



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

3125 Portia Street | P.O. Box 83581 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-3581
P: 402.476.2729 • F: 402.476.6454 | www.lpsnrd.org

Memorandum

Date: February 13, 2024
To: Board of Directors
From: David Potter, Assistant General Manager
RE: Land Resources Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

The Land Resources Subcommittee met at 5:30 pm on Thursday, February 8, 2024, in the NRD Large Conference Room to take action on three items and discuss a few others. Subcommittee members present included Don Jacobson, Gary Aldridge, Tom Green, Seth Hawkins, Gary Hellerich, Chelsea Johnson, Susan Seacrest, and Ken Vogel. Others present included Tom Cowan, John Albert, Sean Loken, Lesli Lair, Donna Reid, Mike Sousek, and David Potter. Director Jacobson called the meeting to order, gave a brief welcome, and reviewed the agenda.

The first item was **consideration of the NRD/NSWCP 2024 LPSNRD Average Costs for the Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-Share Program**. Potter stated our District Conservationist, Tom Cowan finally received the DNR NSWCP Payment Schedule in mid-January. The payment schedule is an NRCS regional docket that identifies all the possible practices and recommended unit prices. These unit prices are not always indicative of what we are seeing within LPSNRD. Each year we prepare the annual LPSNRD Docket that identifies the common practices and scenarios used within our District with our recommended cost-unit rate. Cowan and our resources technicians met on January 22nd to discuss the average costs listed in the 2024 Docket. In review of the 2024 NSWCP Payment Schedule, our technicians noted a few average costs commonly used in our District were not correctly listed and the changes in unit costs were not reflective of what we have been seeing from contractors. The final draft of the 2024 LPSNRD Average Costs (or Docket) based on those discussions and input was presented and is attached. The 2024 NSWCP Payment Schedule (long list) was also provided to the subcommittee. Cowan and Potter then discussed the spreadsheet comparing the new 2024 cost-share numbers with those approved for the 2023 Docket (attached). It was noted that some unit costs have gone up while others have decreased. Discussion followed. It was also noted that if an uncommon project scenario that's not on the LPSNRD docket would occur, then the unit price listed on the DNR NSWCP Payment Schedule would be used.

It was moved by Vogel, seconded by Hawkins, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the 2024 LPSNRD Average Costs for the Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-share Program.

The second item was to **consider a change to the LPSNRD Surface Water Quality Cost-Share Program maximum cost-share dollar amount.**

During FY24 LRIP meetings, the subcommittee and staff discussed the possibility of raising the maximum cost-share dollar amounts for the program and how it would affect conservation work. Staff felt that any new maximum dollar amounts should take effect after the first of the year to coordinate with the new docket and application period and avoid any confusion. In 2015, the Board changed the district-wide maximum from \$7,000 to \$10,000 and the summer conservation program maximum from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The most recent change took place in December 2020, when the Board approved an increase of \$2,500 in the maximum dollar amounts to the LPSNRD district-wide, targeted and summer surface water quality cost-share programs (district-wide maximum from \$10,000 to \$12,500, targeted maximum from \$12,500 to \$15,000, summer district wide from \$15,000 to \$17,500, and summer targeted from \$20,000 to \$22,500). Based on current prices, staff are again proposing to consider an increase of \$2,500 in the maximum dollar amounts to the LPSNRD district-wide, targeted and summer surface water quality cost-share programs. Copies of the land treatment cost-share program and summer conservation program brochures with the recommended changes to the 2021 maximum amounts (attached) were shared with the subcommittee. Potter, Cowan, and Albert discussed how the increases would help with larger projects and get more conservation work on the ground.

It was moved by Hellerich, seconded by Vogel, and approved by the Subcommittee (with Aldridge voting present and the others voting yes) to recommend the Board of Directors approve a \$2,500 increase in the maximum cost-share amounts for the LPSNRD Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-share Fall and Summer Programs.

The third item was to **consider a Farm Pond Cost-Share application.** Potter stated the district received one farm pond application for 2024. Resources Technician John Albert has reviewed the application from Andy and Dana Cotter and presented project information to the subcommittee. The project would be located on Lot 2 NW Section 2-12-6, Lancaster County, southwest of Ceresco near the county line. It was noted by Albert that the application meets the criteria of the farm pond cost share program and a dam in this location would stabilize the increasing head cut.

It was moved by Vogel, seconded by Seacrest, and unanimously approved by the Subcommittee to recommend the Board of Directors approve the farm pond application for Andy and Dana Cotter at a cost-share not to exceed \$14,400.

The next agenda item included **updates of LPSNRD program and projects.** Staff provided updates on the following items and the subcommittee discussed each.

- **Status of Cost-Share Projects.** Due to the 2023 drought and the recent snow and extreme cold, several fall land treatment projects have not been completed or even started. In some cases, NRCS would not allow construction due to lack of moisture and compaction issues. Only 13 fall cost-share applications of the 70 approved have been completed and paid so far (5 pd by NRD and 8 pd by NeDNR). With the recent precipitation and warmer temperatures, we're expecting more projects to be completed. NRCS will review fields on a case-by-case basis. All the 2023 summer cost-share jobs were completed, and all have been paid.
- **Extension of Fall cost-share construction deadline.** The construction deadline for fall cost-share applications is February 1st of each year. This date has been established to give the district an opportunity to evaluate the number of cost-share projects during the construction period with the remaining budgeted funds. For most years, this set date has worked well and prevents projects from being dragged out. With

some projects not completed or started due to the drought and construction restriction by NRCS and with money still in the budget, staff has extended that deadline to April 30, 2024. The District's Summer Conservation Program construction period begins May 1st, so this would complete those fall applications before the start of that program. Even if all the work is done with the outstanding applications, the district will still be within budget. This has been extended in past years when the current budget allows us to get more conservation practices completed. We extended the construction deadline last year to April 30th and it worked well.

- Cover Crop Program. The district currently has 33 approved cover crop cost-share applications for a total of 2,328.44 acres in the amount of \$69,600. With the drought conditions in 2023, we do expect a few cancellations from producers that did not want to plant cover crops by the November 1st deadline due to the lack of moisture. Resources technicians will be inspecting the current cover crop BMPs throughout the winter making sure they were seeded and are growing and then verifying termination of the crop in the spring. Cost-share payments are not made until the cover crop is verified and terminated.

Staff continues to promote the cover crop program (brochures, website, social media, newspaper, NRCS promotion, and direct mailings). LPSNRD also participated in UNL Extension Section 319 Highboy Cover Crop Program again this year and worked with two producers in our district to plant cover crops in standing corn.

- Twin Lakes 319 Project. The district worked with Nebraska Game and Parks and with Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy to prepare and submit a 319 Project Implementation Plan (PIP) and funding request to EPA for the Twin Lakes Watershed. In June 2021 the District was notified by NDEE that EPA approved the Twin Lakes Watershed PIP. The LPSNRD Board approved the project agreement in July 2021. Since approving the agreement, staff has mailed a flyer to all of the property owners in the watershed, launched a watershed website (<https://www.lpsnrd.org/programs/landowner-cost-share/twin-lakes-watershed>), ordered project recognition signs, held an open house in Pleasant Dale to provide additional information, and received and approved several cost-share applications for BMPs. The Twin Lakes 319 Project is a three-year grant. Upon completion of the grant, the district will consider keeping the Twin Lakes Watershed as one of our identified targeted areas within the Salt Creek Watershed.

