

# Natural Resources News

Winter 2006 A Newsletter of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Vol. 20

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## **DISTRICT-WIDE GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT AREA**

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District (District) Board of Directors (Board) has scheduled a public hearing to consider whether a district-wide Ground Water Management Area should be designated and to consider the adoption of the related Rules and Regulations. **The Ground Water Management and Protection Act imposes a stay on the issuance of water well construction permits at the point in time when the District is designated as a Management Area** and upon adoption of the necessary Rules and Regulations to implement the new permitting requirements.

On February 10, 2005, the District Board approved revisions to Chapter 8 of its' Ground Water Management Plan (Plan). The revisions state that the Board, in order to take a proactive approach to protecting the ground water resources, and upon approval by the Director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), will establish the entire district as a Ground Water Quantity Management Area. The Director approved the revisions on May 26, 2005.

The Plan now provides that, upon establishment of a district-wide Ground Water Quantity Management Area, permits will be required for all new wells with the capacity to pump greater than 50 gallons per minute. The Plan also provides that a permit could be issued if the total irrigated acres would not exceed 25% of the land area within a one-mile radius of a new well.

The Board had initially anticipated that it would be possible to issue permits to allow the construction of new wells in those areas of the District that are outside of the current stay area (described below). Such development would be restricted by imposing a limit on the total number of irrigated acres that could be developed within a one-mile radius of a new well. Nebraska statutes, (primarily Section 46-714(1)), however, impose a stay on the issuance of water well construction permits at the moment the District is designated as a Management Area and the Board adopts the necessary Rules and Regulations to implement the permitting requirements. The Rules and Regulations do not restrict the construction of water wells that pump less than 50 gallons per minute. The Rules and Regulations also identify several exceptions to the stay on the issuance of permits for the construction of new wells, including replacement wells, test holes, dewatering wells, and water wells for range livestock, among others.

Within the District, and along a specifically defined corridor of the North Platte River, the South Platte River, the Platte River, Birdwood Creek, and Whitetail Creek, and pursuant to the Ground Water Management and Protection Act, there is currently a stay on the construction of new water wells and on the use of an existing water well to increase the number of acres historically irrigated. That area is often referred to as the "28/40" stay area. The geographic area within which these particular stays are in effect is not affected by designation of the District as a Ground Water Quantity Management Area. A map of the area is on page 4.

A district-wide stay on the issuance of water well construction permits (if the District is designated as a Management Area), as well as the current stays within the 28/40 stay area, will remain in place until the development and adoption of an Integrated Management Plan (IMP) by the District and the DNR. A group of stakeholders, representing all water users, meets monthly for the purpose of developing recommendations to the District and the DNR. We anticipate that the IMP will be adopted within the next two to four years.

**District-wide continued from page 1**

Part of the IMP process will involve an assessment of whether to impose restrictions on water use within the District and, if so, what those restrictions should be. One of the primary reasons for designating the District as a Management Area, recognizing that operation of the Ground Water Management and Protection Act results in a stay on the issuance of water well construction permits, is to attempt to protect existing water users from being required to mitigate (i.e., replace) the water use associated with newly permitted wells.

In order to establish a Management Area, the Board of the District is required to hold a public hearing to consider revisions to the Management Plan and adoption of the related Rules and Regulations. Within 90 days thereafter, the Board shall determine whether a Management Area should be designated.

The Board of Directors has scheduled a public hearing to consider the proposed district-wide Ground Water Management Area and the Rules and Regulations for January 19, 2006 at 1 pm CST at the Quality Inn & Suites in North Platte, Nebraska.

To obtain copies of the revisions to Chapter 8 of the Plan and the related Rules and Regulations, please go to the District's web site at [www.tpnrd.org](http://www.tpnrd.org) and click on the "Programs" button. The "Regulatory Programs" link contains all of the information pertaining to the proposed district-wide Ground Water Management Area. If you do not have internet access, please feel free to contact the District office.

**Trees, Trees, Trees**



Order forms for hand plant trees are available at the Twin Platte NRD office. The return deadline is the week of February 20<sup>th</sup> 2006. Easter Red Cedars and Rocky Mountain Juniper bare root trees are limited, so supplies are restricted to first come first serve.

**Corners for Wildlife Program**

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District is currently working with landowners who want an alternative to farming certain dryland pivot corners. The Corners for Wildlife program improves wildlife habitat and provides program participants up to \$75 per acre in annual payments for the five-year enrollment period.

