

LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 22, 2011

Ord, Nebraska

The September meeting of the Board of Directors of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District was held at the Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska, on September 22, 2011. Chairman Gary Kruse called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Directors in attendance

James C. Adams
Darwin B. Anderson, Secretary
James J. Eschliman
Virgil W. Gellermann
Thomas Knutson
James C. Nelson
Dean J. Rasmussen
Bradley R. Staab
Kim Walden

Rollie D. Amsberry, Treasurer
Timothy E. Bartak
Craig E. Frenzen
N. Richard Hadenfeldt
Gary A. Kruse, Chairman
Alan D. Petersen
Darwin R. Sieh
Henry J. Thoene

Directors absent

Joseph L. Citta, Jr., Vice Chairman
Lyle D. Rasmussen

Michael P. Gutzmer
Gerald P. Smith

Staff in attendance

Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos, General Manager
Dell Harris, Water Resources Specialist
Robert T. Mohler, District Engineer
Tylr Naprstek, Water Modeling Coordinator
Richard L. Woollen, NC District Forester

Russell Callan, Assistant Manager
Cheryl K. Hornickel, Programs Assistant
Jason Moudry, Water Resources Specialist
Larry D. Schultz, I&E Coordinator

Guests in attendance

Bryce Bauer, DC, NRCS, Ord

NOTICE OF OPEN MEETING LAW POSTING

Chairman Kruse referred those in attendance to the open meeting law information posted in the Board room.

APPROVAL OF VERIFICATION OF MEETING NOTICE, ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND EXCUSED ABSENCES

Chairman Kruse asked for verification of the meeting notice. General Manager Leon “Butch” Koehlmoos verified that the meeting notices were properly published in all newspapers. The meeting notice was also posted at the NRD Headquarters office in Ord, the NRD web site, and the eight field office locations.

Petersen motioned, seconded by Anderson, to approve the verification of the meeting notice, adopt the agenda, and excuse all absent directors. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

MINUTES

Chairman Kruse asked for corrections and/or additions to the August 25, 2011, Board meeting minutes. Koehlmoos said that the resolution to set the property tax request had been mislabeled 2012-2013 and it should be amended to 2011-2012. Kruse ruled that the August 25, 2011, Board meeting minutes would stand approved as amended.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Chairman Kruse directed the Board’s attention to the Treasurer’s Report as published in the regular and supplemental agendas.

Koehlmoos told the Board that a bill from AS Central Services of Lincoln for \$1,194.98 was for maintaining the station as well as cell phone charges. He said that payments to David Wamberg and Keith Byrkit were for Area 28 sampling. Another payment for the Area 28 Study was made to Olsson Associates for \$8,607.49. Koehlmoos said that a payment of \$3,740.00 was made to Sack Lumber Company for concrete for camping pads at Davis Creek.

Kruse asked about a payment to Peerless Machine for \$11,703.70 and Callan said it was for test holes drilled in Custer County for the ELM Study. Walden asked about a credit card payment labeled “attorney fees” and Koehlmoos said that the payment was actually for registration for a water law conference.

Knutson motioned, seconded by Walden, to approve the September, 2011, Treasurer’s Report and pay all bills. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FORESTER'S REPORT

North Central District Forester Rich Woollen of the Nebraska Forest Service told the Board that he had provided landowners with some assistance with windbreak renovation and provided the Board with a handout detailing some options for the work. He said cost-share was available for renovation, including NSWCP and EQIP.

Woollen said that thinning work continues for forest fuels reduction in the Niobrara Valley. He reported that the hiring process was underway for the vacant forestry position in the Valentine area. Fall survival checks are underway on conservation tree plantings.

NRCS REPORT

District Conservationist Bryce Bauer told the Board that annual Quality Assurance Review efforts are underway. Reviews are done annually in September and office staff from nearby locations conduct the reviews. He said the NRCS staff attended an endangered species training to review changes from the previous year. Details on the 2012 budget remained unclear but he had heard that there could be \$2 billion in cuts over 10 years. Koehlmoos asked if the cuts were only to conservation or would farm bill payments be affected and Bauer said that the cuts would be to conservation programs.

ENGINEERING REPORT

Subdistrict Realignment

District Engineer Robert Mohler directed the Board to information included in the regular and supplemental agendas. Mohler then referred the Board to the subdistrict maps created following the 2010 census. He said that there were three different options presented for consideration. Koehlmoos said the new census numbers would most affect Subdistricts 3, 5 and 7. Mohler said the population of the District continues to move eastward.

Mohler and Koehlmoos ran through several scenarios on how the three options would affect Directors and the next elections. Koehlmoos said that the proposals make the most noticeable changes in the city of Columbus. Mohler said he attempted to make the subdistrict boundaries fall along logical lines such as major city streets and current political districts.

Gellermann motioned, seconded by Knutson, to approve Trial 4 as the new subdistrict boundaries for the Lower Loup Natural Resources District. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

Mohler thanked Tylr Naprstek for his assistance with the maps. Frenzen asked what the next step in the subdistrict boundaries was and Mohler said that the boundaries would be sent to the Nebraska Secretary of State and to each of the County Clerks in the District. Eschliman said that it would take effect in 2012.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION REPORT

Area 4 and State Range Judging Contests

Information & Education Coordinator Larry Schultz told the Board that the Area 4 Range Judging Contest was held on Tuesday at St. Paul. There were 307 competitors. He said that the top senior competitor was Chase Rieken of Fullerton and the top junior competitor was Alyssa Hambleton of Fullerton. Schultz said that Sargent had the top Junior team, Ord had the top Senior team, and Mike Kozeal of Sargent was the top professional. There were 10 schools competing.

