

# YOUR NRD BASIN

# LOUP RIVER

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts  
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

Summer/Fall 2017

## BASIN FACTS:

The Loup River Basin includes all or part of 24 Nebraska counties.

Total Basin Acres: 9,252,745

Lower: 5,070,720 acres

Upper: 4,182,025 acres

Total Certified Irrigated Acres: 1,304,237

Upper: 83,089 acres

Lower: 1,221,148 acres

Registered Irrigation Wells:

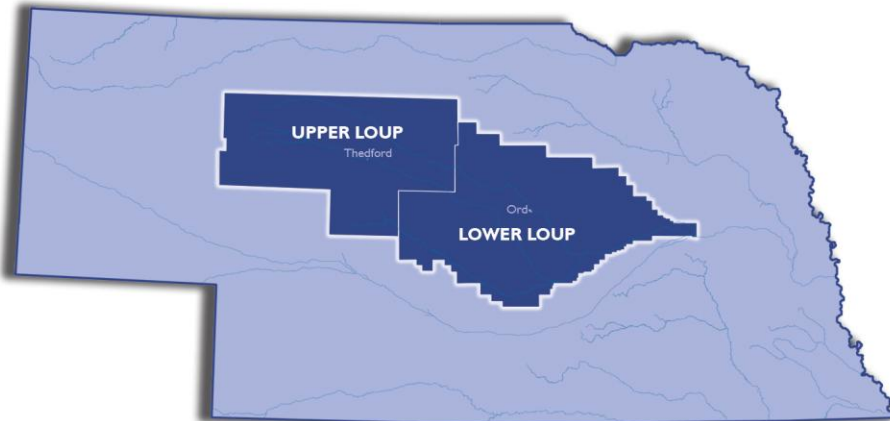
Upper: 765

Lower: 11,486

Conservation Trees Planted in 2017:

Upper: 30,106

Lower: 53,363



LOUP RIVER BASIN

## Protecting Lives

## Protecting Property

## Protecting the Future

### Integrated Management

Both the Upper and Lower Loup NRDs have completed voluntary integrated water management plans with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The plans are designed to ensure a balance between surface water and groundwater supplies and uses. The plans also protect the rights of existing water users.

Groundwater is monitored and controlled by the NRD and surface water monitoring and control is handled by DNR.

Both NRDs are also participating in the development of a plan for the lower Platte River Basin. There are seven NRDs in the lower Platte, Elkhorn and Loup Rivers and DNR involved in that basin-wide project. The Loup and Elkhorn Rivers are tributaries of the Platte River.

The Lower Platte River Basin Plan is also being developed on a voluntary basis.

### Hazard Mitigation

The hazard mitigation plans for the Upper Loup NRD and for the Lower Loup NRD have been updated.

The all-hazard mitigation plan is a community guided document that identifies vulnerability to all natural disasters, assesses possible losses, and lists potential mitigation projects. The plans must be updated every five years.

Disasters covered include tornadoes, hail, wind, drought, wildfires, thunderstorms, and blizzards. An approved plan makes Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds available to help cover community mitigation projects.

These projects can include community safe rooms, generator, slope stabilization, tree removal, public education and warnings, and many other possible solutions. For communities with approved plans, there are additional FEMA funds available in the event of a natural disaster.

### Groundwater Quantity

Both the Upper and Lower Loup NRDs monitor groundwater levels on an annual basis. Technicians measure wells across the Loup Basin in both spring and fall. Data is then compiled to give a snapshot of groundwater levels.

In 2018, the Upper Loup NRD is allowing 2,500 acres of new irrigation, 500 acres in each subdistrict. The Lower Loup NRD has approved 2,000 new irrigated acres in two sub-basins, the North Loup River and Beaver Creek.



The Upper Loup NRD will have all active irrigation wells in the district outfitted with flow meters by 2020. The Lower Loup NRD requires flow meters in one of its water quality areas.

## Projects & Programs

### Water Quality

Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for families in the Loup Basin. Over 1,310 wells are monitored across both Districts each year for nitrate levels. Nitrates, the primary contaminant of groundwater in the basin, averages 2 ppm or less according to data compiled by the Upper and Lower Loup NRDs. The Environmental Protection Agency has listed a safe level to be in the range of 0-10 ppm.



### Tree Planting

The NRDs in the Loup Basin offer conservation trees to landowners in each District to fulfill a variety of needs. Trees are one of our most important resources. They help reduce erosion, protect livestock and farmsteads, and provide protection and homes for wildlife. To encourage tree planting, the Upper and Lower Loup NRDs offer tree and shrub seedlings at a reduced cost. Trees can be hand planted by the landowner or machine-planted by NRD technicians. Other services that may be offered include weed spraying, fabric mulch installation, and drip irrigation installation.



### Range

Rangeland makes up over half the land in the Loup River Basin as well as the State of Nebraska. The benefits of good range management and its positive impact on natural resources in the basin are ongoing priorities. Through the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP), a number of practices that benefit range land are available to landowners. These practices vary from pasture planting and range seeding to critical area planting to planned grazing systems. NSWCP cost-share from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the local Natural Resources District is available to landowners interested in implementing these practices.



### Natural Resources Education

The Upper and Lower Loup NRDs believe that education is key to protecting the future of natural resources and strive to provide the latest information to provide the latest information to both adults and youth.



The NRDs provide presentations for any school or community organization. Presentations can focus on a variety of topics such as water, pollution, forestry, land treatment, or other conservation topics. The Districts provide scholarships, hold land and range judging contests for high school students, and provide natural resources activities for students of all ages. Both districts are active in organizing and presenting the annual Adventure Camp about the Environment.

## Loup River NRDs

- **Protect all natural resources**
- **Protect groundwater quantity and quality for future generations**
- **Use taxpayer dollars effectively**
- **Protect the lives and property of District residents**

Natural Resources Districts were created by the Legislature in 1972. Unique to Nebraska, NRDs were developed along watershed boundaries instead of political boundaries. This allows for more efficient management of natural resources, eliminating overlapping jurisdictions and funding issues.

Each NRD is governed by a locally elected Board of Directors, allowing for the development of local solutions to address local issues.

Find out more about Nebraska's NRDs at [www.nrdnet.org](http://www.nrdnet.org).

Loup River Basin NRD web sites:

**Upper Loup**

[www.upperloupnrd.org](http://www.upperloupnrd.org)

**Lower Loup**

[www.llnrd.org](http://www.llnrd.org)