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LOWER PLATTE NORTH NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT  
Protecting Lives • Protecting Property • Protecting the Future

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Spring/Summer 2011  
[www.lpnrd.org](http://www.lpnrd.org)

## Heavy Rains Result in Lowland Flooding, But Lake Wanahoo Working As Designed

On May 20, following a significant amount of rain, some lowland flooding occurred downstream of Lake Wanahoo near Wahoo. Some fields were flooded and water ran over Highway 77/92 for a period of several hours.

This surprised some area residents and attracted a significant amount of media attention, based on the belief that downstream flooding would be completely eliminated now that the Lake Wanahoo dam is fully operational.

While any amount of flooding is unfortunate, the NRD would like to emphasize that the Wanahoo dam is working as intended. The dam did hold back a significant amount of storm water, but it was not designed to capture 100% of the runoff from a large rain event like the one that occurred in the late evening/early morning hours of May 19-20.

That rain was unusual, with more than 3 inches falling over the entire 87-square-mile Sand Creek Watershed that drains into Lake Wanahoo. Typically, rain events follow a more linear path, with higher intensity rains in a narrow band along the center and lower amounts on either side.

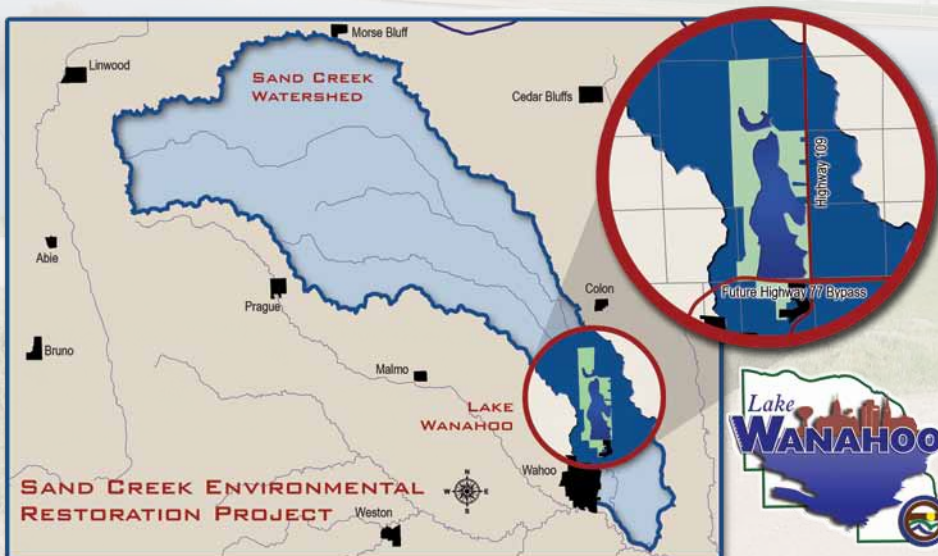
The heavy watershed-wide rain was compounded by the fact that soils were already saturated by rains earlier in the week, and much of the rain fell on newly-planted crops with little or no vegetation to help slow runoff.

The amount of runoff from the May 19-20 rain was equivalent to a 7- to 10-year storm (a storm that has a probability of occurring every seven to ten years). More than 2,700 cubic feet of water per second (cfs) was passing over the Wanahoo principal spillway during the peak rainfall. Prior to the construction of Lake Wanahoo, rain events as small as 500 cfs (a 1/2 year storm) were enough to cause lowland flooding similar to what occurred on May 20.

In short, the flooding would have been worse if Lake Wanahoo had not been in place. Over the long term, the frequency and intensity of lowland flooding in the area should be sharply reduced thanks to the dam.

Over the short term, with already-saturated soils and more bad weather being forecast, there is a concern that further lowland flooding could occur if another large rain event takes place. To help reduce that risk, the NRD is temporarily lowering the water level of Lake Wanahoo by two feet to provide extra storage capacity. The district and its partners will also be evaluating the lake's operational plan to see if other adjustments can be made to further minimize the chances of future flooding.

If you have questions about Lake Wanahoo, please contact our office at (402) 443-4675 or email [lpnrd@lpnrd.org](mailto:lpnrd@lpnrd.org).



