

NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES – April 29, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION & ROLL CALL

Chairman Wilke called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Holiday Inn Convention Center, Kearney, Nebraska. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the roll call was called.

Roll Call:

Commissioners		Absent	Present	Commissioners		Absent	Present
Rollie	Amsberry		X	Larry	Mohrman		X
Don	Batie		X	Tom	Mountford		X
Lawrence	Bradley	X		Doug	Reeves		X
Devin	Brundage	X		Keith	Rexroth	X	
Mark	Czaplewski		X	Lyle	Schroer		X
Lane	Darnall	X		John	Shadle		X
Scott	Dicke		X	Matt	Smallcomb	X	
Christopher	Dierks		X	Jeff	Steffen	X	
Brad	Dunbar		X	Dennis	Strauch		X
Doug	Iske		X	Greg	Wilke		X
Nate	Jenkins		X	Vacant			
Steve	Kelly		X	Vacant			
Rick	Kubat		X	Vacant			
Kenyon	Meyer		X				

DWEE staff in attendance:

Matt Manning & Kent Zimmerman

Others in attendance were:

Katie Cameron, ENWRA; Dennis Carroll, Pinpoint Corporation; Kyle Liebig, NPPD & Kyle Hauschild, NNRD.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Staff reviewed recent updates to the Commission’s website which incorporate new requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, links to rules and statutes now point directly to the legislature’s website.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING AND PUBLIC MEETING LAWS

Notice of the meeting was published on the State Public Meetings Calendar and on the Natural Resources Commission (Commission) web site at <https://nrc.nebraska.gov>. A copy of Nebraska’s open meeting statutes was available in the room.

MINUTES

Czaplewski moved and Batie seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the February 25th, 2026, Commission meeting.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mohrman	X			
Batie	X				Mountford	X			
Bradley				X	Reeves	X			
Brundage				X	Rexroth				X
Czaplewski	X				Schroer	X			
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb				X
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar			X		Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Wilke	X			
Jenkins	X				Vacant				
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer	X				TOTALS	17	0	1	6

DWEE UPDATE & PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were offered. A one-page Executive Summary of the Governor's Water Quality and Quantity Task Force Final Report was distributed. Chief Water Officer Manning noted there are 14 recommendations in the report; and the report creates a road map for the state's water policy going forward. With the recent agency merger, all water quantity and quality management is now housed within DWEE. DWEE's One Red Program will implement some of the goals of the Task Force through producer incentive payments. The One Red program roll-out is scheduled for Husker Harvest Days.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

No Committee updates were given. Chairman Wilke asked staff to lead discussion on agenda topics pertaining to program activities. No unusual activity was reported.

Resources Development Fund

The status report showed business as usual.

Commissioner Mountford gave a brief history of, and update on, the Sand Creek Environmental Restoration Project (Lake Wanahoo). The United States Army Corps of Engineers and NRC's Resources Development Fund (RDF) were the two main funding partners with additional groups backing various items in the park.

The Lower Platte North NRD (LPNNRD) operates a borrow pit on the northeast part of the property, and contracts with local producers to hay portions of the property for management of native grasslands and cedar tree encroachment. Since RDF funding was used for land rights purchase; a portion of the revenue is returned to this fund in an amount equal to the cost share percentage used to fund this project. LPNNRD is reporting the RDF share of revenue for the borrow pit as of March 19, 2026, to be \$6,089.16; and the RDF share of the hay sales revenue as of December 31, 2025, to be \$26,151.09 for a combined total of \$32,240.25.

Staff reported that the Commission could transfer unobligated funds from the RDF into the WSF under the authority of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 2-1588.

Dierks moved and Mountford seconded the motion to request staff transfer the revenue balance from the Resources Development Fund into the Water Sustainability Fund once funding is received from Lower Platte North NRD.

Chairman Wilke asked if there was additional discussion, there was none offered.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mohrman	X			
Batie	X				Mountford	X			
Bradley				X	Reeves	X			
Brundage				X	Rexroth				X
Czaplewski	X				Schroer	X			
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb				X
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar	X				Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Wilke	X			
Jenkins	X				Vacant				
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat			X		Vacant				
Meyer	X				TOTALS	17	0	1	6

The LPNNRD is requesting Commission authorization to continue operating a borrow pit at Lake Wanahoo through the end of 2027 with the option to continue through 2029. The Executive Committee met and discussed the request along with various options for this and other RDF projects that are not yet closed out. The Executive Committee is recommending the Program Committee investigate these options; and that the LPNNRD's request to continue operation of the borrow pit be extended until December 31, 2027; with the area re-graded and reseeded to the original native grasses immediately following.

Mountford moved and Batie seconded the motion to approve the Lower Platte North NRD request to continue operation of the existing borrow pit (with 60% of the total revenue being returned to the Resources Development Fund) until December 31, 2027.

