



# TWIN PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

March 13, 2015

Jim Schneider, Acting Director  
Nebraska Department of Natural Resources  
301 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4676

Dear Jim:

Enclosed please find the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Master Plan approved by the Board Directors on March 12, 2015.

Sincerely,

Kent O. Miller, P.E.  
General Manager

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DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES



# TWIN PLATTE NRD MASTER PLAN



The following document was approved on March 12, 2015 by the Twin Platte Natural Resources District Board of Directors in accordance with Nebraska Law (Section 2-3276).

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NATURAL RESOURCES



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	STATEMENT OF ADOPTION	4
II.	FORWARD	5
III.	SETTING	6
IV.	GENERAL PURPOSE AND MISSION	7
V.	ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	8
VI.	SOURCES OF FUNDING	9
VII.	WATER RESOURCES	10
VIII.	SOIL RESOURCES	11
IX.	GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS	12
X.	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	14
XI.	PRIORITIES FOR GOALS	30
XII.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	31

## I. STATEMENT OF ADOPTION

This Master Plan was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District at their regular meeting on March 12, 2015, before that it was updated in 1996.

Minutes of the meeting are on file at the headquarters office of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District located in the Great Western Bank Center, Second Floor, at 111 South Dewey Street in North Platte, Nebraska.

This Master Plan has been prepared to meet the statutory requirements of Nebraska Revised Statute 2-3276:

“By August 1, 1979, each Natural Resources District shall prepare and adopt a Master Plan to include but not be limited to a statement of goals and objectives for each of the purposes stated in Section 2-3229. The Master Plan shall be reviewed and updated as often as deemed necessary by the District, but in no event less often than once each ten years. A copy of the Master Plan as adopted and all revisions and updates thereto shall be filed with the department.”

We have made our best effort to forecast any future conditions; however this plan should be considered a statement of goals and a general policy guide. For a much more detailed plan of the programs and projects the District undertakes, see our annual budget.

## II. FORWARD

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District began operations on July 01, 1972 by act of the Nebraska State Legislature. The Twin Platte Natural Resources District, a political sub-division of the State of Nebraska, accepted all assets, liabilities, and obligations of the special purpose districts that were merged to form the District. The merged districts included the Keith-Arthur Counties Soil and Water Conservation District, most of the Lincoln County Soil and Water Conservation District, part of the Logan-McPherson Counties Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Brule Watershed Conservancy District.

The reorganization was statewide, with 24 new Natural Resources Districts formed. Boundaries were established along river basins setting up hydrologic units with common interests and problems related to land and water resources. Currently there are 23 Natural Resources Districts with a merger of two of the original 24.

These newly formed Districts were assigned broad authorities and responsibilities as enumerated in Section 2-3229 of state statutes.

2-3229. Districts; purpose. The purpose of Natural Resources Districts shall be to develop and execute, through the exercise of powers and authorities contained in this act, plans, facilities, works, and programs relating to (1) erosion prevention and control, (2) prevention of damages from flood water and sediment, (3) flood prevention and control, (4) soil conservation, (5) water supply for any beneficial uses, (6) development, management, utilization, and conservation of ground water and surface water, (7) pollution control, (8) solid waste disposal and sanitary drainage, (9) drainage improvement and channel rectification, (10) development and management of fish and wildlife habitat, (11) development and management of recreational and park facilities, and (12) forestry and range management.

The purpose of this Master Plan is to provide an organized approach to the management, utilization, and development of the land and water resources within the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. The Master Plan is to include but not be limited to a statement of goals and objectives for each of the purposes stated in Section 2-3229. A copy of the Master Plan as adopted and all revisions and updates thereto will be filed with the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission.