Due to the recent drought and construction restrictions, LPSNRD submitted a request to extend the 319-grant period. In January 2024, LPSNRD signed an agreement with NDEE to extend the grant for the Twin Lakes Watershed Target Area Implementation Project to April 2025. Due to the 2023 drought, most of these BMPs are expected to be constructed this spring and summer (with the construction deadline extension). Those projects that don't get constructed this spring are anticipated to be re-applied for summer or next fall. There are also currently four approved farm pond projects in the Twin Lakes Watershed. Due to the dry conditions and permitting process, these structures have not yet been constructed. Two of the four farm ponds are to be completed this fiscal year. LPSNRD is not currently taking any more BMP cost-share applications in the Twin Lakes Watershed until those approved cost-share projects are constructed or cancelled but will continue to publicize and correspond with interested landowners regarding the Twin Lakes Watershed Section 319 Project.

There being no further business, Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 6:38 pm.

2024 LPSNRD Average Costs - Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-Share Program

Practice Code	Practice Name	Scenario	Scenario Unit	Total Payment per Unit
342	Critical Area Planting	Vegetation - Normal Tillage (Organic and Non-Organic)	Acres	\$426.87
362	Diversion	Diversion	CuYd	\$4.27
378	Pond	Embankment Pond with less than 24" Pipe	CuYd	\$7.08
378	Pond	Embankment Pond with greater than or equal to 24" Pipe	CuYd	\$6.11
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	Hand Planted, Bare Root	Each	\$2.73
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	Trees, machine planted	Foot	\$0.39
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Embankment, Pipe <24"	CuYd	\$7.08
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Embankment, Pipe >=24"	CuYd	\$6.11
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Concrete Block Chute	SqFt	\$8.35
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Rock Chute	CuYd	\$141.51
412	Grassed Waterway	Waterway, 25 to 50 ft2	Acres	\$2,518.19
412	Grassed Waterway	Waterway with Side Dikes or Checks	Acres	\$3,756.95
484	Mulching	Natural Material - Straw	Acres	\$545.14
512	Pasture and Hay Planting	Introduced Perennial & Native Grass Mix	Acres	\$124.91
550	Range Planting	Native, Standard Prep	Acres	\$171.08
550	Range Planting	Native, Wildlife, or Pollinator (Fl)	Acres	\$294.25
600	Terrace	Non-Storage - Broadbase	Foot	\$2.40
600	Terrace	Non-Storage - Narrow Base	Foot	\$3.33
600	Terrace	Storage - Broadbase	Foot	\$4.25
600	Terrace	Storage - Grass Back	Foot	\$4.39
600	Terrace	Storage - Narrow Base	Foot	\$3.58
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 6" or smaller	Foot	\$5.07
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 8"	Foot	\$7.08
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 10"	Foot	\$10.26
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 12" or greater	Foot	\$13.58
620	Underground Outlet	PVC or Dual Wall, 4" - 6"	Foot	\$8.64
620	Underground Outlet	PVC or Dual Wall, 8" - 10"	Foot	\$10.38
620	Underground Outlet	PVC or Dual Wall, 12" - 18"	Foot	\$14.72
638	Water and Sediment Control Basin	WASCOB base	CuYd	\$4.66
650	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation	Removal > 8"es DBH with Dozer	Foot	\$3.18

Reviewed and Approved by:

Signature

Date

Costs for additional eligible practices can be found in the 2024 DNR/NSWCP Practice Payment Schedule.