Commission Chairman Wilke asked if there was additional discussion, there was none offered.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mohrman	X			
Batie	X				Mountford	X			
Bradley				X	Reeves	X			
Brundage				X	Rexroth				X
Czaplewski	X				Schroer	X			
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb				X
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar	X				Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Wilke	X			
Jenkins	X				Vacant				
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat			X		Vacant				
Meyer			X		TOTALS	16	0	2	6

After additional comments and discussion, the Commission expressed clear guidance to have the borrow pit closed, re-graded and seeded at the end of 2027. Chairman Wilke directed the Commission’s Program Committee to begin work with all RDF projects sponsors to close out all remaining projects by the end of 2027; and to report back at the July Commission meeting regarding its progress. It was also recommended that any project sponsors who believe they are unable to meet this goal be invited to address either the Committee or Commission to give an update on project’s progress.

Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund

The Nebraska Legislature terminated this program with the outright repeal of this fund and its associated statutes (sections 2-1502, 2-1503.01, 2-1503.02, and 2-1503.03) with passage of LB1072e Sec. 242.

Commissioner Batie asked staff to investigate what if any action needs to be taken by the Commission regarding the rules (Title 257).

Soil & Water Conservation Program Fund

The status report showed business as usual.

Natural Resources Water Quality Fund

The status report showed business as usual.

Water Well Decommissioning Fund

The status report showed business as usual.

Water Sustainability Fund

The WSF Financial Status report showed business as usual. Staff reported one Combined Sewer Overflow project (CSO) and 11 WSF applications were received during the March 2026 submittal period.

- In the Large Project category (requests exceeding \$250,000) six applications were filed with a total request of \$4,878,948.60.
- In the Small Project category (request of \$250,000 or less) five applications were filed with a total request of \$877,818.00.
- The total request of the 11 applications was \$5,756,766.60.
- A CSO application was also filed. However, LB1072e Sec. 151 amends the Water Sustainability Fund statute to provide that any money transferred to the fund from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund shall not be used for the purposes of subsection (2) of section 2-1507 (combined sewer overflow projects). Therefore, this application is ineligible for a grant this year.

Project Status reports for each of the active projects were due by April 1st and are now available on the NRC's website at: www.nrc.nebraska.gov. Several projects were discussed.

Dennis Carroll, Pinpoint Corporation (Pinpoint) gave an update on the Santee Sioux Nation's Water System Upgrade project WSF #10095. The information Carroll presented is also available at: www.santeewater.com. Housmann Construction has been hired using a Construction Manager at Risk contract. They are working with the design team and are at 60% complete on

the HDPE pipe from Avon, South Dakota, to Santee in Nebraska. The pipe will be bored under the Missouri River; with the United States Corps of Engineers (USACOE) acting as the lead agency. The sponsors went through a permitting council to get the environmental permitting. The pipe size will be 16 inches in South Dakota and 12 inches in Nebraska; and the water will flow by gravity the entire length of the project without being pumped. Currently Pinpoint is working on land right easements in Nebraska and has received 100% verbal agreement from all landowners. Construction is expected to start in April of 2027 and be completed within two years. In conclusion Carroll thanked the Commission for their help.

Kyle Hauschild, General Manager, Nemaha Natural Resources District gave an update on the Burr-Cook Paleovalley Aquifer Sub-Area Resilience project, and the requested project scope change for WSF #10091. Hauschild stated that during summer irrigation season, NNRD is seeing greater irrigation well drawdowns in the Burr – Cook paleovalley which is between Syracuse and Tecumseh. The drawdowns recover after the irrigation season, but the NNRD is attempting to reduce the aquifer drawdown through a producer cost share for more efficient sprinkler nozzles. As part of the package, producers are required to install meters. This project has not been utilized by producers to the extent the NNRD anticipated because a lot of producers do not want to use meters. Hauschild distributed an aerial photograph (attached) depicting where the NNRD is offering a cost share program for more efficient sprinkler nozzles with the existing boundary depicted in yellow; and the proposed expanded boundary depicted in red. The area in yellow was initially targeted because there are two municipal drinking water systems in the area. Given the low producer participation within this area, the NNRD would like to expand the offer to producers east and southwest of the area defined in the application as producers within this area have expressed interest in this program. The additional acres are within the same aquifer.

Commissioner Meyer noted for the record that her law firm represents the Nemaha NRD, but they have not been involved with this project. Commissioner Iske asked for clarification as to whether he could vote on this because he is a NNRD board member. Commissioners confirmed Iske could vote on this because this scope change does not involve funding and he is not personally benefiting from the change; he would not have been able to participate in an action for the original grant.

Batie moved and Kelley seconded the motion to approve the Nemaha NRD request to modify Water Sustainability Fund Project No. 10091 to expand the boundary within which the NRD offers cost share to producers for irrigation nozzle efficiency upgrades.

Chairman Wilke asked if there was additional discussion, there was none offered.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mohrman	X			
Batie	X				Mountford	X			
Bradley				X	Reeves	X			
Brundage				X	Rexroth				X
Czaplewski	X				Schroer	X			
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb				X
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar	X				Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Wilke	X			
Jenkins	X				Vacant				
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer			X		TOTALS	17	0	1	6

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman Wilke noted everything has been discussed.

OTHER BUSINESS & REQUESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Wilke led a round of applause for the work Commissioner Czaplewski has done for the commission, this is Czaplewski's last meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

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Greg Wilke, Chair

Matt Manning, P.E., J.D., Chief Water Officer, DWEE