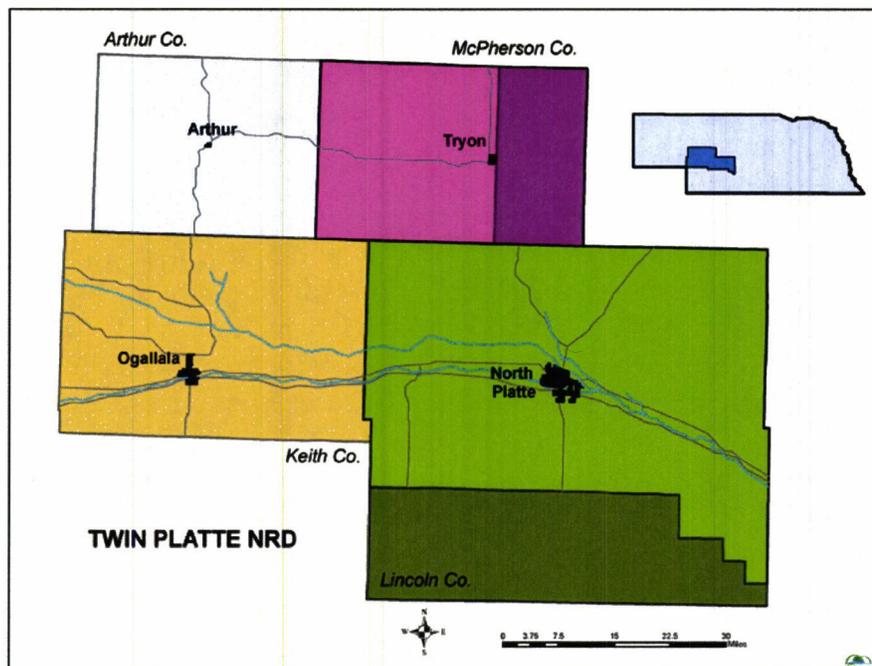
This Master Plan is to provide the public, supporting agencies, and other organizations, notice of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District's Goals and Objectives.

### III. SETTING

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District is located in west central Nebraska. The District is approximately 96 miles east to west and 57 miles from north to south. The total land area is 4,157 square miles (2,660,480 acres). The counties in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District are Arthur County, Keith County, the northern approximately three-fourths of Lincoln County, and the western two-thirds of McPherson County. The land elevations range from approximately 2,800 to 3,600 feet above sea level.

Three major river basins are included in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District (North Platte River Basin, South Platte River Basin, and Platte River Basin). Topographically, the District consists of the Nebraska Sandhills, the Central Nebraska Loess Hills, the Rolling Plains and Breaks, and the Central High Tableland, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Major Land Resource Areas in Nebraska. The majority of the valley lands are devoted to pasture and row crops, with the uplands consisting primarily of pasture with scattered row crops. Approximately 75% of the District is in rangeland and pastureland. Irrigated cropland is found in the North Platte River Valley, South Platte River Valley, Platte River Valley, and scattered throughout the uplands. Ground water or surface water for irrigation is required for agriculture production, as there is not sufficient moisture in the form of snow and rainfall to effectively produce crops.

The population of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District in the 2010 census was 44,331. Approximately 66% of the District's 2010 population resided in the cities of North Platte and Ogallala.



#### **IV. GENERAL PURPOSE AND MISSION**

The purpose of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District shall be to engage itself in a general program of management, development, and protection of the soil and water resources found in the District.

The mission of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District is to be a leader in conserving, protecting, developing, and maintaining the natural resources of the District for the health and welfare of the people of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

The methods to meet the responsibilities of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District, as authorized by Nebraska Statutes, are leadership, technical assistance, cost-sharing, monitoring, data collection, construction, operations, information, education, and regulation.

## **V. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

An eleven-member Board of Directors governs the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. The Directors are non-partisan elected officials, voted on at general elections. Terms of office are four years. Two Board members are selected from each of the five sub-districts, and the eleventh board member is elected at large.

The Board of Directors approves all policies of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

A regular Board meeting is held the second Thursday of each month. The Board meetings are advertised and open to the public.

A staff of ten full-time and one part-time employees carry out the programs of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. Professionals are retained for legal, engineering, contracting, and general technical work as their services is required.

