



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
August 13th, 2026, at 1:30pm

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:

Meeting notices were published in the Harlan County Journal, posted in the District NRCS Offices, and on the district website at www.lrnrd.org.

Brad Wulf called the meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors to order at 1:30pm.

Motion #1 by Lee Fintel, seconded by Troy Fletcher, to designate Brad Wulf as Chairman Pro Tempore for the August 13, 2026, meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors. Motion carried. Ayes 6 Nays 0, Absent 5.

Brad noted that the current version of the statutes governing public meetings is posted on the south wall of the boardroom and on the district website. Guests were asked to sign the attendance roster.

Excused Absences: Dave Bartels, Chris Grams, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Toby tenBensel.

Directors present: Brian Ballou, Don Duffy, Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Matt Harrison, and Brad Wulf.

Others present: Jerry Kovarik, NRCS.

Staff present: Todd Siel, Nick Simonson, Mary Goebel.

MATERIAL E-MAILED OUT PRIOR TO THE MEETING & AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING

Agenda

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 7/2026

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 7/2026

NRCS Staff Report, 8/2026

LRNRD Staff Report, 8/2026

Comments from the Public: None.

Motion #2 by Troy Fletcher, seconded by Don Duffy, to approve the July minutes as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 6 Nays 0, Absent 5.

Motion #3 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Don Duffy, to approve the LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Ayes 6 Nays 0, Absent 5.

NRCS Staff Report: Jerry Kovarik updated the board on Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Pheasant Forever Biologist. Lacy Bonifas's last day was July 31st. They will be looking to fill the position soon. Jerry also let the board know that the offices will be short staffed in August thru mid-September. He encourages producers to call and make appointments. A full report is in the minute book.

LRNRD Staff Report: Nick provided a staffing update. MaChaela Gruntorad will be taking over as our I&E Coordinator/Natural Resources Assistant on August 24th. We have been in discussions with NRCS about the Franklin Field Office position and how that can work for everybody. A full report is in the minute book.

Motion #4 by Don Duffy, seconded by Brian Ballou, to approve the FY2027 Draft LRNRD budget as presented. Motion carried. Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 5.

Motion #5 by Lee Fintel, seconded by Troy Fletcher, to set the FY2027 Budget Hearing date and time for September 10th, 2026, at 1:30pm. Motion carried. Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 5.

Variance Requests: None.

Rural Water Update: We are moving forward with a test well north of Red Cloud. It is required that we put it out for bid for 30 days. Once that is completed, we should be able to move forward. If the tests are good, things should start to progress towards construction. Survey work should be completed this fall and winter, and the project will be put out for bids. Our system has been stressed and struggling to keep up with demand. We are using more water than we ever have in the past due to the drought conditions.

Republican River Compact Administration (RRCA): The annual RRCA meeting will be held August 27th, 2026, at the McCook Community College, East Campus. Nick and Todd plan to attend.

Platte Republican High Flow Diversion: The grazing lease for 2025 has not been paid yet. An invoice will be sent for 2025 and the first half of 2026.

NCORPE: Quarterly meeting is August 19th, 2026, at 10:00am at the URNRD in Imperial.

Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Environmental Assessment Plan and Design (WFPO EA Plan):

The West Turkey Creek project is going through the final request for public comment. NRCS released their "Finding of no Significant Impact" (FONSI), which means we do not need an Environmental Impact Statement to move forward with the project. As part of the release of the FONSI by NRCS, we must allow 30 days of public comment, as well as advertise the FONSI for 3 weeks in the Valley Voice. The Thompson Creek project should be officially closed out, as NRCS accepted our request for withdrawal after our final reimbursement.

WaterSmart Grant: Over 1,500 new flow meters have been installed to date, when considering both phases of the project. We plan to close out Phase 1 by the end of September and Phase 2 is projected to be completed by the end of 2029.

NARD Update: Annual Conference is coming up the last week of September in Kearney.

Other Business: None.

Motion #6 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Brian Ballou, to move that the Board go into Closed Session at 3:12pm to discuss Contractual Negotiations, Imminent Litigation, and Personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 5.

Motion #7 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Lee Fintel, to move that the Board come out of Closed Session at 4:01pm and declare that no actions of the board, official or unofficial, were taken during said Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 6, Nays 0, Absent 5.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be on September 10th, 2026, at 1:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03pm.

Secretary

Date