

NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES – September 29, 2026

CALL TO ORDER PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL

Chairman Wilke called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in the Younes Conference Center South, Kearney, Nebraska. Following the Pledge of Allegiance the roll was called.

Roll Call:

Commissioners		Absent	Present	Commissioners		Absent	Present
Rollie	Amsberry		X	Tom	Mountford		X
Don	Batie		X	Doug	Reeves	X	
Lawrence	Bradley	X		Keith	Rexroth		X
Devin	Brundage	X		Lyle	Schroer	arrived	late
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	Rich	Walters	X	
Nate	Jenkins		X	Greg	Wilke		X
Steve	Kelly		X	Vacant			
Rick	Kubat		X	Vacant			
Kennon	Meyer	X		Vacant			
Larry	Mohrman		X				

DWEE staff in attendance:

Matt Manning, Kent Zimmerman & Emily Rose

Others in attendance were:

Daryl Anderson, LPNNRD; Ryan Chapman, LPNNRD; Josh Dack, NPPD & Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Wilke announced the Commission will no longer be providing public notice of NRC meetings in the Public Meetings Calendar and instead will be providing notice on the Commission website (see Executive Committee Update).

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

Strauch moved and Shadle seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the July 29th, 2026, Commission meeting.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves				X
Bradley				X	Rexroth	X			
Brundage				X	Schroer				late
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen	X			
Dunbar	X				Strauch				X
Iske	X				Walters				X
Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer				X	Vacant				
Mohrman	X				TOTALS	16	0	0	8

DWEE UPDATE & PUBLIC COMMENTS

Matt Manning, Chief Water Officer DWEE, provided insight into the following:

- Manning stated that much of the agency merger is complete.
- DWEE's water planning folks are in the early stages of working through implementation of the goals from the 14 recommendations of the Water Quality and Quantity Task Force.
- DWEE's One Red EPA grant has refocused towards water conservation and nitrate reduction through producer education and technology grants; and a water supply consolidation review.
- Governor Pillen called for a Data Center Task Force study and charged DWEE with running it.
- Perkins County Canal continues to move forward with permitting and litigation.
- DWEE will push legislation to provide a way to register wells at no charge and with fewer requirements; and to shift Ag chemigation to NRDs.

Emily Rose, attorney with DWEE, provided a case progression update on the Nebraska Environmental Trust lawsuit.

No public comments were offered.

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.

Staff recommend formally closing out the Central Platte Natural Resources District's (CPNRD) Upper Prairie Silver Moores Creek Flood Reduction Project.

Mountford moved and Rexroth seconded the motion to Close Out Central Platte NRD's Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Creek Flood Control project.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves				X
Bradley				X	Rexroth	X			
Brundage				X	Schroer	X			

Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar	X				Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Walters				X
Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer				X	Vacant				
Mohrman	X				TOTALS	17	0	0	7

Soil & Water Conservation Program Fund

A status report was not given because there has been no activity since the report given at the last Commission meeting on July 29th, 2026. The temporary injunction issued on expenditures and transfers of funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) remains in effect prohibiting payments of invoices from the previous year's allocation and does not allow for an allocation this year.

Natural Resources Water Quality Fund

The status report showed business as usual. Payments totaling \$375,000 went out in August.

Water Well Decommissioning Fund

The status report showed business as usual. A \$50,000 allocation was issued in July.

Water Sustainability Fund

The WSF status report showed business as usual. Staff reminded Commissioners that projects with approval dates of 2025, and all applications filed in March were subject to the same NET lawsuit injunction. Project sponsors were notified that DWEE could not make any additional reimbursements until the injunction is lifted. Funding remains available and reimbursements continue to be made for all other projects.

Project Close Out & Grant Reduction

Staff noted and reviewed certain projects' progress; and completed projects whose grants are ready to be closed out as depicted on the following table.