## **VI. SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Revenue may be from local property taxes, an occupation tax on irrigated acres, state aid to local subdivisions, user fees such as chemigation inspection fees and the tree program, and grants that may be available from Federal, State, or local agencies, or private organizations. Nebraska Statutes limits Natural Resources Districts' property tax levy per \$100.00 of actual valuation to \$.045 for all programs, plus \$.010 for ground water management activities, and plus \$.030 for ground water management activities for Districts fully or over appropriated. Nebraska Statutes allow Natural Resources Districts with an Integrated Management Plan to levy an occupation tax upon the activity of irrigation of agricultural lands on an annual basis, not to exceed \$10.00 per acre for repaying bonds for one or more projects.

## VII. WATER RESOURCES

Three major river basins are included in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District (North Platte River Basin, South Platte River Basin, and Platte River Basin). Tributaries to the North Platte, South Platte, and Platte Rivers are located throughout the District. These tributaries are fed by ground water and precipitation.

The Brule Watershed is located northwest of Brule and is the only major flood control dam operated and maintained by the District. The City of Ogallala operates and maintains the flood control dams in the Ogallala Watershed.

Lake McConaughy, located north of Ogallala, is a facility of the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID) and is a structure for the storage of water used for irrigation, hydropower generation, and recreation. The water stored is transported to CNPPID's power plants and water consumers in central Nebraska utilizing the North Platte River and supply canals in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District. The Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) has facilities in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District for storage and transporting water to their power plants and water consumers in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and central Nebraska. The CNPPID and NPPD facilities provide extensive recreation facilities in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

There are seven Irrigation Districts fully within the Twin Platte Natural Resources District delivering surface water from direct diversions to water consumers (Keith and Lincoln Irrigation District, Paxton-Hershey Irrigation District, Platte Valley Irrigation District, Suburban Irrigation District, Cody-Dillon Ditch Company, Birdwood Irrigation District, and Western Irrigation District). The CNPPID also delivers surface water to water consumers from their main supply canal in east central Lincoln County.

The ground water in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District is generally from the Ogallala Aquifer. Nebraska is divided into 13 ground water regions, of which six are represented in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District (Sand Hills, Platte River Valley, Southwestern Tablelands, Panhandle Tablelands, East Central Dissected Plains, and Republican River Valley and Dissected Plains).

## VIII. SOIL RESOURCES

There are three general soil resource areas in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

### A. Sandhills

The sandhills area lies in the northern and central parts of the District. This area comprises approximately 80% of the total area in the District. The landscape in the sandhills is mainly rolling and hilly with some nearly level valleys. The soils consist of stabilized sand. Soils are vegetated with native grasses and used for grazing by beef cattle. A few areas are cultivated.

### B. Bottomland

The North and South Platte Rivers enter the District on its western border and join to form the Platte River at a point just east of the City of North Platte. The Platte River Valley consists of stream terraces and bottomlands. The soils for this area are highly productive. Types of agriculture vary widely in this area. Some areas are too wet for cultivation and are left to native grasses, while in other areas farming is highly intensified. Approximately 75% of the bottomland area is irrigated. The principal crops grown are corn, alfalfa hay, grain sorghum, and wheat. Minor crops are rye, oats, potatoes, sugar beets, soybeans, and field beans. Soils vary widely and can be determined from the available USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Surveys. Flooding is infrequent and of short duration. The soils are affected by a high water table which causes poor aeration for plant growth and in some cases has left excessive amounts of toxic salts in the soil profile.

### C. Silty Upland

This area consists of deep, silty soils on nearly level to gently sloping Loess plains and steep-sided canyons. This area is located in the southern part of the District and makes up approximately 10% of the land in the District. Farms in this area are diversified and consist mainly of the cash grain-livestock type. Water erosion, soil blowing, and drought are the main hazards when these areas are cultivated.

UDSA NRCS Soil Surveys are published for each of the counties in the District.

## **IX. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS**

It is the general policy of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.....

To develop comprehensive soil and water resources programs consistent with the best interest of those persons residing in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and the North Platte, South Platte, and Platte River Basins.

To seek the direct assistance of all local, State, and Federal units of government responsible for land and water resources development in the implementation and maintenance of a comprehensive program of flood control, drainage, erosion control, and water management in the North Platte, South Platte, and Platte River Basins.

