

# KNOW YOUR NRD



Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts  
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

Spring, 2017



*This dry dam along Ash Hollow Creek, south of Waverly, will be completed in the spring. The NRD and the City of Waverly are each funding half of the nearly \$3 million project cost. It will control flooding in the town and remove about 90 properties from the floodplain. Flood insurance would no longer be necessary in order to get loans to buy those properties. The dry dam will only hold water after a storm, releasing it at a controlled rate.*

## New Year-New Challenges

by NRD Board Chair Ray Stevens



The Lower Platte South NRD began the year with nine hold over, eight re-elected and four new directors. The range of talents is quite diverse but the capability is uniformly high. Combined with the professional and extremely proficient staff, this NRD will meet the responsibilities of preserving and protecting the natural resources entrusted to us. Deadman's Run, the Salt Creek Levee, watershed dams, environmental education and cost sharing programs will occupy much of our time this year. Collaboration with many federal, state and local governmental organizations results in a very efficient use of financial resources, also known as your tax dollars.

The year 2016 marked the end of the Antelope Valley Authority, the multi-year cooperative effort between the NRD, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the City of Lincoln. 2016 also marked the retirement of long time General Manager Glenn Johnson. We wish Glenn health and happiness in his leisure years.

## Protecting Lives • Protecting Property • Protecting the Future

### Seedling Sales in Bloom

Ordering of about 30 species of seedling trees and shrubs from the NRD continues until March 24th. Landowners can order online, by mail (print an order form online) or by visiting the NRD office at 3125 Portia Street, Lincoln. Trees will be delivered to the NRD in early April and stored in our custom tree cooler until you're ready to plant them in April or May. We recommend planting the seedlings immediately after you pick them up from the NRD office. Most of the seedlings are between 24 inches and 36 inches in length, including the roots,

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### Stevens Leads Board

The NRD Board chose Director Ray Stevens, of Lincoln, as its new chair in January (see guest column above). Stevens was first elected to the board in 2013 and has also served as NRD Board Treasurer. He succeeds Greg Osborn, who served a rare three consecutive years as chair. Ordinarily, board officers are elected each January by the 21-member NRD Board and officers may serve no more than two consecutive years. The board made an exception last year and re-elected all officers. Larry Ruth is the new Vice-Chair. Jeremie Kerkman was elected

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### Deadman's Run Study Update

A preliminary plan has surfaced to reduce the risk of flooding in a portion of Lincoln's Deadman's Run Watershed. After two years of study, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has determined several flood reduction measures it may be able to help fund in an area from Salt Creek, upstream to just past 48th Street. The NRD and the City of Lincoln are the local sponsors of the study.

The Preliminary Preferred Alternative that emerged from the Corps study was introduced at a public open house on January

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# Conservation Forestry

## Seedling Sales in Bloom

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One bundle of 25 seedlings.

and 100 or more can usually be packed in a single box that is easy to handle and can fit into any vehicle. In the past, the NRD has offered to plant seedlings for cooperators. Unfortunately, the outside help we utilized is no longer available; however we have produced a new tree seedling planting video. Search "lower platte south nrd" on YouTube.

Seedlings cost \$0.85 per plant for 75 or fewer and \$0.80 per plant for 100 or more and each species must be ordered in increments of 25. Acreage packages of 50 seedlings (five species/ten seedlings each) specially selected for specific uses are also available. The NRD is non-profit and operates the program with a goal of breaking even. Lower Platte South's annual sales have averaged around 30,000 seedlings per year since the program began in its current form about 15 years ago and the 23 NRDs throughout Nebraska sell nearly one million seedlings per year. Learn more and order at [lpsnrd.org](http://lpsnrd.org).

## Run Supports Foundation



Registration is open for the annual "NRD 5K/1 Mile Fun Run and Kids Dash," Saturday April 1st, starting at the NSAA building at Lincoln's Haymarket Park. The looped 5K course will take runners past Memorial Stadium and the Devaney Center. The run benefits the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts Foundation, which supports students studying natural resource-related fields by providing scholarships and internships. Lower Platte South is this year's host. Look for a registration link at [lpsnrd.org](http://lpsnrd.org). Register before March 15th and get a free T-shirt!

## Antelope Cleanup

*Crews from the NRD and Gana Trucking and Excavating, of Martel, Nebraska, used skid loaders to scoop-up accumulated sediment along the Antelope Valley Project, downstream from Vine Street, in January. Gana was able to dedicate extra equipment and the anticipated three-week project was completed in one week, lowering the cost and allowing the creekside trail to be re-opened earlier than anticipated.*





## Your Elected Officials

### Stevens Leads Board

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Treasurer and Deborah Eagan is Secretary. The Board also selects a member to represent them on the board of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) and Milt Schmidt was chosen for that role. Larry Zimmerman is the NARD Alternate. Information about the board and the subdistricts they serve is available at [lpsnrd.org](http://lpsnrd.org); click on About Us.

