



1999

Skull Creek Site #55

Skull Creek Site #55, a long-awaited dam project north of Bruno, has proved to be Y2K ready.

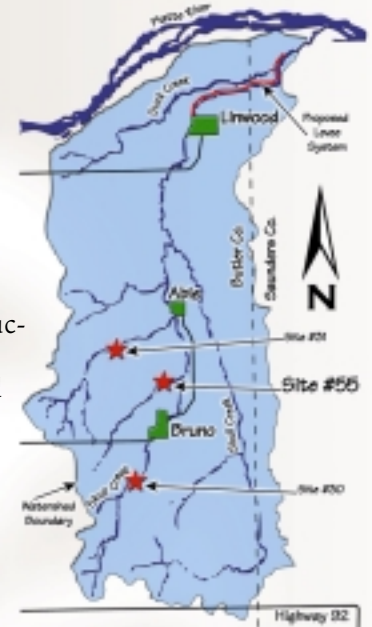
The Site #55 dam is on schedule for construction in summer 2000. The dam will create a 37-surface-acre reservoir for flood control and outdoor recreation. The dam is the primary component of the Skull Creek Watershed Project, designed to provide flood relief for Abie, Linwood, and surrounding areas.

Years of effort have gone into making Site #55 a reality. Before the project could be approved for state funding, the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission required at least 75 percent of the land above the dam site to be treated with terraces or other conservation measures. Working with area landowners, the Lower Platte North NRD achieved the 75% land treatment goal in late 1998. Nearly \$55,000 in state and local cost-share funds were used for this work, in addition to \$220,000 in grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

With the land treatment goal met, the Natural Resources Commission formally allocated funds for Site #55 in June 1999. The initial allocation of \$181,488 enabled the NRD to proceed with final design and engineering of the dam, and to begin purchasing land rights.

Final design of the dam was completed in November by Olsson Environmental Sciences. Land appraisals were also completed around the same time. The NRD plans to complete the land rights purchase process by spring 2000.

If the schedule holds, construction of the dam will be completed in summer 2000. The Natural Resources Commission is expected to contribute \$313,455 to the dam construction, bringing their total contribution to the project to \$494,943. The NRD will provide the remaining 25 percent of the \$659,924 project costs (the NRD's share will be \$181,488).



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

As the new millennium begins, the Lower Platte North NRD, the city of Wahoo and Saunders County are busy "Building for the Future."

Lake Wanhoo, a 637-surface-acre lake project jointly sponsored by the city, county and NRD, continued to make big strides through 1999.

The lake, named after an area dance park that was destroyed in a flood in 1963, will be built in conjunction with the Highway 77 expressway around Wahoo. The four-lane expressway will

skirt the west side of Wahoobefore swinging back to link with the existing Highway 77-92-109 junction one mile north of town. The roadway will run over the top of the Lake Wanhoo dam just west of the junction.

The project partners spent much of 1999 preparing for land purchases. The lake and recreation area will require 1,600 acres of land, affecting 16 landowners.

Land appraisals were completed in the fall, and negotiations with land

con't on page 2

Inside

Pg. 2

- 1999 Accomplishments
- Grant Funds Approved for Water Quality Project at Czechland Lake

Pg. 3

- Lower Platte North NRD Map

Pg. 4

- GWMA Programs in 1999

Boat Ramp Opened in Fremont's Hormel Park

A boat ramp to the Platte River was completed in Hormel Park near Fremont in 1999. The ramp provides free public access to the river. The NRD cooperated with the city of Fremont, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Sports Fish Restoration Program on the project.

300 Students Attend 1999 Spring Sensation

Nearly 300 elementary students attended the 7th annual Spring Conservation Sensation on May 5. Due to rainy weather, the event was held at the Saunders County Fairgrounds. Students spent the day doing hands-on activities involving water, wildlife, forestry, and other natural resources topics.

Cost-share for Conservation

Cost-share programs offered by the Lower Platte North NRD helped construct 241,219 linear feet of terraces, 80,614 linear feet of tile outlets, and 25,275 linear feet of waterways in 1999, using a combination of state, local and grant funds.

NRD Online

The Lower Platte North NRD launched a new web site in 1999 with greatly expanded information about the district and its projects and programs. The site received First Prize in the National Association of Conservation District's Outreach Awards. View the site at: <http://lpnnrd.nrc.state.ne.us>

Spreading the Green

The NRD sold 30,000 trees in 1999 for windbreaks, shelterbelts, wildlife habitat, and other conservation purposes. Nearly 600,000 trees have been planted through the district's Tree Planting Program since it began in 1973.

Czechland Water Quality Project Receives Grants

An innovative project to protect water quality at the NRD's Czechland Lake will become a reality soon, thanks to state and federal grants.

The Czechland Lake Wetland Development Project has received the go-ahead for funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality/EPA Region 7. The Trust and the Lower Platte North NRD will provide 40 percent of the funding, or \$44,400 each, for the \$222,000 project. DEQ/EPA will provide the remaining \$133,200.

The project will use a new approach for keeping sediment and chemicals out of the popular NRD-owned lake near Prague, said Bob Heimann, Operations and Maintenance Manager.