To support local sponsorship for the establishment of watershed projects.

To assume the maintenance and operation responsibilities for the completed Brule Watershed Project as well as any other works of improvements that may be completed.

To provide guidance and leadership to any natural resources management program within the Twin Platte Natural Resources District with objectives to either maintain or improve the quality of our land and water resources.

To seek assistance of the USDA NRCS in supplying technical assistance necessary to implement and carry out land treatment programs.

To encourage both private and public landowners to participate in voluntary land treatment programs and appropriate resource management of land and water.

To encourage individuals to work together on soil conservation, drainage, water management, flood control projects, and to provide leadership and other assistance as available to such groups.

To utilize the Engineering Standards and Technical Guides of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District in land treatment programs.

To participate in development and promotion of Federal cost-share programs for establishing land treatment practices.

To encourage appropriate management of all waters in the District.

To keep informed on Federal and State legislative and administrative activities affecting management of natural resources.

To conduct an active public information and education program utilizing the news media, social media, and other available contacts with the general public.

To support and participate in the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts to promote coordination and cooperation between member Districts and to provide a collective voice in management of Nebraska's natural resources.

To encourage the incorporation into plans and programs, wherever feasible and desirable, for other multi-purpose features, such as wildlife, irrigation, recreation, water quality, and ground water recharge.

To cooperate with other Natural Resources Districts in soil and water conservation activities.

To cooperate with cities, towns, villages, and counties within the Twin Platte Natural Resources District in soil and water conservation activities.

To act as a coordinator between the local people and State and Federal agencies in flood control and other resource development programs, including Platte River Basin studies and surveys.

To cooperate with groups or organizations working in the field of natural resources whose programs are consistent with the intent and purpose of policies adopted by the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

## **X. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goals and objectives for the Twin Platte Natural Resources District for each of the authorities for Natural Resources Districts as provided by Nebraska Statutes are established by the Board of Directors.

The goals are the framework for all District activities, programs, practices, and regulations. Some goals will require many years to achieve. Therefore, failure to complete actions on some goals within any set period may be expected.

The objectives are a measurable amount of progress to be made toward the Twin Platte Natural Resources District's goals. Objectives may include several alternative methods or procedures that may be used to work toward the goal. Each of the objectives may be used, but it is anticipated that not every objective will be used or completed during this planning period, and that other objectives may become available for use.

## **A. Erosion Prevention and Control (1) & Soil Conservation (4)**

### Goal

The goal is to encourage and assist soil conservation and erosion prevention efforts to preserve the resources for future use while maintaining production today.

### Objectives

- Increase the land adequately treated .
- Provide an information and education program to maintain public interest in soil and water conservation and beneficial utilization of natural resources, and to promote voluntary guidelines to control soil erosion.
- Provide a service of voluntary land treatment programs to prevent or reduce erosion.
- Minimize and control erosion of soil through conservation practices, protection of stream banks, and land management.
- Promote and encourage reduced tillage operations and residue management to control erosion on all cropland within the District.
- Encourage soil management practices for productive land use and prevention of water pollution.
- Support outdoor classrooms for conservation education.
- Implement the Nebraska Erosion and Sediment Control Act and other mandatory regulations, and promote voluntary actions where possible to control soil erosion.
- Cooperate with local units of government in implementing voluntary or mandatory erosion control practices on all residential or commercial development, industrial development, road construction, and other non-agricultural sites.
- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to land treatment and land use.
- Federal, State, and other local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported for soil and water conservation practices.

- Cooperate with Federal, State, and other local units of government.
- Promote research and cooperate with NRCS plant materials programs in trial plantings to locate new desirable woody and grass plants for this area, and for developing improved planting equipment.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

#### Current Activities

- Encourage and assist soil conservation and erosion prevention measures to preserve the resources for future generations while maintaining production.

### **B. Prevention of Damage from Flood Water and Sediment (2) & Flood Prevention and Control (3)**

#### Goal

The goal is to prevent or reduce flooding and flood damages to acceptable levels, and encourage land-use planning that prevents or reduces flooding.

