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Scottsbluff, NE 69363-0280

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**CONTACT US**

PHONE  
308.632.2749  
FAX  
308.632.4346

EMAIL  
npnrd@npnrd.org

WEB  
https://www.npnrd.org

**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday – Thursday  
7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.  
Friday 7:30 A.M. – 4 P.M.

**VISIT US**

In person,  
NPNRD.ORG, or at



North Platte  
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT



Your  
**RESOURCE REPORT**

Protecting Lives - Protecting Property - Protecting the Future

**JUNE 2024**

**IMPORTANT DATES**

**GREENHOUSE TOURS**  
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.  
Second Tuesday of each Month  
call to schedule

**BOARD MEETINGS**  
3:00 p.m.  
Second Thursday of each Month

**PLANT SALE**  
5/20/24 – 6/1/24

**CHEMIGATION INSPECTIONS**  
after 6/1/24

**GREENER GARDENS WORKSHOP**  
9:00 a.m.  
• 6/19/24 – Integrated Pest Management Plan Basic  
• 7/17/24 – Herbs & Spices For Your Kitchen  
• 8/21/24 – Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation

**LANDOWNER FORUM**  
7:00 p.m.  
6/27/24 • Bridgeport

**ANNUAL WATER EXPO**  
9/2/24

**NITRATE SAMPLING**  
begins 9/1/24

**FLOWMETER READS & SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE**  
begins 10/1/24

**FALL LEVELS**  
begins 10/15/24

**Resource Reflections:  
Insights from Scott**

**Nitrogen Regulation...Why?** I, as well as the North Platte NRD Board of Directors, fully understand producer concerns regarding the potential future regulations related to nitrogen use by this District's agriculture producers. First and foremost, I would like to emphasize that any decisions made by this District's leadership related to new regulation is taken very seriously and made with careful consideration of this District's largest industry, the production of agriculture. As an ag producer, you may feel like once again the government is making it more difficult to operate by now getting involved in the way you manage nutrients. I cannot stress this point enough in that the Board of Directors and Staff of the North Platte NRD would rather not be involved in this important part of your farm management, however, our role as a Natural Resource District requires us to monitor and protect our greatest natural resource, our water.

Over the last several decades our nitrate levels in groundwater have steadily increased, and in some instances, increased above the safe drinking water level set by the Environmental Protection Agency of 10 parts per million. Levels of this magnitude make the need to act urgent. Nebraska NRDs are bound to twelve statutory responsibilities in which Development, Management, Use, and Conservation of Groundwater and Surface Water is one of those responsibilities. With that statutory charge, it becomes necessary to protect the resource today and for the future generations to come.

Today, the management of the resource is made by the Board of Directors which happen to be your neighbors and your friends who have been elected by you to serve as your voice. As the Directors and Staff continue to evaluate and then begin to provide solutions in combating the contamination of nitrates in groundwater, please take a moment and consider the responsibility each of them has.

Water quality issues are incredibly complex and require a completely different manner of management than water quantity issues. The nitrate contamination issues did not develop overnight and will not go away overnight either. To successfully address this problem, we all need to work together. The North Platte NRD would fully appreciate creating closer partnerships with our ag product suppliers as well as our producers in taking a commonsense approach to nutrient management.

**To do nothing is no longer an option.**

I cannot urge you enough to get involved by being part of the solution as it relates to the adoption and implementation of best management practices in the North Platte NRD to bring this issue into check. As always, I encourage you to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you may have. In closing, I as well as the Directors want to let you all know that we are fully committed to supporting production agriculture in this District. The best way for us to support you is by taking the most appropriate management actions to keep the decision-making process with your locally elected officials.

**Landowner Forum Water Suitability**

The North Platte NRD is currently working on the new draft of the Rules and Regulations for the District. We would like to invite our constituents to attend a Landowner Forum to be scheduled in June. We will be discussing the new Rules, specifically Chapter 11, Nitrogen Application. The changes to this chapter will affect Groundwater and Surface Water irrigators. We want to hear your input. There will be additional information about the meeting coming out soon. We hope to see you at the Bridgeport Community Center on June 27th at 7 p.m.

Do you know what is in your drinking water? Your drinking water should be tested annually, at a minimum, for bacteria, nitrates, and anything else that is of concern, based on your location. Along with bacteria and nitrates, Arsenic has been found in some wells within the NPNRD district. Arsenic is a naturally occurring trace component in many rocks and sediments. Arsenic can also be released into the groundwater by human activities such as mining, through its use in various animal feeds, a wood preservative, and as a pesticide. Arsenic is naturally occurring up to 5,000 parts per billion (ppb). The Environmental

Protection Agency has set a Maximum Contaminant Level of 10 ppb in drinking water. Water containing more than 250 ppb of arsenic is considered potentially toxic for large animals.

Some other basic tests that are recommended include a basic water potability test, pH test, Ion's test, total dissolved solids, and hardness test, along with the tests mentioned above.

If you are concerned about what could be in your drinking water or have questions about the information above, please contact the North Platte Natural Resources District Water Department. We will be happy to answer any questions and get you the testing you desire.

**Meet the Staff**

Becky Schaneman

Hello! I'm Becky Schaneman, the Field Clerk for the NPNRD/NRCS in Scottsbluff and Bridgeport. A native of Scottsbluff, I graduated from Scottsbluff High School. Following my education, I embraced various roles including farmer's wife, livestock producer, and dedicated mother. I spent over twenty-five years as a preschool teacher and assistant director, earning my Childhood Development Certificate along the way. Looking for a career change, I became the NRD field clerk. This role has provided me the opportunity to learn more about our natural resources and conservation in Nebraska. I enjoy connecting with producers and helping them with their conservation endeavors. My husband Scott and I have two children, their spouses and four precious grandchildren. Together, we are actively involved in Diamond S Stock Farms, where we raise Polypay sheep.

**Meet the Staff**

Jody Fiscus

My name is Jody Fiscus and I have been with the North Platte NRD since November of 2015. I am a water technician and have a well drilling contractor certification. I went through Water Leaders Academy in 2022. I have several duties that I perform in the water department. I perform meter reads in the fall; I do maintenance as well as repair work to the meters that come back to the office not working. I perform Chemigation inspection of the chemigation valves as well as repair and decommission monitoring wells in the district. I do parts inventory for the meter parts that we have on hand. I really like the interaction I get with the farmers of the district, as I get to know their farming operations. Before I started at the NRD, I had a cleaning business for 15 years and day worked at the sale barn and a couple of feedlots in the area as well as a small alfalfa hay farm south of McGrew. My wife and I have 2 grown children and 1 grandson and are members of the Bayard Church of Christ. I like to team rope and hunt when I can.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Roger Eirich – *Chairman*  
Sub-District 4 since 2013
- Kent Andreas – *Vice Chairman*  
Sub-District 4 since 2013
- Pete Lapaseotes – *Secretary*  
At-Large since 2005
- Ryan Reuter – *Treasurer*  
Sub-District 1 since 2018
- Dave Deines – *Director*  
Sub-District 3 since 2005
- Chuck Henkel – *Director*  
Sub-District 2 since 2013
- Dan Weinreis – *Director*  
Sub-District 1 since 2009
- Mark Westphal – *Director*  
Sub-District 2 since 2019
- Lane Darnall – *Director*  
Sub-District 3 since 2023

**NPNRD STAFF**

- General**  
Scott Schaneman – General Manager  
Travis Preston – Assistant Manager
- Water Department**  
Craig Uhrig – Water Resources Coordinator  
Seth Popp – Water Resources Technician  
Keelie Williamson – Natural Resources Technician  
Jody Fiscus – Water Resources Technician  
Ethan Woehrl – Water Resources Technician  
Lynn Okicki – Natural Resources Technician
- Resource Conservation Department**  
Todd Filipi – Resource Conservation Coordinator  
Ken Ridgeway – Resource Conservation Technician
- Geographic Info. Systems Department**  
Lydia Hendrickson – GIS Data Coordinator
- Data Management and Outreach Dept.**  
Kyle Ann Hopkins – Data Management & Outreach Coordinator  
Paula Kihlthau – Data Analyst