WSF Project Proposed Close Outs & Grant Reductions, 2026

App #	Year	Approved Grant	Grant Released	Final Grant	Sponsor
5247	2019	1,249,125.00	0.00	1,249,125.00	West Point
10008	2022	240,000.00	0.00	240,000.00	SPNRD
10041	2023	82,500.00	0.00	82,500.00	UNWNRD
10056	2023	4,898,104.00	0.00	4,898,104.00	Papio
10059	2023	81,892.00	0.00	81,892.00	NPD
10082	2024	75,000.00	0.00	75,000.00	Loup Power
10084	2024	145,686.00	0.00	145,686.00	Red Cloud
10086	2024	133,706.00	5,268.29	128,437.71	West Knox RWB
10087	2024	57,780.00	0.00	57,780.00	UBBNRD

Total 5,268.29

Dunbar moved and Iske seconded the motion to formally close out each project listed (above) in the table titled “WSF Project Proposed Close Outs & Grant Reduction, 2026” reducing grants where necessary to that proposed in the Final Grant column; and to make available the unused balance of \$5,268.29 as unassigned.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves				X
Bradley				X	Rexroth	X			

Brundage				X	Schroer	X			
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar	X				Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Walters				X
Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly	X				Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer				X	Vacant				
Mohrman	X				TOTALS	17	0	0	7

WSF #10008 Update

Thad Kuntz, Adaptive Resources, Inc. thanked commissioners for providing continued funding for this model over the years and provided a review of the website which was built under this grant for public outreach as an education update to the North Platte and South Platte Natural Resources District's Western Water Use Model which may be viewed at <https://www.wwumm.org>.

WSF #10014 Update & Scope Change Request

Daryl Anderson, Lower Platte North Natural Resources District (LPNNRD) presented a request to increase the project's boundary area to include the whole LPNNRD, add Reverse Osmosis (RO) units as a cost share item, and purchase soil coring equipment.

Dunbar asked what the cost of the soil coring equipment probe would be, Anderson replied about \$50,000. Anderson pointed out the LPNNRD has the required cost share match to cover these expenses.

Batie questioned whether the Department's review found this to be within the original parameters of the overall project. Staff replied that it is and that cost share percentage doesn't change.

Dierks noted that RO units had not scored well in the past and asked how many units the district was planning to cost share on. Anderson replied ten as that was about all of the funding that would be available.

Mountford moved and Jenkins seconded the motion to approve the scope change requested by Lower Platte North NRD to modify WSF No. 10014 to; 1) add RO units as a cost share item for any well meeting the district's policy on eligibility, 2) expand the project's boundary to include all of the district, and 3) purchase soil coring equipment.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves				X
Bradley				X	Rexroth	X			
Brundage				X	Schroer	X			
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar	X				Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Walters				X
Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly				out	Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer				X	Vacant				
Mohrman	X				TOTALS	16	0	0	8

Josh Dack, an engineer with NPPD's Water System Group out of North Platte thanked the commission for funding this project which provided cost share to purchase a trailer and camera inspection system. Dack brought the trailer, crawler camera and submersible submarine camera; and demonstrated the equipment in the parking lot.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman Wilke announced the Executive Committee will meet briefly following this meeting. Wilke also led discussion regarding dropping the use of the State Public Meetings Calendar. Staff noted issues with the State Public Meetings Calendar and that the Commission may decide how to publicly notice meetings. Therefore, it needs to be reflected in the minutes.

Batie moved and Dicke seconded the motion to provide public notice of Commission meetings on the NRC website.

Motion Passed.

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent	Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Amsberry	X				Mountford	X			
Batie	X				Reeves				X
Bradley				X	Rexroth	X			
Brundage				X	Schroer				out
Darnall				X	Shadle	X			
Dicke	X				Smallcomb	X			
Dierks	X				Steffen				X
Dunbar	X				Strauch	X			
Iske	X				Walters				X
Jenkins	X				Wilke	X			
Kelly				X	Vacant				
Kubat	X				Vacant				
Meyer				X	Vacant				

Mohrman	X				TOTALS	16	0	0	8
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OTHER BUSINESS & REQUESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Wilke announced:

- Caucuses for the Big Blue, Loup, Missouri Tributaries, Nemaha, Lower Platte, South Platte and Metropolitan Class City River Basins will be held Jan 8 – 15, 2027.
- Staff will work with NRD managers to schedule the exact time, date and location for the Caucuses, determine director eligibility, give notice and conduct the caucuses.
- Agribusiness, Manufacturing and Outdoor Recreation Representatives positions remain vacant.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

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