



Nebraska's
Natural Resources
Districts

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To: NARD Board & NRD Managers
From: Dean E. Edson, Executive Director
Re: Board Action Memo
Date: March 10, 2023

The following are action items taken up at the March 6, 2023, Board meeting.

NARD Foundation - The following were approved for funding from the NARD Foundation.

- **Approved \$3,000 for the Nebraska Envirothon** -- \$1,500 to the winning team; \$1,000 to runner-up and \$500 for third place.
- **Approved \$5,000 for the Producer Connect App in FY 2023-24.**
The NARD Foundation has approved \$5,000 toward development of this of a producer app to collect and track data that is required by local districts for water quality and quantity management. In a sperate memo and attachment the proposal from Longitude 103 is outlined.

The total cost of the project is \$400,000 to develop a Producer Connect web and mobile application suite. This allows producers to access their crop reporting data and includes a nitrogen recommendation based on their personal yield goals. This is very similar to the “nitrogen dashboard” concept discussed over the last couple years with various interested parties to educate producers how to maintain and improve profitability while reducing and properly timing the amount of fertilizer applied. The proposed Producer Connect concept also includes the ability to track water use data and any other data the districts would like to collect for management decisions.

We would like local NRDs to consider being a financial partner in this endeavor. Our plan is to apply for a grant to cover 60% of the cost. The remaining 40% could be divided by the parties involved. The more districts that are involved, the less per district the cost will be. At the March 1, 2023, NRD managers Meeting, 19 managers expressed interest in the project and will be talking to their local board about it.

The Nebraska Corn board is interested in partnering in the development of such a tool and providing financial assistance. They have committed up to \$100,000 for this project. Their interest is in providing their members a tool that helps them make good nitrogen management decisions. The Corn board is not interested in being able to access any data. However, providing them an annual aggregate report would be beneficial to help them promote the use of such tool for sound nitrogen management.

If you have any questions, please contact me, Dustin Wilcox or Jenifer Swanson. Longitude 103 would also be willing to do a presentation to your board.

- **Approved \$3,000 for the NRD Recreation Exploration program.** The NRD Recreation Exploration challenges participants to visit as many Natural Resources District (NRD) recreation areas as they can between March 1, 2023, and Sept. 15, 2023. Participants visit a recreation area and submit an online form, which includes a photo to show they visited, to win prizes.
 - Monthly Drawings: March-September (\$100/Month = \$700)
 - Second Runner-Up: Late September (\$300)
 - Runner Up: Late September (\$500)
 - Grand Prize Drawing: Late September (\$1,500)

The goal of the NRD Recreation Exploration is to promote the more than 80 NRD recreation areas across the state and encourage individuals to get outdoors and explore nature. NRDs without recreation areas, will provide another option to visit like an arboretum, outdoor classroom, state recreation area, trail, etc. Grand prizes would be announced at the NARD Annual Conference in September.

Megan Grimes worked with a recreation subcommittee to build out this program. The website form has been developed along with signage and informational handouts to promote the program. All NRDs will be provided information to actively promote the program in their districts.

Previously, the NARD Foundation sponsored the Great Parks Pursuit hosted by Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at the \$3,000 level. We are reallocating that funding to the NRD Recreation Exploration promotional program. We will also actively seek additional partners/sponsors.

General Operating Funding Requests - Approved \$5,000 for the Nebraska Public Media UNL & Creighton Baseball Sponsorship. This includes three 0:30 spots in each game, plus Courtesy Mentions as available. The games are as follows:

- 3/21: Nebraska vs. Creighton Baseball @ 6pm CT Charles Schwab Field, Omaha
- 3/25: Illinois vs. Nebraska Baseball @ 2pm CT Haymarket Park, Lincoln Nebraska
- 4/7: Villanova vs. Creighton Baseball @ 6pm CT Charles Schwab Field, Omaha
- 4/11: Omaha vs. Nebraska Baseball @ 6pm CT Haymarket Park, Lincoln Nebraska
- 4/15: Northwestern vs. Nebraska Baseball @ 2pm CT Haymarket Park, Lincoln Nebraska
- 4/26: South Dakota State vs. Nebraska Baseball @ 6pm CT Haymarket Park, Lincoln:
- 5/6 Xavier vs. Creighton @6pm CT (Military Appreciation Game) Charles Schwab Field, Omaha

