

Manager's Report
4/14/2022

Water Department Staff have finished recording Spring static water levels. Levels were taken starting March 15th and wrapping up that last week in March. The Staff will provide the Board an update and report regarding the static water level data collected at the June Board meeting.

Water Department Staff has begun collecting water quality data District wide to provide information regarding nitrate levels necessary for the ground water sampling study that will conclude at the end of 2022. This data gathered, will be important as we begin the discussions and implementation of District nutrient management rules in January of 2023. The Board will be provided a complete report regarding this study at the December 2022 or January 2023 Board meeting.

To try to simplify as well as consolidate our office technology with one company, a new phone system was implemented on April 8th. This system is equipped with an auto attendant as well as the option to speak with the receptionists or now direct dial any employee. The system also provides a whole host of new options to make communicating with customers as well as with each other in the office better. By consolidating our business with Capital, we were able to improve some of our office printing equipment, replace a decade old phone system with the latest features, and still save close to a thousand dollars in yearly office operations.

The Staff has started our budget planning process for this coming fiscal year. The Department heads have begun turning in their planned expenses. Once all Department budgets have been submitted, we will begin importing those expenses, creating a budget for the Committee to consider. The intention is to have it before the Budget and Personal Committee by May 30th.

The Tree Department has sold to date 30,261 trees in 161 different orders. Tree Staff will be planting trees at 31 sites across the district. The Staff will also be involved in eight different grass plantings for a total of eighty-nine acres, in which two of them are fire line reclamation projects. The dry weather has really hampered tree sales this year, but the Tree Department is at the ready if conditions change.

This year's EPIC program signup was a smaller signup than what we have experienced in the past. We received applications from ten producers, totaling 705.7 acres, with the NRD purchasing 6647-acre inches. The NRD purchased the entire allocation on eight of the ten contracts. The projected payments on these contracts will be \$99,707.10 with \$59,824.26 of that total being reimbursed by NDNR.

I have sent a request to the Platte Basin Coalition (PBC) for funds to be dedicated to some of the permanent retirements we signed up several years ago. These retirements were not funded at the full reimbursement rate authorized by DNR, which is 60%. I have sent a memo asking for full reimbursement on those contracts into the future. If approved by the PBC, it would provide a dedicated funding source for those contracts until the final payments are made. I have requested \$1.3 million dollars to cover those retirement contracts.

I had an opportunity to visit with the Nebraska Lead group on the 28th of March as they traveled the Panhandle looking at water projects as well as other aspects of production agriculture. I provided the group a little background on the NPNRD while discussing allocations and water quality issues we face in the District. This is the second year in a row I have been able to visit with this program and they are always extremely interested in our District rules, programs, and projects.

On April 6th Craig and I attended a meeting with NDEE, and other Upper Platte Basin NRD's in North Platte. The purpose of the meeting was to build a better line of communication between the two agencies. It was a good meeting, and I think staff from both agencies went away knowing more about the operations and responsibilities of one another. There were questions asked of NDEE relating to oil and gas operations, dewatering wells, confined feeding operations, as well as nutrient management requirements of those feeding operations.

The process has now begun regarding the Gering Valley Watershed rehabilitation. NRCS has approved our PIFR application, and the initial site visit has been scheduled. This project will be incredibly important to the extended life of the impoundment of flood water and the drainage infrastructure required to protect life and property.

Tuesday, I had an opportunity to introduce myself as the General Manager of the North Platte NRD to those in attendance at the Yonts Water Conference sponsored by UNL. Time was dedicated in the program to introduce all the new water leaders in the area and provide some time for each person to give a little background on themselves.

I have been tapped as a co-chair to the Ag Chamber of Commerce water tour committee. Rob Eirich and I will take the reins of the tour this year and are planning to take the tour back West to see the reservoirs as well as the control center at Mills. The tour will be scheduled for some time in early August.

Staff has begun planning for the 2022 NPNRD Water Expo. This year, the expo will coincide with the NRD 50th Anniversary week celebrations. The expo will be held here at the NPNRD on July 16th.