



LOWER REPUBLICAN NRD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Lower Republican NRD Meeting Room, 30 North John, Alma, NE
March 12, 2026, at 1:30 pm.

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.

Chairman Marlin Murdoch called the meeting of the Lower Republican NRD Board of Directors to order with an invitation to prayer at 1:30 pm. The chairman announced that the current version of the statute governing public meetings is posted on the south wall of the boardroom and on the district website.

Excused Absences: Don Duffy.

Directors present at the NRD Office: Brian Ballou, David Bartels, Lee Fintel, Troy Fletcher, Chris Grams, Matt Harrison, Tim Kahrs, Marlin Murdoch, Toby tenBensel, Brad Wulf.

Others present: Jerry Kovarik, NRCS.

Staff present: Todd Siel, Nick Simonson, Shirlee Poyser.

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

Agenda

LRNRD Board Meeting Minutes, 2/2026

LRNRD/RWP Treasurer's Report, 2/2026

NRCS Staff Report, 3/2026

LRNRD Staff Report, 3/2026

Comments from the Public: None.

Motion #1 by Matt Harrison, seconded by Chris Grams, to approve the February board minutes as presented. Motion carried. Aye 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 Don Duffy.

Motion #2 by Tim Kahrs, seconded by Matt Harrison, to approve LRNRD and Rural Water Treasurer's reports. Motion carried. Aye 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 Don Duffy.

NRCS Staff Report: Jerry Kovarik from Harlan Co. NRCS provided the NRCS update. EQIP RPP preapproval has commenced. LRNRD has two applications tentatively preapproved. State and Local EQIP applications will likely need to be evaluated and ranked by March 27th. LRNRD has been tentatively allocated \$850,000. The total of local applications preapproved will be lower this year due to limited funding and increased cost assistance rates. The CSP Classic ranking deadline is May 1st.

LRNRD Staff Report: Harlan County Reservoir is currently 65.5% full, 1.9 feet lower than at this time last year. The lake numbers indicate that Harlan is holding 20,030 acre-feet less than it was at this time last year. Another good month of inflow as we netted just short of 5,900 acre-feet of gain in the lake with almost no precipitation. Candidates for District 38, Tim Anderson from Sutton and Janel Anderson Ehrke from Orleans, will be at the April meeting.

Variance Requests: A variance involving the transfer of acres from pivot corners to convert gravity-irrigated acres to a wiper pivot was presented. While we thought this might end up being a staff-approved variance, we are slightly over the 10-acre rule that allows staff to approve small trades. Eric Boudreau continues working with Jim Choquette to make his farms more efficient by converting gravity acres to pivots.

Motion #3 by Brad Wulf, seconded by Tim Kahrs, to approve the acre trade Variance Request for Eric Boudreau. Motion carried. Aye 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 Don Duffy.

Rural Water Expansion Project: The Riverton Expansion project remains in the survey and design phase. We will meet with Chris Miller next week to discuss details. Nick obtained his Grade 4 Water Operator's license, so there will be two licensed employees. This will provide a backup if Dave is unavailable. Todd attended the Franklin City Council meeting this past Tuesday to discuss the water service agreement we have with them.

RRCA Update: While we are doing well on our compliance volume, there is a lot of water that still needs to come from natural means. As we have already mentioned, our base flow is great given our lack of precipitation, but it can only last so long. We need an extended period of moisture to put us in any sort of position to end the irrigation season with irrigation water still in Harlan County Lake. A normal or above normal April and May would be wonderful.

NCORPE Update: We have been pumping about 50 cfs to the headwaters of Medicine Creek since around January 12th. As of today, we have moved 6,200 acre-feet of water to Harry Strunk. They released from both Strunk and Swanson until recently. We do not have the exact totals of what they released, but the plan was that it would be enough to meet our compliance obligations and prevent any further releases this spring. I wish we weren't pumping just for compliance; it's good to see that NCORPE is operating as designed. While issues weren't expected, it's always nice to have verification after not pumping for almost 9 years.

WaterSmart: Meters are still being installed, with 40-50 remaining under Phase 1. Miranda and Nick are working on getting HydroData and Producer Connect up and running.

NARD Update: The newly appointed NARD officers are President Ryan Reuter, Vice President Mason Hoffman, and Secretary/Treasurer Deb VanMatre.

We are currently on day 43 of this legislative session, and as you know, they are discussing the budget exclusively. A budget must be delivered to the Governor by day 50, or March 25, which is only seven session days away. A few bills have been passed that affect the NRD, but none currently have major implications for it. Depending on how the budget talks progress, there could be impacts on our programs, like NSWCP and new Water Resources Cash Fund projects. By the time we meet next month, only two days will remain in this session.

Other Business: The LRNRD was asked by the Little Blue and Lower Big Blue NRDs to participate in Hazardous Mitigation Planning in Webster and Nuckolls Counties. The funding outlay required would be \$2,500 in each of the next two fiscal years, for a total of \$5,000.

Motion #4 by Lee Fintel, seconded by Toby tenBensel, to approve the LRNRD participating in the Hazardous Mitigation Plan in Webster and Nuckolls Counties. Motion carried. Aye 10, Nays 0, Absent 1 Don Duffy.

Motion #5 Matt Harrison, seconded by Chris Grams, to move the Board into Closed Session at 2:28 pm to discuss Contractual Negotiations, Imminent Litigation, and Personnel. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Don Duffy.

Motion #6 by Chris Grams, seconded by Matt Harrison, to move that the Board come out of Closed Session at 3:14 pm and declare that no actions of the board, official or unofficial, were taken during said Closed Session. Motion carried. Ayes 10, Nays 0, Absent 1, Don Duffy.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on April 9th, 2026, at 1:30 pm.

The meeting concluded at 3:14 pm.

Secretary

Date