

Manager's Report
6/9/2022

Last week I attended an NRD Managers meeting in Norfolk. It was good to hear from all the State agencies on different programs and projects being promoted and offered to not only NRD's but to landowners as well. The largest takeaway from the meeting was the frustration that NRD staff and District Boards have dealing with rising nitrates in ground water Statewide. This will be the largest problem facing NRD's well into the future. Many NRD Managers are fearful that the loss of local control regarding nutrient management is imminent. A few NRD Boards are looking at mandatory chemigation both surface and ground water, water allocations, as well as other regulatory schemes. The sense of frustration from those District Managers dealing with rising nitrates was evident.

Our Staff had the opportunity to show off some of our projects to a tour group sponsored by NARD at the beginning of the week. We toured the Enterprise Project, the Minatare Canal Project, as well as showing the group the rehabilitation work completed with landowners on Nine Mile Creek. The group also took in a few sights at Chimney Rock and Lake Minatare before leaving our District. The group also spent some time in the South Platte NRD and the Upper Niobrara White NRD looking at projects.

NRD Staff took part in the annual Gering Valley Flood Control drainage system inspection on May 19th as well as attended the annual meeting that was held the following day on the 20th. The drainage system was inspected by members of Gering Irrigation District, Central Irrigation District, Gering Ft. Laramie Irrigation District as well as a representative from Scotts Bluff County. The inspectors found a wide array of issues ranging from excess erosion to trees and other deadfall in the drains. The NPNRD will complete a dam inspection of all dams this coming Summer as well as our normal inspections we attend with NDNR regarding the dams classified as high hazard.

The Scottsbluff Gering Chamber of Commerce water tour has been scheduled for August 16th and 17th. The tour group will be heading West to the reservoirs in Wyoming as well as the Bureau of Reclamation Control Center in Mills. This will be the first tour heading West since the onset of Covid. The facility had been closed to all tours due to Covid 19 protocols.

David Christian led a group from the State NRCS office on a tour of the GVFC project, spending time looking at problem areas on the system. The NPNRD and Permanent Maintenance Committee have made it through the initial round of acceptance into a watershed rehabilitation grant sponsored by NRCS that would provide a complete rehabilitation to the drainage system. This drainage is no different than many of the other infrastructure that's out there, it is degrading and in need of upkeep. This program will allow us to utilize Federal dollars to rehabilitate with little to no cost to this District or the Maintenance Committee.

The week of May 16th was the annual NPNRD Greener Gardens Green House plant sale. This year we are excited to report that the plant sale was more than double of what we sold a year ago. This year we took in a total of \$3058.83. Many thanks go to the hard work and dedication of Jennifer and her volunteers.

After much delay, this past week we did receive the signed transfer order from DNR authorizing the transfer of surface water to the Enterprise Recharge Facility. Seth and Ethan have finished the installation of the discharge flowmeters on Friday of last week and at 9:45 last Friday morning we opened the headgate and began filling the pits.

At the June 16th Platte Basin Coalition (PBC) meeting, I will be asking for reimbursements on one ground water lease. That 162-acre ground water lease is with the Western Nebraska Joint Water Board. This new lease was executed just before John departed.

The Staff is finalizing the draft proposed FY 22/23 budget. Our plan is to have this ready for review by the Budget and Personnel Committee this month. We have been waiting for some information regarding health insurance costs as well as a few other items. We have received those numbers now and are wrapping up our proposed budget.

This year the NPNRD Water Expo will be held on July 16th from 9:00 to 2:00. We are holding the Expo earlier this year to coincide with the NRD 50th Anniversary week that begins on July 11th and runs through the 15th. Last year we had over 400 people attend the Expo and are planning for more this year. This will be the third time we have held this event. We did cancel the event in 2020 due to Covid.

We are preparing the final edits right now for the mid-year edition of the newsletter. This newsletter was very well received by the public with nothing but good comments. Many people I have spoken with are glad to once again hear from the NRD through print. We plan to issue a newsletter two times a year, in January and at the end of June.

NSWCP signups will begin July 1st and will cut off on a date to be determined in February 2023. This has been a continuous signup program and will continue to be operated in that fashion. We did however pause signups for a few months to review our operations and scoring of the program with NRD Staff as well as DNR. We have had meetings with DNR regarding our procedures and will be working on creating a program informational meeting with NRCS and NRD Staff. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss not only procedures on signups but make sure we are meeting the conservation needs of our producers as well as promoting our conservation mission through this program.