In Phase I of the project, a silt dam

will be built just upstream of the lake inlet on Cottonwood Creek. The small dam will keep water from entering the lake long enough for sediment to settle out. Such dams are a common practice for many newer flood control structures, but they tend to silt in quickly, and costly dredging is periodically required to keep them functional. Phase II of the Czechland Project should help avoid that problem, said Heimann.

In Phase II, a hydrosuction dredge line will be installed to divert sediment around the lake. A pump will suck up the sediment collected by the silt dam, send it through buried pipe running along the edge of the lake, then release the sediment back into the creek. The system should increase the lifespan of both Czechland Lake and the silt dam,

Wanahoo cont. from page 1

owners began in October. The project partners expect all of the land purchases to be completed in February.

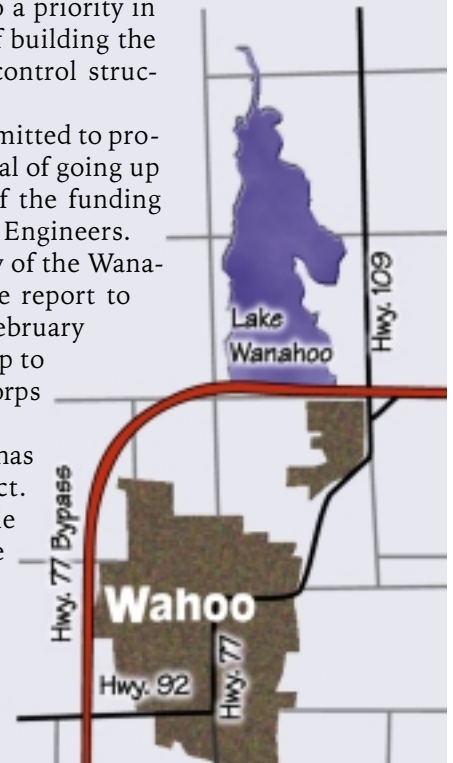
Funding plans for the project were also a priority in 1999. Current estimates place the cost of building the lake and seven smaller upstream flood control structures at \$17 million.

The city, county and NRD are each committed to providing at least \$750,000, with the potential of going up to \$1 million. Much of the remainder of the funding could come from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps completed a feasibility study of the Wanahoo project in 1999, and will submit the report to Congress for funding consideration in February 2000. If Congress approves the project, up to 65% of the funding could come from the Corps of Engineers.

The Nebraska Department of Roads also has committed \$2.23 million to the project. Other potential sources of funding include the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Current plans call for the dam to be built in 2002. The roadway is scheduled for completion in 2004.



The Annual Report is distributed once a year in newspapers in the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District. Writing/design by Troy Thompson, Information/Education Specialist.

Board of Directors ... Sub-District

Dean Johnson, Treasurer	1
Keith Lallman	1
David A. Shelso	2
Mary Sendgraff	2
Steven E. Grueber	3
Ted Bailey	3
Dave Saalfeld	4
Lumir Jedlicka	4
Greg Wilke, Vice Chair	5
Clinton Johannes	5
Annette Mastny	6
R. J. Sabata	6
Jane Daufeldt, Secretary	7
Ronald Sabatka	7
Donald Kavan	8
Jim McDermott, Chair	8
LeRoy Nelson	9
Ervin Bull	9
Chris Langemeier	at large

Staff Members Position

Larry Angle	Water Resources Mnger.
Sam Barlean	O&M Specialist
Dan Becker	Water Resources Spec.
Jill Breunig	Administrative Assistant
Ann Brodd	Secretary/Bookkeeper
Cam Conrad	GIS Specialist
Bob Heimann	O&M Manager
Marla Milliken	NRD/NRCS Tech.
John Miyoshi	General Manager
Tom Mountford	Assistant Manager
Scott Nelson	Water Resources Spec.
Shaula Ross	Water Resources Spec.
Joe Sabata	O&M Specialist
Troy Thompson	Info/Ed Specialist
Katherine Vasa	Special Projects Coord.
Roger Woita	Recreation Facilitator

NRD/NRCS Clerks County

Susie Leu	Butler County
Carol Prokesh	Saunders County
Kristin Uhing	Dodge County
Brenda Wardman	Colfax County

To receive the district's quarterly newsletter, *The Viaduct*, contact:

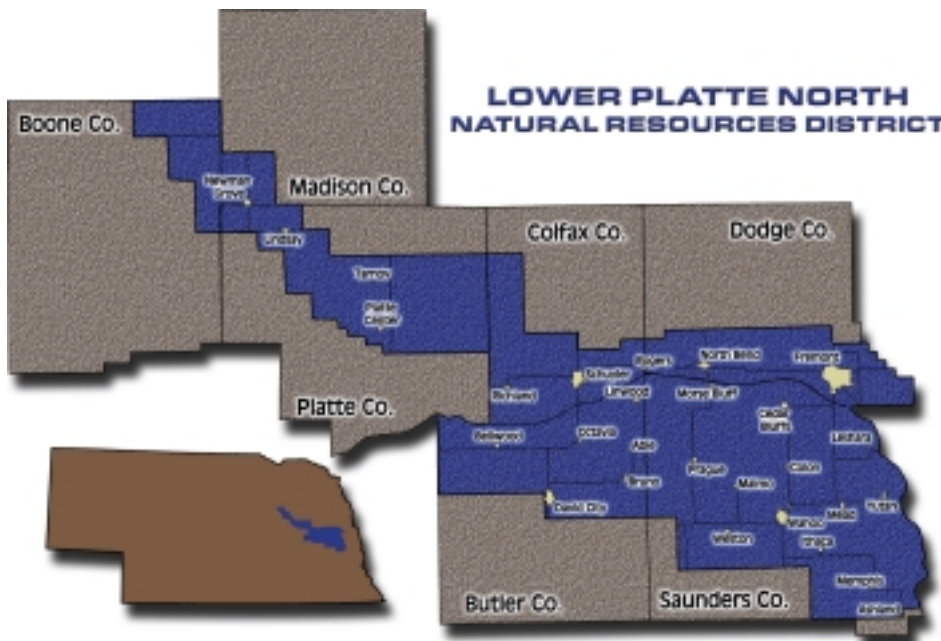
Lower Platte North NRD
 511 Commercial Park Road
 P. O. Box 126
 Wahoo, Nebraska 68066-0126
 Phone: 402-443-4675
 Toll-free: 1-888-764-0543
 Fax: 402-443-5339
 E-mail:
lpnnrd@nrcdec.nrc.state.ne.us
 Web Site:
<http://lpnnrd.nrc.state.ne.us>



Heimann said. The amount of chemicals entering the lake also should be reduced, because pesticides and other chemicals are often attached to sediment particles.

The NRD also plans to apply for further grant funding for development of a wetland at the lake. During heavy

flows, water will flow over the silt dam into the wetland, which will filter sediment and chemicals out of the water before it returns to the lake. A rock dam also is planned between the wetland and the lake to provide further protection during heavy flows.



The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District, based in Wahoo, covers parts of seven counties in eastcentral Nebraska. There are 23 NRDs in the state. NRDs are charged with developing and protecting the state's natural resources. In pursuing this mission, the districts often work in partnership with landowners and other government agencies .

The district is governed by 19 locally-elected directors from nine sub-districts. The district is financed by a property tax levy that is limited by law to 4.5 cents per \$100 of valuation. Typically, the NRD uses between 1.5 and 2 percent of local property tax dollars. Other funding comes from state and federal grants and sources such as the Environmental Trust.



GWMA Accomplishments in 1999

The Lower Platte North NRD's Ground Water Management Area had a successful third year in 1999.

Once again, hundreds of producers took advantage of the NRD's cost-share opportunities, nitrogen management training, and other programs designed to protect water quality.

In February and March, 367 producers attended nitrogen management certification training at various sites throughout the district. Producers are required to attend the training once every four years under the GWMA rules and regulations.

Four hundred and fifty producers also requested free nitrate sampling kits in 1998. One hundred and seventy-two kits had been returned for analysis by December.

Unfortunately, the state fertilizer tax wasn't renewed, meaning that 1999 likely was the last year the NRD will offer cost-share for purchasing fertil-

izer calibration meters and anhydrous distribution manifolds. However, a number of producers took advantage of their last chance for cost-share funds; the district provided \$26,381 for 24 meters and \$1,300 for eight manifolds.

The district's Abandoned Well Program continued going strong, providing \$9,025 in cost-share funds to cap 26 unused wells.

Thirteen producers signed up for The district's Ultrasonic Flow Meter Program. For a small fee, producers receive a flow meter check to see how much water their irrigation system is using.

The district also approved 10 new permits for chemigation, bringing the total number of chemigation permits in the NRD to 269. Producers are required to have a permit to chemigate. Renewal notices for permits will be mailed in April and are due by June 1.

Water Briefs

Saunders County Protests Well Field

A proposed well field in Saunders County erupted in controversy in 1999.

The well field, operated by the Metropolitan Utility District of Omaha, is planned to eventually include 26 wells in southeastern Saunders County. Area residents became concerned that the field could lower groundwater levels in the Wann Basin, the primary source of drinking water and irrigation for the area.

In summer 1999, Saunders County filed a series of complaints with the Department of Water Resources and the Lower Platte North NRD, alleging various violations of state law in the permitting and registration of the MUD wells. MUD agreed to hold off on operating any wells in the Saunders County portion of the field until the complaints are heard by the Department of Water Resources.

One of the complaints was resolved through corrective action by MUD. The remainder of the complaints are awaiting a decision by DWR. Depending on DWR's decision, the NRD may take action of its own on the complaints.

Sample Kits Available

In the Lower Platte North NRD's Ground Water Management Area, water samples are required every 4 years from owners of irrigation, industrial, and municipal wells. The samples are analyzed for nitrate content. There is no cost to the well owner for the water analysis.

To request a free kit, contact the NRD at (402) 443-4675, or pick up a postage-paid request card, available at Extension, NRCS, and FSA offices, and at most area coops and fertilizer dealers.