Tentative NARD Budget FY 2023-2024 and 24-25 – At the March 6, 2023, meeting the NARD Fiscal Planning Committee and the NARD Board approved a draft budget for consideration by the districts. Final action will occur on the budget at the June board meeting. We have included a separate budget for the NARD Foundation. Both are in a separate file that was sent out with this memo.

For the NARD General Operation, the two-year budget adopted last year asked for a 4% increase in dues each of the next two fiscal years. This is maintained. The other major changes included: 1) New line-item amount for NRD Dam Assessments (\$540,000 Income, \$500,000 Expense); 2) Increased income and expenses for the annual and legislative conferences in both fiscal years; 3) Decreased income for NDEE Liaison grant; and 4) Increased interest income.

There were no changes proposed with the tree program or the reimbursements from the NARD Risk Pool. A spreadsheet with the budget follows, including an explanation for each line item. We welcome any suggestions for changes to the budget and/or position descriptions.

For the NARD Foundation, changes for this year include: 1) Increased interest income due to interest rates; 2) Adding an expense item for NRD recreation sites promotion (This used to be funds for the NGPC Great Parks Pursuit); 3) Adding a expense item for Nitrate Education to be determined by the NARD Board in consultation with the NRD Managers; and 4) Adding an income and expense for the NRD Fun Run.

NRCS Dam Assessments - NARD partnered with NRCS to complete the final paperwork for a funding agreement to complete assessments for 18 dams across 7 NRDs this week. The agreement includes funding up to \$492K to complete the 18 assessments. The agreement runs through November, but assessments are advertised to require completion by end of September.

The RFP was distributed to a list of Engineering firms discussed by the sponsor committee including (JEO, Houston, Olsson, EA, Flatwater, Miller, Baker, Mainelli Wagner) – the deadline for proposals is March 10th. NARD will forward proposals to the sponsor committee as they are received. The sponsor committee is scheduled to meet on March 13th to review proposals and make selection of contractor(s).

NARD Conservation Awards -- Nominations for Conservation Awards will be open through May 1st. Nomination request forms will be updated and distributed to all districts. Nominations meeting the criteria will be sent to all NARD Board Representatives with the June board packets and the board will select winners at the June board meeting. The NRD Hall of Fame nominations will be announced at the June board meeting and a follow-up ballot will be sent out.

Categories include: Outstanding Community Conservation; Outstanding Grassland Conservation; Outstanding Soil Conservation; Outstanding Water Conservation; Educator of the Year; Tree Planter of the Year; Director of the Year and NRD Hall of Fame.

Groundwater Modeling Training - NARD has worked with USGS to develop a curriculum and process for hosting a Groundwater Model training for NRD Staff. NARD will work with USGS to finalize details, but we are currently targeting August for part-1 training and early Fall for part-2. Details and registration information will be sent to district this spring.

Future NARD Meetings

- March 18-22, 2023 -- NARD DC Trip, Embassy Suites, DC
- April 24, 2023 – NRD Benefits Meetings, NARD Office
- June 6-7, 2023 – NRD Managers Meeting, TBA
- June 11-12, 2023 – NARD Board Meeting – TBA - CPNRD
- June 12-13, 2023 – NARD Basin Tour, TBA - CPNRD
- July (3rd week) – NRD Benefits Meetings - TBA
- August 28-30, 2023 - NRD Managers Retreat – LLNRD Host, Ord
- August 25 – September 4, 2023 - Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island
- September 12- 14, 2023 – Husker Harvest Days, Grand Island
- September 24-26, 2023 – NARD Annual Meeting, Kearney
- October (3rd Week) NRD Benefits Meetings – TBA
- November 1, 2023 – NRD Mangers Meeting – TBA
- November 5-6, 2023 – NARD Board Meeting - TBA