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Office hours

Monday-Thursday  
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Friday  
7:30AM-4:00PM

Meet the Staff  
Geri Alworth

Hello, my name is Geri Alworth. I am the Field Clerk for the North Platte NRD in the Oshkosh office. I grew up in Garden County, graduating from Lewellen Rural High School. Prior to beginning my position here, I worked at the Coffee Roastery, that is still here in Oshkosh, for twelve years. I have been with the NPNRD for over three years. I enjoy having the opportunity to assist producers and customers that come into this office. My husband, Larry, and I have three grown children, and five grandchildren, all of which keep us very busy. In my free time, I enjoy cooking, baking, and fishing.

Meet the Staff  
Kirstee Moore-Schutte

I'm Kirstee Moore-Schutte, the Special Projects Coordinator at the North Platte Natural Resources District. I started working in the greenhouse industry 10 years ago, which sparked my deep passion for horticulture and environmental stewardship. As an active University of Nebraska Master Gardener, I'm always looking to expand my knowledge, and I'm currently pursuing a degree in horticulture through the University of Massachusetts. In addition to my professional work, I serve on the board of directors at the Gering Library, my hometown. In my free time, I enjoy reading, mountain bike riding, and dirt bike riding.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Sub-District 4 since 2013  
Kent Andreas—Vice Chairman  
Sub-District 4 since 2013  
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Sub-District 1 since 2018  
Lane Darnall—Director  
Sub-District 3 since 2023  
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

**STAFF**

**General**  
Scott Schaneman—General Manager  
Travis Preston—Assistant Manager  
**Water Department**  
Craig Uhrig—Water Resources Coordinator  
Seth Popp—Water Resources Technician  
Jody Fiscus—Water Resources Technician  
Lynn Okicki—Water Resources Technician  
Keelie Williamson—Water Resources Technician  
Ethan Woehrle—Water Resources Technician  
**Resource Conservation Dept.**  
Todd Filipi—Resource Conservation Coordinator  
Ken Ridgeway—Resource Conservation Technician

**Geographic Info. System (GIS) Dept.**

Lydia Hendrickson—GIS Coordinator  
**Administration Department**  
Danielle Madden—Office Manager  
Renay Smith—Secretary/Accounts Payable Clerk  
Susie Kaufman—Receptionist/Accounts Receivables Clerk  
**Greenhouse & Special Projects**  
Kirstee Moore-Schutte—Special Projects Coordinator in Greenhouse  
**Data Management and Outreach Dept.**  
Kyle Ann Hopkins—Data & Outreach Coordinator  
Paula Kihlthau—Data Management Specialist  
Macy Elliott—Public Communications Specialist and Educator  
**NPNRD & NRCS Clerks**  
Geri Alworth—NRCS Clerk, Oshkosh  
Becky Schaneman—NRCS Clerk, Scottsbluff

# Your Resource Report

Protecting Lives—Protecting Property—Protecting the Future



**North Platte**  
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

January 2025

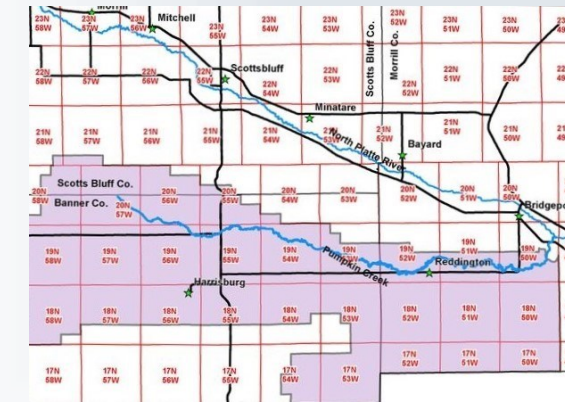
## Pumpkin Creek Allocations By Travis Preston

On November 14, 2024 the Board of Directors held a hearing to hear testimony concerning the proposed Rules and Regulations for the 2025-2029 allocation period.

The North Platte NRD would like to thank all those who came to listen and testify for and against these Rules and Regulations. As a locally controlled entity, input from the public is important and valued by both the staff and the Board of Directors. The Board passed the new Rules and Regulations at the board meeting held on the same day. There were a number of changes to the rules. Among those changes is a 5-year pilot study where an increase of allocation in the Pumpkin Creek Basin from 12-acre inches per year to 14-acre inches per year will be monitored and modelled to determine long term feasibility of sustainable water use.

Several factors were considered when deciding on this rule change. In July of 2004 Legislative Bill 962 designated portions of the North Platte NRD either Fully Appropriated or Over Appropriated. Pumpkin Creek Basin was designated as Over Appropriated. In an effort to meet the requirements of our subsequent Integrated Management Plan (IMP), the North Platte NRD implemented allocations in the Over Appropriated areas of the District. Since that time, extensive modelling efforts have been made to better understand water use within the District. Through voluntary acre retirement programs, recharge projects, and allocation, the North Platte NRD has been able to meet and exceed IMP requirements. The Nebraska Groundwater Management and Protection Act recognizes the importance of agriculture to the state and the North Platte NRD recognizes the importance of agriculture to our local communities. This change in rules will allow the NPNRD to better understand what sustainable use within the Pumpkin Creek Basin looks like.

