



Vacancies Filled on NRD Board



New directors Eldon Snoke (left) and Bob Lassen (right) take their oath of office at the March board meeting.

In one fell swoop, the two vacancies created on the Board of Directors following the 2016 general election were quickly filled in March. Vacancies

occurred when two directors chose not to run for reelection, and no new candidates filed to run for the spots. Therefore, the board was forced to advertise

for applicants to be appointed to the jobs.

Chosen to fill the empty slot in Subdistrict 1 is Robert Lassen from Firth. A self-described avid tree planter, Lassen states that he also enjoys wildlife viewing and habitat and preservation of land and water resources through conservation. He is a retired pharmacist having specialized in long-term care and senior services. An active member of his community, Lassen also partners with a local breeder to raise Angus seed stock and is a member of several cattle associations.

Eldon Snoke of Humboldt takes on the position of director in Subdistrict 8. He is a farmer

with livestock emphasis and has a degree in agronomy from UNL. A charter member of the Southeast Nebraska Grassland Association, he has also held positions with the Southeast Pork Producers and Richardson County Weed Board. He is also busy serving his church and involved with short-term missions. Snoke hopes to help take care of our natural resources during his tenure on the board.

Both men will serve just two-year terms as state law requires that the remaining two years of the terms for these slots go up for election in 2018.

Staffing Changes at the NRD



Gerry O'Malley started as the NRD Clerk at the NRCS in Tecumseh on April 17.

After nearly 29 years working for the NRD, Glenda Bates began her well-earned retirement in March. She worked first as a field technician helping lay out conservation work in Johnson

County and later as the clerk in the Pawnee City NRCS office before moving into the Tecumseh NRCS office as the NRD Clerk in 2005.

Now seated at the front desk at the Tecumseh NRCS is the new NRD Clerk, GERALYNN O'MALLEY. "Gerry" (as she prefers) has lived west of Tecumseh for several years but commuted to Lincoln working over the past 19 years for Nebraska Book Company and most recently for NRECA, a benefits company for electric cooperatives. Her first day at work for the NRD was April 17.

As we bid a fond farewell to Glenda and thank her for her years of dedicated service, we welcome Gerry to the NRD staff and invite you to stop and introduce yourself to her!

Summer Staff: This summer a couple of new guys are on the payroll to help with much of the work needed to get the new Duck Creek Recreation Area completed. Mitch Faris, a Tecumseh native, just completed his freshman year at Nebraska Wesleyan majoring in business; and Eric Sundar hails from Wyoming and is an education major at Peru State College.

Check Out Our New Website

www.nemahanrd.org

In April we premiered our new and improved website, so take a minute and check it out (www.nemahanrd.org). This fresh and modern format allows us to make quick and easy changes and updates, so it's your go-to place for the latest Nemaha NRD information. Also you can now purchase your Nemaha NRD park permit online with your Visa, Mastercard, or Discover credit card. Fill out and provide all the information, and your annual vehicle sticker will be in the mail to you before you know it! (The site is mobile friendly too.) We're still adding information and images, so check back often.

Recreation Areas Ready for Summer

Great weather marked the kickoff of the summer recreation season at the NRD's four parks. The result was record crowds as all camping areas at both Iron Horse Trail Lake and Kirkman's Cove were at capacity for the holiday weekend. Young and old took advantage of the numerous fishing opportunities at Iron Horse Trail Lake with reports of good success for the entire weekend. When the NRD made the decision to rehabilitate Iron Horse Trail Lake in 2010, one of the goals was to make the area more attractive to families in hopes of increasing use. It appears that goal has been accomplished.

Since this is just the start of summer, it is important that park users remember a few key rules to follow at the District's parks:

- Vehicle permits are required at Kirkman's Cove, Iron Horse Trail Lake, and Wirth Brothers Lake. No permit is needed at Prairie Owl near Dunbar. Permits may be obtained at pay stations in each park, on-line, or at the NRD office in Tecumseh. Credit cards are now accepted when

purchasing permits on-line or at the District office.

- There is a \$12 per night fee for electric RV pads. Non-electric and tent sites are free.
- All campgrounds are first come, first served; and pads cannot be reserved with trailers, boats, tents, signs, or unattended vehicles even if they are paid for. Violators are subject to removal.
- ATVs or off-road utility vehicles are not allowed in the parks.
- Alcohol, fireworks, and firearms are not allowed in the parks.
- Pets must be on a leash and are not allowed on the beaches.
- Make certain to follow all posted fishing and boating regulations, which vary for each park.
- Jet Skis are not allowed at any Nemaha NRD lake.

As in the past the NRD will be monitoring each lake for the presence of blue-green algae. Samples are collected on Mondays, and results are not available until late Thursday or early Friday of the same



Electrical hookups are available at Iron Horse Trail Lake & Kirkman's Cove @ a rate of \$12/night.

week. If a lake exceeds the alert level, signs will be posted onsite and on the District's website. Algae levels can change quickly, so common sense is always encouraged.

Hopefully everyone can enjoy a great summer at the District's parks!

