody Vorderstrasse  
Cozad Ditch Manager: Michael Schmeeckle  
Cozad Ditch Rider: Jake Laird  
GIS Coordinator: Angela Warner  
GIS Image Analyst: Luke Zakrzewski  
Hydrologist: Brandi Flyr  
Information/Education Specialist: Marcia Lee  
Precision Conservation Specialist: Darren Cudaback  
Prescribed Fire Planning Specialist: Nelson Winkel  
Projects Assistant: Tom Backer  
Range Management Specialist: David Carr

Resources Conservationist: Bill Hiatt  
Resources Conservationist: Shane Max  
Office Assistant/CPNRD: Vacant  
Office Assistant/NRCS-Grand Island: Lexie Zubia  
Office Assistant/NRCS-Central City: Kyla Friedrichsen  
Office Assistant/NRCS-Lexington: Lisa Kennicutt  
Office Assistant/NRCS-Kearney: Shelly Lippincott  
Office Assistant/Thirty Mile Irrigation District: Marci Ostergard  
Thirty Mile Irrigation District Manager: Jim Harris  
Thirty Mile Irrigation District Technician: Mike Ostergard  
UNL/CPNRD Demo Project Coordinator: Dean Krull  
Water Quality Specialist: Tricia Dudley  
Water Resources Specialist: Vacant  
Water Resources Technician: Courtney Widup

Nebraska's NRDs: [Protecting Lives](#) | [Protecting Property](#) | [Protecting Your Future](#)



# IN PERSPECTIVE

Central Platte NRD Newsletter

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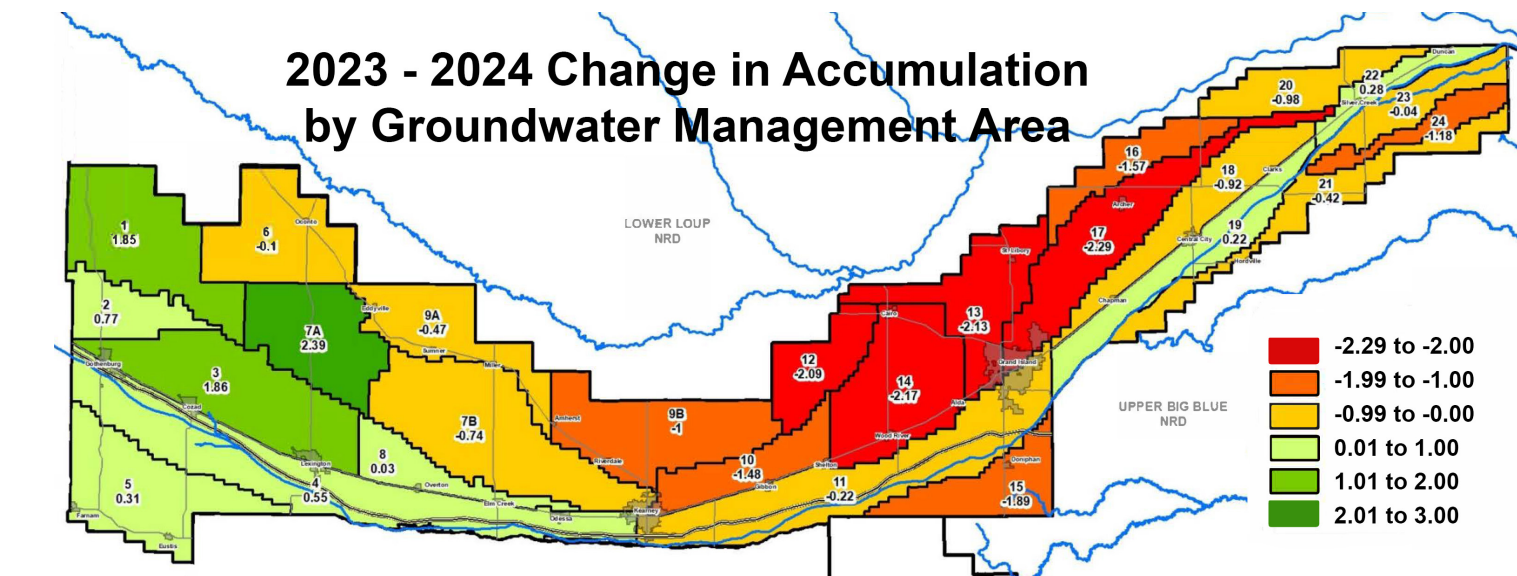
215 Kaufman Ave Grand Island NE (308) 385-6282 [cpnrd.org](http://cpnrd.org)

## Spring 2024 Groundwater Levels Report

Luke Zakrzewski, GIS Image Analyst, said the District has seen an accumulated loss of 1.26 feet in spring 2024 static groundwater levels compared to the baseline levels established in 1982. These 1982 levels serve as the standard for the NRD's Groundwater Management Plan, which includes maximum acceptable declines and a margin of safety for each Groundwater Management Area (GMA).

