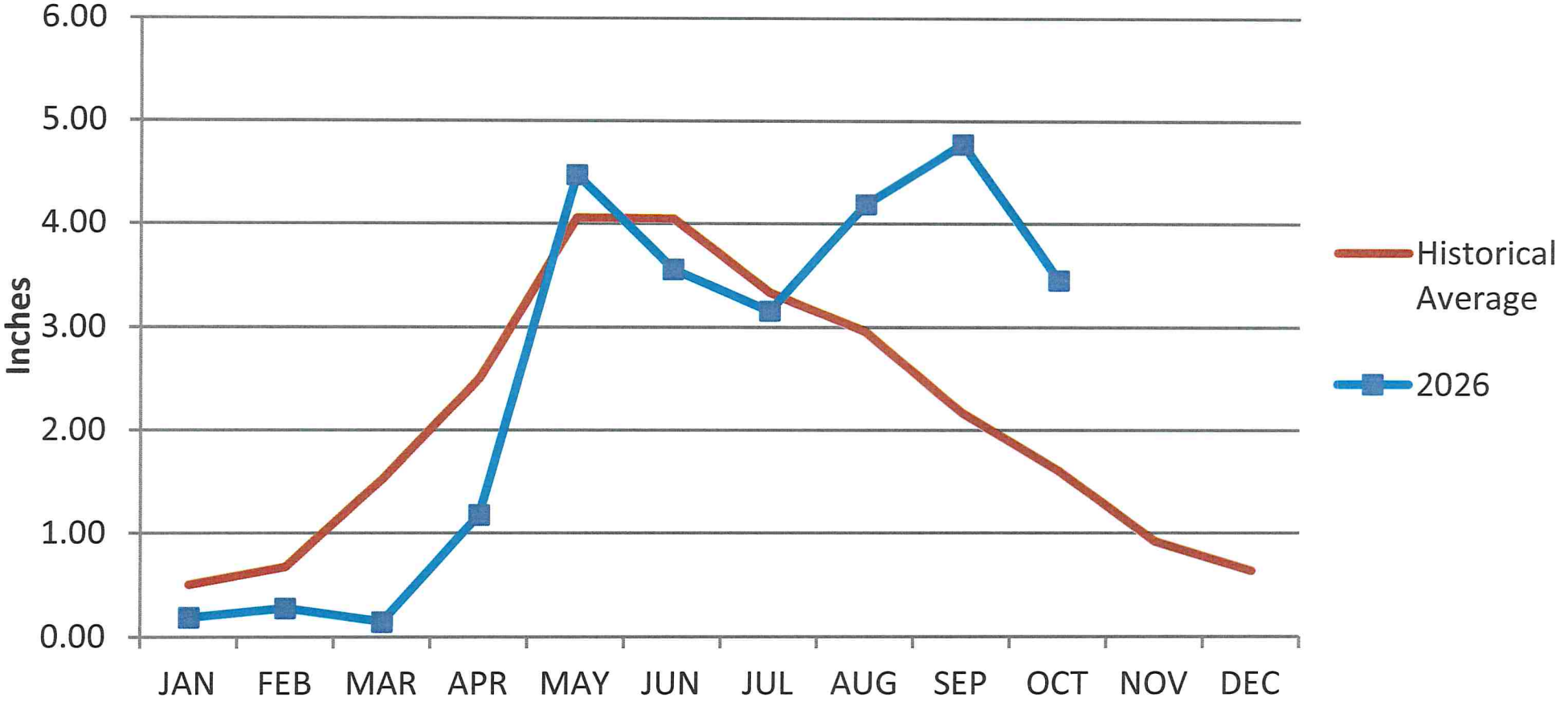
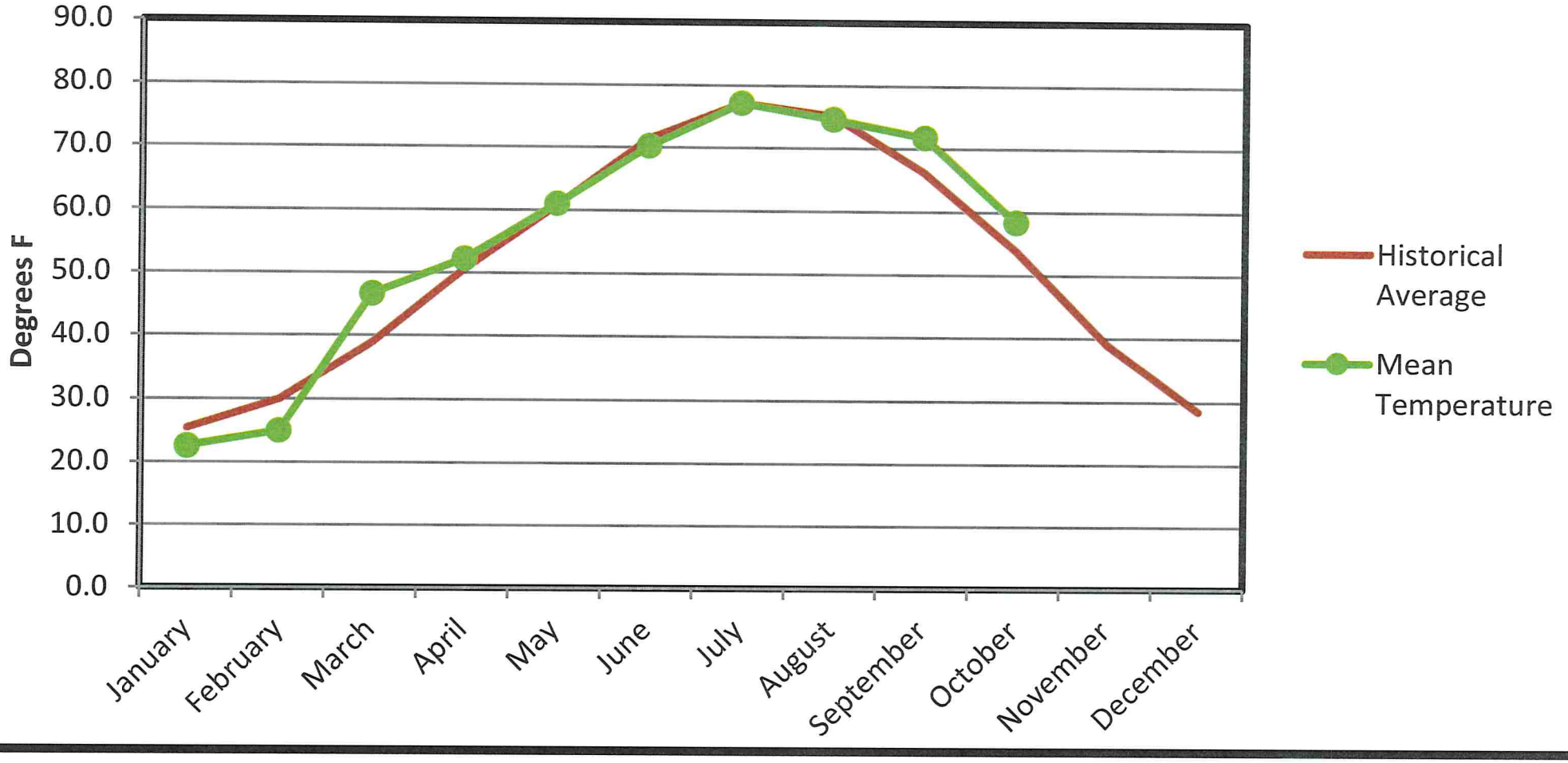
# Tri-Basin NRD
# Holdrege Monthly Precipitation - 2026



# Tri-Basin NRD
# Holdrege Monthly Mean Temperature - 2026



Tri-Basin NRD
1723 Burlington
Holdrege, NE 68949

Phone: (308) 995-6688
Fax: (308) 995-6992
Email: tribasin@tribasinnrd.org

Tri Basin
Natural Resources District

## October 2026 - Holdrege

**Temperature: (°F)**

* High: 90° (Recorded October 7)
* Low: 32° (Recorded October 17 - 20)

* Mean: 58.1° (Normal for October 54.3")
  Mean High: 71.2° (Normal: 68.2°)
  Mean Low: 45.0 (Normal: 40.7°)

**NOTES:**

Precipitation for October 2026: 3.46"
(Normal for October: 1.47")
Precipitation for the year through October: 25.55"
(Normal for the year through October: 22.56")

**NOTES:** Rain noted 6 days
Fog noted 2 days
Trace noted 2 Days

---

## October 2025

**Temperature:**

High: 89°
Low: 27°
Mean: 56.7°

**Precipitation:**

For the Month: 1.88"
For the year: 24.62"

STATION *(Climatological)*: Holdrege — *(River Station, if different)*: —
MONTH: Oct 2026
STATE: NE
COUNTY: Phelps
RIVER:
TIME *(local)* OF OBSERVATION RIVER:
TEMPERATURE: 08:00
PRECIPITATION: 08:00
STANDARD TIME IN USE:
TYPE OF RIVER GAGE:
ELEVATION OF RIVER GAGE ZERO:
FLOOD STAGE:
NORMAL POOL STAGE:

WS FORM B-91
(03-09)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

# RECORD OF RIVER AND CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

High 90°

mean High 71.2°

mean 58.1°

mean Low 45°

Low 32°

| DATE | TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MAX | MIN | AT OBSN | PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS Rain, melted snow, etc. (in and hundredths) | Snow, ice pellets, hail (ins.and tenths) | AT OB Snow, ice pellets, hail ice on ground (in) | Draw a straight line (——) through hours precipitation was observed, and a wavy line (~~~~) through hours precipitation probably occurred unobserved: A.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 / NOON / P.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 | WEATHER (Observation Day) Mark 'X' for all types occurring each day: Fog | Ice pellets | Glaze | Thunder | Hail | Damaging winds | Time of occurrence if different from above | RIVER STAGE: Condition | Gage reading at ___ AM | Tendency | REMARKS *(SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS, ETC.)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 67 | 63 | 64 | 2.17 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 67 | 41 | 42 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 69 | 42 | 48 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | 70 | 47 | 49 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 79 | 42 | 53 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | 78 | 53 | 55 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | 90 | 52 | 56 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | 84 | 53 | 59 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | 87 | 53 | 54 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | 88 | 53 | 61 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | 89 | 60 | 61 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | 88 | 60 | 60 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | 85 | 47 | 47 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | 56 | 40 | 40 | 0.01 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | 52 | 40 | 47 | 0.37 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | 57 | 39 | 39 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | 57 | 32 | 33 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | 64 | 32 | 39 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | 70 | 32 | 42 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | 70 | 32 | 44 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | 69 | 44 | 45 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | 78 | 45 | 54 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | 76 | 54 | 59 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | 79 | 58 | 58 | 0.32 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | 67 | 42 | 42 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | 60 | 41 | 45 | 0.39 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | 57 | 39 | 39 | 0.19 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | 57 | 39 | 39 | 0.01 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | 67 | 38 | 40 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | 64 | 40 | 54 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | 65 | 41 | 55 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 71.2 | 45.0 | SUM | 3.46 | | | CHECK BAR (for wire weight) NORMAL CHECK BAR | Fog | Ice pel | Glaze | Thund | Hail | Dam winds | | | | |

CONDITION OF RIVER AT GAGE

A. Obstructed by rough ice
B. Frozen, but open at gage
C. Upper surface smooth ice
D. Ice gorge above gage
E. Ice gorge below gage
F. Shore ice
G. Floating ice
H. Pool stage

| READING | DATE |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

OBSERVER:

SUPERVISING OFFICE: GID Hastings

STATION INDEX NO.: 25-3910-08

| STATION (Climatological) | (River Station, if different) | MONTH | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Minden | | Sep | 2026 |

| STATE | COUNTY | RIVER |
|---|---|---|
| NE | Kearney | |

| TIME (local) OF OBSERVATION | TEMPERATURE | PRECIPITATION | STANDARD TIME IN USE |
|---|---|---|---|
| RIVER | 08:30 | 08:30 | |

| TYPE OF RIVER GAGE | ELEVATION OF RIVER GAGE ZERO | FLOOD STAGE | NORMAL POOL STAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

WS FORM B-91
(03-09)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

# RECORD OF RIVER AND CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

| DATE | TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MAX | MIN | AT OBSN | PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS Rain, melted snow, etc. (in and hundredths) | Snow, ice pellets, hail (ins.and tenths) | AT OB Snow, ice pellets, hail ice on ground (in) | WEATHER (Observation Day) Fog | Ice pellets | Glaze | Thunder | Hail | Damaging winds | Time of occurrence if different from above | RIVER STAGE Condition | Gage reading at ___AM | Tendency | REMARKS (SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS, ETC.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 90 | 66 | 88 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 92 | 66 | 76 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 95 | 71 | 74 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | 95 | 69 | 76 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 90 | 72 | 72 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | 92 | 67 | 68 | 0.05 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | 87 | 67 | 68 | 0.25 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | 96 | 67 | 77 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | 86 | 67 | 68 | 0.08 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | 80 | 56 | 65 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | 84 | 61 | 68 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | 89 | 58 | 59 | 0.04 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | 65 | 54 | 61 | 0.20 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | 64 | 58 | 64 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | 87 | 61 | 61 | 0.10 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | 62 | 55 | 59 | 0.05 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | 68 | 55 | 64 | T | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | 78 | 64 | 78 | T | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | 96 | 67 | M | 0.15 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | 76 | 58 | 59 | 0.25 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | 66 | 56 | 61 | 0.02 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | 73 | 56 | 59 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | 68 | 54 | 56 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | 72 | 56 | 57 | 1.10 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| 25 | 65 | 57 | 60 | 2.22 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | 67 | 60 | 62 | 0.20 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | X | | | | | | | |
| 27 | 79 | 59 | 77 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | 80 | 60 | 64 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | 73 | 63 | 66 | T | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | 73 | 65 | 65 | 0.05 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 79.6 | 61.5 | SUM | 4.76 | | | Fog | Ice pel | Glaze | Thund | Hall | Dam winds | | | | | |

Draw a straight line ( ——— ) through hours precipitation was observed, and a wavy line ( ~~~~~ ) through hours precipitation probably occurred unobserved

A.M. NOON P.M.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

CHECK BAR (for wire weight) NORMAL CHECK BAR

| READING | DATE |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

CONDITION OF RIVER AT GAGE

A. Obstructed by rough ice
B. Frozen, but open at gage
C. Upper surface smooth ice
D. Ice gorge above gage
E. Ice gorge below gage
F. Shore ice
G. Floating ice
H. Pool stage

OBSERVER
Closed by WFO GID (wfogid) on 22 Oct 2026 07:11PM

SUPERVISING OFFICE
GID Hastings

STATION INDEX NO.
25-5565-08

STATION *(Climatological)* Elwood 8S | *(River Station, if different)* | MONTH Sep | 2026

STATE NE | COUNTY Gosper | RIVER

TIME *(local)* OF OBSERVATION RIVER | TEMPERATURE 08:00 | PRECIPITATION 08:00 | STANDARD TIME IN USE

TYPE OF RIVER GAGE | ELEVATION OF RIVER GAGE ZERO | FLOOD STAGE | NORMAL POOL STAGE

WS FORM B-91
(03-09)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

# RECORD OF RIVER AND CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

| DATE | TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MAX | TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MIN | TEMPERATURE: AT OBSN | PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Rain, melted snow, etc. (in and hundredths) | PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Snow, ice pellets, hail (ins.and tenths) | PRECIPITATION: AT OB: Snow, ice pellets, hail ice on ground (in) | WEATHER (Observation Day): Fog | Ice pellets | Glaze | Thunder | Hail | Damaging Winds | Time of occurrence if different from above | RIVER STAGE: Condition | RIVER STAGE: Gage reading at ___AM | RIVER STAGE: Tendency | REMARKS (SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS, ETC.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | A clear, calm period. Hot! Mid to upper 90's. |
| 3 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | CALM, HOT PERIOD. UPPER 90'S FOR TEMPERATURE YE |
| 5 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | THUNDER LATE AFTERNOON, BUT NO RAIN. |
| 6 | | | | 1.09 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | 0.40 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | 0.20 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | X | | | | | | | STRONG HOT WIND FROM ABOUT 1:00 TO 5:00 P.M. STR |
| 9 | | | | 0.01 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | A COOL MORING. 57 DEGREES @ 8:00 A.M. CLEAR. |
| 11 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | DISTANT LIGHTNING ON EAST HORIZON @ 1:00 A.M. SK |
| 13 | | | | 0.05 | T | 0 | | | | | X | | | | | | DIME TO NICKEL SIZE HAIL. |
| 14 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | SOME MIST IN THE MORNING TO EARLY AFTERNOON YEST |
| 15 | | | | 0.03 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | YESTERDAY'S FOG CONTINIUED UNTIL LATE MORNING YE |
| 19 | | | | T | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | DISTANT FOG. MOISTURE WAS LIGHT FOR A FEW HOURS. |
| 20 | | | | 0.28 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | Fog yesterday lasted until late morning. No fog |
| 21 | | | | T | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | | | | 0.28 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | | | | 1.16 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | | | | 0.03 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | LIGHT RAIN ON & OFF MOST OF THIS 24 HOUR PERIOD. |
| 27 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | HEAVY FOG. |
| 28 | | | | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | FOG YESTERDAY LASTED UNTIL LATE A.M. HEAVY FOG A |
| 29 | | | | 0.14 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | | | | 0.04 | 0.0 | 0 | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | SUM | 3.71 | T | | | | | | | | | | | | |

PRECIPITATION: *Draw a straight line ( ——— ) through hours precipitation was observed, and a wavy line ( ~~~~~ ) through hours precipitation probably occurred unobserved*

A.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 | NOON | P.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

WEATHER (Observation Day): Mark 'X' for all types occurring each day

| | Fog | Ice pellets | Glaze | Thunder | Hail | Damaging Winds |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Check Bar | X | | | | | |

CHECK BAR (for wire weight) NORMAL CHECK BAR

| READING | DATE |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

CONDITION OF RIVER AT GAGE

A. Obstructed by rough ice
B. Frozen, but open at gage
C. Upper surface smooth ice
D. Ice gorge above gage
E. Ice gorge below gage
F. Shore ice
G. Floating ice
H. Pool stage

OBSERVER
Closed by Charlene Nott (ELWN1) on 13 Oct 2026 08:46AM

SUPERVISING OFFICE
GID Hastings

STATION INDEX NO.
25-2690-08

## Fourth Quarter 2026 Grand Island Stream Gauge Data

| | Oct Act | Oct Tar | Well Rur | Nov Act | Nov Tar | Well Rur | Dec Act | Dec Tar |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3.75 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 2 | 3.79 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 3 | 3.69 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 4 | 3.65 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 5 | 3.59 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 6 | 3.64 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 7 | 446 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 8 | 319 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 9 | 345 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 10 | 218 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 11 | 209 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 12 | 181 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 13 | 141 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 14 | 173 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 15 | 242 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 |
| 16 | 349 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 17 | 349 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 18 | 349 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 19 | 551 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 20 | 466 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 21 | 3.41 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 22 | 298 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 23 | 275 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 24 | 264 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 25 | 242 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 26 | 887 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 27 | 1500 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 28 | 848 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 29 | 678 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 30 | 569 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |
| 31 | | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 |

## Fourth Quarter 2026 Overtaon Stream Gauge Data

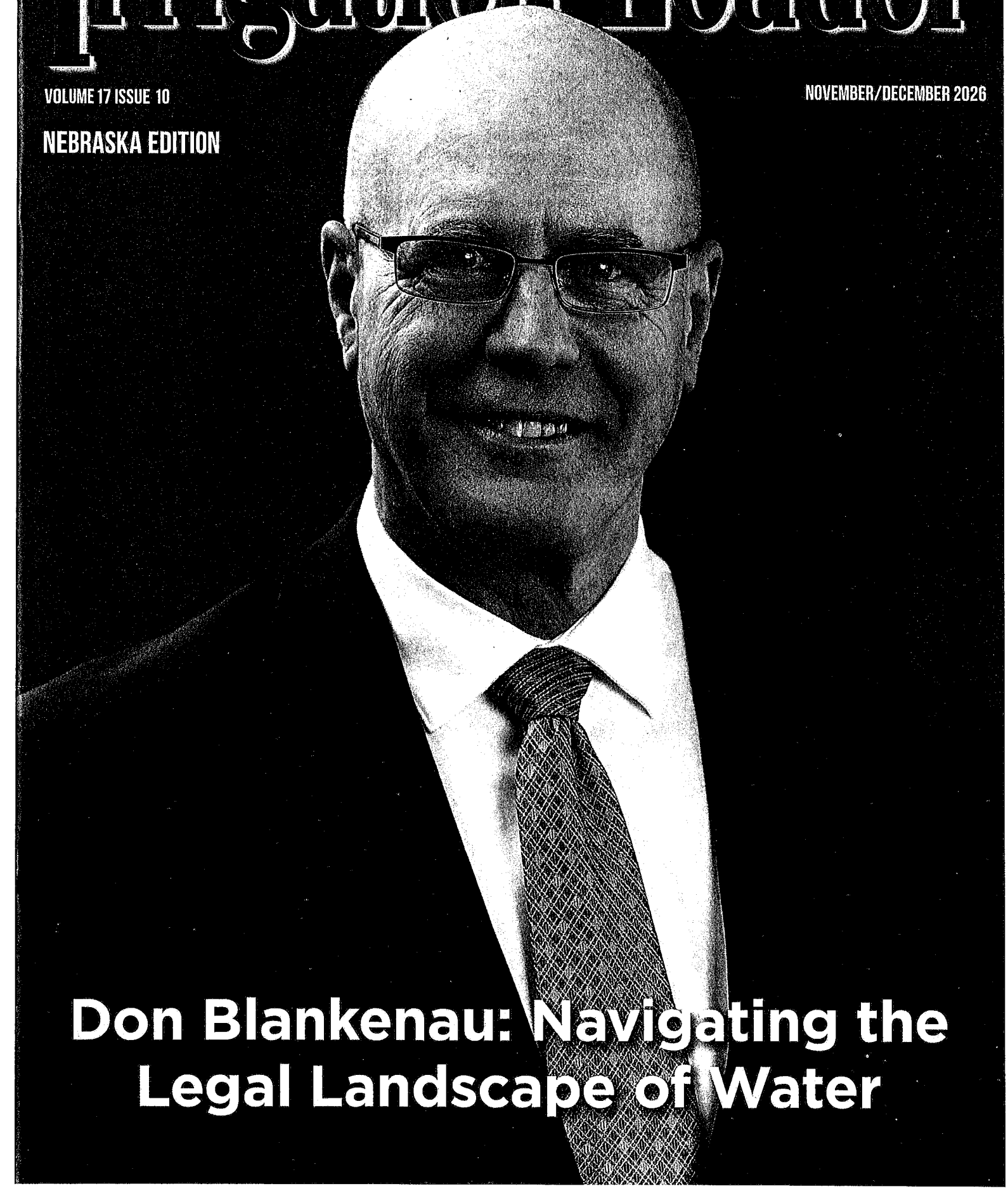
| | | Oct Tar | Well Rur | Nov Act | Nov Tar | Well Rur | Dec Act | Dec Tar | Well Run |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1490 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 2 | 203 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 3 | 188 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 4 | 417 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 5 | 164 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 6 | M | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 7 | M | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 8 | 148 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 9 | 115 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 10 | 142 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 11 | 1290 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 12 | 152 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 13 | 120 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 14 | 353 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 15 | 310 | 1300 | | | 1300 | | | 1000 | |
| 16 | 410 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 17 | 1760 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 18 | 161 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 19 | 167 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 20 | 142 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 21 | 137 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 22 | 120 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 23 | 872 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 24 | 1400 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 25 | 1750 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 26 | 335 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 27 | 304 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 28 | 274 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 29 | 266 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 30 | 1400 | 1300 | | | 600 | | | 1000 | |
| 31 | | 1300 | | | | | | 1000 | |

# Irrigation Leader

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 10

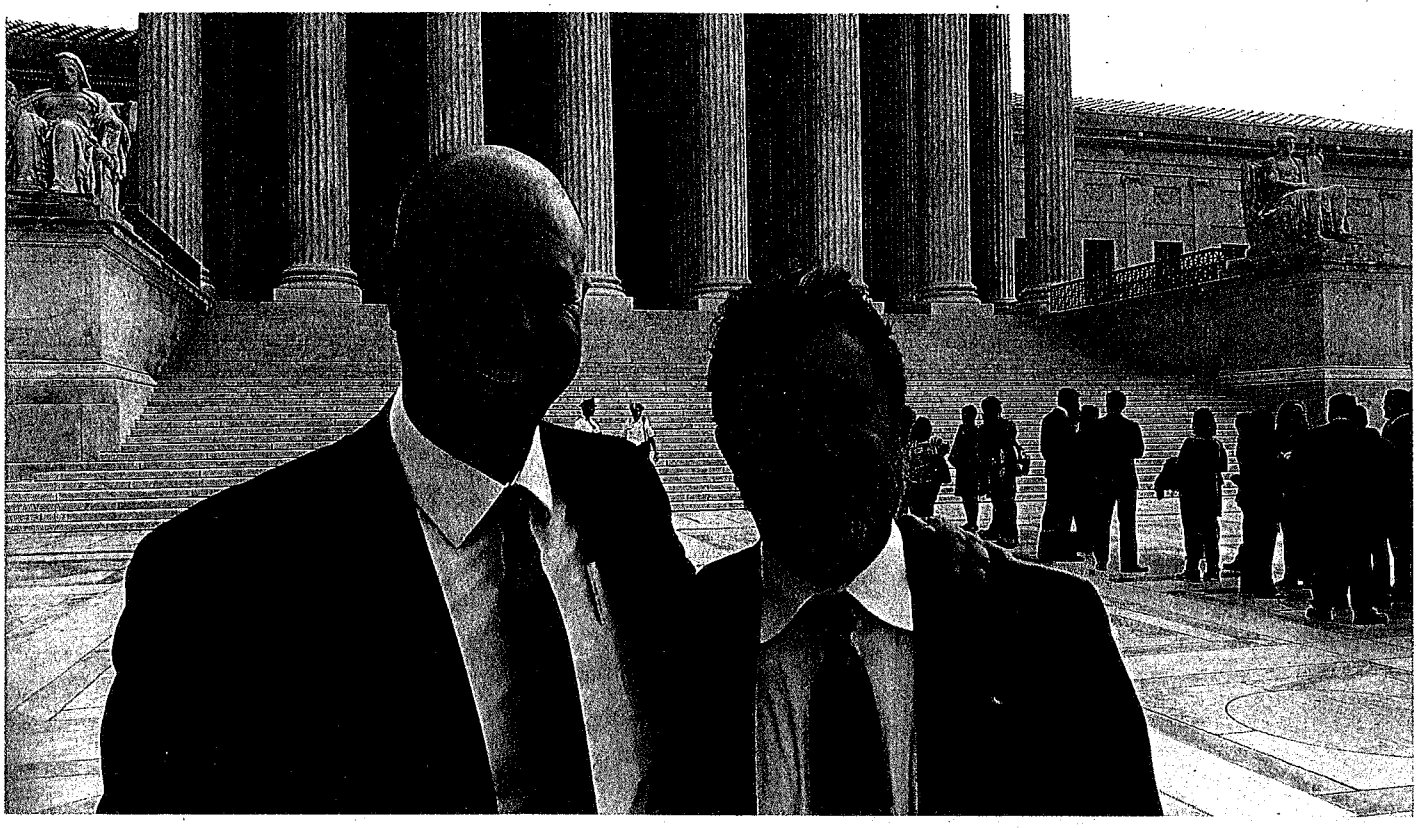
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

NEBRASKA EDITION



## Don Blankenau: Navigating the Legal Landscape of Water

# Don Blankenau: Navigating the Legal Landscape of Water



Don Blankenau (left) and Tom Wilmoth (right) at the U.S. Supreme Court for the *Kansas v. Colorado* case involving the Republican River.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WOODS AITKEN.

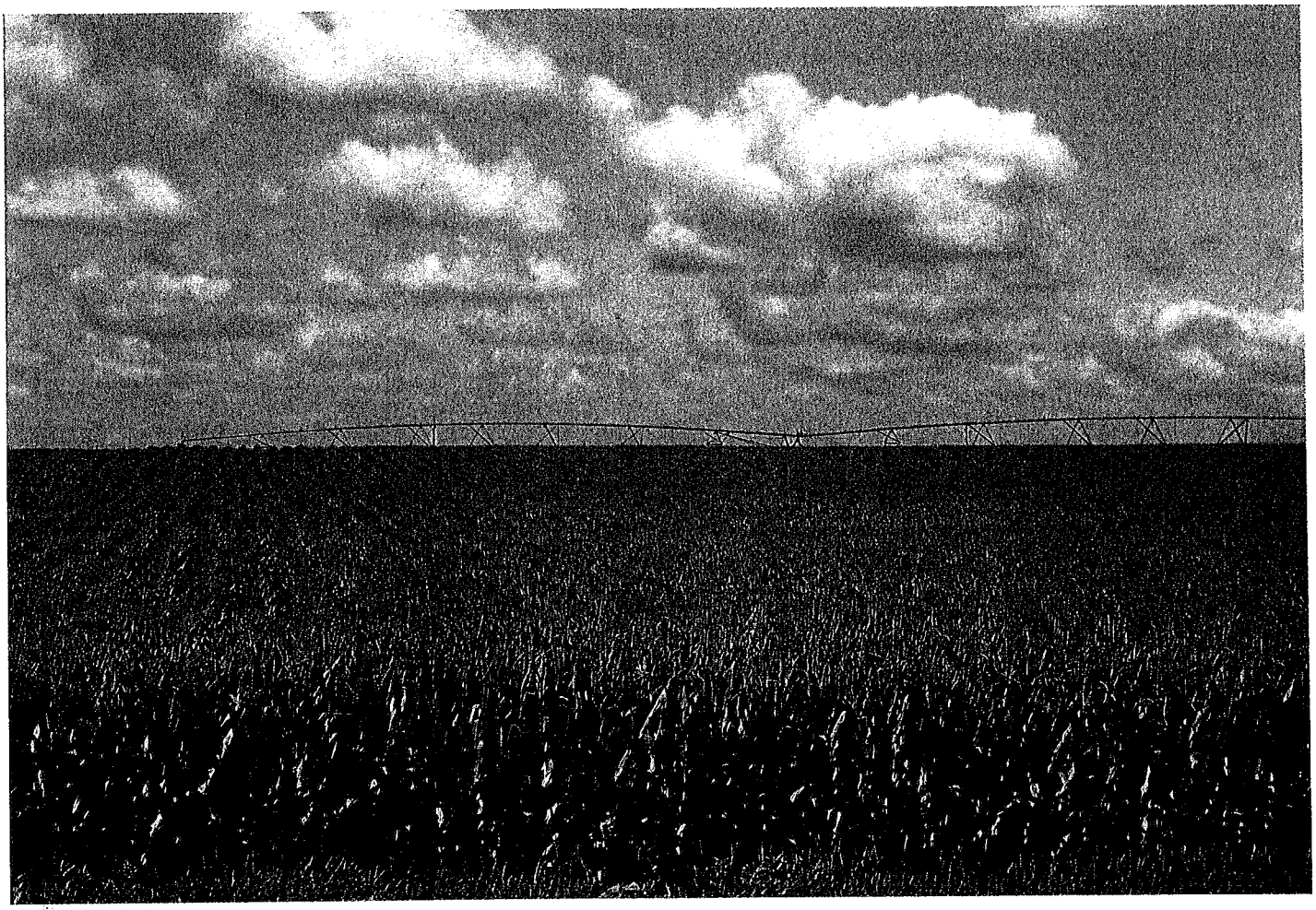
*Don Blankenau, an attorney at Woods Aitken, has spent his career at the intersection of water law, agriculture, and natural resources policy. From his early work with Nebraska's Department of Water Resources to his role in interstate water litigation and the development of the state's integrated management framework, he has helped shape the legal landscape in which irrigators, natural resources districts (NRDs), and water managers operate. In this interview, Mr. Blankenau speaks with* Irrigation Leader *about the evolution of Nebraska water law, the importance of collaboration, and the challenges that scarcity and water quality concerns may pose in the years ahead.*

**Irrigation Leader:** Please tell us about your background and how you came to be in your current position.

**Don Blankenau:** I grew up in a small agricultural town in eastern Nebraska. I went to college at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and received a degree in natural resources management with a focus on water resources. I pursued that degree expecting to go to law school and get involved in natural resources issues. After I earned my undergraduate degree, I went to law school and took every natural resources class the school offered, only to find that virtually no jobs in Nebraska matched that focus. My wife, whom I married during law school, wanted to stay in Nebraska, so I took a job as a criminal prosecutor. It was a terrible job with all sorts of unpleasant issues, but it was great in that it got me into court almost every day, which was an important learning opportunity for me.

After about 2½ years, a job opening came up at the Nebraska Department of Water Resources in Lincoln. I accepted that job. I was fortunate to get it, and I held that position for about 8 years, spending the last 4 as the agency's assistant director. I was then lured into the private sector and landed at a firm based in Phoenix with a Lincoln office, where I met my friend Tom Wilmoth. After about a decade, he convinced me that we should open our own firm, and we did. We ran it for 15 years. This past January, Tom decided to go into partial retirement, so I decided it was time to go back to a firm that offered background support and assistance. That is how I ended up at Woods Aitken.

**Irrigation Leader:** Please introduce us to Woods Aitken and its work.



Nebraska farmland.

PHOTO BY RICHARD HURD, LICENSED UNDER CC BY 2.0.

**Don Blankenau:** Woods Aitken is 105 years old. It is a full-service firm, offering services across a wide range of industries and now, of course, water. It has offices in Lincoln; Omaha; Denver; and Washington, DC.

**Irrigation Leader:** What initially drew you to the intersection of law, agriculture, and natural resources?

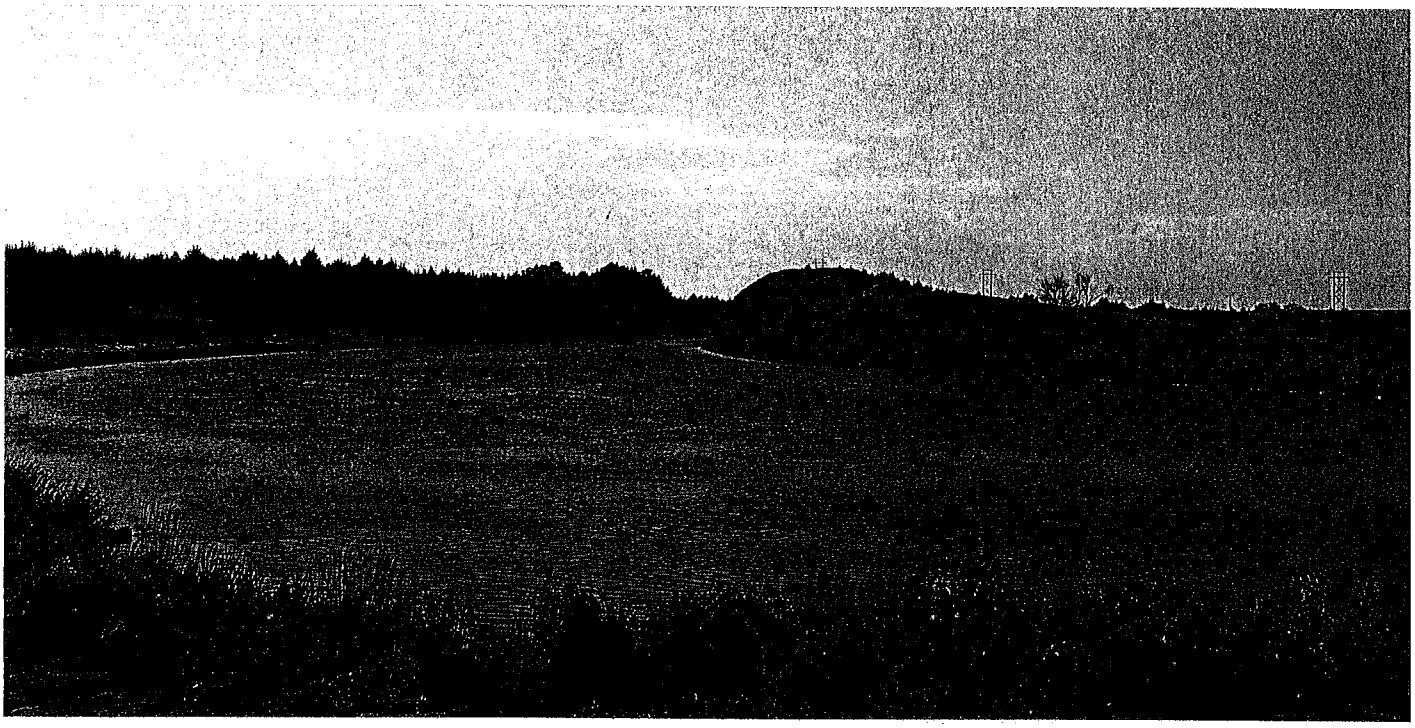
**Don Blankenau:** From the time I was a boy, I enjoyed natural resources. Growing up in a small agricultural town, I found it interesting that food production could coexist with natural resources and wildlife. I enjoyed the science behind it and the people who lived that lifestyle. When I finally got a job in water resources, it was partly driven by the people. I really like my clients. I like the people I work for and the work they do. I see myself as helping them accomplish the goals they have set for themselves.

**Irrigation Leader:** Water law is highly technical. What are some of the biggest misconceptions that landowners, irrigators, or the general public may have about Nebraska's water law?

**Don Blankenau:** There are a couple of significant misconceptions. One is that water is like a mineral right. Rights to access and use water are very different from mineral rights. Legally, they vary by jurisdiction, and even within Nebraska, they vary depending on which NRD you are in. People think they can acquire water rights, sell them, and move them around, but that is rarely the case.

People also commonly believe that Nebraska is running out of water, which is not the case. I think Nebraska has been ahead of the curve in managing both ground and surface water, and if you look at a map of groundwater levels in the High Plains aquifer, Nebraska has been remarkably stable over the last four decades. A few problem areas exist, but those areas developed well before Nebraska's current system of laws went into place. Overall, Nebraska is well poised to deal with water shortages in both the short and the long term, and water will be available for future Nebraskans because of that.

**Irrigation Leader:** Why is it so important for irrigation districts or agricultural producers to understand the framework surrounding water rights, even if they are not directly involved in litigation?



The Tri-County Supply Canal, south of Maxwell, Nebraska.

**Don Blankenau:** Water is critical to the success of those entities. In order to retain water rights, operators must understand the legal limitations put on them. Nebraska used to be extremely aggressive in bringing forfeiture and abandonment proceedings against surface water users; in fact, it canceled rights to over a million acres of land over about two decades. Today, the state is not as aggressive as it once was, but landowners always risk losing their authority to use groundwater or surface water if they do not understand the law that governs them. At a minimum, they must have basic familiarity with those rights.

**Irrigation Leader:** How has the growing emphasis on the integrated management of groundwater and surface water reshaped the legal landscape for irrigators and water managers?

**Don Blankenau:** The change has been truly remarkable. When I first started my career, surface water law was well developed and highly regulated, but groundwater was the Wild West. There were really not many restrictions anywhere in the state on the ability to develop groundwater, but that changed rapidly around the year 2000. By 2004, the Nebraska Legislature had adopted LB962, which integrated groundwater and surface water. That legislation put the ability to manage groundwater in the hands of local government through the NRDs, aided by state expertise and oversight. That was driven in part by a need to comply with interstate obligations. Collaboration at the local and state levels has been valuable and important, and it has allowed Nebraska to stabilize its water use and ensure that the resource will be available for future generations.

**Irrigation Leader:** Are there any projects or cases you have been part of that you feel have had a particularly meaningful influence on Nebraska water management?

**Don Blankenau:** My interstate involvement, particularly with the Republican River Compact, was valuable. That case worked out very well for Nebraska, but it also forced Nebraska to take its water management obligations to a higher level, which shaped the broader legal framework for how Nebraska manages groundwater.

I also helped draft portions of LB962, which was important to me. It has been gratifying to see how that law has worked and been implemented.

**Irrigation Leader:** What accomplishments are you most proud of professionally?

**Don Blankenau:** Again, my interstate work has been fun. I have assisted with six original actions in the U.S. Supreme Court. I represented the State of Florida for some 16 years in various interstate water matters and helped the City of Memphis, Tennessee, with its groundwater dispute with Mississippi. And, of course, the Republican River litigation was important to me. I also really enjoyed my work with the NRDs. We have been to the Nebraska Supreme Court on behalf of NRDs probably 20 times now regarding various aspects of their authority to regulate groundwater, and the result is that the NRDs now generally have a clear, well-defined authority to regulate groundwater. For me, that was really a fortunate opportunity. I like my clients, so having the opportunity to help them has been a real point of pride for me.

PHOTO BY JAMES ST. JOHN, LICENSED UNDER CC BY 2.0.

**Irrigation Leader:** How important is collaboration among attorneys, engineers, irrigation districts, and NRDs when addressing today's water challenges?

**Don Blankenau:** It is essential. As humans, we all consume water. In at least some sense, we are all stakeholders in how water is managed. The law does not operate in a vacuum; it relies on the evidence on the ground, the facts, and the needs of society. As lawyers, we try to implement policies created by NRDs, the state, and ultimately the legislature itself. Doing that requires collaboration at virtually every level: Engineers; geologists; hydrologists; and, of course, the policymakers themselves are essential to that whole process.

**Irrigation Leader:** For young attorneys or students interested in natural resources law, what opportunities do you see in the field? What skills are most valuable for success?

**Don Blankenau:** I teach water law at Creighton Law School and the University of Nebraska College of Law, and I tell my students that, frankly, there are not that many opportunities in water law or natural resources law. It is not like family law—everybody knows a family lawyer, an estate lawyer, or a corporate lawyer. The people who make use of legal services for water and natural resources are a small pool, and your primary sources of employment are going to be state governments or the federal government. There are opportunities in the private sector, but there are not a lot, and frankly, that is a good thing. There should not be. If there were a large market for water lawyers, that would mean that there was a lot of conflict and discord between water users.

As for skills, I think two things are important to be somewhat successful in this area. First, you need a solid understanding of the earth sciences related to water and how it is used. Second, you need a strong grounding in constitutional law, both state and federal, because ultimately everything we do is grounded in the Constitution, and a tremendous amount of case law on natural resources management is tied directly to constitutional law. Understanding the Constitution gives you the framework for understanding how laws must operate within it.

**Irrigation Leader:** Is there anything you would like to add?

**Don Blankenau:** There is an unfortunate reluctance to talk about how natural resources and their consumption intersect with immigration. Immigration is a very sensitive subject, of course. It is important to have frank conversations, particularly with respect to natural resources, because, as humans, we all use and consume water to varying degrees. In the immigration context, I look at the U.S. population in 2000 versus 2025. In a period of 25 years, the population of the United States grew, primarily because of immigration, by about 60 million people. Now, when I say 60 million, people often shrug, but that is equivalent to Italy's entire population. The United States grew by Italy's population in a span of just 25 years, and all those people need water, not just for their personal consumption, but for their industries, businesses, manufacturing, and timber production. Of course, there are species' needs as well. At some point, you reach a level of development at which you can no longer maintain your position in food production or in protecting species. Something must give at that point. A more reasonable and frank discussion of immigration should include how we deal with natural resources.

**Irrigation Leader:** As competition for water resources intensifies, what legal or policy challenges do you expect Nebraska to face over the next decade?

**Don Blankenau:** In Nebraska, agriculture is our number 1 industry, and it always will be. Agriculture will, however, face competition for water from new development—be it of ethanol, data centers, or municipal growth. Nebraska will face difficult choices about how to deal with that competition for water.

The other big issue for the next decade will be how we deal with nitrates in Nebraska. It is becoming difficult to locate projects to provide a water source for small communities or even rural water projects because of nitrates. In some way or another, we are going to have to tackle that issue sometime in the next decade.

**Irrigation Leader:** What is your vision for the future?

**Don Blankenau:** The challenge, not just in Nebraska but throughout the American West, is how to deal with scarcity. That scarcity, at least right now, is climate driven. Is this a short-term drought or a long-term one? We have a great deal of historical evidence showing extremely long periods of drought. How does that shape how the West can develop? How does it shift? Agriculture is the largest user of water throughout the western United States. If droughts are long in duration, how can agriculture continue to function and flourish, and what does that do to our ability to provide food, not just for our nation but for the world?



PHOTO COURTESY OF WOODS AITKEN.

*Don Blankenau is an attorney at Woods Aitken. For more on Woods Aitken, visit woodsaitken.com.*

# Retirement Interview Questions for Dean Edson

## Looking Back on Your Career

## Megan Grimes, NARD Public Relations Director

## October 2026

- ***You spent 11 years with Nebraska Farm Bureau before joining NARD. What led you to make the move in 1997, and what appealed to you about the opportunity?***

Coming from a farm background with surface and groundwater irrigation, water law was an area that I was very interested in. When I was with Farm Bureau, I was involved with forming a coalition of water users to resolve some instream flow issues. Ron Bishop, CPNRD Manager, was part of that coalition along with environmental, agriculture, municipalities, public power and irrigation districts. It was a difficult task to recognize and balance everyone's wants and needs. In the end, we hammered out a solution that was agreeable to all parties and the bill passed 47-0.

Shortly after, Ron Bishop and some other NRD managers approached me about the position opening at NARD. I was not looking for another job, but this seemed to be a great opportunity.

- **Over the past 29 years, what changes have you seen in Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts and the issues they face?**

When I started, the NRDs were not always working together. Urban districts had their issues and rural districts had theirs. There was even some disagreement between rural districts. With the help of some pro-active NRD managers and board members, we started down the path of getting all of the districts to pull together. Let's get the urban districts to support rural districts and vice versa. We did a lot of public relations training and pulled in some qualified people to do the training. Eventually, we all came together and supported all NRD projects – urban and rural.

We eventually came up with a tag line - Protecting Lives, Protecting Property and Protecting the Future. I was told that once someone outside our group starts repeating it, you know it is successful. It happened at a dedication of a flood control project in Lincoln shortly after. An urban state senator that had been critical of NRDs in the past, spoke about how proud he was of the local NRD involvement and finished his speech with "the NRDs moto says it all - Protecting Lives, Protecting Property and Protecting the Future".

I have been blessed with the opportunity to be involved with finding a remedy to many contentious water issues. The key to finding a solution has always been to first talk to the local people that are affected. Let all the ideas come to the table, listen and take notes! Slowly build a coalition. Eventually, a solution will come out of the discussions. It must be coordinated with state agencies, including the Attorney General.

- **What accomplishments during your time at NARD make you the proudest?**

It would be the projects that the local NRDs came up with, whether on their own or as a group of NRDs. No other state has a system like ours that can adapt rapidly to resource needs. I know I am going to leave some out, but here is a short list of some large-scale projects.

- Developing partnerships with local irrigation companies and NRDs to own and operate surface water canals jointly. Again, Ron Bishop was the leader with developing partnerships with four canal companies in Dawson County. I had the pleasure of working with Ron to introduce him to the producers in the area, many of which were life-long friends of mine and helped shape the agreements. These agreements eliminated non-delivery fees that farmers were paying to not take the water, close one canal that only had one user left on it, refurbish the other three canals with new headgates/turnouts so existing irrigators could use the water, and put excess flows back to the Platte River. This model has been picked up by many other NRDs to create win-win solutions in their respective districts. An agreement with the state allows the canals to take excess flows in the off-season and recharge groundwater levels.

- The NCORPE project south of North Platte on the basin divide of the Republican and Platte Basins with a coalition of four NRDs. The districts joined together to purchase roughly 17,000 irrigated acres from a willing seller. All land was converted back to grass, and groundwater is pumped to the Republican Basin in times of shortage rather than shutting down 300,000 irrigated acres in the basin, as Kansas demanded for compliance to the compact. The water is only pumped in water-short years.

  I joined Dan Smith, MRNRD Manager; Kent Miller, TPNRD Manager; Joe Anderjaska, NARD representative from the MRNRD; and Jim Meismer NARD Representative from TPNRD to attend all local board meetings to answer questions about how this would work. We also set up information sessions throughout the Republican Basin and TPNRD to inform the public.

In the end, all four boards voted unanimously to move forward with the project. The finance end was a $10/acre occupation tax on all irrigated acres and a 10-cent property tax levy to pay for a bond to finance the purchase and pay for the infrastructure and operations.

That needed legislation to authorize, so we worked with the Natural Resources Committee and Ameritas to set up the system which included revenue bonding. A trip to Chicago was also in order to convince the bonding company that the occupation tax was a stable source of funding. Another key part of this was to work with the Attorney General's office and DNR to coordinate compact compliance.

The last time water was pumped was in 2018. When the pumps are off, the groundwater is recharged from natural precipitation. On the Platte side, water is pumped to meet the Platte River Recovery Project, and no additional restrictions were placed on the users in the Twin Platte. There was some litigation with the project, and we lost the 10-cent property tax authority as a revenue source for bonding because it was ruled a property tax for a state purpose, but the NRDs prevailed on all rest of them.

For history buffs, this was the same pastureland that Prudential Insurance bought in the late 1970s, tore it up, and put center pivots on it to raise corn. This was the poster child for Initiative 300, adopted by the voters in 1982, to prohibit corporate ownership of farm ground. The prohibition remained in the Nebraska Constitution until 2005 when the federal courts ruled it un-constitutional because it violated the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution. My dad owned a pasture about 3 miles away from it, so I witnessed it go from pasture to irrigated farm ground, and back to pasture over a 40-year period. This also included witnessing all the legal battles from start to finish.

- We were able to get legislation passed to allow the Papio NRD to use general obligation bonding to finance flood control projects. We tried to get authority for all districts but could not come up with the votes. Narrowing it to Papio only, gave us the support we needed. This allowed projects to be built faster and keep up with Omaha's growth.

  Only one-cent of the existing property 4.5-cent tax levy could be used, so there was not a tax increase. This allowed the district to finance at a low interest rate and keep their property tax ask to a minimum. The district coordinated with developers and city planners to incorporate the flood control project with the development. A

recreation component is included with the flood control structure to benefit the community.

Next time you are in the Omaha area, go out to one of the projects and notice all of the individuals enjoying the recreational benefits. The new and existing projects have also proven their flood control benefit every time heavy rain comes, most recently in September 2026!

- The Niobrara River agreement was 15+ years in the making. There were many meetings to resolve a conflict on water use in the basin and resolve the federal water right issue on the scenic river. It was an honor to sit in on the meetings and help shape a solution. Eventually, three Niobrara Basin NRDs, local irrigation districts, the NGPC, NPPD and the federal agencies came to an agreement to allow the NRDs to buy out the NPPD hydro-facility and related water rights and convert some of the water right to an instream flow right, allow all existing surface water districts to get their water, and leave some excess water for future uses. We needed legislation passed to change some water laws, which I had the honor to help shepherd through.

## People and Experiences

- **What have been some of the biggest highlights of your career at NARD?**

When Ron Bishop talked to me about the job, he gave me a "heads up" that there were some issues to fix. That did not bother me, as I was raised on a farm and there were always things to fix. I was blessed with great parents that taught me a valuable life lesson - Adversity is just an opportunity to not just fix it – but to build it better and stronger.

I did not know the severity of what Ron was talking about, but I found out soon. Every time I would uncover and correct some of the problems, I let Ron know. If you knew Ron, he always had a smile that let you know – you are not done finding all of it yet!

We had board members at the time that wanted the ship up right and were willing to work to do that. Mike Mosel, NARD President at the time (URNRD), Dale Watermeier, Past President (LPSNRD) and Roger Duitsman, Past President (LBBNRD), were instrumental in helping straighten things out. They saw the same thing I did -- there is a problem but there was an opportunity.

**Financial Accountability**

The NARD had just come off an IRS audit in 1996 due to financial irregularities. Some fines had been paid. There were no financials provided to the board when I started, only a checkbook with a ledger that gave me an ending balance. No budget. I was raised doing budgets and cash flows. This was perplexing to me.

Dean Rasmussen (LLNRD) was the NARD Treasurer at the time. He knew what needed to be done and helped me tremendously. We soon got QuickBooks set up and slowly discovered where the funds were at. The board soon started getting Financial Reports and ability to do line-item budgets.

We also discovered that it might be in our best interest to get a different accountant and auditor as one firm was doing both. When we started down that path, more information came out about where funds were at. There were some funds at a different bank that had been siphoned off from NARD by a former NARD employee and some local NRD employees. The accountant knew about it and told me he was just waiting for me to find it. Ron Bishop had that same unique smile again when I asked him about it!

The funds were placed back under control of the NARD Board and placed in the NARD Foundation. These funds had not been found by the IRS audit, so we reported this finding to IRS and no fines were assessed as it was self-reported. The principal balance was placed in CDs and the interest earned is used to support youth leadership programs.

We ended up separating the audit and accounting functions to different companies. Willnerd and Associates took over the accounting and we use Marcy Luth, with AMGL out of Grand Island for the audits.

They gave me a credit card with a $250 limit on it for all employees, not each with $250. I asked how we are supposed to take 50 people to Washington, D.C., for five days on that? We resolved the issue by using my personal credit cards to help finance the trips. I could put those on my expense sheet for reimbursement at the end of the month. Also, get a hotel that can direct bill the rooms and expenses back to NARD. No problem, here we go! Slowly I got the card authority increased. Also, we were able to switch over to have all attendees now pay for their own room.

**NARD Foundation - Ron Bishop Memorial Golf Tournament**

I also discovered we had a Foundation Account with $4,000 in it. Ron informed me it was set up to buy a building for NARD in the early 1990s. There were more funds raised than that, but the board got concerned about accountability and financial reports. By 1995, all

but $4,000 was returned to the NRDs. Again – is there an opportunity to do something to promote the NRDs?

It started with having a golf tournament in conjunction with the annual meeting to raise funds to send one college student to Washington, D.C., to intern with the National Water Resources Association. We did that for about three years. The last time we did it, as usual we sent the funds out first, then sent the student later. When the student arrived, we found out the CEO used the money to hire his son for the summer instead and there was no job for our student.

Quickly working with Water Strategies President Kris Polly, a native of Imperial, we found another place the student could intern at in D.C. and Kris let the kid stay at his place for free.

That adversity led to a broader view of what we could do here in Nebraska – finding youth education and leadership programs that we could help finance rather than just sending one kid to D.C. It started with the Nebraska Envirothon and now has led to about 10 more Nebraska organizations that reach thousands of kids on ag and natural resources education and leadership issues.

The Ron Bishop Memorial Golf Tournament is the centerpiece of the fundraising efforts. We added silent auctions and raffles to our annual conference and now raise close to $30,000 annually to finance those leadership programs. We need to keep doing our part to foster strong leadership programs to develop the next generation of Nebraskans. The side benefit has increased the exposure of the benefits of our NRD system to those future leaders in Nebraska.

**Retirement and Insurance Programs**

There was an insurance agent in Lincoln that handled both retirement and insurance benefits for employees. Neither was functioning very well.

The first change was to change the retirement program from a defined benefit program to a defined contribution program. We made the final change in the fall of 2005 with the guidance from Dave Nelson (TBNRD) who was President at the time. Other key leaders were: Mike Mosel, URNRD Board Representative; Dan Steinkruger, LPSNRD Board Representative; Ron Bishop, CPNRD Manager; Glenn Johnson, LPSNRD Manager; and John Turnbull, UBBNRD Manager.

We set up an advisory committee made up of several NRD managers and the NARD Executive Board to look at changes to the program. We also shifted away from the insurance agent to a 414 (h) platform with UBS and Nationwide that NARD could control.

We incorporated the Advisory Committee into the NARD bylaws in January 2006. The insurance agent was removed from any duties with the retirement program.

Now the retirement fund has grown from about $6 million to more than $71 million during the 20-year period. There is no liability to the boards anymore for performance. We consistently monitor and change investment options for employees based upon performance of funds. It is not rare to have one or two option changes per year.

We also added a 457 option under the same UBS and Nationwide platform so employees could add more to their retirement savings. It started out at zero balance and now sits at $10.3 million.

The insurance agent had also set up a different 457 product back in the mid-1990s. Some stayed in, while most migrated to the new platform. We found out a couple of years ago, the agent set his product up to have the NARD be the beneficiary, not the individual, when the investment matured. About a year ago, we tracked down the last participant in that old program and got them to move it over to a retirement vehicle of their choice that they could control.

Next up was the insurance program the insurance agent was running. When I came back to the office after my father's funeral in April 2006, there was a letter in my inbox from the Nebraska Department of Insurance (NDOI) ordering a cease and desist of our insurance program as it was being operated illegally.

The insurance agent wanted to fight the department, but I wanted to work with the department to fix it and get in compliance. We discovered the agent had been hiding claims so they would not show up on our books. To cover his tracks, he just told the third party claims administrator that we refused to pay.

Getting to the bottom of it, we were upside down by about $1.3 million. It would be easy to quit and walk away, but we did not do that. The NDOI was willing to work with us to get in compliance, get the outstanding claims paid and operate a licensed company. The NRDs eventually all agreed to contribute $2,000 per employee to get the minimum reserve to start up a company and get straightened up with the third party claims administrator.

It took about a year to get back on track with the dedication from local boards and the NARD Board. Ted Hughes (UENRD) was the NARD president at the time and led us through the maze. John Turnbull, UBBNRD Manager, helped tremendously to get the employees on board. We received our first license from the NDOI on July 1, 2007, and follow the same laws and reporting requirements as any other insurance company doing business in

Nebraska. The insurance agent was removed from any duties related to the insurance program.

The Risk Pool Board bylaws mirror the NARD bylaws, so there are the same people from each district that are the representatives. We mirrored the retirement advisory committee in the bylaws as well, so there is employee input. It is treated as a separate company, but seamless in board meetings as we can adjourn one board or committee meeting and start the next.

Twenty years later, we have a licensed insurance company in good standing that has close to $10 million in reserves that allows us to keep premiums low. When we have losses, we dip into reserves to pay claims. When we have good years, we add to the reserves. We are now in our fourth year in a row of no change in premiums. This is unheard of in the health insurance world.

Just like all other insurance companies in Nebraska, we are audited by the NDOI every 4-5 years and have passed each time. We are currently in the audit process for FY 2021-2025 and hope to have a final report by December 2026.

Dedication and perseverance have paid off!

**NARD Office**

We got a new office not out of a plan that was set with the original idea of the NARD Foundation, but out of adversity that struck. In May 2020, civil unrest following the death of George Floyd spread to the Lincoln Mall between the City-County Building and the State Capitol. Our office was located halfway between the two buildings and stood at the epicenter of the property damage. The Inland Insurance building where NARD offices resided on the second floor was burned. The first floor was completely destroyed, while NARD lost 90% of belongings on the second floor due to smoke damage.

We formed an office relocation committee, led by Jim Eschliman (LLNRD) and NARD President at the time. The Department of Insurance helped us out as well, knowing that we had to have a physical location to maintain our license. There was some talk about having districts raise taxes to help buy a new office. That was a non-starter with the NARD Executive Committee.

The Department of Insurance helped us come up with a plan to use a dividend from the Risk Pool and combine it with reserves from our General Operating Account and NARD Foundation to buy a building. The Foundation ended up purchasing a building in south Lincoln in December 2020 with a tenant and new partner, the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF).

The building needed to be remodeled. This was during the COVID pandemic, and contractors were hard to find. We were able to get a contractor to do the new entrance, framing and drywall. The cleanup, paint and staining were left to NARD Staff. Much of our work was done in the evenings.

We were able to hold rents at 2015 levels and lowered rent for the NCF. A win-win for all involved. The building will be paid off December 30, 2026. This will add more funds to the NARD Foundation to do more for natural resources and leadership programs in Nebraska.

My sister's old high school classmate found out about the fire and what happened to us. He owns a company in Omaha that sells used office equipment at auctions. He contacted me and asked us to come up to his warehouse and pick out items that we needed from inventory that did not hit minimum bids. I think we spend about $3,000 getting all five of our offices set up with furniture and he threw in some for free. It might have been used, but it was better furniture than what we had.

At the end of my 29-year career, we have turned a profit every year and added to reserves. The combined Association and Foundation Balance now show $3.5 million in Net Assets. A long way from a $250 credit card limit and financing operations with my own personal credit cards.

- **You've worked with generations of NRD directors, board members and staff. What have you appreciated most about the people you've worked with?**

I have discussed many board members and managers in previous questions. There are more board members, too many to mention, that have helped the organization grow and become what it is today. One that stands out the most is Orval Gigstad, NNRD Board Representative. Orv was on the board when I started and is still on the board. He has served as NARD President twice over my 29 years. He has served as the Nebraska NACD representative for over 25 years and is an example of a true leader.

I have had many good employees that have worked with me. None more important than Jeanne Dryburgh, NARD Office Manager, who has been with me for 26 years. She is the rock that holds it together.

My philosophy with employees is to hire smart people, give them ownership in their job, and get out of their way!

Current staff have been with Jeanne and me for over 7 years now. Past employees have been hired by other firms that gave them career advancements. I applaud that!

- **Is there anything about your time at NARD that you think deserves to be remembered but that people might not know?**

One thing that we started doing 20 years ago was to hire interns from UNL to work part-time. I have told them all that your job here is secure if your grades are good. Bring your homework with you. If we just have you sitting at the front desk answering the phones, do your homework while you sit there. If I find out that grades are slipping, they are not working here anymore.

I have only dismissed one, and he was my best friend's son. I may have let him go at NARD, but I didn't let him off the hook! Between his parents and me, we got him back on course and now he is a CPA and Certified Financial Planner. I stayed in touch with him and was invited to come celebrate his son's first birthday last August. I looked at his son and told the dad to get ready – I see a lot of him in the little one!

## The Future of NARD and the NRDs

- **What do you see as the biggest opportunities and challenges facing Nebraska's NRDs in the years ahead?**

  I would say the challenge is growing complacent with the position you are in. There is always an opportunity to grow and help. This is not about you as an individual, but rather about the NRD system and how it can help resolve many issues. We are the envy of other states, but let's take it to another level and stay true leaders.

  We are rounding second base on the Perkins County Canal project. This will give Nebraska 500 cfs of water from the South Platte River during the off-irrigation season – only if the canal is built. It is allowed under the interstate compact on the South Platte River with Colorado. The funding is set aside to build the project. This project will help secure water for Nebraska in the future. It is a coordinated effort with the State, Nebraska Attorney General's office, NARD, local NRDs and public power districts. Stay on course!

  This and other opportunities will come. We need to stay focused and look beyond today. Many other opportunities might be hiding in adversity.

- **What advice would you give your successor as they take the role of Executive Director?**

  Here are the keys to the car – don't wreck it! Adversity is an opportunity. Don't get suckered in to lower the standards. Keep raising the bar! Build it stronger and better!

  I have seen many successful people in my life and what it takes to keep building stronger. I have also witnessed many times the first generation that built it, the second generation lives off it, and the third generation grows complacent and loses it.

## Life after Retirement

- **After 29 years at NARD, what will you miss most about the job?**

  I will miss the opportunity to run a business. I have done it since high school, when my dad turned the custom haying operation over to me. I will still run my farming operation. It is not going to be easy to walk away from running multiple businesses, but it's time. I will also miss the opportunity to work on issues and help resolve problems.

  I will also miss doing maintenance and projects at the office building. I am not happy unless I have a little dirt under my fingernails. There was never any task too small for me to do even if it was taking out the garbage, fixing a leaking toilet, landscaping, keeping the parking lot clean, or cleaning up a mess in the workroom that others left behind.

- **What are you looking forward to in retirement?**

  Spending more time on my farm in Gothenburg and getting more John Deere therapy. I farmed full time there from the mid 1970s to 1984. We had to restructure the farm during the ag crisis in the 1980s and I had to get out so my dad could handle it and retire from it. It was a stressful time for those involved in production agriculture.

  Most don't know what it is like to pay 20% interest on an operating note. Land and machinery values dropped by more than 50% in a couple of years. The balance sheets did not look very good anymore. I was never bitter about the situation.

Rather, it provided the opportunity to learn, change and improve. It was just another adversity that led to better solutions.

We farmed about 400 acres of corn, sold registered Hereford bulls, I owned a custom haying operation doing about 700 acres and we custom combined about 500 acres. I also managed a 150-sow farrow to finish hog operation for a neighbor. He sold the hog operation in 1984, and I was out of the job that helped pay the bills. We also sold off the cattle in 1983.

My banker did not want me to quit, but I could see the writing on the wall. I did not have a four-year college degree, so I decided to take a chance and moved to Lincoln in 1984 to go back to college at the age of 28, married with a child on the way. Finished it up in 2 years, working part time for the UNL Animal Science Department and taking an average of 20 hours/semester and 15 hours in the summer sessions. Upon graduating, I landed the job with Farm Bureau in 1986 and got accepted into graduate school. I earned my MBA from UNL in 1991.

My father developed dementia which quickly turned into Alzheimer's in the 1990s. I had to manage the farming operation to keep it together, while working full time in Lincoln. After my parents passed, I bought my sisters out and I own it now. Those are my roots and I cherish every moment I can spend out there. It is the foundation for my life and career.

Most don't know some of my side jobs in Lincoln.

- I also work part time for UNL Sports Information, now in my 36th season. I do the defensive stats for Husker Football program. I also do the stats for high school football championship games at Memorial Stadium in Lincoln. I plan to continue working these events for as long as I can.

- In the 1990s I did security for the UNL basketball program at home games but gave that up shortly after joining NARD. I also worked at the high school wrestling championship matches when they were held in Lincoln. I learned quickly not to get in between a wrester's mom and her son when he is on the mat!

- I helped bounce at Barry's Bar in Lincoln for home football game weekends and other special events in the 1990s to the early 2000s. I have plenty of funny stories about that. The owner once told me I enjoyed it too much!

- I managed apartment buildings while working for Farm Bureau and NARD. I did that for about 18 years and learned a lot doing that. That experience made it easy to manage the new NARD office. I decided to get out of that side job in 2008.

Over my life, I have restored many vehicles. Old 1949-53 Chevy era pickups are my favorites. My dad's uncle, Chris, had a 1949 Chevy and he taught me how to drive when I was a kid. Both of my grandfathers had passed away before I was born, so Chris was my default grandfather.

He gave the 1949 Chevy to me before he passed away. I fixed it up and then bought a 1953 with corner windows in the cab to restore. My dad called them "Red Neck Windows" because you could get a sunburn on your neck with the sunlight coming through the glass. I also restored a 1956 Chevy Panel Truck in high school. I wish I had kept them all, but I ended up selling them when I needed money for something else.

I currently have a 1975 Corvette convertible that I purchased from my friend's estate after he passed. I have restored it. Maybe I'll sell it and start another project car or just keep it. I plan to attend more classic car auctions, shows and maybe a few small-town parades.

I also have a Harley Davidson Motorcycle and want to take some long trips like I used to do with some of my old farming buddies. One of my riding partners and I raced dirt bikes against each other back in the 1970s at some local tracks. There is still a little competition when we get on the road with our Harleys! There are some great roads in Wyoming, Idaho and Montana to ride. We always stayed in small rural towns on our trips and made many friends that we still stay in contact with.

I also have some woodworking projects on the to-do list. My old high school shop teacher is still a good friend of mine, and I go to him for advice. I have done a lot of my own work building furniture and finishing interiors of buildings out of cedar trees I have at my river pasture. I always ask him to grade my work. He says, "It's not an A+ yet but keep improving your work!"

It has been an honor and privilege to work 29+ years for NARD and the nation's true conservation leaders – Nebraska's NRDs. Keep improving and continue Protecting Lives. Protecting Property. Protecting the Future!

State Range judging held near North Platte

The Valley Voice 10/9/2026

Conserving native range resources and teaching others to do the same is a long-standing tradition in Nebraska. In 1965, a group of people associated with the Nebraska Chapter of Society for range managent began the Nebraska Range Judging contest. The contest today is open to youth and adults who have an interest on range management. There are 6 local contest followed by the state contest which are held around the state allowing an opportunity for all youth and adults in the state to participate and increase their knowledge in range management.

The state local contest for 2026 was held north wet of North Platte on Wednesday September 23rd. the contest had participants from 48 schools participating with a total of 484 students completing and 38 adults. The first place junior and senior teams and high point individuals win purple rosette ribbons while the next three placing ;'s receive corresponding ribbons. Additionally, the top 25% receive participation ribbons. Although the ribbons are a trophy, the students work very hard to earn, those responsible for the contests feel the real prize is in what the students learn about range management , the legacy that is passed on, and the pride they develop in their state and the future of its resources.

A Thank you to all the local Natural Resource Districts, National Resource conversation Extension Office for coordinating and hosting the contest.

The winners are the state contest :

Junior Team &7th -10th Grade)

1st place Imperial : Clayson Thayer, Tatum May, Damien Barger, Truman Olsen.

Conservation program invests $18.8 million to protect Nebraska's grassland cores

The Valley Voice 10-15-2026

Grand Island, Neb. – Nebraska landowners now have a new opportunity to protect the state' most important grasslands through Growing and Expanding Nebraska's Grassland Cores, a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) led by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in collaboration with Rainwater Basin Joint Venture (RWBJV) and a board coalition of public and private partners.

The muliti-year imitation will deliver approximately $18.8 million in NRCS

Funding to support proactive management on more than 90,000 acres of grassland statewide. The program is designed to slow and reverse woody encroachment , particularly eastern red cedar , by helping landowners implement proven contravention practices, resilient, and tree free grazelands.

"By investing in protective management today, we can help keep Nebraska's grassland , resilient and working for both agriculture and wildlife," said Laura Rubeck RCFF Coordioton with the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture.

Funding will be used to target core grassland area was identified under the Great Plains Grassland Initiative ,

Eligible practices include brush management, prescribed burning , and grazing deferment.

Participation in the programs is voluntary, and applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

For addional information about Growing and Expanding Nebraska 's Grassland Cores or to enroll in the program, visit www.rwbjv.org/rcpp-sign-up/ or contact Laura Rubeck, RCPP Coordinator by email at laura.rubeck@ Audubon.org or by phone at (402) 276-4982.

OVERALL BUDGET · FY2027 PROPOSED

# FY27 proposed budget totals $11.61M, ↓5.8% from FY26

Platte River Recovery Implementation Program · Proposed · Draft for GC review · Executive Director's Office

| FY2027 PROPOSED | FY2026 APPROVED | CHANGE |
|---|---|---|
| **$11,606,540** | **$12,326,600** | **−$720,060** |
| Proposed Program budget | Restated sections: $12,311,600 | −5.8% vs. prior-year approved |

BUDGET SPENT, FY20–FY25

**80%**

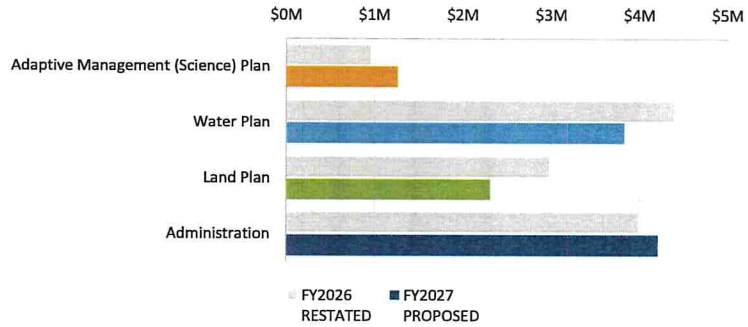
Under budget every year (69%–96%); $14.1M unspent

FY27 PROPOSED BY SECTION

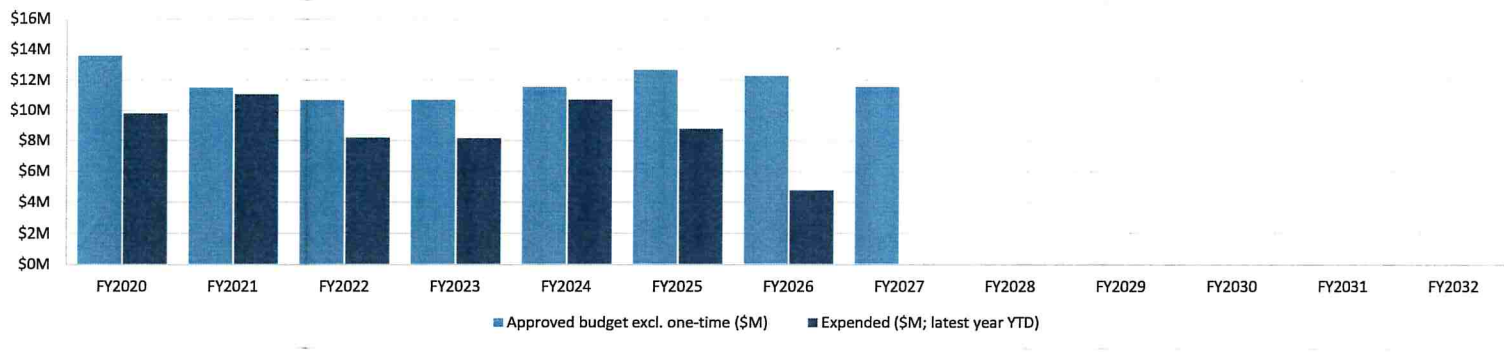
| SECTION | FY2026 RESTATED | FY2027 PROPOSED | $ CHANGE | % CHANGE | SHARE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adaptive Management (Science) Plan | $953,000 | **$1,262,800** | +$309,800 | +32.5% | 10.9% |
| Water Plan | $4,392,000 | **$3,826,000** | −$566,000 | −12.9% | 33.0% |
| Land Plan | $2,976,100 | **$2,309,100** | −$667,000 | −22.4% | 19.9% |
| Administration | $3,990,500 | **$4,208,640** | +$218,140 | +5.5% | 36.3% |
| Total, FY2026 restated sections | $12,311,600 | $11,606,540 | −$705,060 | −5.7% | |
| FY2026 items not carried forward | $15,000 | – | | | |
| **Total** | **$12,326,600** | **$11,606,540** | **−$720,060** | **−5.8%** | **100.0%** |

Sections vs. FY26 restated to FY27 sections ($12.31M); total vs. FY26 approved ($12.33M).

*Check: sections + not-carried = program total* OK




BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES · FIRST INCREMENT EXTENSION




FY2023 excludes the one-time $24M for water acquisition. Latest-year expenditures are year-to-date as of 11/02/26. Future years fill in as Budget History is updated.

# PRRIP FY2027 Budget — Line Items

Proposed · Draft for GC review · Numbers of record, incorporated by reference in the FY2027 Work Plan · FY2026 shown as approved, restated to the FY2027 section structure

*Blue = input · Black = formula · Green = link to another tab · Subtotals use SUBTOTAL(9,...) so nested totals never double count*

| ID | LINE ITEM | EDO LEAD | FY2026 APPROVED | FY2027 PROPOSED | $ CHANGE | % CHANGE | SHARE | FY2027 BASIS | COMMENTS ON FY2027 FUNDING | WP PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ADMINISTRATION** | | | | | | | | | | |
| ED-1(a) | Headwaters EDO professional services, WC seasonal technicians, reimbursable expenses | Executive Director | $3,251,700 | $2,998,340 | −$253,360 | −7.8% | 25.8% | 17.9 → 12.3 FTE; 23,440 hrs; $123.34/hr composite | Headwaters contract −7.8% from FY26; 17.9 → 12.3 FTE, 4,640 fewer billable hours; composite billing rate $123.34/hr; expenses flat; Year 1 of 6-year contract. | 12 |
| ED-1(b) | Subcontract: Hydraulic Modeling | Executive Director | – | $32,000 | +$32,000 | New | 0.3% | MSA, annual not-to-exceed | Libby Casavant, JEO; annual reach-wide 2D model update and hydraulic section of the System-Scale Geomorph and Veg Report; MSA, annual not to exceed. | 13 |
| ED-1(b) | Subcontract: Independent Science Facilitation | Executive Director | – | $101,000 | +$101,000 | New | 0.9% | 3-year T&M not-to-exceed; pass-through | Darcy Pickard, Pickard Environmental; ISAC facilitation, replaces extra Chair/Vice Chair stipend; T&M not to exceed; 3-year pass-through (no markup). | 13 |
| ED-1(b) | Subcontract: Effectiveness of Germination Suppression Flows for WC Habitat | Executive Director | – | $245,000 | +$245,000 | New | 2.1% | 1-year agreement; pass-through | Jason Farnsworth; standardize inputs and methods, rerun analyses across scales; datasets, model code, technical memoranda, synthesis report; 1-year pass-through (no markup). | 13 |
| *ED-1 Total* | *EDO professional services, expenses & subcontracts* | | *$3,251,700* | *$3,376,340* | ***+$124,640*** | ***+3.8%*** | *29.1%* | | | |
| ED-2 | Legal Services and Public Notices | Executive Director | $43,300 | $60,300 | +$17,000 | +39.3% | 0.5% | Contract/agreement counsel; RFP notices | Legal fees for PRRIP contract/agreement legal counsel; public notices for RFPs. | 15 |
| ED-3 | Public Outreach | Executive Director | $28,000 | $61,000 | +$33,000 | +117.9% | 0.5% | Legacy outreach contributions; DJ Case outreach planning | Legacy outreach project contributions; DJ Case fee for continued assistance with outreach planning and products. | 17 |
| GFC-1 | Financial Services | Executive Director | $249,000 | $269,000 | +$20,000 | +8.0% | 2.3% | Calculated on expected PRRIP spend | Calculated based on expected PRRIP spend. | 21 |
| GFC-2 | Program Insurance | Executive Director | $85,500 | $92,000 | +$6,500 | +7.6% | 0.8% | FY2028 renewal payable in 2027 | Renewal for FY27 $83,476 payable in 2026; add 10% for FY28, payable in 2027. | 22 |
| PD-8 | Program Website and Databases | Executive Director | $103,000 | $118,000 | +$15,000 | +14.6% | 1.0% | DJ Case website and database fee | DJ Case fee = website maintenance + species database + PRRIP Financial Management Database refinement. | 23 |
| CTE-1 | Committee Meeting Expenses | Office Manager | $12,000 | $20,000 | +$8,000 | +66.7% | 0.2% | Now includes the annual ISAC Field Meeting | Includes annual ISAC Field Meeting ($8,000 based on FY26 cost); facilities, meals. | 25 |
| ISAC-1 | ISAC Stipends and Expenses | Executive Director | $218,000 | $212,000 | −$6,000 | −2.8% | 1.8% | 5 members × $40,000 + travel for 4 | 5 ISAC members × $40K (200 hrs × $200/hr) + $3,000 expenses × 4 members (no travel funds needed for Aaron Pearse). | 26 |
| **Administration subtotal** | | | **$3,990,500** | **$4,208,640** | **+$218,140** | **+5.5%** | **36.3%** | | | |
| **LAND PLAN** | | | | | | | | | | |
| LP-2 | Habitat Restoration and Management Actions on Program Lands | Land Coordinator | $965,100 | $410,100 | −$555,000 | −57.5% | 3.5% | Reduced funding for in-channel disking | Target species habitat restoration and maintenance at Program habitat complexes and non-complex properties; includes funding for potential in-channel disking at Program properties. | 28 |
| LP-3 | Land Acquisition, LIHE Fees, and Property Taxes | Land Coordinator | $1,326,000 | $1,326,000 | – | 0.0% | 11.4% | Extension plus-up: 1,316.5 of 1,500 acres; 183.5 to go | Acquisition of interest in land (own, lease, easements, other agreements) under the Land Plan and AMP; LIHE (PRRIP) fees; property taxes and other annual fees. | 30 |
| LP-4 | Land Operations and Maintenance | Land Coordinator | $415,000 | $293,000 | −$122,000 | −29.4% | 2.5% | Non-AMP management per Appendix A | Non-AMP management (fencing, routine agricultural operations, weed management, property maintenance, day-to-day management, non-AMP tree and channel clearing). | 33 |
| LP-6 | EDO Special Advisors – Land Plan | Land Coordinator | $25,000 | $35,000 | +$10,000 | +40.0% | 0.3% | Agricultural management firm | Administration of agricultural leases and FSA obligations, crop management and marketing, cropland conversions; UFarm 6-year sole source contract. | 34 |
| LP-7 | Public Access Program Management | Land Coordinator | $40,000 | $40,000 | – | 0.0% | 0.3% | Nebraska Game and Parks agreement | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission manages public access to Program lands for | 36 |
| WP-1(b) | Phragmites Control | Land Coordinator | $200,000 | $200,000 | – | 0.0% | 1.7% | Annual contribution to in-channel control | Annual contribution toward Phragmites control in the channel. | 37 |
| WPLW-1 | Maintenance for Water Properties | Land Coordinator | $5,000 | $5,000 | – | 0.0% | 0.0% | Moved from Water Plan | Moved from Water Plan section; general land maintenance for Program properties acquired for water-related purposes. | 39 |
| **Land Plan subtotal** | | | **$2,976,100** | **$2,309,100** | **−$667,000** | **−22.4%** | **19.9%** | | | |
| **WATER PLAN** | | | | | | | | | | |
| WPRT-1 | Retiming Projects (Canal Recharge) | Water Coordinator | $40,000 | $102,000 | +$62,000 | +155.0% | 0.9% | WSA through 2032; up to 2,500 AF net recharge | WSA for Phelps recharge approved December 2022 with pre-payment for 50,000 AF at $35.92/AF. Deliveries from Jan 2023-Oct 2026 totaled 1,800 AF, no additional funds needed for 2027. WSA for NPPD recharge through 12/31/2032. Unit cost escalates 3% annually. Zero excess flow diversions January–October 2026. Assume up to 2,500 AF net recharge in 2027 based on 2015–2026 surveys. | 40 |
| WPRT-2 | Retiming Projects (Reservoir Recharge) | Water Coordinator | $353,000 | $92,000 | −$261,000 | −73.9% | 0.8% | Completes Elwood Outlet Study Phase 2 | WSA for Elwood recharge approved December 2022 with pre-payment for 134,927.7 AF at $54.54/AF. Deliveries from Jan 2023–Oct 2026 totaled 11,600 AF. No additional funds needed for water in 2027. Budget includes rollover of $92,000 for completion of the Elwood Outlet Feasibility Study – Phase 2. | 42 |
| WPRT-3 | Retiming Projects (Other Recharge) | Water Coordinator | $65,000 | $65,000 | – | 0.0% | 0.6% | Pipeline credit ≈$776,000 remaining | Includes Rubicon maintenance, site monitoring, general berm maintenance, and electricity. Assume no payments to CNPPID for water deliveries or water management services until cost of pipeline is exceeded; both deducted from remaining pipeline construction credit balance (about $776,000 as of October 2026). | 44 |

| ID | LINE ITEM | EDO LEAD | FY2026 APPROVED | FY2027 PROPOSED | $ CHANGE | % CHANGE | SHARE | FY2027 BASIS | COMMENTS ON FY2027 FUNDING | WP PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WPRT-4 | Retiming Projects (Recapture Wells) | Water Coordinator | $81,000 | $81,000 | – | 0.0% | 0.7% | 8 recapture wells per TBNRD agreement | Includes annual admin, electricity/pumping, maintenance, and easement costs for 8 recapture wells, per agreement with TBNRD. | 46 |
| WPST-1 | Storage Leases (Lake McConaughy Sources) | Water Coordinator | $3,114,000 | $2,746,000 | −$368,000 | −11.8% | 23.7% | 18,306 AF × $150/AF (est.); no CNPPID water in 2027 | Negotiations in progress for lease through 2032 for CPNRD ($2,250,000) and NPPD ($496,000) exchange water. Unit cost based on current Water Negotiation Workgroup discussions, volume based on prior one-year lease agreements. | 47 |
| WPST-2 | Storage Leases (Upstream Sources) | Water Coordinator | $624,000 | $624,000 | – | 0.0% | 5.4% | Up to 9,600 AF; lease through 2032 | Lease contract through 12/31/2032. Maximum annual lease of 9,600 AF. | 48 |
| WPWM-1 | Water Monitoring Activities | Water Coordinator | $55,000 | $56,000 | +$1,000 | +1.8% | 0.5% | Surface, groundwater, and weather monitoring | Surface, groundwater and weather monitoring in support of Program water operations. Includes J2 Channel, Overton, and Cottonwood Ranch stream gages. | 49 |
| WPCP-1 | North Platte Chokepoint | Water Coordinator | $10,000 | $10,000 | – | 0.0% | 0.1% | State Channel berm maintenance | As-needed maintenance of the State Channel berm. | 51 |
| PD-15 | Environmental Permitting | Water Coordinator | $50,000 | $50,000 | – | 0.0% | 0.4% | HDR under contract through 2032 (moved from Land) | Contract services to secure or maintain environmental permits associated with adaptive management and/or water projects. | 52 |
| **Water Plan subtotal** | | | **$4,392,000** | **$3,826,000** | **−$566,000** | **−12.9%** | **33.0%** | | | |
| **ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT (SCIENCE) PLAN** | | | | | | | | | | |
| LP-2-P | Trapping Projects | Ecological Science Coordinator | $115,300 | $117,600 | +$2,300 | +2.0% | 1.0% | Year 2 of 3-year contract (Wayne Homan, TSE, LLC) | Mammalian predator trapping at managed tern and plover sites; beaver trapping at the North Platte Choke Point; year 2 of 3-year contract with Wayne Homan. | 53 |
| PD-22 | Sediment Augmentation Implementation | Engineering Science Coordinator | $3,000 | $303,000 | +$300,000 | +10000.0% | 2.6% | Competitive RFP for long-term augmentation plan | Competitive RFP for a versatile long-term augmentation plan (~$500,000 total; remainder in FY28); $3,000 for final year of no-augmentation monitoring. | 55 |
| G-1 | Remote Sensing Data Collection | Engineering Science Coordinator | $386,900 | $412,600 | +$25,700 | +6.6% | 3.6% | 6-year sole-source contract (NV5) | Summer and fall aerial photography and fall bathymetric LiDAR for all AHR channels; NV5 6-year sole-source contract. | 57 |
| TP-1 | Tern and Plover Monitoring and Research | Ecological Science Coordinator | $3,200 | $3,200 | – | 0.0% | 0.0% | EDO-implemented; direct costs only | MSHA training, camera supplies, cinder blocks for point reference and chick shelter. | 58 |
| WC-1 | Whooping Crane Monitoring and Research | Ecological Science Coordinator | $101,200 | $117,000 | +$15,800 | +15.6% | 1.0% | Aircraft and pilots; RFB each January | Aircraft rental and pilots for spring and fall migration; contractors typically <$25,000 each. RFB each January. | 60 |
| PS-1 | Pallid Sturgeon Monitoring and Research | Ecological Science Coordinator | $276,900 | $250,000 | −$26,900 | −9.7% | 2.2% | Placeholder for potential Water Management Study | Placeholder for potential Water Management Study under the GC Pallid Sturgeon Framework (~$350,000 total; remainder in FY28); requires evaluation of UNL results, ISAC review, and GC decision. | 62 |
| G-5 | Geomorphology and Vegetation Monitoring and Research | Engineering Science Coordinator | $5,500 | $4,900 | −$600 | −10.9% | 0.0% | Cameras, drone imagery, Phragmites patches | Time-lapse cameras, batteries, posts, height gages, hardware, drone imagery, Phragmites patch measurement; work beyond FY27 not yet determined. | 64 |
| IMRP-3 | EDO Special Advisors – Science Plan | Ecological Science Coordinator | $39,000 | $33,000 | −$6,000 | −15.4% | 0.3% | Jason Bruggeman, Ph.D.; work complete in 2027 | Jason Bruggeman, Ph.D.: finalize Phragmites inundation and herbicide analyses and manuscript; work complete in 2027. | 66 |
| PD-3 | PRRIP Peer Review and Publications | Ecological Science Coordinator | $22,000 | $21,500 | −$500 | −2.3% | 0.2% | Publish six PRRIP manuscripts | Publish 6 PRRIP manuscripts (wet meadows, WC roost and diurnal use, LiDAR methods, germination suppression methods, Phragmites response). | 68 |
| **Adaptive Management (Science) Plan subtotal** | | | **$953,000** | **$1,262,800** | **+$309,800** | **+32.5%** | **10.9%** | | | |
| **Total, FY2026 restated sections** | | | **$12,311,600** | **$11,606,540** | **−$705,060** | **−5.7%** | **100.0%** | | *Section comparisons use the prior year restated to the current section structure.* | |
| FY2026 LINE ITEMS NOT CARRIED INTO FY2027 | | | | | | | | | | |
| PD-11 | Science Plan-related Workshops | — | $15,000 | – | −$15,000 | −100.0% | – | Not carried; ISAC Field Meeting now in CTE-1 | FY2026 Science Plan line item. ISAC Field Meeting is budgeted in CTE-1 beginning FY2027. | |
| WPIR-1 | Irrigator Leases | — | – | – | – | 0.0% | – | Not carried; $0 in FY2026 | Water leasing agreement expired 12/31/2025; GC did not approve extension. | |
| WPSA-1 | EDO Special Advisors – Water Plan | — | – | – | – | 0.0% | – | Not carried; $0 in FY2026 | Unfunded as-needed water Special Advisor line item in FY2026. | |
| **Not-carried subtotal** | | | **$15,000** | **–** | **−$15,000** | **−100.0%** | **–** | | | |
| **PRRIP BUDGET TOTAL** | | | **$12,326,600** | **$11,606,540** | **−$720,060** | **−5.8%** | **100.0%** | | *Change measured against the FY2026 approved Program budget.* | |

Prior-year column: FY2026 budget as approved, line items shown in the FY2027 structure (ED-1 shown approved in total).

FY2027 structure: all EDO services in a single ED-1 line in Administration; ISAC-1 to Administration; LP-2-P and PD-22 to Science; PD-15 to Water; WPLW-1 to Land.

ED-1(a) and the ED-1(b) subcontracts link to the ED-1 Detail tab — change hours, fees, and subcontract amounts there.

Work Plan page numbers (WP PAGE) refer to the line-item sheets in the draft FY2027 Work Plan; confirm against final pagination.