### Election Wrap

Voters in the November General Election put four new representatives on the 21-member NRD Board. Congratulations to Gary Hellerich, of Valparaiso; Sarah Wilson, of Waverly; and Gary Aldridge and Chelsea Johnson, both of Lincoln. Eight board members were re-elected (see right column). Directors serve four-year terms and one of the two board seats in each of ten subdistricts is elected every two years. The 21st At-Large seat was not up for election in 2016, but there were two two-year terms on ballots, due to board vacancies.



*Voters last November brought four new members to the NRD Board. They are (from left) Gary Hellerich-Subdistrict 1, Sarah Wilson-Subdistrict 2, Gary Aldridge-Subdistrict 4, and Chelsea Johnson-Subdistrict 7.*

The four out-going directors were recognized for their service at the December meeting of the NRD Board. Daryl Bohac, Joe Skopp and Ann Bleed had all served on the board since 2013 and Mark Christensen was appointed to fill a vacancy on the board last August. The NRD Board, staff and public thank them for their years of service!. Information about the board and the subdistricts they serve is available at [lpsnrd.org](http://lpsnrd.org); click on About Us.

## NRD Board

Here are your NRD Board representatives. Those who were re-elected to the board in November are in **bold**. The Board meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month at the NRD office in Lincoln. More information is available at [lpsnrd.org](http://lpsnrd.org); click on About Us.

### Subdistrict

- 1 Don Jacobson, W Lincoln  
Gary Hellerich, Valparaiso
- 2 Sarah Wilson, Waverly  
Mark Spangler, Murray
- 3 Mike DeKalb, NE Lincoln  
Vern Barrett, Ceresco
- 4 Larry Ruth, Walton  
Gary Aldridge, SE Lincoln
- 5 Greg Osborn, W Lincoln  
Bruce Johnson, W Lincoln
- 6 Jeremie Kerkman, NW Lincoln  
Deborah Eagan, NW Lincoln
- 7 Chelsea Johnson, NE Lincoln  
Richard Bolte, NE Lincoln
- 8 Larry Hall, SE Lincoln  
Ron Svoboda, SE Lincoln
- 9 Milt Schmidt, SE Lincoln  
Larry Zimmerman, SE Lincoln
- 10 Ray Stevens, S Lincoln  
Karen Amen, S Lincoln

### At-large

David Landis, Lincoln

## Reducing the Floodplain

### Deadman's Run Study Update

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*Interested citizens study Deadman's Run floodplain maps at an open house held January 17th at Nebraska Educational Telecommunications.*

### Summer Conservation

Each fall, the demand for NRD cost-sharing to construct terraces, waterways and other land improvements exceeds the number of available contractors and some projects are not able to be constructed. In response, the NRD Board has increased the time window to May 1 - Sept. 15 and increased cost-sharing to 15% in its Summer Conservation Program. The board hopes the changes encourage more landowners to install best management practices during the summer months, when more contractors are available. Contact your NRCS office or the NRD for details.

17th. More than 100 people attended to learn more about the plan. The preliminary plan includes:

- widening and improving the Deadman's Run Channel from 48th Street to Cornhusker Highway
- replacing bridges at 33rd and 48th streets
- creating a detention basin just west of the Fleming Fields sports complex
- relocating an access road east of State Fair Park Drive
- and improving the channel under the railroad tracks, west of 33rd Street, to convey water more quickly

Corps Planner and Project Manager Jeff Bohlken told the crowd the Corps study yielded four alternatives, but the Preliminary Preferred Alternative is the only one of the four in which the benefits of construction would exceed the cost; a prerequisite to the Corps being able to provide funding. The estimated cost of the plan is \$20 million and the benefit-to-cost ratio is 1.5 to 1.0. Bohlken said if the plan is approved, the Corps could provide up to \$10 million, with the balance of the cost coming from local sources.

Flood insurance would no longer be required in order to receive loans to buy properties removed from the floodplain. More study is needed this winter to determine exactly what properties would be removed. Bohlken also introduced a tentative timeline for the project, with the final design completed in September 2018, landrights negotiations done by spring 2018, construction starting in the summer or fall of 2019 and completion in spring 2021. FEMA floodplain maps would then be re-drawn, officially removing properties, possibly by fall 2022.

