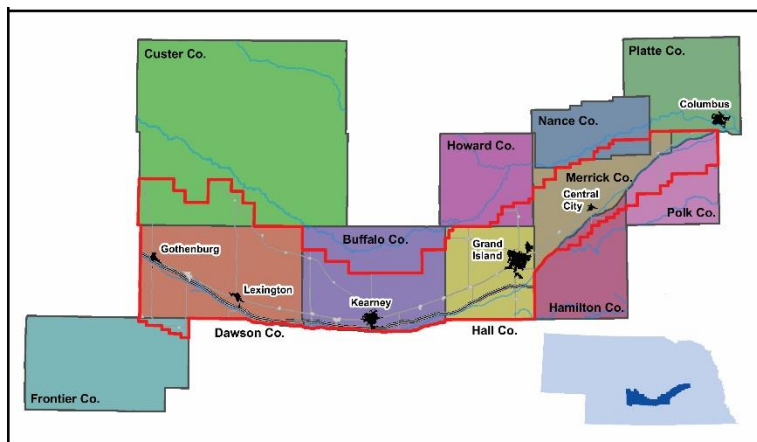


CENTRAL PLATTE NRD

EDUCATION

The CPNRD provides avenues of natural resources education for both educators and students. The *NR Corner Newsletter* is sent to all schools within the District twice a year. Staff provides presentations to classrooms as requested. Educational materials are provided to instructors through Project Wild, Project Wet, Project Learning Tree, Outdoor Classrooms, Arbor Day Foundation, and other credible sources. Starting in 2018-2019, \$5,000 will be budgeted for natural resources presentations and materials for K-12 classrooms in the District.



Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival In 2004, CPNRD began coordinating the statewide Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival. Students in 4th-5th grade are invited to learn about all aspects of groundwater from water and natural resources professionals. Students attend six in-depth, hands-on classroom activities and one stage show. CPNRD is the main sponsor of the festival, providing \$10,000 towards the festival. Donations through the Grand Island Community Foundation from local businesses and residents allow schools to attend at no cost. Nearly 1,000 students attend annually from across the state and around 300 presenters and volunteers help with the event. This festival was the first groundwater festival to be formed and has been replicated in 41 states in the U.S.A., Mexico, Canada, India and the United Kingdom. The Groundwater Foundation began the festival in 1988 and requested that CPNRD take over this event in 2004.

Arbor Day In 1992, the CPNRD began providing seedlings to area schools to celebrate the Arbor Day holiday. CPNRD provides 2,000 chokecherry shrubs and delivers them along with an Arbor Day packet to participating schools within the District.

Outdoor Classroom Grants Program This Program provides funding for educators through three types of grants including: Outdoor Classrooms, Community Grants, and Mini-School Grants. The requirements for each were updated in 2010 to accommodate the different types of funding needed by educators to provide hands-on learning experiences. Outdoor classrooms are found in both primary and secondary schools within the CPNRD. Schools that have received funding in the past include: Grand Island Northwest; Lexington District #22; Wood River Elementary; Centura Public Schools; Horizon Middle School, Northeast Elementary, and Glenwood Elementary in Kearney; Doniphan-Trumbull Elementary, Cozad Community Schools, Grand Island Senior High, and the new Kearney High School.

In August 2016, the Kearney Area Children's Museum received \$2,000 in funding to develop a Prairie Garden Walkway in their Little Sprouts Outdoor Classroom. Plants were selected that represent the prairie throughout the four seasons of the year. Tours and workshops are conducted focusing on biodiversity, characteristics of native prairie plants, and the role that these plants play in supporting the prairie ecosystem.

In 2016 and 2017 CPNRD partnered with GISH Success Academy to create an 800 square-foot Monarch butterfly habitat at Dodge Elementary in Grand Island and 4-acre habitat on an easement of the Wood River Flood Control Project. Students from Success Academy, Dodge Elementary, Skills Academy Elementary, and the Roots & Shoots Program partnered in the projects. Students use the scientific method to conduct real world observation and data collection. Vlcek Gardens, Chapman, provided

project design and construction. Pheasants Forever presents lessons for students to apply their knowledge in field observations by participating in national field studies.

College Scholarships In 2007, the NRD began providing scholarships for high school students to further their natural resources education, funding 10 students at \$1,000 per year. In 2014, the scholarship name was changed to the Ron Bishop– CPNRD College Scholarship Program to honor former manager, Ron Bishop. Starting in 2018-2019, CPNRD will offer five \$1,000 scholarships to junior and senior college students pursuing natural resources degrees.

High School Contests CPNRD's I&E specialist coordinates high school contests for the central region Envirothon, Land Judging and Range Judging and serves on the steering committees for each of these committees. The NRCS and UNL Extension help prepare for the land and range judging contests.

In 2017, a three-year funding request was approved for the 2020 North American Envirothon to be hosted by NARD in July of 2020. CPNRD will contribute \$8,000/year towards the event; which will showcase the success of Nebraska's NRD system to manage resources on river basin boundaries to the top environmental science students and future leaders in North America. Over 500 students, sponsors, and teachers from the United States and Canada are expected at the event.

Platte Basin Timelapse In June 2016, the board approved a funding request in the amount of \$2,000 towards the *Timelapse: Monitoring Change Over Time* project. The NARD board approved partnering with Michael Forsberg and the NET to create STEM curricula, meeting Nebraska standards for schools. Materials will be developed in consultation with teachers and curriculum designers, with input from agricultural subject matter experts and the Nebraska Department of Education. Platte Basin Timelapse staff presented stage shows to showcase this project at the 2017 Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival.

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