

# NDSU Williston Research Extension Center

WREC Listening Session - Dickinson, ND  
November 9, 2023



WREC research studies are conducted on crop variety evaluation, weed science, plant pathology, and other cultural management research, cropping systems and soil and water conservation practices in dryland and irrigated systems.

## Williston REC in Brief

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## Capital Projects

**Machine Storage Shed: \$475,000**

**Nesson Valley Research and Tech Transfer Center: \$1,700,000**

An update will be provided later.

## Greenhouse

An additional \$750,000 in fundraising authorization was granted, bringing the total to \$1,250,000. \$500,000 has been raised, and I recently allotted a \$130,000 easement to this project, but under the next Director's authorization.

## Staff

### Research Technicians

Keeping qualified staff in the Williston Basin is challenging. We currently have 2 Research Technicians that we are recruiting for, or will be this fall. We continue to run into salary issues competing with the oil field, but also with the commercial agronomy industry with our Specialists and Scientists.

We have shuffled some of the duties in the past year and are working to see if these changes are temporary or permanent. One of the major changes was to have Justin Jacobs oversee all variety trials, both irrigated and dryland. Communication in the past was split between dryland and irrigated programs, potentially making it confusing for growers and producers. There were definitely growing pains in this transition, but I do believe some of these transitional concerns were ironed out and anticipate this growing season going well.

## Operating Support and Deferred Maintenance

Inflation continues to be a strain on our annual operating budget, as well as maintenance on roads and houses built in the early 1900's. Any additional operating or deferred maintenance support is appreciated.

## Easements

During the past year I have been part of completing or starting 3 easements on WREC land. Some are for sub-surface, some are for surface, and some are for temporary surface easements. Yes, there can be a lot of money coming in to help offset costs and aid in fundraising. Since last November 1 approximately \$144,532 in easements have been secured. The previous year there was one easement of over \$700,000. But, these also come at a cost, namely time, and insecurity of potential resources for the future. It would be very easy to rely on these funding streams to support the budget. We need to be careful not to. "Uncoupling" the WREC from having to fundraise for all of their projects by providing funding for the Nesson Valley project and a Machine Storage Shed was a step in the right direction for the future of the WREC.

## New Director

Funk was hired with a tentative start date of January 2, 2024. I have served as the Acting Director since November 1, 2022, and will continue to serve in that roll at Dr. Lardy's discretion until Dr. Funk arrives. I look forward to helping him and the staff transition to new leadership this coming winter.