Changes since last spring across the NRD's 26 GMAs varied significantly. GMA 7A experienced an increase of 2.39 feet, attributed to precipitation gains in the western part of the District. Conversely, GMA 17 saw a decrease of 2.29 feet due to drought conditions in the central and eastern areas.

As part of the NRD's Groundwater Monitoring Network, staff reads 386 irrigation observation wells, including 65 dedicated monitoring wells, each spring and fall for the Groundwater Management Program. On average, 405 wells have been assessed annually since 2000. To enhance data collection in areas where more readings are needed, the NRD plans to add new monitoring wells in GMAs 9B and 10.



### In This Edition

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## Rogge Contractors Selected to Build Office/Education Center

After nearly five years of planning, CPNRD's Board of Directors selected Rogge General Contractors Inc. of Lincoln to build a new office with an education center at their June meeting. The overall cost will be \$13,473,000. The building will be located on the Prairie Silver Moores Flood Reduction Project site, northwest of Grand Island.

Rogge submitted the lowest of seven bids received for the proposed building, with bids ranging from \$13.47 to \$15.29 million. Due to the multi-year planning process, the NRD has funds available to begin construction, including nearly \$4 million expected from other sources. The construction is expected to take 16 to 18 months.



The education center will offer both indoor and outdoor learning experiences, demonstrating the relationship between water, forests, grasslands, and soil. The outdoor sites will provide hands-on learning opportunities that complement topics presented at the indoor learning center. These sites will feature wetlands, walking trails, windbreaks, pollinator habitats, irrigation and crop demonstrations, monitoring wells, and other educational resources.

At the new facility, CPNRD plans to host workshops and training sessions for agricultural producers, groundwater technicians, well drillers, and students. These sessions will cover topics such as how to sample and test wells, use the most modern irrigation equipment, earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs), and explore new technology and research.

## Budget Hearing to be held July 25



In June, the Board approved the NRD's 2025 Fiscal budget of expenditures to hold a public hearing. The hearing will be held at 1:45 p.m. on July 25, 2024, just before the Board of Directors July meeting. The proposed budget is \$35,757,815 million with an estimated tax request of \$5,316,196. A hearing to set the tax request and levy will be held on the same day as the August 29<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

## Education Updates



### AquaVentures Summer Camp @ Raising Nebraska

Get ready for a splash-tastic summer camp all about water! CPNRD and the Grand Island Groundwater Guardians are hosting Wednesday morning camp sessions for ages 9-12. Sessions are being held Wednesdays through July 31<sup>st</sup> from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Raising Nebraska in Grand Island.

Registration is \$10 for all four sessions! **Registration link:** <https://cvent.me/z1KyDI>

### Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival

In May, students from 17 counties gathered at Central Community College and College Park in Grand Island to participate in the annual Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival, coordinated by Central Platte NRD. This event brought together professionals in natural resources to educate students on a wide range of groundwater-related topics, including aquifers, floodplains, watersheds, stream health, wildlife, ecosystems, wetlands, stormwater, wastewater, agriculture, soil health and more. The festival was made possible with the help of over 100 dedicated volunteers who contributed to its success.

## New Fiscal Year Brings New Cost Share Funds

Following the approval of the 2025 fiscal budget of expenditures in June, new funds are now available for all the NRD's cost-share programs. CPNRD provides financial assistance to private landowners for the implementation of soil and water conservation practices through cost-share funding. See CPNRD's programs listed to the right.

### CPNRD Increases Cost-Share Payment for Cover Crops

As of July 1, CPNRD's cost-share payment for cover crops has been increased. Recipients will now be reimbursed 50% of the actual cost of seed, up to \$2,000.

This decision was made to raise awareness about the many benefits of cover crops, including improvements in soil fertility, soil quality, water management, weed control, pest and disease management, biodiversity and wildlife support within agro-ecosystems.

### Cost Share Highlight: Sensor-Based Fertigation

Producers are encouraged to try the NRD's newest Sensor Based Fertigation program to experience the accuracy of data-driven nitrogen management. CPNRD provides \$11 per acre for the service with a two-year commitment. Landowners and operators are eligible to sign up for two fields, with a maximum of 320 acres.

Sensor-Based Fertigation is a cutting-edge technology that analyzes satellite images to deliver precise fertigation scheduling recommendations for your crops throughout the growing season. By optimizing nitrogen applications, farmers can save money on fertilizer, improve crop yields and minimize environmental impact.

**Your Contact:** Kelly Cole | [cole@cpnrd.org](mailto:cole@cpnrd.org) | 308-395-7134

### Learn About Sensor-Based Fertigation

Sentinel Fertigation is hosting a series of Sunset Seminars, with two events to be held in CPNRD. The seminars will feature presentations on Sentinel's N-Time nitrogen management technology and insights from The Combine and affiliated companies.

Following the presentations, there will be an open Q&A session. Each seminar will be co-hosted by a current customer or trial partner, who will share their experiences with N-Time.

All events start at 5:30 p.m. Complimentary dinner and drinks will be provided.