Duck Creek Recreation Taking Shape



Water in the Duck Creek lake is now backing up under the newly constructed bridge on the county road south of the dam.

The dam is done, and the reservoir is full; but plenty of work is left before the new Duck Creek Recreation Area can be opened to the public. Work is presently underway installing the water and electric infrastructure which includes water hydrants throughout the park and electricity for 28 RV sites. Concrete vault restrooms will be installed in August; and during the summer NRD staff will be

adding picnic tables, fire rings, and grills. To be completed this fall are signs, trails, picnic shelters, and playground equipment. A beach and swimming area have also been added to the construction plans.

Early April, 2018, is the target date that the area is expected to be open to the public. Vehicle permits will be required at Duck Creek, and the same general park rules will apply as in other NRD areas.

NeRAIN Website Gets Facelift

The State of Nebraska recently updated several of its websites including the popular NeRAIN site where local reporters enter daily precipitation reports. A few things have changed, and you may notice some of the old maps and reports are



gone; however, they are planning to add some of these back as time and budgets allow. The website address has changed too; so if you're a frequent visitor to the site, be sure to update your bookmark with this new address: <https://nednr.nebraska.gov/nerain>.

As local administrator of the Nemaha NRD area of NeRAIN, we're always looking for more volunteer reporters. Volunteers receive an official rain gauge and training on how/when to enter precipitation data. It's really very simple; so if you think you could become part of the NeRAIN team, contact Mark McDonald at the Nemaha NRD today.

From the Manager's Desk *by Bob Hilske, General Manager*

Where Did the Goldfish Come From?

Stocking a reservoir to create a sustainable sport fisheries is more of a science experiment than most people realize; you don't just dump in fish, wait a couple of years, and start fishing. You find that big fish eat small fish, and this fish eats that fish; so it's important to do it right to avoid creating an all-you-can-eat buffet for a few hungry bass. That's why we have the fisheries experts from Game and Parks developing the stocking plan for Duck Creek. These guys know and love their fish. They probably did book reports on the Dr. Seuss book, "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish" in high school. There is nothing more exciting for a fisheries geek than to work on a new lake.

Duck Creek is particularly intriguing because the clarity of the water surpasses anything else in southeast Nebraska by a wide margin. NRD staff regularly check the clarity of the water using a high-tech device called a Secchi disk. Well, it's basically a string attached to a coffee can lid that was invented in 1865 by an Italian priest named Angelo Secchi. I'm not sure why Father Secchi got involved in testing water clarity, but I do know that 150 years later while we are on version 7 of the iPhone, we still use version 1 of the Secchi Disk. He either invented the perfect tool or his marketing department wasn't very good.

Operating it is simple: you drop the disk in the water, and measure the string when you can't see the disk anymore, and that's your Secchi Disk reading for the lake. In southeast Nebraska Secchi Disk readings of 2 feet or less are common; Duck Creek's results are about 5 feet. You can thank trees for the clarity of the water. Most of the Duck Creek Watershed has an extensive tree buffer, which filters out the sediment from crop fields. The installation of conservation practices over the past decade has also helped the cause.

Stocking the reservoir started last year, and to date largemouth bass, catfish, and bluegill of various sizes have been added to the lake. Later this year they plan to add black crappie to the mix. In addition to stocking they also monitor the progress of the fish population. A recent count showed bass population is very good; and in addition to bass they found the usual suspects including bluegill, bullheads, and one goldfish. So, who threw the goldfish in the lake? Goldfish are just Hollywood cousins of carp. They look good, but you really don't want them in your lake. Duck Creek has the potential to be one of the best fishing reservoirs in eastern Nebraska. To keep it that way, it is important people follow the rules and don't play amateur fisheries expert and throw any outside fish in the lake. So unless they are crackers, leave the goldfish in your aquarium.

We plan on opening the area in April next year. There will be size limitations and other fishing rules to abide by; and leave Johnson, Mercury, and Evinrude at home; because it's a no-wake lake.

45 Years Fly by Before You Know It

July 1 marks 45 years since the founding fathers of today's Natural Resources Districts celebrated their eventual beginning. The original 12 statutory responsibilities set aside for NRDs have not changed over the years though the approach to fulfilling those duties may have. Early on in the Nemaha NRD, flood control, erosion control, soil conservation, and tree planting dominated the workload. Though they continue to be areas of attention for NRD staff, water quality and quantity as well as outdoor recreation and urban projects are also on the agenda.

Throughout the years about 125 folks have served on the elected board of directors, and more than 70 different people have been employed with the District (not including part-time, summer help or tree planters). The Nemaha NRD boasts more

than 400 flood or erosion control structures in 16 watersheds throughout its southeast Nebraska borders. Each spring and fall the NRD's water department measures water levels in about 130 wells, and throughout the year they sample water quality from as many as 190 irrigation, domestic, or public water supply wells. Since beginning in 1994, cost-share assistance has provided for the closing of 1,300+ abandoned wells. More than 1.5 million trees have been sold and/or planted by the District. Four public recreation areas with lakes and one hiking trail are now operated by the District, and one more recreation area (Duck Creek) will open next year. This is just a sampling of what's been accomplished over the years – check out our website during the next few months to learn more about the 45-year history of the Nemaha NRD.

