

KNOW YOUR NRD

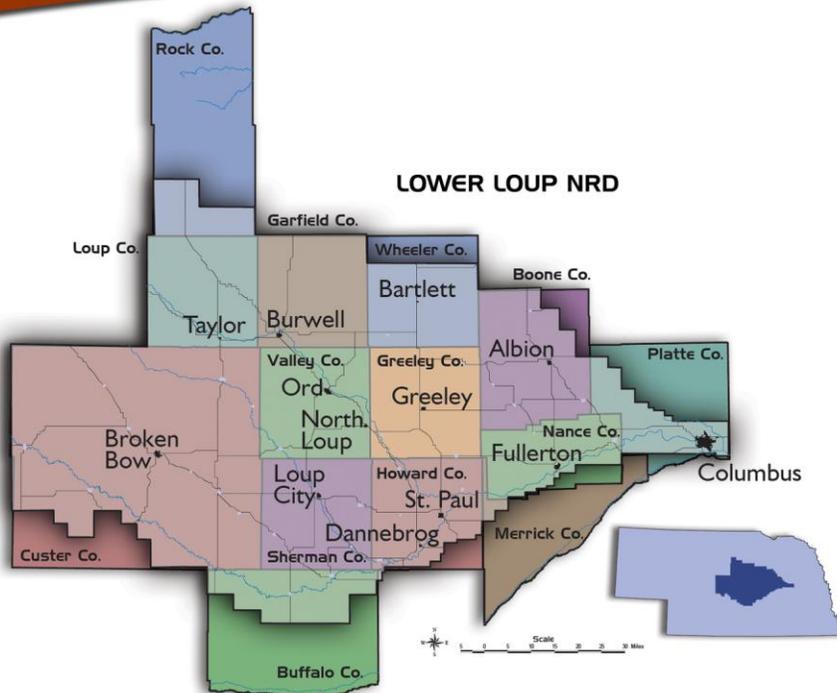


Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

Summer/Fall 2017

LLNRD QUICK FACTS:

- District Population: 68,746 (2010 Census)
- District Size in Acres: 5,070,720
- Encompasses 514 miles of rivers
- 11,486 Registered Irrigation Wells
- 1,221,148 Certified Irrigated Acres
- Planted over 12 million trees since 1972
- Distributed \$7.66 million in cost-share funding to landowners
- 2006 - Self-imposed moratorium on new high capacity irrigation wells
- 2008 - Self-imposed moratorium on expansion of irrigated acres
- 2009 - Lower Platte River Basin fully-appropriated designation reversed
- 2009 - Additional groundwater rules approved to allow limited irrigation development under LB-483



Protecting Lives

Instream Flow Application

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District has applied for an in-stream flow application on the Loup River.

The application to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources was approved by the LLNRD Board of Directors at its July, 2017 meeting.

The application seeks rights to the unappropriated Loup River water from the Genoa Diversion Dam to the confluence of the Middle Loup and North Loup Rivers.

At a public hearing prior to the Board meeting, Assistant Manager Russ Callan said the application would provide the greatest level of protection for existing water resources of the District, including fish, wildlife, and recreation.

Action on the application by DNR could take months, perhaps over a year, according to General Manager Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos.

Protecting Property

LLNRD HMP Is Approved

The Lower Loup NRD's Hazard Mitigation Plan update has received final approval from both the Federal Emergency Management and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency.

Hazard Mitigation Plans identify where vulnerabilities to natural disasters such as flood, drought, earthquake, wildfire, winter storm, tornado/high wind storm, or dam failure might exist.

The plan covers the LLNRD as well as participating communities, counties, and districts. The plan sets goals, establishes mitigation alternatives, and prioritizes projects which may alleviate potential damages to property, and provides protection when future disasters occur. The NRD hired JEO Consulting Group to assist with plan creation.

Protecting the Future

New Irrigated Acres Granted

Applications for new irrigated acres in two sub-basins of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District have been accepted for 2018. The Lower Loup NRD Board of Directors voted to grant 2,000 acres of new irrigation development.

The decision came after a review of the Lower Platte River Basin Study showed surplus water supplies in the North Loup River and Beaver Creek sub-basins. The surplus means that new irrigation will not have a negative effect on current irrigation.

The new groundwater acres will mean the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources will also be allowed to grant new surface water irrigation in those basins at a ratio of one new surface water acre for every three new groundwater acres.

NRD Flowmeter Program Is A Success

The Lower Loup NRD provides cost-share to irrigators interested in a better understanding of the water used to grow row crops. Funded in part by the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the program provides valuable data regarding annual irrigation across the NRD. The data is used in various modeling endeavors and provides for better analysis of groundwater use in the district. The program funding expired at the end of 2016.



The NRD requires flowmeters on all irrigation sources with its Groundwater Quality Management Area 28. Increasing nitrate levels in Area 28 led to the decision to require the meters, which will give irrigators a means to

measure and control the amount of nitrogen they are applying through irrigation water. Knowing this amount will allow the irrigator the opportunity to save on inputs and promote better groundwater quality by reducing the amount of fertilizer needed to grow a crop. The Lower Loup NRD is the first district to require flowmeters to address water quality concerns.

Partnership Moving Forward In Columbus

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District is partnering with the City of Columbus, Archer Daniels Midland and the Christopher Cove subdivision to seek funding for a project that would remediate water issues. Following a study of groundwater resources in and around the city of Columbus and the creation of a community groundwater model, plans are being made for the partnership to work together to manage groundwater and surface water in the community. The community is the most populated in the NRD and has a complex hydrology. An aerial electromagnetic survey of the area was completed in the summer of 2016.



Recreation Areas Get Updates, Expansions



The Lower Loup Natural Resources District has completed a water quality and renovation project at Pibel Lake Recreation Area in southeast Wheeler County and an expansion at Davis Creek Recreation Area in southeast Valley County.

The Pibel Lake updates included two new fishing piers, parking updates, a sediment trap for sediment and nutrients to improve water quality, flood damage repairs, and a new picnic shelter.

At Davis Creek Recreation Area, changes include 42 new camp sites with water and electrical hook-ups, landscaping, 2 new picnic shelters, a restroom/shower facility, and an additional restroom near the new camp sites. Three of the new campsites are ADA compliant and have sidewalk access. Additionally, a new boat launch, RV cleanout facility, and a fish cleaning facility have been added.

Funding for a portion of the renovation project is from the US Bureau of Reclamation.

- Lower Loup and 6 other NRDs are coalition participants
- Coalition members represent the NRDs in the Platte, Elkhorn and Loup Rivers and Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
- Coalition created to discuss and make recommendations on water management in the basin

The coalition is managed by a Board of Directors and gets input from two committees, one managerial and the other technical. The management committee is responsible for the administrative and financial affairs of the committee and the technical committee handles the scientific and technical components.

The coalition is looking at groundwater inventories, surveys, studies, modeling, goals and objectives of groundwater management in the basin.

Find out more about Nebraska's NRDs at www.llnrd.org or www.nrdnet.org