**Administration Department**

- Danielle Madden – Office Manager
- Renay Smith – Secretary/Accounts Payable Clerk
- Susie Kaufman – Receptionist/Accounts Receivables Clerk

**Greenhouse & Special Projects**

Kirstee Schutte – Special Projects Coordinator in Greenhouse

**NPNRD & NRCS Clerks**

- Geri Alworth – NRCS Clerk, Oshkosh
- Becky Schaneman – NRCS Clerk, Scottsbluff

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## First Annual Ag Symposium Wrap Up

Hosted By North Platte Natural Resources District

### Special Guest Presenter Brian Hefty Ag PhD

On Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024, at the Gering Civic Center, the North Platte Natural Resources District held their first annual Ag Symposium. The guest speaker was Brian Hefty from Ag PhD. Brian and his brother, Darren Hefty, are known for their innovative and progressive approaches in crop production. The Hefty brothers take time out of their busy farming life to give other farmers insight into crop and pasture management through their television program Ag PhD seen on RFD TV as well as podcasting and video production accessed through their website @ [www.agphd.com](http://www.agphd.com). That information can also be heard at Ag PhD Radio daily at 2:00 p.m. CST on Sirius XM Radio channel 147.

The main topic for Brian was how proper nutrient management practices can affect your bottom

line while at the same time protecting our natural resources. He highlighted water sampling, soil sampling, and understanding your crops' nutrient needs based on the information gained from the samples to obtain the greatest return on investment. He stressed that implementing these practices now would help retain local control over farming practices. If farmers do not start protecting their resources under the advice of local officials will be regulating farming.

A producer panel was also featured at the event. Panelists included Craig Sitzman, Nicholas Lapaseotes, and PJ Hoehn. Each of them described the implementation of nutrient management practices they use on their farms. Questions were taken from the audience as well. Don Orr, Lisco, and Frank Lussetto,

Broadwater, were recognized as Conservation Award winners for improving the protection and preservation of natural resources and the environment. The North Platte NRD wants to recognize these individuals for their dedication and contributions to the future of the agricultural industry in the Panhandle of Nebraska.

The Symposium was concluded with a presentation by the NPNRD General Manager, Scott Schaneman. During his presentation, it was stated that there is a known issue with high nitrates in the ground water across the entire state. One of the responsibilities of an NRD is Water Supply for Beneficial Uses. Another responsibility is the Development, Management, Utilization, and Conservation of Groundwater and Surface Water. It is the intent of the North Platte

Natural Resources District to use best management practices to work with all irrigators throughout the district in an effort to fulfill its responsibilities. The Rules and Regulations for the NPNRD are currently under review by the staff and Board. There will be more information about the updated Rules and Regulations in the next few months.

All the presentations were recorded and are available on the North Platte NRD website. You can also find copies of both presentations (Hefty and Schaneman) on the website. The North Platte Natural Resources District holds its Board Meetings on the second Thursday of each month. The meetings are held at the NPNRD office at 100547 Airport Road, Scottsbluff, at 3 o'clock p.m. The public is always welcome to attend.

## NRD Awarded NET Grant for Windbreak Renovation Pilot Project



The NRD was recently awarded a Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) Grant for a three-year pilot project to do windbreak renovation work within the district. The district has many miles of old windbreaks that are in a serious state of decline. We understand financially that the easiest and cheapest method for renovating or dealing with these old windbreaks is oftentimes slashing and burning but conservation wise and for the sake of starting a new windbreak, this method is a huge step back. With the awarded money we will be leasing a skid steer and a mulching head to not clear cut these old stands but to simply mulch enough of a path through the old dead and dying woody growth to be able to plant new rows in among the existing stand.

The old windbreaks may be ugly but they still serve a purpose and can be extremely useful in protecting and helping the new saplings to grow and succeed. The wood mulch left behind will help to retain moisture and reduce competition for the new saplings while having the old trees and other vegetation help catch moisture and protect the little trees from the elements and exposures that can wreak havoc on our new plantings. The work will be highly subsidized at \$60 per machine hour with a stipulation that new trees be planted back into the windbreak within twelve months of the mulching operation. The plan is to start work later this summer but with the majority of the work taking place late fall and during the winter months as the weather allows. Standard rates, fees and cost share through the NRD on their trees will stay the same for these projects. Please contact Todd or Ken at the office in Scottsbluff to discuss options and for quotes.