More than 3 inches of rain fell over the entirety of the 87-square-mile Sand Creek Watershed in the late evening/early morning hours of May 19-20. This was the equivalent of a 7-10 year storm, with more than 2,700 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water passing over the Lake Wanahoo principal spillway during the peak.

Prior to the construction of Lake Wanahoo, rain events as small as 500 cfs (a 1/2-year storm) were enough to cause lowland flooding downstream.

Getting the itch for some outdoor fun? We've got the perfect remedy - check out one of our outdoor recreation areas for camping, fishing, hunting, picnicking and much more:

### Czechland Lake

Picturesque Czechland Lake (at right), one mile north of Prague, offers outdoor activities for all seasons, including hunting, fishing, camping, day use, and more.

### Homestead Lake

This hidden gem near Bruno provides fishing, hunting, picnicking, no-wake boating, and other outdoor fun.

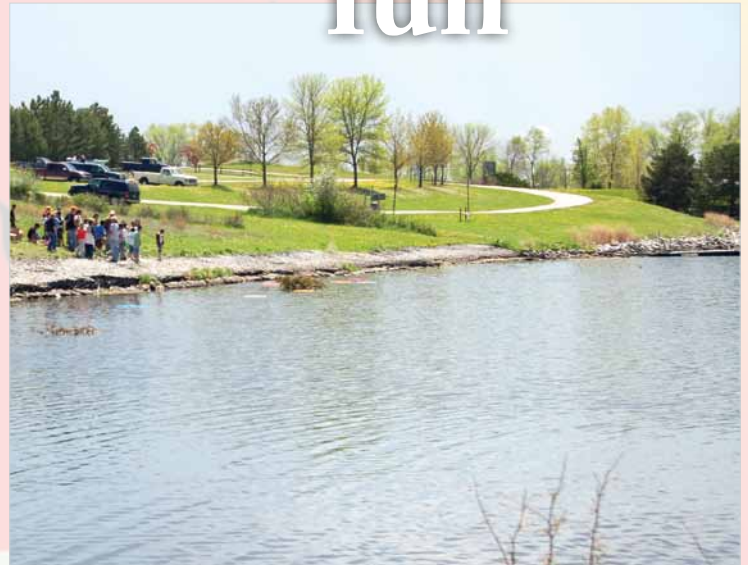
### Fremont Hormel Park Boat Ramp

A favorite for airboaters, the Hormel Park Boat Ramp near Fremont provides easy 24-hour access to the Platte River.

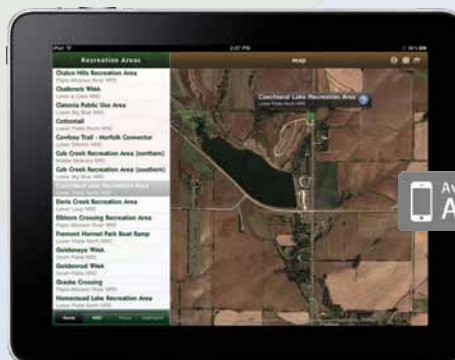
### And coming in 2012 - Lake Wanhoo

Lake Wanhoo, a 662-surface-acre lake located one mile north of Wahoo, is scheduled to open to the public in 2012 and is destined to become a favorite southeast Nebraska destination with fishing, youth hunting, camping, picnicking, hiking/biking, and many other recreational opportunities.

# finding outdoor fun



## www.nrdrec.org



*Planning a trip to some other part of Nebraska? There are dozens of other NRD recreation areas across the state, and now there are more ways than ever to find one that's perfect for you:*

### NRD Recreation Areas Website

The new NRD Outdoor Recreation Areas website at [www.nrdrec.org](http://www.nrdrec.org) has maps, photos, descriptions, facility and service lists and more for every NRD recreation area in the state.

### NRD Recreation Areas App

Have an iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad? There's an app for that too - search for "NRD Outdoor Recreation" on the App Store to download the NRD Outdoor Recreation Areas app, with browsable, fully-interactive maps, detailed information on all of the NRD recreation areas in Nebraska, one-touch contact information and driving directions, and more.

Whether you're looking for a quiet fishing hole, a hiking area or bike path, a place to hunt or camp, or just a scenic spot to enjoy a picnic, chances are you can find what you're looking for by visiting one of the many NRD recreation areas across the state. Get out and enjoy the "Good Life" at the earliest opportunity!