#### Objectives

- Monitor, and if determined to be necessary, investigate and study the North Platte, South Platte, and Platte Rivers and their major tributaries within the District to determine if adequate flood control is provided, or is being planned.
- Provide an information and education program to create and maintain public awareness and interest in flood plain problems, prevention, and control, and to promote voluntary guidelines.
- Encourage flood plain management as a necessary step in creating the proper balance between structural and non-structural methods of flood protection.
- Promote public linear parks, greenbelts, and open space in flood plains as an alternative to real estate development and building construction, if lands have the potential of changing from agricultural to non-agricultural areas.

- Promote conservation practices such as terraces, dams, waterways, and diversions to control erosion to prevent or reduce damage from sediment.
- Assist communities, on a case-by-case basis, for flood control projects by providing technical and administrative assistance, cost-share assistance, and/or assistance in acquiring grants or other funds.
- Sponsor, construct, operate, and/or maintain flood control projects where needed within the capabilities of the District to provide for flood prevention, and for the prevention of damages from water and sediment. Design and plan multi-purpose use facilities where possible. Obtain grants and other funding where possible. For projects where no outside funding is available, Improvement Project Areas will be encouraged.
- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to flood prevention and control.
- Federal, State, and other local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and other local units of government.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

#### Current Activities

- Inspections and maintenance of the Brule Watershed.

### **C. Water Supply for any Beneficial Uses (5)**

#### Goal

The goal is to cooperate with other agencies to maintain, improve, or develop water supplies when requested, and if determined to be appropriate, within the capabilities of the District.

#### Objectives

- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to water supply.

- Cooperate with Federal, State, and other local units of government.

#### **D. Development, Management, Utilization, and Conservation of Ground Water (6)**

##### Goal

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District's Ground Water Management Plan was approved by the Board of Directors on December 14, 1995, and implementation of the plan began on January 1, 1996.

The jointly developed Twin Platte Natural Resources District's Integrated Management Plan was approved by the Board of Director's on September 15, 2009, and revised on March 14, 2013.

The goal is to manage the water resources within the District in a manner to balance water use and water supply while optimizing economic, social, and environmental benefits for the near and long term.

The goal for the Integrated Management Plan is to protect, to the extent possible, existing users, local economy, environmental health, and recreational uses; manage total water supply in the District to achieve sustainability of supply and use while allowing for growth and changes in use; recognize there are multiple causes of streamflow depletion; and to the extent possible, distribute mitigation responsibilities appropriately.

The goal for ground water quantity is to encourage and promote the efficient management and conservation of ground water to maintain for 100 years the ground water quantity for domestic, agricultural, and commercial purposes.

The goal for ground water quality is to encourage and promote the use of ground water to maintain water quality acceptable for domestic purposes.

##### Objectives

- Implement the District's Ground Water Management Plan.
- Implement the District's Integrated Management Plan.
- Provide an information and education program to maintain public interest in the development, management, utilization, and conservation of ground water and to promote voluntary

guidelines.

- Maintain a monitoring program within the District.
- Cooperate with the Federal, State, and local agencies and other groups with programs consistent with the intent and purpose of policies adopted by the District to collect data and to provide adequate long-range planning information on the quality and quantity of the ground water within the District.
- Encourage the use of best management practices to reduce deep percolation of contaminants.
- Support research and adoption of equipment and techniques that have the potential for reducing ground water contamination.
- Reduce the potential for nonpoint source contamination of ground water through education, research, management practices, and incentives that would not adversely affect the economy of the area.
- Encourage landowners and producers to properly manage and conserve their irrigation water.
- Provide information to landowners for complying with State laws or regulations affecting the drilling of wells for use, control, and distribution of ground water for domestic, industrial, agricultural, or recreational uses.
- Promote the sealing of abandoned wells and provide a cost-share program for sealing abandoned wells.
- Investigate specific problems with ground water when requested or observed.
- Encourage other agencies to conserve and protect ground water when implementing programs.
- Obtain funding from State, Federal, and other local sources to supplement the District's ground water management activities.
- Federal, State, and other local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported.