NEMAHA NRD STAFF

Bob Hilske, Manager
Scott Nelson, Assistant Manager
Jane Kuhl, Administrative Assistant
Karen Mahoney, Administrative Assistant
Lisa Bartels, Secretary
Chuck Wingert, Water Resources Manager
Charlie Pierce, Water Resources Technician
Steve Bartels, Field Representative
Mark McDonald, Field Representative
Vernon Speers, Jr., Field Representative
Aaron Stalder, Resources Specialist
Tomas Chalé Aké, Field Technician
Ken Hatten,
Land & Water Resources Assistant
Phil Vance, Summer Maintenance
Mitch Faris, Summer Maintenance
Eric Sundar, Summer Maintenance

NRD STAFF IN NRCS OFFICES

Alice Alexander, Auburn
Geraldyn O'Malley, Tecumseh
Kim Zech, Syracuse
Monica Dishong, Falls City
Kathy Harlow, Pawnee City

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lisa Beethe, Elk Creek
Rob Bohling, Johnson
James Gerweck, Falls City
Orval Gigstad, Syracuse
Dave Guhde, Nebraska City
Dan Hodges, Julian (**CHAIR**)
Doug Iske, Dunbar
Jenny Kearney, Nebraska City
Jon Keithley, Falls City
Robert Lassen, Firth
Timothy Loseke, Hickman
Michael McDonald, Palmyra
(**SECRETARY-TREASURER**)
Russel Moss, Burr
William Niedfeldt, Shubert (**VICE-CHAIR**)
Alan Romine, Falls City
Don Siske, Table Rock
Eldon Snoko, Humboldt
Mike Speece, Auburn
Dan Stukenholtz, Brock
J. Duane Sugden, Sterling
Kevin Thorne, Nebraska City

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Campsites Still Available for Eclipse Weekend

Have you heard about the upcoming solar eclipse? Did you know southeast Nebraska will have a front-row seat to this uncommon attraction? Because the two-and-a-half-minute phenomenon cuts directly through the District, visitors from across the country and beyond are interested in camping at Kirkman's Cove and Iron Horse Trail Lake in order to catch the best view. Though normally camping is first-come, first-served, for the weekend of August 18-21 only, reservations are being accepted for both electrical and non-electrical RV camping spots. Here's the details if you're interested in saving your spot:

All reservations must be made by telephone (402-335-3325) or at the NRD office and must be confirmed with a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover.

Reservations are only accepted for a minimum, three-night stay from August 18-20, 2017 (no one- or two-day reservations accepted).

Electrical RV pads may be reserved at a rate of \$60 for the three nights; non-electrical pads are available for

\$24 for the three nights. (Tent camping will continue to be first-come, first served.)

All reservations are non-transferrable and are limited to a maximum of two campsites per reservation.

Information required includes name, address, daytime phone, email address, and physical description of the camper including license number.

Cancellations must be made in writing or in person; refunds may be provided depending on the date of cancellation, but a cancellation fee will apply.

If you're interested in viewing the eclipse from either of the parks on August 21, the NRD will waive the usual park entry permit for that day only. Parking is limited, however; and the NRD reserves the right to close any park or area of a park in the event space is filled. Depending on location, the total eclipse begins around 1:00 p.m. CST at Kirkman's Cove or Iron Horse; for more information check eclipse2017.nasa.gov.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



July

- 1 45th Anniversary of NRDs
- 4 Independence Day Holiday, NNRD Office Closed
- 13 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 23-29 National Envirothon, Maryland

August

- 10 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 21 Solar Eclipse
- 25-9/4 Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island

September

- 4 Labor Day Holiday, NNRD Office Closed
- 9 Doc Gigstad Steamboat Trace Run, Peru
- 12-14 Husker Harvest Days, Grand Island
- 14 NNRD Board Meeting, Tecumseh
- 19 Area Range Judging Contest, Pawnee County
- 24-26 NARD Annual Conference, Kearney



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NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

62161 Hwy 136

TECUMSEH, NEBRASKA 68450

Stories This Issue:

- *Vacancies Filled on NRD Board*
- *Staffing Changes at the NRD*
- *Check Out Our New Website*
- *Recreation Areas Ready for Summer*
- *Duck Creek Recreation Taking Shape*
- *NeRAIN Website Gets Facelift*
- *Where Did the Goldfish Come From?*
- *45 Years Fly by Before You Know It*
- **NEMAHA NRD STAFF**
- *Campsites Still Available for Eclipse Weekend*
- *Calendar of Events*

The Nemaha NRD's **Insight** is a publication of the Nemaha Natural Resources District. Requests to be placed on the **Insight** mailing list and/or comments regarding information in this publication should be directed to Jane Kuhl, Administrative Assistant, 62161 Hwy 136, Tecumseh, NE 68450. Phone (402) 335-3325