Lake Ecosystems



Fishing



Geo-Hunt

# SPRING CONSERVATION SENSATION

Three hundred and twenty students from area schools converged at Czechland Lake on May 4 for a day of fun hands-on activities relating to conservation and natural resources.

Students rotated through eight 25-minute sessions covering a variety of topics, from high-tech to low. They examined lake fish and insects, learned to use GPS units, got a close-up look at a variety of skins, antlers, and pelts (including one from a mountain lion), planted trees, learned "Secrets of Scat", and much more.

Nearly 6,500 students have attended the Spring Conservation Sensation since it began in 1991. Attending the 2011 event were classes from East Butler, Immanuel Lutheran (Columbus), Logan View, North Bend, Schuyler, St. Mary's (David City), and St. Wencslaus (Wahoo).

The event was sponsored by the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District. Additional presenters came from David City High School, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Lower Platte South NRD. High school students from David City served as group leaders. In-kind services were provided by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Youth Fishing Program.



Wildlife Roundup



Water Jeopardy!



Migration Headache



Secrets of Scat



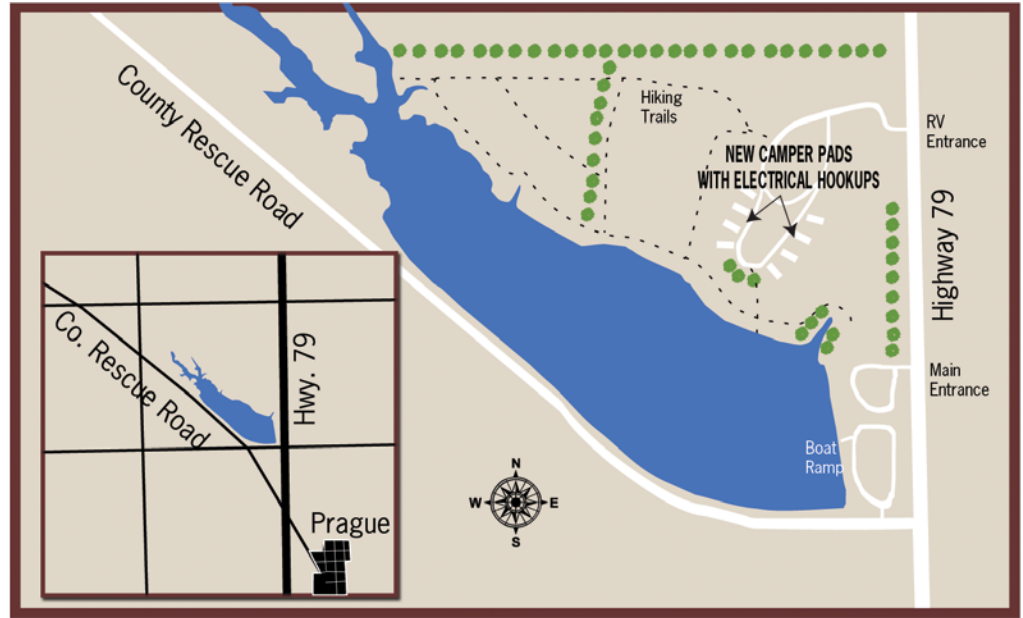
Tree Planting

# Electrical Hookups Coming to Czechland Lake

Czechland Lake near Prague, a popular destination for camping, fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreation, will be adding camper pads with electrical hookups this summer.

Eight camper pads with electrical hookups will be open at Czechland by July 1. The sites will be available on a first-come, first-served basis for a fee of \$18/night. Tent camping will still be available for no charge in other parts of the recreation area.

"Electrical hookups have been a highly requested feature at Czechland Lake, and we're happy to be able to offer them now," said Bob Heimann, Operations and Maintenance Manager for the Lower Platte North NRD.