## Icy Fun!

### Ice Fish the NRD Lakes

Most of us, hopefully, have taken advantage of warm weather and targeted one of the eight NRD public use lakes for an afternoon family picnic, a camping weekend, group hike, or some “me time.” Fortunately, all of those opportunities are still out there in 20-degree weather, plus, you may be able to ice fish! Take along an auger, ice fishing pole and some bait and your winter outings may become your favorites. All eight of our public-use lakes are open this winter. There are no entry



*Two ice fisherman erect a temporary shelter on the ice at Wildwood Lake in January.*

Nothing is more important than safety when ice fishing. Four inches of clear, newly formed ice is safe to walk on, but a foot of old ice that has partially thawed may not be safe. Stay aware. Ice thickness can vary greatly within just a few steps. Some good ice fishing safety tips are available at [www.TakeMeFishing.org](http://www.TakeMeFishing.org). Be safe and good luck.

### Rule Changes

Changes to two sets of NRD rules and regulations took effect in January. Public hearings were held in late 2016 on changes to ground water rules and to the NRD’s Erosion and Sediment Control Program and the changes were approved by the NRD Board before they took effect. The ground water rule changes relate to:

- prohibiting irrigated acre increases in the Dwight-Valparaiso-Brainard Special Management Area
- water well permit requirements
- decertifying irrigated acres
- extending irrigation allocations for three more years in part of the Dwight-Valparaiso-Brainard Special Management Area
- and more

Changes to the Erosion and Sediment Control Program mostly parallel recent definition and terminology changes statewide. Complete Ground Water Rules and Regulations and pertinent sections of the Erosion and Sediment Control Program are available at [lpsnrd.org](http://lpsnrd.org) or contact the NRD.

## Levee Website

The NRD continues to work with JEO Consulting Group to prioritize and design needed updates to Lincoln’s Salt Creek Levee. Keep up with the multi-year project at [saltcreeklevee.jeo.com](http://saltcreeklevee.jeo.com).

## Like Us?

Social media is a great way to keep up with NRD programs and activities. Like us on Facebook at LPSNRD, follow [lowerplattesouthnrd](https://www.instagram.com/lowerplattesouthnrd) on Instagram and search [lower platte south nrd](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) on YouTube!

permit requirements, but state fishing permits are required and all state fishing regulations apply along with any special regulations posted on the property.



# Protecting Lives, Property, Future

## Biesecker is District Engineer

The NRD's new District Engineer brings significant experience to that new staff position. Devin Biesecker is providing engineering support for NRD projects, after a combined 15 years in Watershed Management and Engineering Services with the City of Lincoln. Biesecker has a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering from the University of Iowa and lives near Roca with his wife and three daughters. Welcome Devin!



## Web or Print?

Our *Know Your NRD* newsletter is available in both printed and electronic versions. Look for the printed newsletter in District newspapers in February, June and October. You can have a link to the electronic version delivered right to your inbox. All you need to do is visit our newsletter subscription page, at [lpsnrd.org](http://lpsnrd.org), under Publications, to sign up. The NRD will not share your email address.

## Conservation Legislation

Each year, the NRD identifies bills introduced in the Legislature that may modify the many ways we preserve and protect natural resources. Below are some of the bills and resolutions we are watching this session:

LR 4 - explores the need for a more comprehensive statewide water quality study

LBs 22,23 & 24 - budget measures to compensate for the more than \$267 million state budget shortfall

LB 98 - gives NRDs that have fully or over-appropriated water supplies increased taxing authority for certain groundwater management activities.

LB 182 - makes more rural water systems eligible for low interest loans

LB 232 - proposes property leased to the state, NRD or other government subdivision be exempt from property taxes

LB 71 - increases the amount appropriated for the Nebraska Tree Recovery Program, as the emerald ash borer invades Nebraska

## NRD Project Update

MoPac East Trail bridge near Fletcher Avenue - storm damage from spring 2015 repaired northeast of Elmwood. Valley Corp. \$146,370

Salt Creek Trail, 14th to Cornhusker at 23rd Street - Planning phase. Expected completion in 2017.

Marsh Wren Saline Wetland Restoration - East of 48th along Salt Creek. Completion in 2017. Yost Construction \$629,596

Ash Hollow Dry Dam, Waverly - Completion expected this spring (see page1). Construction cost, \$1.2 million: 50% City of Waverly, 50% NRD. Commercial Contractors

Havlat Road Structure - dam completed near 168th and Pioneers, south of Pleasant Dale. B-D Construction \$368,308

Salt Creek Levee-Rosa Parks Trail - Landrights and permitting phase. 80% NE Dept. of Roads, 20% NRD. Expected completion in 2017.