- Implement the Nebraska Chemigation Act and promote voluntary actions to protect the ground water quality.
- Implement the Nebraska Ground Water Management Act for ground water runoff and promote voluntary actions to protect the ground water.
- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to ground water.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and other local units of government.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

#### Current Activities

- Irrigation Canal Recharge Projects diverting excess surface water flows into irrigation canals for ground water recharge purposes.
- N-CORPE project converting ground water irrigated acres to a permanently non-irrigated status and pumping the use of those wells into pipelines for surface water flows in the Platte River.
- Re-use pit recharge projects diverting excess surface water into irrigation canals and re-use pits for ground water recharge purposes.
- J-2 re-regulating reservoir for a short term credit for water to the river.

### **E. Development, Management, Utilization, and Conservation of Surface Water (6)**

#### Goal

The jointly developed Twin Platte Natural Resources District's Integrated Management Plan was approved by the Board of Director's on September 15, 2009, and revised on March 14, 2013.

The goal is to manage the water resources within the District in a manner to balance water use and water supply while optimizing economic, social, and environmental benefits for the near and long

term.

The goal for the Integrated Management Plan is to protect, to the extent possible, existing users, local economy, environmental health, and recreational uses; manage total water supply in the District to achieve sustainability of supply and use while allowing for growth and changes in use; recognize there are multiple causes of streamflow depletion; and to the extent possible, distribute mitigation responsibilities appropriately.

The goal is to strive to provide an adequate supply of acceptable quality surface water to fulfill the reasonable surface water demands within the District for domestic, agricultural, and commercial purposes.

#### Objectives

- Provide an information and education program to maintain public interest in the management, utilization, and conservation of surface water, and to promote voluntary guidelines.
- Investigate specific problems with surface water when requested or observed.
- Encourage and assist as appropriate the conservation of surface water to provide adequate supplies for domestic, agricultural, and industrial use.
- Encourage landowners and producers to properly manage and conserve their irrigation water.
- Determine surface water project priorities consistent with the greatest long-term benefits.
- Obtain funding for surface water projects from private, local, State, and Federal sources to supplement the requirements for such projects.
- Promote surface water quality testing by appropriate agencies.
- Encourage soil conservation practices as a method of maintaining or improving the water quality in streams and lakes.
- Cooperate with appropriate agencies in collecting surface water data.

- Make available surface water data in the Twin Platte Natural Resources District from existing sources.
- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to surface water.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and local units of government.
- Federal, State, and local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported.
- Protection of Platte Basin water supplies from out-of-basin interests.
- Protection of Twin Platte Natural Resources District interest from in-basin activities within the Platte River Basin in Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

#### Current Activities

- Irrigation Canal Recharge Projects diverting excess surface water flows into irrigation canals for ground water recharge purposes.
- Canal re-use pit recharge projects diverting excess surface water flows into irrigation canals for ground water recharge purposes.

### **F. Pollution Control (7)**

#### Goal

The goal is to minimize the misuse and pollution of the natural resources and to protect and enhance the air, land, ground water, and surface water of the District to maintain or improve the present qualities. All activities sponsored by the Twin Platte Natural Resources District will have this goal as one of its primary considerations.

#### Objectives

- Maintain or improve the quality of the air and water through

soil and water conservation .

- Provide an information and education program for pollution control and the need for prevention, and to promote voluntary guidelines.
- Consider the quality of the air and water in any plans or projects of the District.
- Investigate specific problems with pollution when requested or observed.
- Encourage other agencies to consider soil and water conservation during cleanup efforts.
- Comply with all regulations and laws affecting air and water quality.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and local units of government.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

## **G. Solid Waste Disposal and Sanitary Drainage (8)**

### Goal

The goal is to cooperate with other agencies to maintain, improve, or develop solid waste disposal and sanitary drainage when requested, and if determined to be appropriate, within the capabilities of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

### Objectives

- Promote regional efforts for managing urban and rural solid waste.
- Encourage planning for the development of solid waste disposal sites and encourage the operation of solid waste disposal sites to protect land and water quality .
- Encourage recycling of solid waste.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and local units of

government.