## Czechland Lake Recreation Area

## Be a Good Neighbor...

With camping season in full swing, please remember to be considerate of your fellow campers when you're enjoying one of our outdoor recreation areas. Here are a few common-sense ways you can help ensure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience:

**Observe "quiet time" hours** from 10 pm to 6 am

**Place your trash** in designated receptacles and leave your camp site in good shape for the next set of campers

**Don't leave a mess** on picnic tables

**Only build fires** in provided fire rings or grills, and make sure to extinguish them completely when you're done

**Don't disturb** trees, grass or wildlife

**Keep your pets** on a leash at all times

**Follow** any other posted regulations at the site

**If you see something** that needs our attention, please call (402) 443-4675 or email [lpnnrd@lpnnrd.org](mailto:lpnnrd@lpnnrd.org)

## CZECHLAND LAKE RECREATION AREA RULES & REGULATIONS

1. Camping permitted in tents and campers up to 14 days.
2. Alcoholic beverages prohibited, unless authorized by the NRD.
3. Fishing permitted in accordance with State Regulations.
4. Hunting and Trapping prohibited.
5. Boats No Wake, 5 MPH maximum.
6. All motorized vehicles confined to rock surfaced roads.
7. All garbage must be deposited in designated containers.
8. Fires permitted in designated fire-rings and grills only.
9. Explosives and Fireworks are prohibited.
10. Pets must be on a leash, under control.
11. Swimming and wading prohibited.
12. Horseback riding permitted on roads only.
13. No begging, soliciting or hitchhiking.

**Questions: Contact Lower Platte North NRD, Wahoo,**

LOWER PLATTE  
NORTH NATURAL  
RESOURCES DISTRICT



is the quarterly publication of the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District and is edited by Troy Thompson, Information & Education/Computer Specialist.

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# Protect Your Future Water Rights, Complete Acre Certification Now

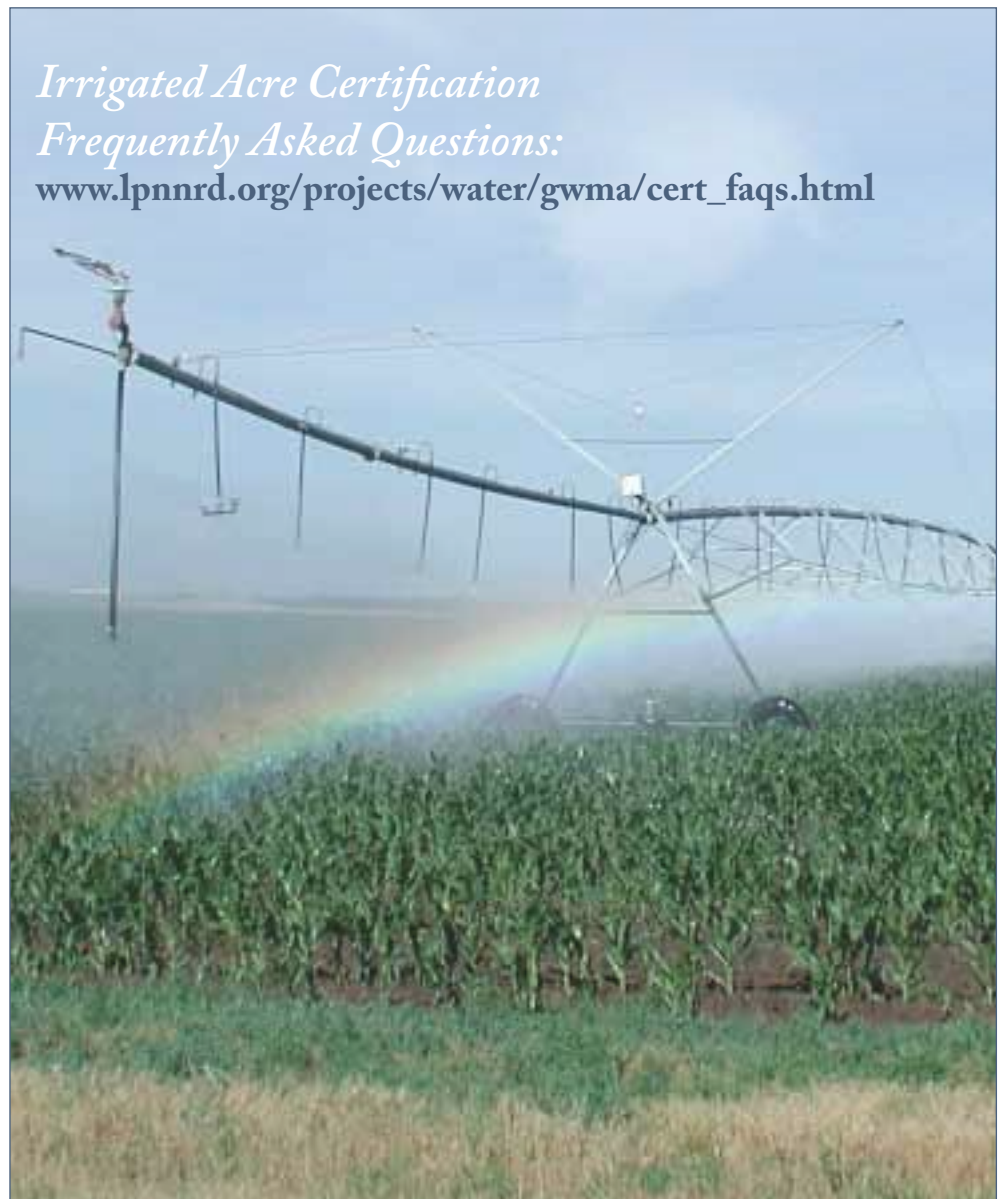
The Lower Platte North NRD would like to remind irrigators in Boone, Butler, Colfax, Madison and Platte counties to complete their irrigated acre certification paperwork as soon as possible if they haven't already done so.

