

**UPPER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT  
SPECIAL POLICY ISSUES BOARD MEETING  
February 12, 2026 -- 1:30 P.M.  
O'Neill, Nebraska**

**CALL TO ORDER, STATEMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT AND OPEN MEETINGS LAW NOTIFICATION:**

The special meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order. The statement of advertisement was noted; and, the open meetings law posting were all noted at 1:30 P.M. by Chairman Trevor Gotschall.

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

Bruce Anderson	Kevin Blair	Chris Dierks	Cody Frank	Curtis Gotschall
Trevor Gotschall	Gene Kelly	Aaron Rice	Tony Sanderson	Allen Schueth
Cameron Smith	Art Tanderup	John Vogel		
Matt Beckman (arr. @ 1:32)		Marv Fritz (arr. @ 1:36)		

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Dennis Schueth - General Manager  
Joslynn VanDerslice - Water Resources Manager  
Beth Walsh - Information & Education Coordinator  
Wayne Frederick - Water Resources Technician  
Grant Mathis – Water Resources Technician  
Cole Jesse – Natural Resources Technician  
Brett Sholes – Agronomy Technician

**GUESTS:** None

**AGENDA:**

⇒ It was moved by Gene Kelly and seconded by Tony Sanderson to adopt the agenda. **AYE:** Anderson, Blair, Dierks, Frank, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Schueth, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** None. **ABSENT:** Beckman & Fritz. **MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Trevor Gotschall not voting.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES:** None

**NSWCP COSTSHARE PRACTICES:**

Dennis Schueth reviewed the current NSWCP rankings for the UENRD. The district receives approximately \$70,000 each year and the majority of the funds go toward the tree program. What funding is left over is then distributed based on the district's priority practices. Dennis asked if anyone wanted to revisit the rankings for the upcoming year and the consensus was to leave the priorities the same for 2026.

**PERSONNEL POLICY DISCUSSION AND OPEN TOPICS:**

- Dennis Schueth discussed the perception of Staff and/or Directors acting on behalf of the UENRD without proper authority. After consulting with the attorney, we need to be careful regarding proprietary photo's and copy rights regarding information used for advertising district programs. It was also noted that Directors need to be careful when speaking to vendors regarding potential UENRD business. They need to make sure they have the proper authority, from the board, to speak on behalf of the UENRD regarding quotes or any other issues surrounding a project. Dennis also cautioned Directors on helping cooperators

with applying for Expansion and Transfer acres. Through no fault of anyone, we have had Directors tell cooperators that they qualify for Expansions or Transfers only to find out that they do not based on a missed step or incomplete information which puts staff in a very awkward position when they come into the office to apply.

- Dennis Schueth discussed the current Vacation Leave policy and would like the Personnel, Equipment, Promotion and Education Committee to look into the possibility of amending the leave allocations and carryover for employees with over 25 years of service. He noted that he would consider himself exempt from any new leave policy at this time.

#### **OPERATING POLICY DISCUSSION OPEN TOPICS:**

- Dennis Schueth discussed the districts cell phone policy with the board. Dennis explained that staff is encountering more throttling down (or slowing) of their cell phone services due to the use of new programs and software. He proposed looking into increasing the stipend of using personnel cell phones for NRD purposes and/or putting the tablets used in the field on a data package to increase their efficiency in the field. It would cost approximately \$2,800 to upgrade the phone stipends and get service for the tablets. This will be reviewed by the LBF or Personnel Committee.
- Dennis also reviewed the UENRD mileage reimbursement program. Currently, all staff are encouraged to use a district vehicle when one is available; however, there have been times when staff have used their own personal vehicle for district functions. The present reimbursement for staff using their own vehicle is .105/mile. Dennis is proposing changing the reimbursement from the .105/mile to a percentage of the federal rate. This will be referred to the LBF or Personnel Committee for discussion.

#### **GROUNDWATER QUALITY/QUANTITY DATA RULES AND REGULATIONS AND ACRE**

##### **EXPANSION/TRANSFER/CRITERIA:**

- Joslynn VanDerslice reviewed the 2025 Nitrate Water Sampling Summary data. She also reviewed which townships need to be updated for the designation of the district's Phase levels. Static water sampling procedure was discussed and the use of elevation measuring equipment. Grant Mathis handed out information on a Trimble unit that could measure the elevation of the districts static water locations. This will be referred to committee.
- There are several issues that the Water Resources and Watershed committee discuss on a regular basis and these sometimes get pushed back because there are issues with expansion and transfer acres that take up the committees time. They discussed moving forward with the smaller changes to the GWMP Rules and Regulations since they require a public hearing and then move forward with some of the larger issues. The Board also discussed having more full board water quality/quantity issue meetings to keep everyone informed of what the committee is discussing and the data they are using for their recommendations.
- Aaron Rice described changes he would like the committee and board to consider regarding the transfer rules. He discussed transferring from surface water to groundwater, changing how the HUC's (hydrological unit codes) are used for transfers, allocations, flowmeters and contracts for transfers. Discussion was held regarding what directors have been hearing from cooperators in their area regarding development. Trevor Gotschall asked if any of the Directors were asking those cooperators how they feel about our nitrate issues and whether or not they have any ideas for reducing the amount of nitrates in our groundwater. Discussion was held regarding the variables in farming practices as they relate to nitrogen efficiency or inefficiency. Grant Mathis handed out a summary report of the vadose zone sampling conducted from 1993 to 2025. It was discussed that it would be nice to continue analyzing this data. A comment was made that crop rotation should be considered in reducing nitrogen in the soil.
- Curtis Gotschall reported that he has reviewed Rule 16 of the GWMP and submitted a written report of proposed changes for the WRWS Committee/Board to review moving forward.

- Dennis Schueth passed out a map from the Lower Elkhorn NRD regarding their irrigation development areas which denotes that they have designated areas where they do and do not allow new development.

Allen Schueth departed at 4:15 PM

**OTHER ITEMS:**

- John Vogel gave an update on the engineering project he is proposing on his property.
- Tony Sanderson handed out a policy proposal regarding new tiling projects in the Upper Elkhorn NRD. Tony would like it to be reviewed and referred to the WRWS Committee for proposed action.

**Next Board Meeting: 2:30 PM February 23, 2026**

⇒ It was moved by John Vogel and seconded by Chris Dierks to adjourn at 4:20 PM. AYE: Anderson, Beckman, Blair, Dierks, Frank, Fritz, C. Gotschall, Kelly, Rice, Sanderson, Smith, Tanderup & Vogel. NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Schueth. MOTION CARRIED. Chairman Trevor Gotschall not voting.

I, the undersigned Secretary/Treasurer of the Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings had and done by the Board of Directors on February 12, 2026 that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to said meeting, the minutes of the Chairman and the Board were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body, that all news media requesting notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.

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Gene Kelly, Secretary/Treasurer