## H. Drainage Improvement and Channel Rectification (9)

### Goal

The goal is to improve the drainage of lands and associated channels within the District when requested, and if determined to be appropriate, within the capabilities of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District.

A high percentage of the population of the District resides in the Platte River Valley where high water tables and soil conditions may cause many hazards to the development of homes and other intensified uses. Proper planning, based on soil characteristics, needs to be done to ensure proper development to protect the soil and water resources.

### Objectives

- Provide an information and education program for drainage improvement and channel rectification, and to promote voluntary guidelines.
- Investigate specific problems with drainage when requested or observed.
- Sponsor, construct, operate, and/or maintain drainage and channel rectification projects where feasible and needed within the capabilities of the District.
- Outside financing of projects will be encouraged.
- Project sponsors for projects where no outside funding is available will be encouraged to establish Improvement Project Areas.
- Encourage, and when appropriate, assist landowners to manage lands adjoining streams to reduce stream bank erosion.
- Federal, State, and local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported.
- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to drainage and channel rectification.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and local units of government.

- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

## I. **Development and Management of Fish and Wildlife Habitat (10)**

### Goal

The goal is to encourage and assist landowners and/or producers and other local governmental agencies to protect, improve, or develop habitat for fish and wildlife.

### Objectives

- Maintain or improve wildlife habitat.
- Consider the inclusion of wildlife habitat development in all projects undertaken by the District.
- Provide an information and education program to maintain public interest in the development and management of fish and wildlife habitat and to promote voluntary guidelines.
- Provide technical and financial assistance for private landowners to develop and maintain fish and wildlife habitat.
- Obtain funding for habitat programs from private, local, State, and Federal sources.
- Promote and implement the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's "Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program".
- Cooperate with Federal, State, local agencies, groups, and individuals in maintaining and preserving wildlife habitat.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, local agencies, groups, and individuals in assisting with the development of wildlife habitat.
- Discourage destruction of permanent vegetation and trees unless the removal is beneficial for fish and wildlife habitat.
- Encourage private landowners to preserve wetlands. Discourage dredge and fill activities and conversion to croplands, unless there are reasonable wetland mitigation sites available.

- Encourage State and Federal agencies and private landowners to work together for wetland habitat needs.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

#### Current Activities

- Developing and managing wildlife habitats through local partnerships throughout the District.
- Corners for wildlife projects providing wildlife habitat near irrigated lands.
- Nebraska Legacy Program promoting habitat improvement and grassland management and habitat in the Loess Hills in Lincoln County.
- Wild Nebraska Program removing invasive tree species and diversifying wildlife habitat in the Platte River corridor.
- Invasive Species Program managing invasive plant species and limiting expansion into diverse wildlife habitats.

### **J. Development and Management of Recreation and Parks Facilities (11)**

#### Goal

The goal is to maintain, and if determined necessary, improve and increase the outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District is fortunate to have many excellent outdoor recreation facilities that provide opportunities for residents of the District and residents from throughout Nebraska and adjoining states.

#### Objectives

- Consider the inclusion of recreation and parks facilities in all projects undertaken by the District.
- Support outdoor classrooms for conservation education.
- In flood plains, promote public linear parks, greenbelts,

and open space for public access.

- Federal, State, and local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and local units of government.

## **K. Range Management (12)**

### Goal

The goal is to encourage and assist landowners and/or producers and other local governmental agencies to protect the rangeland within the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and to maintain or improve the land to a good range condition.

### Objectives

- Increase the amount of land adequately treated.
- Provide an information and education program to maintain public interest in the development, management, utilization, and conservation of rangelands, and to promote voluntary guidelines.
- Provide technical assistance for grassland management.
- Encourage planned grazing systems, native grass planting, and other improvement practices for better range utilization.
- Support outdoor classrooms for conservation education.
- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to range management.
- Federal, State, and local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and local units of government.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

### Current Activities

- Conserving rangelands for long term productivity through cost-share practices and educational opportunities.
- Technical assistance to landowners on appropriate range seeding practices.
- Working with the Nebraska Legacy Program to promote grassland management in unique biological areas and help preserve Loess Hill grasslands.
- Invasive Species Program managing invasive plant species and limiting expansion into diverse grasslands.

