

Manager's Report

Administrative

Master Plan – Staff are finalizing the Master Plan for your consideration in either February or March. The plan is due to the state in 2022.

Simplifying Financials – As you are aware, the NRD holds several checking and savings accounts. This was historically done to “spread the wealth” amongst area institutions but has had a negative effect on ease of accounting. We will likely bring a proposal to the Budget and Personnel Committee to consolidate and simplify our finances.

Manager Transition – As you know, current General Manager John Berge will be resigning effective January 14. You will be considering how to proceed with that position later in the agenda. John has offered to provide consultation even after he departs to aid in the transition.

Projects and Programs

Variance, Transfers and Reconfiguration Requests – As you might imagine, given the dryness, we have had several landowners contact us with various proposals on how they would like to manage their lands and resources. We are working diligently to ensure that they can make their lands the most profitable while living within the bounds of our rules and regulations. This will necessarily require your action on some requests as they relate to variances and/or transfers. Those requests will first be heard by the Water Resources Committee. Stay tuned for scheduling.

Schaneman Recharge Project – We are still awaiting permits from the Department of Natural Resources to operate the Schaneman Recharge Project this coming spring.

Range/Land Judging and Envirothon - For calendar year 2022 and beyond, we have agreed to revert to the arrangement of the administration of these contests by District Boundary rather than subject matter. For example, if there is a Range Judging contest scheduled in Upper Niobrara White NRD, North Platte NRD or South Platte NRD, those contests would be led by the “host” NRD. The same would hold true for Land Judging contests and Envirothon. Our desire is for our respective staff to work with landowners, contractors, and host schools within familiar boundaries. This should streamline our efforts and make the planning and implementation of each contest more seamless and cause less miscommunication. Of course, regardless of which NRD is in the lead for each contest, other NRDs would serve in a support role to ensure that contests are successful. As it relates to other organizations involved in the planning and performance of each of these contests, their roles would also remain in support of the NRDs' efforts.

WRCF – As you know, we are working on a plan to fund our long-term commitments under contracts 925 and 935 that are currently unfunded. As I reported to you last month, there are funds available from the Water Resources Cash Fund for this purpose, and the PBC is prepared to approve, with the caveat that it would be simpler if the match for those funds was available up front. In the near term, there may be a need to meet with the Budget Committee to arrange for such an up-front match.

Joint Water Board – The language for the lease with the Morrill, Henry, Lyman Joint Water Board is completed, and the ball is now in the JWB’s court. If approved, this would be a significant wellhead protection area and one that will also provide a good deal of consumptive use credit. We will request PBC reimbursement for this lease as soon as it is finalized.

WFPO – As of this writing, the NRD is in communication with the NRCS State Office to request money through the WFPO for engineering on maintenance and upkeep of the Gering Valley Flood Control Project. Our official request was submitted prior to the end of the year.

Surface Water Infrastructure – I have been in conversations with Senator Stinner and Senator Bostleman about potential funding for surface water infrastructure upgrades and maintenance on the projects in the North Platte NRD. We are discussing the potential use of ARPA funds and the Federal Infrastructure bill. We have sent a survey to our SW Districts to gauge their needs and will share this information with the Senators as soon as that information is received.

State Climatologist/Drought Planning – we continue to be in close touch with Martha Shulski about utilizing climate data for drought plan triggers moving forward.

Outreach

Legislative Conference – Several staff will be attending the NARD legislative conference and meetings in Lincoln in January.

Producer Roundtables – are being set for the month of February and the first week of March.