## NORTH PLATTE NRD Buffalograss Cost Share Program

The North Platte Natural Resources District is offering its popular buffalograss seed rebate program with new enhancements. The buffalograss program reimburses residential homeowners or business owners for converting their existing irrigated lawns. Participants can receive up to \$20 per pound for Bowie, Sundancer, or Cody varieties of Buffalograss seed purchased to convert up to 15,000 square feet of established lawn. Maximum reimbursement is \$900 per person per year. These adjustments have been made to reflect the rising cost of grass seed and requests by homeowners to convert larger areas of lawn. Reimbursement will be based on the recommended seeding rate of 2-3 pounds per 1,000 square feet. The buffalograss seed program is open to all homeowners and business owners within the boundaries of the North Platte NRD, including Scotts Bluff, Morrill, Garden, Banner and southern Sioux Counties.

**The application deadline for this program is June 15.** Buffalograss is best established in areas with full sun exposure. The ideal planting time is between Memorial Day and July 4th. The NPNRD believes the use of this program will help promote water savings, and good land stewardship and help residents adapt to our semi-arid climate. We want to encourage panhandle residents to use native plant species to their benefit and enjoyment. For complete information on the buffalograss seed program, visit the NPNRD website at or contact the North Platte NRD office.

North Platte NRD's

# Annual Water Expo

**Free Event**

## August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

[100547 Airport Road, |](#)  
[Scottsbluff, NE](#)

Family Friendly day of fun and learning with a Free Lunch provided. For more information call the North Platte NRD at (308) 632-2749 or visit our website at [nprnd.org](http://nprnd.org).



North Platte  
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

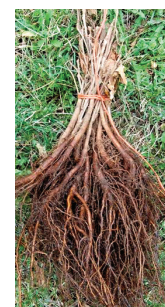
### GREENER GARDEN WORKSHOPS

**6/19 Integrated Pest Management Plan, Basic**  
What is it? Why is it important? How can you do it in your garden?

**7/17 Herbs and Spices for your Kitchen**

**8/21 Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation**  
What is it? How does it work?

**11/2 Dried Floral Wreath Workshop**  
Beginner-Level workshop on how to make your own natural dried floral wreath.



## Tree Care Between Pickup and Planting

Purchasing bare root trees is an excellent way to avoid some of the girdling and other root issues typically associated with potted grown plants that have potentially been constrained in an ill-fitting container for too long. Bare root trees aren't without their own challenges though. Without the soil and protection of the pot, care from the time of purchase to planting can be extremely critical. We want to be keeping bare roots in a moist, cool environment right up until planting time. Root desiccation and dieback happens much sooner than most people think and can start to happen within minutes if left exposed to the sun, wind and elements of Western Nebraska. We want to be keeping those saplings in a moist environment, like how you pick them up from the NRD tightly wrapped or boxed with moist wood chips over the roots. You want to keep those roots damp at all times and if not planting right away, find a cool, dark place such as your basement or cellar where you can keep them cool and moist. Remember they are alive and the roots need to be able to breathe too so keep from submerging the roots entirely in a bucket of water for days on end. A few hours of soaking before planting can be a good thing but don't leave them that way for days on end, as damage will start to occur at that point especially with species like the currant. The top half is the pretty side but remember those roots are the lifeline and storage for the tree so get those trees in the ground as soon as possible after pickup and make sure to take the utmost care to keep them damp, cool and happy. Our margins for success are narrow enough in our climate so don't start them off with root damage and stress. Happy planting and here's hoping for another good year of moisture.

## Is Your Soil Diseased?

**Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation** – is a chemical fumigant alternative method of controlling soil borne pathogens. It consists of applying an easily liable carbon source followed by irrigation to achieve an anaerobic condition in the soil.