## **L. Forestry Management (12)**

### Goal

The goal is to encourage and assist landowners and/or producers and other local governmental agencies to protect and expand forestry resources, both rural and urban, for soil and water conservation, livestock production, wildlife, and energy conservation.

### Objectives

- Maintain or improve the quality of all woodlands and livestock and farmstead windbreaks.
- Provide an information and education program to maintain public interest in the development, management, utilization, and conservation of trees, and to promote voluntary guidelines.
- Provide technical assistance for forestry management.
- Encourage tree planting for windbreaks, wildlife, and other conservation purposes.
- Provide a Tree Planting Program to assist landowners in planning for tree plantings, offer seedling trees for sale, and provide a planting service for windbreaks and wildlife.
- Provide an Urban Forestry Program for cities and villages, on a case-by-case basis, providing for planning and financial assistance for community tree planting.
- Promote tree maintenance.
- Discourage the conversion of existing tree plantings and

woodlands to other uses.

- Support outdoor classrooms for conservation education.
- Remain informed on all Federal, State, and local programs relevant to forestry management.
- Federal, State, and local cost-share programs will be encouraged and supported.
- Cooperate with Federal, State, and local units of government.
- Provide staff in the NRCS field offices as appropriate to meet the planning and layout needs required by landowners and/or producers within the District. The NRCS field offices should be staffed and supported by NRCS professionals in engineering, soils, range, and forestry.

#### Current Activities

- Encouraging landowners to plant trees and shrubs, and educating all District residents of the importance to trees and shrubs. In some cases, cost-share is available from the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program and the District Conservation Program.
- Conservation tree plantings by coordinating between vendors and landowners for the design of windbreaks.
- Urban Forestry Program encouraging the planting of trees within the villages of Sutherland, Ogallala, and North Platte.
- Arbor Day tree give away by coordinating all 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in the District receiving a seedling to take home and plant.

## **XI. PRIORITIES FOR GOALS**

The following priorities are assigned to the goals to designate those areas the District will place the most emphasis. These priorities reflect need for activity and do not assign importance of any one goal over another.

### **First Priority**

- Erosion Prevention and Control & Soil Conservation
- Prevention of Damage from Flood Water and Sediment & Flood Prevention and Control
- Development, Management, Utilization, and Conservation of Ground Water
- Development, Management, Utilization, and Conservation of Surface Water
- Development and Management of Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Range Management
- Forestry Management

### **Second Priority**

- Water Supply for any Beneficial Uses
- Pollution Control
- Solid Waste Disposal and Sanitary Drainage
- Drainage Improvement and Channel Rectification
- Development and Management of Recreation and Parks Facilities

## XII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This plan is a guide for the Board of Directors of the Twin Platte Natural Resources District to use in the planning process over the next 10 years. This plan may be updated as often as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors has tried to assess the needs facing the Twin Platte Natural Resources District and establish objectives that meet those needs. Circumstances and situations change, and it may become necessary to adjust priorities to meet these changes.

One potential catalyst of change is the Nebraska Legislature, which controls the duties and authorities of Natural Resources Districts. In 1996 the State enacted new legislation affecting Natural Resources Districts' duties in addressing water conflicts. Also in 1996 the Legislature passed new restrictions on the levying and spending of property taxes, an important source of revenue for Districts. In 2004 the Legislature passed "LB 962" which directly impacted the District with all programs related to Integrated Water Management. From this point forward the management of ground and surface water has changed.

The District will be continuing to study the ramifications of any new legislation on the Twin Platte Natural Resources District's activities, and the District's ability to meet the goals and objectives in this plan. With the additional statutory duties and limits on financial resources, it may be necessary for the District to prioritize needs and focus its resources on those needs.