2023 LPSNRD Final Rates vs 2024 Average Costs- Surface Water Quality BMP Cost-share Program

Practice Code	Practice Name	Scenario	Scenario Unit	2023 LPSNRD Payment per Unit	2024 Total Payment per Unit	Change in Payment per Unit
342	Critical Area Planting	Vegetation - Normal Tillage (Organic and Non-Organic)	Acres	\$ 420.33	\$426.87	\$6.54
362	Diversion	Diversion	CuYd	\$ 4.27	\$4.16	(\$0.11)
378	Pond	Embankment Pond with less than 24" Pipe	CuYd	\$ 7.08	\$6.84	(\$0.24)
378	Pond	Embankment Pond with greater than or equal to 24" Pipe	CuYd	\$ 6.11	\$5.56	(\$0.55)
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	Hand Planted, Bare Root	Each	\$ 2.66	\$2.73	\$0.07
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	Trees, machine planted	Foot	\$ 0.36	\$0.39	\$0.03
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Embankment, Pipe <24"	CuYd	\$ 7.08	\$6.84	(\$0.24)
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Embankment, Pipe >=24"	CuYd	\$ 6.12	\$5.56	(\$0.56)
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Concrete Block Chute	SqFt	\$ 8.18	\$8.35	\$0.17
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	Rock Chute	CuYd	\$ 137.41	\$141.51	\$4.10
412	Grassed Waterway	Waterway, 25 to 50 ft2	Acres	\$ 2,518.19	\$5,375.33	\$2,857.14
412	Grassed Waterway	Waterway with Side Dikes or Checks	Acres	\$ 3,756.95	\$6,867.80	\$3,110.85
484	Mulching	Natural Material - Straw	Acres	\$ 462.96	\$545.14	\$82.18
512	Pasture and Hay Planting	Introduced Perennial & Native Grass Mix	Acres	\$ 80.64	\$124.91	\$44.27
550	Range Planting	Native, Standard Prep	Acres	\$ 162.10	\$171.08	\$8.98
550	Range Planting	Native, Wildlife, or Pollinator (Fl)	Acres	\$ 277.19	\$294.25	\$17.06
600	Terrace	Non-Storage - Broadbase	Foot	\$ 2.00	\$2.40	\$0.40
600	Terrace	Non-Storage - Narrow Base	Foot	\$ 3.50	\$3.33	(\$0.17)
600	Terrace	Storage - Broadbase	Foot	\$ 3.93	\$3.85	(\$0.08)
600	Terrace	Storage - Grass Back	Foot	\$ 4.39	\$4.72	\$0.33
600	Terrace	Storage - Narrow Base	Foot	\$ 3.77	\$3.58	(\$0.19)
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 6" or smaller	Foot	\$ 5.07	\$7.70	\$2.63
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 8"	Foot	\$ 7.08	\$8.42	\$1.34
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 10"	Foot	\$ 10.26	\$10.99	\$0.73
620	Underground Outlet	PE, 12" or greater	Foot	\$ 13.58	\$14.57	\$0.99
620	Underground Outlet	PVC or Dual Wall, 4" - 6"	Foot	\$ 8.64	\$10.70	\$2.06
620	Underground Outlet	PVC or Dual Wall, 8" - 10"	Foot	\$ 10.38	\$23.07	\$12.69
620	Underground Outlet	PVC or Dual Wall, 12" - 18"	Foot	\$ 14.72	\$48.39	\$33.67
638	Water and Sediment Control Basin	WASCOB base	CuYd	\$ 4.66	\$3.83	(\$0.83)
650	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation	Removal > 8"es DBH with Dozer	Foot	\$ 3.03	\$3.18	\$0.15

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Landowner applies for LPSNRD cost-sharing at local NRCS office.
2. NRCS reviews project application and completes initial design and cost estimate.
3. LPSNRD staff reviews application request and Board of Directors considers approval of the application.
4. After receiving notice of approval from LPSNRD, landowner hires contractor, completes conservation work and notifies NRCS of completed work.
5. NRCS verifies completed work.
6. Landowner pays contractor and submits all paperwork and invoices to NRCS.
7. NRCS submits completed application, forms and billings to LPSNRD.
8. LPSNRD reviews project certification for payment.
9. LPSNRD makes cost-share payment to landowner.