An additional 2 inches of water can be the difference between growing a crop in a drought year or watching a crop burn up in the sun, opens the possibility of planting a cover crop to increase soil health and help draw out excess nitrates, and provides an increased ability for operations to make on farm decisions which ultimately benefit our communities and the state. The NPNRD will continue to take levels at monitoring wells throughout the basin, check streamflow, and model the Basin. The staff of the NPNRD will regularly update the Board on findings throughout the allocation period and the Board will make decisions concerning this rule as more information becomes available. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the NPNRD if you have any questions.



Important Dates

- 2/4: Bean Day at Gering Civic Center
- 2/7-2/8: Farm and Ranch Expo At Mitchell Fair Grounds
- 2/19: Second Annual Ag Symposium at Gering Civic Center
- 3/11: Tree Pruning Workshop at NPNRD
- 5/15-17, 5/19-24: Annual Fundraising Plant Sale at the NPNRD Greenhouse
- 8/16: Annual Water Expo

Important Announcements

- Accepting tree orders now for the spring planting season
- NRD windbreak renovation program is up and running
- Buffalo Grass Planting demonstration in early June
- Ponderosa and Bur Oak saplings will be available for replant into any burn scars in the District
- Accepting NSWCP applications for various Conservation Practices



## Holistic Management By Todd Filipi

I hope this finds everyone having had a Happy Holiday Season and a safe and joyous New Years. I recently had the opportunity to attend an Ag and Conservation Conference in Denver with a coworker. There were various good talks on a wide array of things but one piece in particular caused me some reflection. During one of the session breaks, an announcement was made recognizing the 40th Anniversary of a group called Holistic Management International.

I don't know how many people have ever looked up the term Holistic Management. I'll admit it's a term that has changed and morphed over the years and that perhaps wasn't quite what I was taught back in college. The Holistic concept has morphed into more of an all-encompassing, ecosystem wide approach and understanding and probably a term many now associate more with medical type treatment philosophies. At the time I was in college though, it was a movement/management style based largely around doing nothing in essence. Pull back the hand of man and your land will return to looking like it did at some predetermined point in time before white settlers entered the picture. Just that simple. You got to argue about what forbs existed back then and where based upon the journals of Lewis and Clark or the pictures drawn by some illiterate former ship builder on the Oregon Trail but otherwise by just doing nothing, your land will suddenly return to something grand from years ago. On some levels, I can agree with that. The older I have gotten and the more times mother nature has made me look foolish in our conservation efforts, I have come to understand my minuteness in the grand scheme of the world and it's timeline. The timeline of wanting to see something in our lifetimes and sorting out what we screwed up to begin with or manipulated in the name of our existence is where I struggle though especially with the terms of what I learned as Holistic Management so many years ago.

But... Many of you have heard us say "You are going to wonder what we sold you and not think much of us for the first few years." This isn't a statement of the quality of our knowledge or products, but an indicator of the challenges and realities we all face in growing conservation/ regenerative plantings in the semi-arid high plains of the Nebraska Panhandle. When and more often, if nature cooperates, we can all look like heroes, however, we more often find limited success at least initially. We are not suggesting that you let nature take its course and do nothing but rather you commit to allowing the plants to take their course once the best management systems have been utilized. Please allow for a reasonable amount of time for establishment before hooking up the disk or the mower. This may mean several growing seasons. The bottom-line is don't give up prematurely and please call if you have concerns about the viability of any project.

For more information on these programs, please contact Todd or Ken at 308-632-2749 or stop by the office at 100547 Airport Rd. in Scottsbluff.



The Resource Conservation Department has been working on implementing a new Windbreak Renovation Strategy. They are using a Forestry Drum Mulcher and a tracked compact loader to create planting paths through existing degraded or non-functional windbreaks.

# NPNRD AG SYMPOSIUM

**WHEN**  
February 19, 2025  
9am - 3pm

**WHERE**  
Gering Civic Center  
1050 N St, Gering, NE 69341

**• TOPICS •**

- Timely Nutrient Applications •
- Effective Nutrient Management •
- Yields • Protecting Waterways •
- Adapting to Regulations •
- Reduced Nitrogen Applications •
- Conserve Resources •