#### Locations

**Lexington:** Tuesday, August 6, District 22 Event Center

**Kearney:** Thursday, August 8, The Chicken Coop

**Register at:** [www.sentinel fertigation.com](http://www.sentinel fertigation.com)



### CPNRD Cost Share Programs

#### Center Pivot Incentive Payment

Up to \$7,500 - Phases 2/3 (\$5.77/foot of pivot installed)

#### Sensor-Based Management of Fertigation

\$11/acre, 2 fields maximum = 320 acres

#### Prescribed Fire

50% of actual cost up to \$2,500

#### Streambank Stabilization

50% actual cost up to \$3,000

#### Trees and Weed Barrier

50% actual cost up to \$3,000 for 200+ tree order

#### Burn Preparation

50% up to \$75/acre per landowner - maximum \$10,000

#### Well Decommissioning

60% up to \$750 any irrigation well, \$500 wells pumping

50 gallons or less, \$1,500 hand-dug wells

#### Phragmites Control

75% cost share up to \$2,000 on a 3-year program

#### Cover Crop

50% up to \$2,000 on cost of seed

#### Soil Moisture Sensors

\$2,000 for 3-year contract, high intensity

#### Grazing Deferment

\$30/acre - \$30,000 maximum

#### Flow Meters

50% up to \$800

#### Urban Forestry - Cities & Villages

50% matching grant on trees/shrubs up to \$5,000

#### Urban Conservation - Recreation

Up to 50%, maximum \$40,000 to cities, villages, counties

## TREES...

### Tree & Weed Barrier Sales



**Trees & Shrubs**  
37,900 sold in 2024  
3,922,262 sold since 1973

**Weed Barrier**  
6.26 miles sold in 2024  
629 miles sold since 1991

## Habitat Happenings

### Playa Wetlands – Habitat and Groundwater Recharge

Playa wetlands are scattered across Nebraska. These shallow wetlands have heavy clay soils and distinct watersheds that funnel water to the wetland, cycling through wet and dry periods. In the past, producers referred to them as buffalo wallows, mud puddles or wasteland. The Rainwater Basin Wetland Complex is a unique cluster of these wetlands, located north of the Republican River and south of the Platte River, extending west from Seward to Gosper counties. Historically, over 11,000 wetlands covering 200,000 acres were scattered across this landscape.



The fertile soils and abundant groundwater resources make the Rainwater Basin one of the most agriculturally productive regions in Nebraska. To maximize ag production, over 90% of these wetlands were drained. This is problematic since 8.6 million waterfowl rely on these wetlands each year. When large congregations of waterfowl are forced into limited habitat, birds become stressed, resulting in die-offs from avian cholera. In addition, stressed birds cannot forage effectively, negatively impacting waterfowl populations. Birds rely on habitat in the Rainwater Basin to fuel up, which helps them complete migration and prepare for nesting. Healthy birds initiate nesting earlier, lay larger clutches and are more apt to re-nest if an initial nest is lost. All these traits contribute to stable populations.

In addition to providing important habitat, these wetlands are significant groundwater recharge points to the underlying aquifer. Groundwater monitoring suggests that one acre of playa ponding water for 35 days a year will recharge 1.14 million gallons of water. This is sufficient drinking water for 35 residents for a year, based on average municipal water use (32,000 gallons/person/year), or this recharge could provide sufficient groundwater to irrigate 3.5 acres with a 6" allocation. Restoration and enhancement of playa wetlands is an important conservation tool to increase groundwater recharge and improve water quality.

If you are interested in learning more about playa wetlands and conservation programs that can provide financial assistance to restore and enhance wetlands, contact your local NRCS office or Natural Resources District office.

*The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture is a public/private partnership that works with federal and state agencies, local Natural Resources Districts, non-government organizations, and private landowners to develop "win-win" opportunities to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands in the Rainwater Basin.*

To learn more visit [www.rwbjv.org](http://www.rwbjv.org) and follow us on Facebook and Instagram



## Explore Groundwater Levels @ the Nebraska State Fair

Visit the Outdoor Learning Area, located east of the Raising Nebraska Building, while attending the Nebraska State Fair! This area offers a relaxing green space and educational information about our natural resources and groundwater.

A monitoring well was recently added to the site to educate the public about groundwater. The well was funded by the Nebraska Well Drillers Association, drilled by Downey Drilling, and is 55 feet deep. Seim Ag Technology donated and installed the monitoring system. Inside the Raising Nebraska Building, near the elevated map, you can view the kiosk to learn about groundwater levels and see how they fluctuate at this site.

The Outdoor Learning Area was developed and is maintained by the Grand Island Groundwater Guardian Team and Central Platte NRD. Since 2012, development of the quarter-acre site has been ongoing. The NRD has 116 active monitoring wells installed from Gothenburg to Columbus. Measurements from these wells, along with over 400 irrigation wells, are used each spring and fall in the NRD's groundwater management program.

**Your Contact:** Marcia Lee | [lee@cpnrd.org](mailto:lee@cpnrd.org) | (308) 395-7551