In addition, cost-share funds provided by Pheasants Forever and the Natural Resources District will greatly reduce the landowner's cost for habitat materials in the program. The minimum improvement expected for an enrolled site is the seeding of a grass-legume mixture to enhance wildlife cover. To receive the highest annual payment, tree and/or shrub plantings are also required.



The Corners for Wildlife program is administered by the Natural Resources District in cooperation with the Nebraska Environmental Trust and Pheasants Forever, Inc. The program does not require hunting access. Contact Bill Carhart at the Twin Platte Natural Resources District office for more information.

## **ROCKY & DIANE HOFFMANN 2005 TREE PLANTING AWARD**

In 1978, Rocky and Diane Hoffmann purchased an acreage 10 miles south of North Platte. The tract was part of the old Hunter property, and a neighbor remembers planting corn with a horse-drawn planter on the site in the late 1920's. Later, during the dust bowl years, the fields that he had worked with horse and planter blew into a huge sand dune. In the late 1930's, Hunter planted a few rows of Cottonwoods he had pulled from the South Platte River to control the blowing sand. Most of those Cottonwoods had died by the time the Hoffmann's had moved onto the acreage, but remnant survivors of that original planting symbolized hard work with a shovel and a bucket to conserve the fragile soil.

Those old Cottonwoods triggered a plan for a new planting. The wind blew constantly during July when the house was being constructed, and the Hoffmann's were determined to temper the harsh environment. In the fall of 1978, Rocky and Diane pulled winter dormant Cottonwood trees from the South Platte River and planted them around their new house. Rocky's father, who provided much of the tree planting inspiration, carted truck loads of American Elm, Black Walnut, Silver Maple, Raspberries, Nanking Cherries, Sour Cherries, Grapes, Apricot, Apple, and Pear trees from his hobby arboretum in the eastern part of the state.

In the spring of 1979, the Hoffmann's hand planted the perimeter of their property with Red Cedar and Rocky Mountain Juniper. Pines and Plums were also planted that year, and other trees were constantly added from any source available. In 1980, the Hoffmann's cost-shared with the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and hand planted 400 more trees. They continued to plant trees through 2001, most years cost-sharing with the Twin Platte NRD, while constantly deriving trees from other sources as well. Too many horses placed on the small plot by a previous owner had resulted in badly damaged topsoil with little cover. Native grasses were restored through an inter-seeding project conducted by the Twin Platte NRD.

In the early 1980's, hand cultivating and watering of trees by trailer and water tank pulled by a 9N Ford tractor provided summer diversion for the Hoffmann kids, Deb and Chris. In 1996, the Hoffmann's hung up the hoe and laid down 3,600 feet of conservation mulch for a 475 tree machine planting, again cost-shared with the Twin Platte NRD. Every year, a few trees were planted and still are today. The property supports Ponderosa, Scotch, Jack and Austrian Pines, Hackberry, Russian Olive, Autumn Olive, Cotoneaster, Skunkbush, Sumac, Sand Cherry, Sour Cherry, Pear, Apple, American Elm, Black Walnut, Green Ash, Honeylocust, Red Cedar, Rocky Mountain Juniper,

Cottonwood, Silver Maple, Ginala Maple, Cutleaf Birch, English Oak, Burr Oak, Mulberry, and Catalpa. Winter and summer environments have been changed dramatically and continue to change as the trees mature. Deer, quail, pheasants, and prairie chickens find cover in the plantings from the heat and cold, and winter bird feeding produces a diversity of species.

## **MOST FARMS 2005 CONSERVATION AWARD**

In 1950 following his high school graduation, Don Most began his career of farming and ranching on the family farm southeast of Ogallala. In 1951 after the death of his father, Don took over the farm. In 1955 he purchased the home place and married Anita Gengenbach, and they have resided there ever since. Two children were born to Don and Anita; Melanie and Samuel. Sam joined the family farm in 1982 following his graduation from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in Agricultural Economics.

In 1953, Don hand planted a grove of cedar trees on the south side of the farmstead. A second grove of cedar trees was planted north of the farmstead in 1965 and 1966. Irrigation was introduced to the farm in 1974 with the addition of a center pivot. There are now three center pivots on the farm.

A new grove of cedar trees was planted by hand on Sam's place in 1980. It was expanded in 1990 by machine. The windbreak at Sam's was enhanced by a drip irrigation system and is very valuable in the spring during calving. Also in 1990 another grove was planted on the north side of an irrigated circle.

The farm is diversified growing wheat, corn, popcorn, dry edible beans, soybeans, alfalfa, in addition to a small cow-calf operation. No-till dryland corn has been planted for many years conserving moisture. Since 2004, a strip-till machine has been utilized to plant the irrigated crops as well.

Many miles of terraces have been built and re-done over the years to protect the erodible land. There are currently 150 acres of CRP land, with additional acres to be entered in 2006.

Sam and his wife Jody have three children; Micah, Amanda, and Caleb. Don and Anita's daughter, Melanie, lives in Syracuse, Nebraska. The Most family are active members of St. John's Lutheran Church southeast of Ogallala.

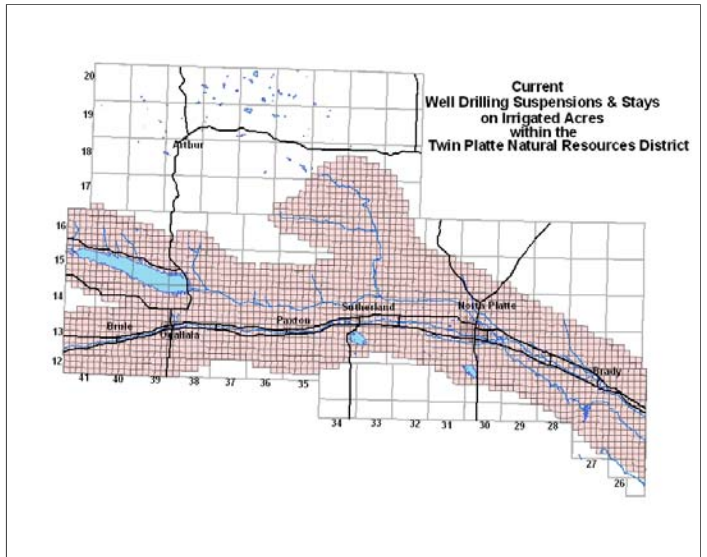
## Twin Platte Natural Resources District

<b>Board of Directors.....</b>	<b>Sub-District</b>
Jim Rubenthaler.....(H)584-3578.....	At-large
<b>(Chairperson)</b>	
Doug Stack.....(W)535-8308.....	3
<b>(Vice-Chairperson)</b>	
Jerry Weaver.....(W)534-9240.....	3
<b>(Secretary)</b>	
Jim Meisner.....(H)284-6509.....	5
<b>(Treasurer)</b>	
Bob Petersen.....(H)532-2689.....	2
Joe Wahlgren.....(H)537-3136.....	2
Shane Storer.....(H)764-2343.....	1
Jeff Baldrige.....(H)534-7780.....	4
Bob Wiseman.....(H)368-5866.....	4
Eric Hansen.....(W)532-6244.....	1
Dennis Schilz.....(W)287-2341.....	5

<b>Staff Members.....</b>	<b>Position</b>
Kent O. Miller.....	General Manager
Dave Slattery.....	Conservation Programs Coordinator
Bill Carhart.....	Range Programs Coordinator
Glen Bowers.....	Water Programs Field Coordinator
Ann Dimmitt.....	Water Programs Regulatory Coordinator
Sudheer Chadalavada.....	GIS Coordinator
Amy Mapes.....	Administrative Assistant
Kathy Clark.....	Field Office Secretary, North Platte NRCS
Brad Carlson.....	Range Programs Tech, North Platte NRCS

Natural Resources News is the official publication of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or would like to be placed on our mailing list, please feel free to submit them to:

Twin Platte Natural Resources District  
 C/O Ann Dimmitt, Water Programs Regulatory Coordinator  
 P.O. Box 1347  
 North Platte, NE 69103-1347  
 Phone: (308)535-8080  
 Fax: (308)535-8207  
 e-mail: tpnrd4@nponline.net



### Upcoming Events:



#### January

- 2 New Year's Day — Office Closed
- 9 TPNRD—Stakeholder's Meeting - 6:30 p.m. CST at Holiday Inn Express in North Platte
- 16 Martin Luther King Holiday — Office Closed
- 19 Public Hearing—1 p.m. at the Quality Inn & Suites in North Platte
- 19 Board of Director's Meeting - 4:00 p.m. CST at the Quality Inn & Suites in North Platte

#### February

- 1 OA Basin Wide Meeting - 10 a.m. CST at the Quality Inn in North Platte
- 9 Board of Director's Meeting - 3:00 p.m. CST\*
- 13 TPNRD—Stakeholder's Meeting - 6:30 p.m. CST at Holiday Inn Express in North Platte

\* Most Board Meetings are held in the TierOne Bank Center-North Platte

## Twin Platte

### NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

PO Box 1347  
 111 South Dewey Street  
 North Platte, NE 69103-1347

Postal Patron