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SCAN ME

## UNWNRD Hires New Groundwater Management Coordinator

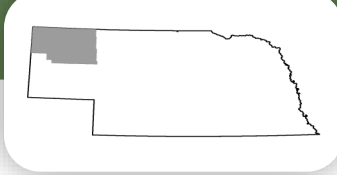
“Hello! My name is Robbin Randall and I am the new Groundwater Management Coordinator for the Upper Niobrara White NRD. I am originally from northwestern Wisconsin, where I worked as a farrier and in the dairy industry for the past 6 years and received a bachelors in Animal Science at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. I met my long-distance boyfriend of 2 years and moved to Hay Springs, Nebraska where he farms. In my free time I am usually riding my horse Saylor exploring new trails or working cattle. I also have a mini Ausie puppy named Maple who was named after the Maple trees I miss so much. I have truly enjoyed my first few months in Nebraska and I am liking this career change! I can't wait to see what my future holds with the NRD.”



# Reflections

Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District  
Serving Box Butte, Dawes, Sheridan and Sioux Counties

October 2023



## Two Long-Time Foresters Retire

Doak Nickerson and Fred McCartney have served as Foresters for the Nebraska Forest Service for many years, working closely with the Upper Niobrara White NRD to educate the public on tree selection, care and management in the Pine Ridge as well as many other areas in the Nebraska Panhandle. By the end of the year, both will retire from the Nebraska Forest Service after a combined 85+ years of service. Their expertise and knowledge will be greatly missed. Below are some final words of wisdom and thoughts on their legacy in the forestry world.

### Doak Nickerson

How did you get started in your field?

I grew up on a family farm that was homesteaded over 140 years ago & that farm remains in the family today. At a young age I

learned the ongoing need for tree windbreaks on the windy Great Plains of southwest Nebraska. Consequently, our family planted trees every spring because it was the right thing to do. In addition to windbreaks, our farm was blessed with over a mile of riparian forest that provided livestock protection, abundant wildlife & paradise in which to live, work & play.

When did you first know you wanted to be a forester?

It was the family vacation to the Black Hills – South Dakota in 1967. We'd gotten rained out of the hay fields & my father decided it was time to get away. Once I camped out in those piney woods....I was hooked & knew where destiny would take me....along with a gentle “nudge” from my mother!

What is your favorite part of the job?

Networking, engaging & working with my clientele (people) & their tree challenges.

### Fred McCartney

How did you get started in your field?

While still a student at the University of Montana School of Forestry, I had the opportunity to participate in a student internship with the St. Regis Paper Company in

Libby, MT. I spent two summers working on primarily company owned timberlands doing many different forestry and forest nursery related activities. I learned a great deal from those folks and this served to spark my interest in working in the private sector.

When did you first know you wanted to be a forester?

Both of my parents were raised on farms/ranches in Montana. Both enjoyed outdoor activities. Most of our family activities involved hunting/fishing and camping. I saw going into resource management as a way to make a career out of working outside.

What is your favorite part of the job?

Both in the private sector and now in the public sector, I most enjoy working with private landowners. Helping a landowner to utilize their forested resource in a sustainable and profitable manner has provided many rewards for me.

*Continued on Page 2...*

## Save the Date!

**UNWNRD  
Range Day  
January 16,  
2024**

**Make sure  
your water is  
safe to drink!**

UNWNRD tests domestic wells annually for Bacteria & Nitrates free of charge for all District Residents!

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...Continued from page 1

**Doak Nickerson**

How has forestry changed over the course of your career for the better?  
**I believe foresters are embracing the need to become better communicators about spreading the forestry message.**

What do you feel is your greatest accomplishment in the field?  
**Well...a 45-year career has created a lot of them. But I reckon 3 highlights come to mind:**

- **Helped the 3 Panhandle NRD's to launch the leading tree planting programs (CRP) of Nebraska in 1985.**
- **Accelerated proactive forest management (logging) in the Pine Ridge to help buffer massive wildfire threats...leading to the conversion of Chadron State College steam plant to renewable wood energy.**
- **Honored & humbled with the 2019 Nebraska Outstanding Tree Planter Award from the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts.**

What do you hope to leave as your legacy?  
**My hope is that my years as a forester serving Nebraskans has made a difference for all who call Nebraska the "Home of the Good Life".**

What are your plans in retirement?  
**Spend more time with my 2 grandsons, explore the USA & build a home from scratch.**

Any last thoughts or comments you'd like to add?  
**The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago...the next best time is NOW!**

**Fred McCartney**

What do you feel is your greatest accomplishment in the field?  
**In the past 40+ years, I have had the privilege of working with literally hundreds of very progressive private timberland owners. Spending time with these individuals and "seeing the lightbulb go on" when they realize they can get a return for their forest resources and still manage those resources for the long term has been very rewarding for me.**

What do you hope to leave as your legacy?  
**I hope to instill some of the same values I have, in the young foresters that will be taking the reins when I leave.**

What will you miss most in retirement?  
**I will miss the interaction with my coworkers, landowners and stakeholders.**

What are your plans in retirement?  
**I don't know where to start... I have way too many hobbies that have been neglected for way too long. I have three grandchildren that need more time with grandpa (and grandma). Although not immediately, I do plan to drive a red bus (Jammer) in Glacier National Park again. I have rural property both in NE and MT that I plan to spend more time at, hopefully with friends and grandchildren.**

Any last thoughts or comments you'd like to add?  
**It's been a good run! Always look for the good in the people you have the privilege to associate with. Don't be afraid to step outside your "box of comfort", you may upset some folks in the short term but you will be respected more in the long run.**

**Upcoming Changes to the UNWNRD Groundwater Management Area Rules & Regulations**

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts have been statutorily charged with the *Development, Management, Utilization and Conservation of Ground and Surface Water*. In order to carry out this requirement, the Upper Niobrara White NRD relies on the approved Ground Water Management Plan and Rules and Regulations. Over time, changes in statutes, technology, production practices and the collection of additional data and information require that the management approach be reviewed and potentially modified. Thus is the case with the current rules and regulations which have been in place since 2018. "Staff and Directors have been discussing the rules and procedures for quite a few years and with the allocation period ending in 2024, we have decided to move forward with updates" stated Rich Zochol, Water Committee Chairman.

Along with grammatical changes and clarifications, some of the significant modifications are:

- Increasing the price of an emergency chemigation permit to \$500
- Language to allow a sub-area to move to a lower phase of management
- Removing obsolete language
- Codifying policies
- Incorporating new procedures for transfers and variances
- Setting the 2025-2029 ground water allocation for subareas four and six



Prior to adoption, public information sessions will be scheduled in Alliance and Rushville. More information on the sessions will be coming soon. A copy of the draft rules and regulations can be found at [www.unwnrd.org](http://www.unwnrd.org).

**2023 UNWNRD Amateur Photo Contest Winners**

*Photos for the 2024 contest will be accepted January 1st to June 1st 2024.  
Get out and start taking your photos now!*



1st Place:  
Audra Johnston  
"A Spring Storm"  
Lakeside, NE

2nd Place:  
Celeste Schumacher  
"Play Time"  
Chadron, NE



3rd Place:  
Dan Anderson  
"Training at  
Walgren Lake"  
Hay Springs, NE

4th Place:  
Tarrah Johnson  
"Farming: A  
Profession of Hope"  
Alliance, NE