**For more information call the North Platte NRD at 308.632.2749 or visit [www.npnrd.org](http://www.npnrd.org)**

**GUEST  
SPEAKERS**

**DAMIAN  
MASON**



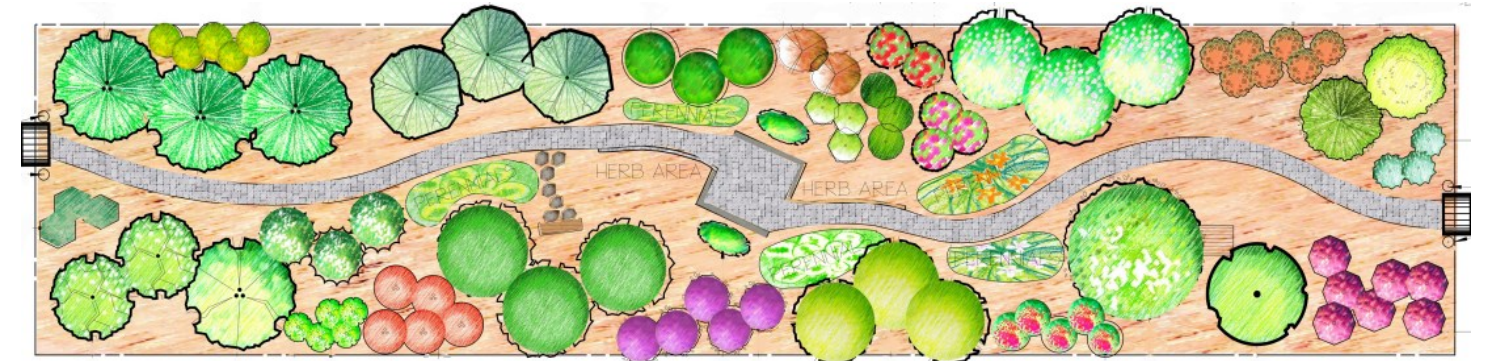
DamianMason  
THE BUSINESS OF AGRICULTURE

**TEMPLE  
RHODES**





North Platte  
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT



This is the layout for the new food forest being established at the North Platte Natural Resources District. It has a variety of plants and a walking path open to the public to come and visit.

## Exploring the North Platte Natural Resources Demonstrational Planting: A Sustainable Edible Landscape By Kirstee Moore-Schutte

As part of the ongoing effort to educate and inspire sustainable growing practices, the North Platte Natural Resources District has recently unveiled a new addition to its outdoor education area—a demonstrational planting funded in part by a grant from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. This innovative project, known as an edible landscape or food forest, transforms a once standard landscape into a thriving, productive garden that not only benefits people but also the environment and wildlife.

Instead of using land for purely aesthetic purposes, this project offers a space that nourishes people, supports wildlife, and fosters sustainability. By integrating a mix of fruit-bearing trees and shrubs, this food forest provides both nutrition and ecological benefits.

The demonstration site features a diverse range of plants, including woody plants such as raspberries, currants, gooseberries, elderberries, and American sandcherry, (it will also feature annual garden plants). These shrubs not only provide nutritious fruit but also attract various wildlife species, making the garden an inviting space for wildlife and people alike.

In addition to these shrubs, the garden includes several fruit trees, including plum, peach, cherry, and multiple apple varieties. Notably, two of the apple trees are espaliered, a unique method of training trees to grow flat against a trellis or fence. Espalier trees offer a range of advantages, especially for those looking to maximize the productivity of a limited space. The key benefit is ease of harvest—by training the trees to grow horizontally, fruit becomes more accessible and easier to pick. The espalier method also encourages better sunlight distribution to the leaves, ensuring that the tree produces more fruit and with higher quality.

The advantages of creating an edible landscape extend far beyond the obvious rewards of homegrown produce. These landscapes offer a multitude of environmental benefits. First and foremost, edible landscapes help conserve soil, especially in areas prone to erosion. By reducing soil loss during heavy rainstorms, these gardens play a crucial role in protecting the land and maintaining soil health.

The benefits extend to water management as well.

Traditional lawns often require significant chemical treatments, including fertilizers and pesticides. By converting portions of turfgrass into edible landscapes, we can reduce the need for inputs, keeping these substances from entering surface and groundwater systems.

Beyond the human benefits, edible landscapes also play a significant role in supporting local wildlife. By providing food and shelter, they attract a variety of creatures, including insects, birds, and small mammals. Many bird species, such as the downy woodpecker, mountain bluebird, black-billed magpie, thick-billed longspur, and American robin, rely heavily on insects for food. These birds, in turn, help naturally control pest populations, reducing the need for chemical interventions in the garden.

The presence of diverse plants and habitats also fosters biodiversity. When different species of plants and trees grow together, they create a balanced ecosystem where pollinators, like bees and butterflies, can thrive. This is essential not just for the health of the garden but for the broader environment.

The North Platte Natural Resources District's new demonstrational planting serves as a model for sustainable gardening practices that anyone can implement. Whether you have a large property or a small backyard, converting part of your landscape into an edible food forest offers tangible benefits for both the environment and you. The integration of edible plants with ecological benefits shows that landscapes can be both beautiful and functional, providing healthy food while supporting the wildlife that depend on it.

If you're inspired by the North Platte demonstration and want to try your hand at edible landscaping, remember that it's not just about the plants you choose but also how they are laid out to maximize their potential. In this case, the combination of woody plants, fruit trees, and thoughtful design creates a garden that nourishes both the body and the environment, setting a positive example for future generations.

For more information or to visit, please contact Kirstee at 308-632-2749 or stop by the office at 100547 Airport Rd. in Scottsbluff.