All irrigators in those counties should have received an information packet on acre certification from the NRD. It's essential that irrigators complete their certification in a timely manner in order to protect their existing irrigation rights. If the Lower Platte River basin is declared fully-appropriated by the state in the future, new irrigation will be restricted but existing

irrigation (verified by the certification process) will be protected.

Because of high volumes, the NRD is asking landowners who need to come in to finish their certification to make appointments to ensure that everyone can be served in a timely manner. You can make an appointment by calling our office at (402) 443-4675. Our office hours are 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Information packets for irrigators in Saunders and Dodge counties will go out later this year. For more information on acre certification, see the FAQ on our website (address below).



*Irrigated Acre Certification*

*Frequently Asked Questions:*

[www.lpnnrd.org/projects/water/gwma/cert\\_faqs.html](http://www.lpnnrd.org/projects/water/gwma/cert_faqs.html)



## Attorney General Confirms Ag Exemption to Diggers Hotline Rule

In a statement released in late March, Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning confirmed that farmers, their employees and third-party contractors do not need to call Diggers Hotline before conducting routine soil sampling in their fields.

Nebraska's One Call Act is intended to prevent accidents involving buried utility lines. Agricultural soil sampling has a long-standing exemption to the law, but the extent of that protection was called into question when State Senator Galen Hadley of Kearney introduced LB484 in the 2011 legislative session.

Hadley's bill arose out of a dispute between Northern Natural Gas employees and Central Valley Ag Coop techs who were sampling a field near a Northern natural gas line. Northern later filed a complaint with the Attorney General's Office. LB484 was intended to formally extend the ag soil sampling exemption to cover professional soil samplers. However, the bill generated considerable opposition from owners and operators of buried electrical, gas and telecom-

munications lines, who argued that no exemption was warranted for agricultural activities.

When the Attorney General's office was asked for an informal opinion on the matter in January, Bruning indicated he wasn't sure the ag exemption applied to third-party contractors hired by farmers. However, his March statement clarified that his office does consider third-party contractors to fall under the exemption to the One Call Act. Therefore, farmers and their employees and contractors can continue to perform routine soil sampling to depths of 30 inches without calling Diggers Hotline.

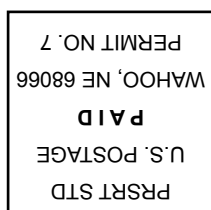
The Lower Platte North NRD's Ground Water Management Area encourages annual soil sampling for all farm fields in the district to help prevent overapplication of fertilizer. In Phase II areas, annual soil sampling is required. If you have questions about soil sampling requirement in the district, please contact us at (402) 443-4675 or email [lpnnrd@lpnnrd.org](mailto:lpnnrd@lpnnrd.org).

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*"To be clear – farmers, their employees and any third-parties they contract with to do routine soil sampling for agricultural purposes do not need to call the Diggers Hotline prior to taking a soil sample," said Bruning. "This is an agricultural state and soil sampling is business as usual. I won't second-guess the common sense of Nebraska farmers."*

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-March 25 statement from the Nebraska Attorney General's Office on soil sampling exemptions for agriculture



**LOWER PLATTE NORTH  
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