**How does it work?** What happens in anaerobic soil disinfestation is beneficial microbes in the soil start to break down the added carbon source. As this happens, they use up all the oxygen in the soil and they create toxic by-products like acetic acid (vinegar) and butyric acid. These toxic by-products reduce the survival of soil borne pathogens.

**What carbon sources should I use?** Good carbon sources include wheat bran, soybean meal, distillers' grain, wheat midds or molasses. Wheat midds are nutritionally similar to wheat bran but cheaper. These are sold as animal feed. Molasses is most effective when used along with another carbon source. Its function is to jump start microbial activity.

**How do I know if it's working?** A bad smell akin to ammonia or decay indicated that the soil has gone anaerobic. To ensure successful treatment, soil temperatures need to be above 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

**What are indications of soil borne disease?**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Above Ground:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilting</li> <li>• Stunting</li> <li>• Curling of leaf</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaf spot</li> <li>• Malformation of plants</li> <li>• Reduction of yield</li> </ul> | <p><b>Below Ground</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texture that is slimy, soft, or corky</li> <li>• Changes in color: yellow, brown, or black</li> <li>• Crinkling of roots</li> <li>• Reduced root vigor</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|

**What are some of the pathogens addressed ASD?**

**Root knot nematode (*Meloidogyne* spp.)** – Swelling, or galling of roots. Root crops may be deformed or have hairy roots with nodules.

**Corky root rot (*Pyrenochaeta lycopersici*)** – Crinkling on the root or crown. Crinkling usually occurs in characteristic bands that make the roots look like tree bark.

**Verticillium Wilt (*Verticillium dahliae*)** – V-shaped lesion on leaves, on the edge of the V-shaped lesion there is a yellowing discoloration.

**Fusarium Wilt (*Fusarium oxysporum* f.sp. *lycopersici*)** – General yellowing discoloration and dieback on one half of the plant.

**Black dot root rot (*collectotrichum coccodes*)** – Roots are golden-brown and speckled with distinct spots. These spots are the fungus itself. This causes a disease called anthracnose on fruits.

**Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation Process:** Remove all plants and root systems, then till the soil so it is easier to work. Apply the carbon sources evenly at 9 tons per acre (0.413 lbs. per square foot). Incorporate the carbon source into the soil to a depth of 6-8 inches. Add molasses as a secondary carbon source at a rate of 1-4.5 tons per acre (0.2065 lbs. per square foot) -or at a half rate of the primary carbon source. Dilute the molasses with water 1:3. Apply with a watering can. Irrigate to a depth of 6-8 inches to saturate the soil profile where you incorporated the carbon source. Cover with a plastic mulch (sheeting) 1.25mm-4mm gauge. Seal the edges of the plastic mulch to prevent air exchange. Burying all the edges in the soil gives the best seal. If the plastic mulch gets pierced, you will lose the anaerobicity of the soil reducing the effectiveness of treatment. To finish ASD treatment, remove plastic and allow the soil to 'breathe' for about 1 week for the toxic by-products to dissipate.

**For more info regarding ASD, there will be a workshop at the Greener Gardens Greenhouse on August 21st.**

## NeRAIN needs Volunteers

Farmers and others need greater and more accurate rain, snow, and hail data. Local citizens can help, and with minimal effort can gather vital data about local storms not available from any other source.

NeRAIN is a network of volunteers who report rainfall from a large area, including the Platte, Republican, Blue and Loup River Basin. NeRAIN welcomes participation by any motivated individual, family, or groups such as schools or clubs.

Each NeRAIN volunteer will receive training from their local NRD regional coordinator. Volunteers agree to transmit precipitation reports daily via the internet to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, where climate analysts process data and prepare detailed maps showing rainfall patterns. Volunteers may also upload snow depth, snowpack, hail, or other intense storm activity. Recording a zero-precipitation day is equally important as reporting a storm.

NeRAIN data will supplement information from the National Weather Service, and will improve daily decision-making information for agriculture, industry, home water use, utility providers, insurance companies, resource managers and educators.

NeRAIN information is updated daily and available for public access at <https://nednr.nebraska.gov/NeRain/>.

