

IN THE LOUP

New Chemigation Fees Approved for LLNRD

Chemigators in the Lower Loup Natural Resources District will pay new fees after a change to the NRD's Groundwater Management Rules and Regulations was approved by the Board of Directors following a public hearing on February 26, 2015.

Those fees are now \$50 for a new permit, a renewal permit is \$30, and an

emergency permit will cost \$500. The cost for a special permit will be \$50.

Chemigation is the process of applying agricultural chemicals by injecting them directly into the water moving through an irrigation system. Nebraska law states that before an irrigator can start chemigation, a permit must be obtained from the local NRD.

Each chemigation system is inspected by an NRD technician before a new permit is granted. The new chemigation rules include a new fee structure created after the Nebraska Legislature passed legislation last session allowing each district to set fees appropriate to the costs of managing the program.

Lower Loup NRD New Chemigation Fees	
New Permit	\$50
Renewal Permit	\$30
Emergency Permit	\$500
Special Permit	\$50

First Female Director Named

Beth Boesch of Columbus has been selected by the Lower Loup Natural Resources District Board of Directors to fill a vacant seat in Subdistrict 9. The subdistrict is located in south central Columbus.

Boesch becomes the first ever female member of the Lower Loup NRD Board. She was one of two candidates to apply for the vacancy and won appointment over Bob Bauer, also of Columbus.



Beth Boesch of Columbus is the new LLNRD director representing Subdistrict 9.

The NRD Board vacancy was created by the resignation of Kim Walden, who moved out of the subdistrict.

Boesch is a native Nebraskan and worked 40 years for NPPD.

Under Nebraska state law, the Subdistrict 9 seat will be up for election again in 2016. There are 21 members on the LLNRD Board of Directors, 2 from each of 10 subdistricts and 1 elected at-large.

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LLNRD to Participate in Project SENSE

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District will participate in a research project that investigates ways to manage fertilizer use to avoid high groundwater nitrate levels. The SENSE (Sensors for Efficient Nitrogen Use and Stewardship of the Environment) Project will be a joint project of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Nebraska Corn Board, and five NRDs.

The Lower Loup NRD's share of the costs of the project will be \$22,500

annually over 3 years. Other NRDs participating in the project are the Central Platte, Upper Big Blue, Lower Platte North, and Lower Platte South.

Crop canopy sensors will be used to collect data to better manage fertilizer use by the crop. The sensors are attached to an applicator boom and quantify the chlorophyll in the plants by measuring light reflection. Those measurements will then be used to determine the crops fertiliz-

er needs.

The project will provide significant data for use in managing groundwater nitrate levels. The data will be of specific use in the NRD's lone Phase III Groundwater Quality Management Area. Area 28 is a strip of land in the NRD, south of the Loup River, from southeast of Palmer to south of Columbus. The nitrate levels in Area 28 are above the maximum allowable level of 10 parts per million and are trending upward.

Boone Central Wins Regional Envirothon

Boone Central defeated 13 other teams to finish first at the Central Region Envirothon Contest held Tuesday, March 3rd, at Central Community College-Platte Campus in Columbus.

Envirothon is designed to test high

school students' knowledge in forestry, range, soils, wildlife, aquatics, and natural resources policy, as well as a current environmental topic. This year's topic is "Urban/Community Forestry."

With the top score of 119 points,

Boone Central has earned an invitation to the Nebraska State Envirothon in April. Team members are Taylor Nelson, John Wagner, Zack Nelson, Maverick Loeffler, and Justin Lee. The Regional Envirothon was sponsored by the Lower Loup and Central Platte NRDs.

South Loup Plan to Tackle Watershed Issues

Addressing water quality and quantity issues in the South Loup River Basin is the goal of a plan being developed by the Lower Loup and three other NRDs...Twin Platte, Central Platte and Upper Loup.

The watershed management plan will use NRD funding along with money from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality to further research causes of water quality impairments on the South Loup. Additionally, groundwater and surface flow declines are a

problem in this area and the NRDs plan to develop steps to improve both water quantity and quality.

The plan will examine the various management practices employed in the basin and recommend the practices that have greatest potential for improving the water resources. Cost-share programs will likely be developed as part of the plan and will be available to area landowners to assist with conservation. The LLNRD is also interested in recharge projects to get water back into the

South Loup system, which stretches from west of Stapleton to near Boelus.

A stakeholder group, comprised of area landowners and groups with vested interest in the South Loup River, will be formed. This stakeholder group will provide recommendations and advice to the NRDs on priorities and potential projects that could benefit the basin. Basin residents interested in participating in this process should contact Tylr Naprstek at the LLNRD.

A Message From The Manager

Welcome to another edition of *In the Loup*. We are always happy to share information on the NRD's work. Thank you for reading this newsletter.

One project of note is the initiation of our voluntary integrated management planning process. With the passage of LB-1098, the Legislature has made partnerships and funding opportunities available to NRDs with such a plan. On February 30, 2015, the LLNRD consulted with all the irrigation districts, reclamation districts, and public power and irrigation districts in the NRD to explain our intention to develop a voluntary integrated management plan in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

It was explained that the plan's goal was to achieve and sustain a balance between water uses and water supplies for the long term. This is in keeping with the LLNRD's long-term goals and objectives to be proactive in the management of water resources in the district.

The LLNRD has also put together a stakeholders group of water users representing a wide array of interests. This special group of 30 plus members represent: municipal users, surface water irrigators, the ag industry, groundwater irrigators, dry land farmers, manufacturing and industry, the sand and gravel industry, real estate interests, finance and banking, government, and others. The group met once in March and will be meeting again in April.



**LLNRD General Manager
Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos**

The public may comment or offer suggestions by visiting our website, www.llnrd.org. You can e-mail comments by visiting the IMP story on our main page and clicking the link in the third paragraph. All comments and suggestions will be considered as our plan comes together.

Study Focus is Columbus' Water Resources

The interaction between surface and groundwater resources in the city of Columbus is being examined by the LLNRD. The NRD hopes to gain a greater understanding of the water resources in the area through the development of water budget study.

NRD Water Modeling Coordinator Tylr Naprstek said that a water budget inventories all the available water sources, such as inflows from the Platte and Loup Rivers; as well as the water sinks like high capacity wells and other outflows to the area. The NRD will be using data from several area water models to

develop a more accurate, site specific model for the Columbus area. The new model will provide a generalized representation of water resources, including availability, flow, recharge and potential impacts from high capacity development.

Additionally, this study will examine possible recharge projects to provide additional water sources in times of specific need, such as extended periods of drought. This recharge planning will consider impacts to the water budget, possible impacts to third parties, and data from the groundwater model.

Conversely, a portion of this resource assessment study will be dedicated to floodplain and stormwater data to assist the City of Columbus during times of flooding.

In order to fully develop this study, the NRD will utilize an outside consultant to provide recommendations and technical expertise. The Lower Loup NRD will consider proposals from several consulting firms to assist in the development and implementation of the various components of this study. The study is expected to kick off in April and should be completed in June of 2016.



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Nebraska's NRDs . . .

Protecting Lives, Protecting

Property, Protecting the Future.

Lower Loup NRD Offers Two Recreation Areas

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District offers fun seekers two spots for outdoor recreation--Davis Creek Recreation Area south of North Loup in Valley County, and Pibel Lake Recreation Area south of Bartlett in southwest Wheeler County.

Davis Creek Recreation Area offers a picnic shelter and a 25 concrete pad camping area. There are no electrical or water hookups for the camp sites. Security lighting has been installed near restrooms and boat ramps. There is an aluminum fishing pier for those with limited mobility. Lake levels vary at different times of the year as the lake's primary purpose is irrig-



Boaters on the Lower Loup NRD's Pibel Lake Recreation Area.

ation storage.

Pibel Lake is 72 acre recreation facility in southwest Wheeler County. The

park and 24 acre lake are located just off Highway 281 south of Bartlett. The facility offers primitive camping and restrooms and a boat ramp. Water is available at the facility, but there are no individual connections for camp sites.

Both recreation areas will be renovated later this year. New camping sites will be created at Davis Creek and new parking and fishing piers will be added to Pibel Lake. Several water quality improvements are also planned, including a sediment trap, repairs to the outlet, flood damage repairs, two picnic shelters and new playground equipment.