

Manager's Report
8/11/2022

On July 16th we hosted our annual Water Expo in combination with celebrating NRD Week. This year happened to be the 50th anniversary of the NRD system in Nebraska, and we were pleased in capping off the week with our annual Water Expo. The Expo was again a huge success. We counted 450 plus people in attendance. This outreach continues to grow in popularity, our ability to share the mission of this organization grows with it. This event will continue to be one of the top events we host as we enter a new fiscal year.

We were once again privileged to host the Nebraska Water Leaders Academy for an evening get together here on our campus on July 14th. This group was able to get a look at our greenhouse after supper as well as having an opportunity to visit with others from around the State. This organization is a resource that our staff has come to utilize over the years. Many of the district staff have been through the academy and have become better water leaders because of it.

On July 21st, Travis, Kyle Ann, and myself attended the annual Upper Platte Basin meeting in Ogallala. I was able to provide our annual activities report (please see Board packet for annual reporting documents, 6a) to the group and Heath Kuntz provided a power point presentation on the Enterprise Recharge Project. After the basin meeting, we began the introductory meeting of the Upper Platte Drought Task Force. This group of stakeholders will be responsible for creating an Upper Platte Basin Drought Plan. This drought plan is required in the Upper Platte Basin IMP. The next meeting will be held sometime in February of 2023.

I had the opportunity to speak to the Scottsbluff Lions Club on July 27th at their noon lunch meeting. The group was very interested in hearing about the way this NRD has been managing our natural resources. They were amazed in the number of trees not only our staff has planted in the last 50 years but the number of trees NRD's are responsible for planting Statewide. Water quality and quantity were issues on their mind, and I feel they are now more aware of how important the NRD system is to the residents of the district.

Last week we were finally after several years of back and forth with NDNR able to provide Dan Gueck a copy of the temporary surface water retirement agreement on his property on the Enterprise Canal system. This agreement has been in the hands of DNR and held up from execution for close to three years. Dan received a copy of the agreement on Thursday of last week and if he agrees with the language, it will be an important addition to the Enterprise Recharge Project. Once the agreement is finalized, NDNR will be receiving an application to transfer water from the Gueck property to the Enterprise pits.

Kevin Sylvester and his team from Dana Cole and Company were in the office last week working on our annual audit. They finished their work here on Friday of last week and will continue reviewing our information at their office. Once completed, Kevin will provide a written report as well as an in-person report at a future Board of Directors meeting.

NRD staff is continuing daily operations on the Enterprise Recharge Project. We have been diverting for close to 60 days now and have yet to fill our second pit. This site is demonstrating its ability to infiltrate a rate of diversion of close to 2 CFS continuously. It will be interesting to see how many acre feet we were able to put back in the aquifer at the end of the irrigation season.

Next week Travis and I will be on the Chamber of Commerce Water Tour. The tour is scheduled to leave Gering on August 16th and return on August 17th. We will be touring the Kortes Power Plant, Pathfinder Dam, the Bureau of Reclamation Control Center in Mills, as well as the Whalen Diversion. Last I heard there were only 19 registered for the tour so this may be one of the smallest groups they have had in quite some time.

As always, my month continues to be busy with Upper Platte Basin meetings like the Platte Basin Coalition, the Platte Over Appropriated Committee, as well as the Upper Platte Principles group that continues to meet monthly to discuss ways this basin can achieve a fully appropriated status. Most of these meetings are held in person usually in North Platte.

At the end of the month there will be a NRD managers retreat held in Alma. I do plan on attending, but due to a conflict may only be able to attend the business meeting.