

Water Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, February 24, 2021 7:00 PM  
Lower Platte North NRD Office  
P.O. Box 126  
Wahoo, NE 68066

## 1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

To table flow meter discussion until February Water Committee, so Committee could know if grant funding would be available.

Update: January 22, 2021

The NET Grant submitted by LPN didn't score high enough for it to be on the recommended funding list for 2021.

## 2. REGULATORY

### 2.A. GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT AREA

#### 2.A.1. Variance Request in the Hydrologically Connected Area (Limited Development Area)

Greg Reeves contacted staff about Variance LPN -V-014-0410 for Section 15-14N-6E. This variance scored 272.5 initially and a letter was sent out in 2019, after Board approved a minimum score of 300 points. Greg claimed that he didn't receive a letter which asked him to contact staff on requesting a re-evaluation. Staff, with assistance from Katie Cameron, is re-evaluating with the AEM data.

Staff explained to the Committee that this variance request was within Village of Weston Wellhead Protection Area. The AEM flights did show that the saturated thickness has the potential to be thicker than what was on the initial evaluation. Staff has contacted Greg Reeves.

Attachments included

#### 2.A.2. Well Permit

The LWS (Lincoln Water System) well permit was submitted to the LPN in February 2020. The Committee recommendation was "To approve LWS well permit if documentation is received on a recently ran model per Class 4 well permit requirement."

LWS has supplied the needed information which showed a 2 foot decline at the higher pumping rate. Staff will approve the well permit for LWS, if the Committee has no issue.

Committee asked staff for a verification document on the Well Decommissioning procedure

on the well that was compromise during the flood, The well abandonment was completed by Layne Christensen Company and the documentation is attached. As the Committee asked for additional documentation, a motion would be appropriate.

### 2.A.3. Cost Share Programs

#### 2.A.3.a. Flow Meter Maintenance Program

The invoice from Tri City Meter's is attached. They serviced 246 mechanical meters and 25 battery/electronic powered meters for a total of 271 meters. The invoice is \$17,563.00 (2020-2021). The LPNNRD should get \$928.00 of that back by billing out the 25 battery changes to those producers.

### 2.A.4. LPNNRD Operator Certification

A certification meeting is planned for Wednesday, March 10 at Lake Wanahoo. The morning session will be testing only and in the afternoon in-person presentations will be given.

A couple of more meetings have been scheduled for March 19 in Columbus and a Zoom meeting on March 25.

### 2.A.5. Lower Platte River Basin Water Management Plan Coalition (LPRBC)

A management meeting was held on February 3, which the main discussion centered on the 2nd increment implementation. Below shows the technical recommendation and since that meeting NeDNR felt that their staff would not be able to complete the evaluation without outside assistance. Bob Hilger and Dave Saalfeld are the LPN representatives on this group. Attached are draft minutes from this meeting. A followup Technical meeting is planned for March 4 and the Management Group will be meeting on March 23. The Directors will meet in April with date to be determined.

From Minutes:

Naprstek outlined the technical committee recommendation for proceeding with analysis prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> increment:

*The Technical Committee recommends proceeding with the updated basin analysis in preparation for approval of the 2<sup>nd</sup> increment of the Basin Wide Water Management Plan. The committee recommends using the updated datasets being collected and prepared by TFG and NeDNR and running those through an analysis utilizing the same methodology used for the 1<sup>st</sup> increment. While this includes utilizing older analytical methods in a portion of the basin, the committee recognizes that efforts to incorporate AEM data and improve numerical models in the lower portion of the basin are not ready for implementation and need more time for review and revisions. The intent is that NeDNR will continue work with Coalition members during the next increment to update models that will then use the best available science to complete an updated analysis at the end of the next 5-year increment. The committee recognizes that these updates could lead to future changes to the hydrologically connected area (HCA), and ratios may change with new modeling efforts and as new water supplies and depletions are incorporated. The next increment could have new depletion ratios for the entire basin and, as portrayed by the spreadsheet tool provided by NeDNR, may cause adjustments to allowable depletion percentages. Understanding the risks of*

*these potential changes, the committee recommends only working forward and not working backwards to correct any past allocations.*

Following review of the technical committee recommendation, discussion followed. Schellpeper noted that since the technical committee last met in October and adopted the recommendation, there has been some staffing changes at DNR. She outlined how those changes, in addition to exiting workload will limit the ability for NeDNR to complete the analysis within a timeline that would align with the expiration of the current increment. It was discussed that to complete the analysis within a reasonable timeline, contracting with a consultant would be required. It was noted that preliminary discussions put those cost estimates at around \$130K.

### 3. GROUND WATER PROGRAMS

#### 3.A. DECOMMISSIONED WELL PROGRAM

##### 3.A.1. Well Estimates

# new wells has been reviewed and approved for decommissioning since the last Committee meeting.

Well Owner	Type of Well	Cost Share Estimate	County
Bryce Grotelueschen	Irrigation	\$1,000.00 (capped limit)	Colfax

##### 3.A.2. Plugged Wells

# wells have been plugged, reviewed, and ready for cost share payment approval this month.

Well Owner	Type of Well	Cost Share Estimate	County

### 3.B. LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD GROUND WATER STUDIES

#### 3.B.1. Phase Area Update

An invoice is attached from UNL for \$871.20 from the project in the Phase Areas.

Update from NRCS Workgroup Meeting. Bob H. discussed some of the Best Management Practices offered by the NRCS. It was suggested manure and nitrate management should be priority BMPs for the LPN.

Other Discussion?

#### 3.B.2. Lower Platte River Consortium

The group met on February 12 to discuss when to conduct the desktop evaluations on projects, with NeDNR working on a time schedule. An agenda is shown on items discussed.

### 3.C. Remote Well Logs Reads

An invoice is attached from the METOS Company for the yearly subscription cost of \$5,390 for 77 remote sites that the Board approved through a WaterSmart Grant. The invoice this year is part of the LPN match for this grant.

Staff did give a demonstration on the information from some of the sites.

### 3.D. NEW MONITORING WELLS

Staff would like to start the process for the District to consider test holes and dedicated monitoring wells. The areas that are of interest is east of Fremont, Schuyler-Richland Phase Area and NW of Columbus.

1. Wells East of Fremont would help in identifying if there would a possibility of installing wells to assist the Platte River Flow during a drought. Papiro NRD would be assisting on this part of the project.
2. Well within Schuyler-Richland area would allow staff to do water tests year around and do controlled specialize water sampling if needed.
3. Well NW of Columbus will fill in a gap within the SQS #2 area for management decisions.

The Board budgeted \$75,000 for additional test holes and monitoring wells. Staff would start the process by sending out RFPs to qualified companies that could drill test holes and install monitoring wells.

Committee gave staff permission to proceed in contacting qualifying companies.

### 4. OTHER

#### 4.A. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC