

Assistant Manager's Report

June 15, 2026

The day after our May board meeting was the beginning of summer break for my kids. Since then, I can hardly keep straight all that has been going on – both at home and at work! Between baseball, softball, summer camps, meetings, tours, and general work duties, I've made lists and reminders to do my best to not forget anything else going on, but I'm sure somewhere along the way I've done so.

Tri-Basin NRD hosted the NARD managers meeting at the Prairie Museum on June 3. This worked well, as we didn't have to travel, but did need to prepare as hosts. The meeting went well, and we were able to host managers and NARD staff for supper the evening before the meeting at our shop. Jeff, Carrie, and Dalton, with help from the interns, had the shop looking good and prepared some fine dining for the group. Earlier in the day, staff hosted a round of golf at Holdrege Country Club and a kayak trip on the Kearney water trail.

Last week I attended the NARD Platte Basin Tour. The two-day tour was well attended, with two full tour buses, as we toured out of North Platte following the CNPPID system to Johnson Lake on day one and then ventured west to Ovid, Colorado to see the Perkin's County Canal project on day two. Jesse Bradley joined us to show the original canal construction from over one hundred years ago, as well as show the new canal alignment and challenges with modern infrastructure. Most notably, the lake of water in the South Platte River highlighted a grim reality that less water is making it to the Colorado/Nebraska border. I spoke with several directors from NRD's not associated with the Platte Basin – the common conversation was that they now understand the situation better and the need to invest in the Platte River system for the state of Nebraska.

The day after the tour I made a trip to Lincoln to meet with DWEE staff, along with Blue River model participants. We check in annually for discussion about how it is functioning and what updates might be available for future iterations. The meeting is a good opportunity to work with Blue River Basin NRD's, which usually don't collaborate on many projects with Tri-Basin.

The Platte River Recovery & Implementation Program has been working on retiming projects for capturing water from the Platte River and returning it when needed. This was the reason for the augmentation wells at Cottonwood Ranch that we manage for the program. Their next phase looked at a larger augmentation well network but was found to be overly expensive and not feasible for various reasons, so they have turned to creating an outlet from Elwood Reservoir that would direct water into Plum Creek and return to the Platte River. This concept is more feasible for returning water to the river; however, the issue of creek maintenance and landowner usage needs to be considered. We will be holding a meeting in Elwood with PRRIP on Thursday to discuss these issues with landowners.

Don't forget, our regular board meeting is rescheduled to June 25th (Thursday) this month. See you all at 1:30.