WHERE TO BEGIN

1. Contact your county NRCS office to obtain an application form:

*Cass County NRCS
Weeping Water: (402) 267-2025 ext 3*

*Lancaster County NRCS
Lincoln: (402) 423-9683 ext 3*

*Butler County NRCS
David City: (402) 367-3074 ext 3*

*Otoe County NRCS
Syracuse: (402) 269-2361 ext 3*

*Saunders County NRCS
Wahoo: (402) 443-4106 ext 3*

*Seward County NRCS
Seward: (402) 643-4586 ext 3*

2. If you have questions, contact the LPSNRD office at (402) 476-2729

ABOUT THE NRD

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District is one of 23 districts in the state of Nebraska formed in 1972 for the purpose of managing the state's natural resources, with an emphasis on watershed management. Programs and activities include all areas of natural resource management and development: tree planting, flood protection, wildlife habitat, stream bank stabilization, environmental education, land treatment, water monitoring and many others. The districts are partially funded by property taxes and governed by a board of directors—elected representatives who serve four-year terms. The NRD system is local government working to protect local natural resources. The Lower Platte South NRD includes nearly all of Lancaster and Cass counties and parts of Seward, Saunders, Otoe, and Butler counties.



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Contact: David Potter, Assistant Manager

The Lower Platte South NRD is an
Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

LAND TREATMENT COST-SHARE PROGRAMS



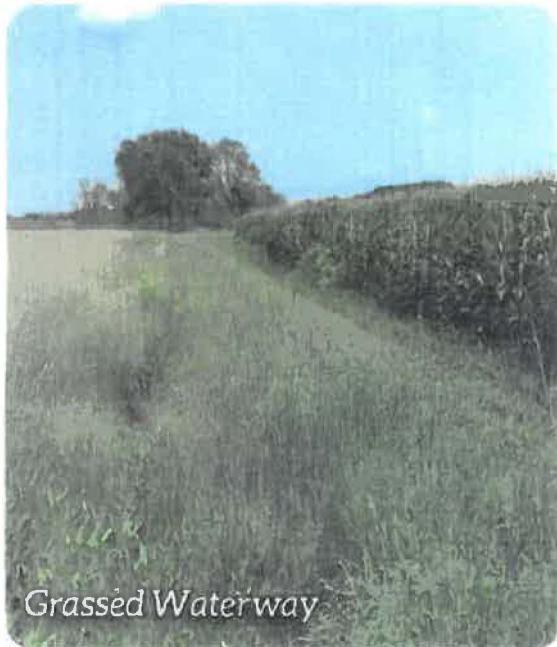
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www.lpsnrd.org

PURPOSE

Each year, the Lower Platte South NRD (LPSNRD) helps hundreds of agricultural landowners install improvements on their property to help reduce soil erosion and improve surface water quality. Our partner in these projects, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), uses federal guidelines to evaluate the land proposed for improvements and helps the landowner apply to the NRD for cost-sharing. Depending on factors like location, available funds and the time of year, landowners will receive cost-sharing from the NRD to install best management practices that are appropriate for their land. Information on individual programs can be obtained from your county NRCS office, from LPSNRD.org, from specific program brochures, or by contacting the Lower Platte South NRD.



Grassed Waterway

TERRACES, GRASSED WATERWAYS, DIVERSIONS & BASINS

LPSNRD will assist landowners with the planning, design, and cost of installing soil and water conservation practices on their land. These practices will reduce the loss of topsoil and control small gullies that contribute to the siltation of streams and lakes. Eligible practices include terraces, grassed waterways, diversions, and water and sediment control basins built on cropland and cropped for at least the previous growing season and certified by NRCS. Assistance may also be available to convert cropland to grass.

In addition to helping landowners plan and design these practices, LPSNRD reimburses them for a portion of the installation cost. The District will pay a cost-share unit percentage that is typically 60% of the average LPSNRD cost or 75% of the actual cost, whichever is less. The maximum cost-sharing amount for district-wide areas in the district is ~~\$12,500~~ **\$15,000**. In an identified targeted area, the average unit cost-share is increased to 75% and the maximum cost-share amount is ~~\$17,500~~ **\$20,000**.

Contact your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Office to determine what soil and water conservation practices you may need and the most current information concerning those cost-share programs in your county. Applications are taken throughout the year, but fall NRD cost-share applications are due July 1st to assure consideration for the program under the approved operating budget. The construction completion deadline for fall approvals is February 1st.