Schultz said that the state contest would be held in Sidney next week.

Schultz reported that the Lower Loup NRD would host the North Central Land Judging Contest on October 13th at Ansley. The NRD would also participate in the annual Environmental Festival in Ord on October 4th.

NRD Apparel

Schultz told the Board that the NRD's Apparel Policy provided a new article of clothing each year. Shirts in shades of yellow had been selected and order forms were provided to the Board from which to make selections.

ASSISTANT MANAGER'S REPORT

Groundwater Management Area Activities

LB-483 Acres

Assistant General Manager Russell Callan said that 572 applications for new irrigated acres had been received. Frenzen asked how many applications had been received last year and Callan said 215. Callan said that the total acres requested amounted to 23,878, compared to 11,900 the previous year. Ranking the applications would be a staff priority given the volume. Koehlmoos said that staff handled the number of requests professionally and each applicant was informed that there were numerous applications. Walden asked if other NRDs had similar numbers of requests and Callan said each NRD has a different process and time period. Amsberry said that a radio ad was running advertising irrigated acres available for transfer in Logan County. Anderson said that he assisted a landowner with an application in Lower Platte North NRD and that District had 200 acres that had not been requested. Callan said the average application request was around 40 acres.

Area 28 Activities

Callan said that staff would be meeting with the NRD's attorney to begin a process for taking repeat violators of groundwater regulations to District Court. Adams asked if the letters sent to violators had received a response and Callan said that they did in some cases, but not in the cases that will go to court.

Area 18 Activities

Callan directed the Board to a map included in the supplemental agenda. He said that staff had worked to make determinations on whether water quality problems were focused in river valleys or throughout the area. He said that about 35% of the sampled wells would come from the river valleys. Kolar and Moudry have been taking deep core soil samples throughout the area. Adams asked if the water quality problems could be a localized issue and Callan said staff was looking at the possibility in some cases.

ELM Update

Callan told the Board that USGS continues to work on the ELM model and some payments have been made on the project.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Game & Parks Letter to LLNRD Concerning Pibel Lake

Koehlmoos told the Board that he had been contacted by Bill Vasey inquiring to the District's interest in acquiring Pibel Lake from the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. He said Vasey is a member of the Pibel Bible Camp Board. Koehlmoos said that he talked with Kirk Nelson of Game & Parks and received a letter seeking the NRD's interest in acquiring the recreation area. Koehlmoos directed the Board to a map included in the agenda. The lake services 64 square miles of drainage, is 26 acres in size, and holds 136 acre-feet of water storage. He said that public recreation and fish/wildlife are two of the duties of NRDs.

Koehlmoos said he visited the lake and noticed a couple of simple improvements that could be made to improve the lake. The recreation benefits and water storage benefits might make it a good acquisition. Nelson asked if Game & Parks gave up Bowman Lake at Loup City and Koehlmoos said he believed a similar situation had occurred at Arnold. Koehlmoos said that there were some siltation issues on the lake and Game & Parks might be willing to make an improvement such as a siltation basin part of the ownership transition.

Following some discussion, Koehlmoos said that if the Board wished to pursue the matter, he was seeking authorization for management to pursue negotiations.

Adams motioned, seconded by Eschliman, to authorize the General Manger to pursue negotiations with Nebraska Game & Parks Commission regarding a potential transfer of ownership of Pibel Lake State Recreation Area. Motion carried by roll call vote, all present voting yes.

New Hires

Koehlmoos said that there were no new hires.

NARD REPORT

Director's Report

D. Rasmussen said the NARD Board would meet in Kearney the following week. There were only a few resolutions to consider. Koehlmoos said that one of the resolutions is to exempt surface water acres from the occupation tax in the Republican River Basin.

NRC REPORT

Hadenfeldt and Knutson said that the Commission would meet in Kearney the following week.

RC&D REPORTS

Loup Basin RC&D

D. Rasmussen told the Board that the RC&D had met twice. The executive board had met and the annual banquet was held in Burwell on Tuesday night. There was a presentation on Happy Jack Mine and another from Calamus Outfitters. He said that the election of officers was held and he was re-elected.

PrairieLand RC&D

Gellermann reported that the RC&D had held its annual meeting and awards banquet in Humphrey. He said that the group reviewed its ongoing projects, including the electronics recycling collections, the Shell Creek project, and the No-Till project. He said new officers were elected.

Koehlmoos said that the NRD had not paid membership dues to any RC&D and would wait until directed by the Board to do so.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

D. Rasmussen said that Lyle Rasmussen remained ill and no diagnosis had been made as to his medical issues.

Adams said that there would be an antique firearms show at Fort Hartsuff this weekend.

Thoene asked if any Board members had been approached regarding the Keystone XL Pipeline and Koehlmoos said that he reiterates the NRD stand of neutrality.

Adams asked about the current status of the Central Platte NRD lawsuit and Koehlmoos said he wasn't aware of any new developments.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Chairman Kruse declared the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Roster for attendance of this meeting and tally of votes cast on motions at this meeting are being filed with the official minutes of this meeting at the Lower Loup Natural Resources District's Headquarters Office, 2620 Airport Drive, Ord, Nebraska. Publication notification of this meeting was made via newspaper in each county within the District. The next Board of Directors meeting will be held Thursday, October 27, 2011, at 5:00 p.m., at the Headquarters Office in Ord, Nebraska.

Darwin B. Anderson
Secretary