SUMMER CONSERVATION PROGRAM

If a landowner chooses to complete the work between May 1 and September 15, the project may be eligible for increased cost-sharing, under our Summer Conservation Program. The summer cost-sharing rate is an additional 15 percent, not to exceed 85 percent. The payment percentage is 75% average cost and 85% actual cost, whichever is less and the maximum cost-sharing amount for district-wide areas increases from ~~\$12,500~~ **\$15,000** to ~~\$17,500~~ **\$20,000**. In the identified targeted areas, the payment percentage is 85% average cost and 85% actual cost, whichever is less and the maximum cost-share amount is ~~\$22,500~~ **\$5,000**. Grassed waterways are not eligible for added incentive. The District offers this enhanced incentive because most projects are constructed in the fall, after harvest, but there is never enough time or contractors to complete all of the projects before winter begins.



Terrace Construction

COMPLETED CONSERVATION PROJECTS



Terrace with riser in wheat field



Waterway



Sediment Basin

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Contact:

David Potter, Assistant General Manager
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SUMMER CONSERVATION PROGRAM



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH
natural resources district



www.lpsnrd.org

PURPOSE

To offer an additional incentive to landowners to do more conservation work during the summer months on cropland. Increasing summer work spreads out the workload among a limited number of contractors and increases the overall amount of conservation work that gets done annually.



HOW TO APPLY

1. Contact the NRCS office to obtain an application form.
2. Fill out the application form in this brochure and submit it to your local county NRCS office with an aerial photo of the land to be treated.

Butler County NRCS

David City: (402) 367-3074 ext 3

Lancaster County NRCS

Lincoln: (402) 423-9683 ext 3

Saunders County NRCS

Wahoo: (402) 443-4106 ext 3

Cass County NRCS

Weeping Water: (402) 267-2025 ext 3

Otoe County NRCS

Syracuse: (402) 269-2361 ext 3

Seward County NRCS

Seward: (402) 643-4586 ext 3

3. If you have questions, contact the NRD office at (402) 476-2729

PROCESS

1. Landowner applies for cost-share at local NRCS office.
2. LPSNRD considers approval of the application.
3. Applications submitted to board for approval.
4. Landowner completes conservation work.
5. Landowner, contractor, and NRCS verify completed work.
6. LPSNRD reviews application for payment.
7. LPSNRD makes cost-share payment with additional incentive.



APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE

Terms

1. Eligible practices include terraces systems and water and sediment control basins built on cropland and certified by NRCS.
2. Only projects completed between May 1st and September 15th are eligible for this increased cost-share percentage.
3. Cost-share unit calculations (estimate and actual), will be based on an increased percentage of an additional 15%, not to exceed an 85% level.
4. The maximum for non-targeted area approvals is increased from ~~\$12,500~~ **\$15,000** to ~~\$17,500~~ **\$20,000** for work done through the NRD's Summer Conservation Program. The maximum for targeted area approvals is increased to ~~\$22,500~~ **\$25,000**.

Landowner Date

Address

City

State ZIP

Phone Email

The undersigned agrees to the terms of the program listed above and does hereby apply for the additional cost-share assistance on those practices to be built and completed according to NRCS design specifications between May 1st & September 15th.

Landowner Signature Date

*Submit to your local NRCS office.
If you are unsure, call Lower Platte South NRD for further information @ (402) 476-2729*

Lancaster County Farm Pond Site North Central Lancaster County

Andy and Dana Cotter



- 55 drainage acres
- Grade stabilization needs, wildlife
- Property lines not an issue
- \$24,000 estimated total cost; \$14,400 cost-share
- Actively eroding head cut is present.

Cotter farm pond site – NW ¼ NW ¼, Section 2, T-12-N, R-6-E, Lancaster County



Cotter farm pond site - Looking at centerline location in trees to North



Cotter farm pond site - Looking Northeast

