

IN THE LOUP

LLNRD Board Approves New Irrigated Acres

Applications for new 2,367 irrigated acres in three river basins in the Lower Loup Natural Resources District (LLNRD) have been approved by the District Board. The LLNRD had made up to a total of 2,500 acres of irrigation available.

In the North Loup Basin, 1,103 irrigated acres were granted; in the Middle Loup Basin, 565 acres were awarded; and in the Plum Creek, Beaver Creek and lower portion of the Loup Basins, 699 new irrigated acres were allowed.

NRD General Manager Russell Callan said that the new irrigation development was approved after

a review of the available water in the NRD. He said that studies still showed a “surplus” in the water budget created for the approved sub-basins of the Loup River Basin. Water quality was also a consideration.

During the application process, bonus points were awarded for applications in an area of rising groundwater. New irrigation allocation was not allowed for areas south of the Middle Loup and Loup Rivers, as well as in the Cedar River Basin, the area east of Columbus, and the South Loup River Basin due to negative changes to the water supplies.

New Irrigated Acres By County

County	Acres
Boone	206
Custer	50
Garfield	18
Greeley	640
Howard	367
Loup	154
Platte	493
Sherman	51
Valley	388

Nitsch Named to Lower Loup NRD Board

Todd Nitsch of Boelus has been selected by the Lower Loup Natural Resources District Board of Directors to fill its Subdistrict 3 vacancy. Nitsch will represent the subdistrict, which is comprised of parts of Custer, Sherman, Howard, and Buffalo Counties.

Nitsch was one of two candidates who applied for the vacancy. Nitsch was appointed, by a vote of the Board, over John Kriha of Ravenna. Both men made presentations to the Board highlighting their backgrounds and qualifications. The vote took

place at the LLNRD’s September 26th meeting.

The NRD Board vacancy was created by the resignation of Jim Nelson, who retired after 47 years as a director. Nitsch, an Aurora Co-op employee, is a native Nebraskan and has a background in agronomy and management. He is also a member of the Boelus Rural Fire Board and Howard County Foundation Board.

Nitsch’s term on the Board will be up in 2020 and then the Subdistrict 3 seat will again be determined by voters in 2020.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Nelson Named to Hall of Fame	2
Schulte Family Wins Award	2
New Recreation Area Fees	2
Message From The Manager	3
Buffalo Co. AEM Flights Complete	3
Water Quality Sub-Area Approved	4

Jim Nelson Named to NRD Hall of Fame

Former Lower Loup NRD Board member Jim Nelson of Cairo has been named to the Natural Resources District Hall of Fame. Nelson was officially inducted at the NARD Annual Conference, September 23rd, in Kearney.

Nelson was nominated for the honor by the Lower Loup NRD. He retired in August as the last NRD Director in the state to serve from the first day of the Natural Resources District system.

Through his nearly five decades of service, Nelson has served as Board Vice Chairman and on the Governor's Water Policy Task Force,



Jim Nelson of Cairo makes remarks following his induction to the NRD Hall of Fame.

representing surface water users in the Loup River system.

At the age of 80, Nelson is a life-long farmer, who along with his son and grandson, are working land in Howard County first purchased by his great grandfather, five generations in all.

LLNRD General Manager Russ Callan said that Nelson's passion for and commitment to natural resources conservation has been a tremendous asset to the District. Nelson was joined by two other 2019 Hall of Fame inductees, retired Lewis and Clark NRD General Manager Tom Moser and retired Department of Natural Resources employee, Tom Pesek.

Schulte Family Wins Grassland Award

The Schulte Family of Pleasanton has been awarded the 2019 Nebraska Outstanding Grassland Conservation Award by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts.

Tim and Jeremy Schulte are fourth generation farmers/ranchers and were recognized for the excellent management of range and pasture on their cow-calf operation in

Buffalo County. The family, which includes parents Robert and Darleen, Tim's wife Shanna and Jeremy's wife Stacy, was honored for the use of prescribed burning in their grassland management plan. The Lower Loup NRD, Central Platte NRD, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service nominated the Schultes for the conservation award.



Tim, Jeremy & Robert Schulte receive the 2019 Grassland Award.

LLNRD Board Approves New Rec Area Fees

The cost of a camping spot at Davis Creek Recreation Area has increased to \$25 per night. The rec area, located south of North Loup, now features electrical service at each of its camp sites. The service was expanded to the older campground this fall.

The price increase was voted into effect at the Lower Loup NRD's September Board of Directors meeting. The nightly fee now brings Davis Creek into line with the fees charged at other campgrounds in central Nebraska.

Anyone wishing to reserve a camping spot for the 2020 recreation season should visit the Reserve America web site. You may link to that site on the Lower Loup NRD web site, www.llnrd.org. The link is halfway down the main page on the right side.

A Message From The Manager

When a county, community or other local government entity wants to reduce or eliminate the impacts and risks of natural disasters to its residents and properties, it creates a Hazard Mitigation Plan or HMP. The Lower Loup NRD plan must get an update by 2022 and the process for that update is underway.

Under the Lower Loup's HMP, cities, towns, and villages across the NRD have applied for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding to offset a variety of disasters, from tornado shelters and sirens to 2019's most urgent need, flood mitigation.

HMPs must be updated every five years. The update for 2022 will be the plan's second revamp. Representatives from each of the participating jurisdictions will be asked to

take part in a series of workshops to review and analyze their needs and potential solutions.

The Lower Loup NRD HMP includes sections for each of the participating counties, communities and districts. It identifies potential hazards, ranging from agricultural animal diseases to winter storms to tornadoes. It provides a historical perspective on the disasters impacting the area and lists strategies and projects which can address those issues.

The update will begin in 2020 and the process is expected to take approximately 18 months before the plan goes to state and federal review.

Finally, the arrival of November started conservation tree sales,



*LLNRD General Manager
Russell Callan*

which continue into the spring. Now is a great time to plan for trees. Visit your local NRCS office or contact North Central District Forester Rich Woollen at the NRD Headquarters, (308) 728-3221.

AEM Flights in Buffalo County Now Complete

Residents of northern Buffalo County may have noticed a low-altitude helicopter towing a large hexagonal frame flying over their area in October.

LLNRD Water Modeling Coordinator Cam Conrad said this unique equipment was part of a project to map groundwater aquifers and subsurface geology in that area. Instruments mounted below the helicopter collect and record geologic measurements to learn more about buried sand and gravel aquifers.

The flights were made with supplemental sponsorship from the

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR).

According to Conrad, the data collected will improve understanding of the available groundwater resources and potential groundwater/surface water connections in this area of the state. The data will allow the LLNRD to identify physical occurrences such as changes in geologic materials and sediment types.

Aqua Geo Frameworks, LLC (AGF) oversaw the flights, is processing and interpreting the data and will produce a final report. That report is expected in the spring of 2020.



The helicopter and sensing equipment take off from the Kearney Municipal Airport.



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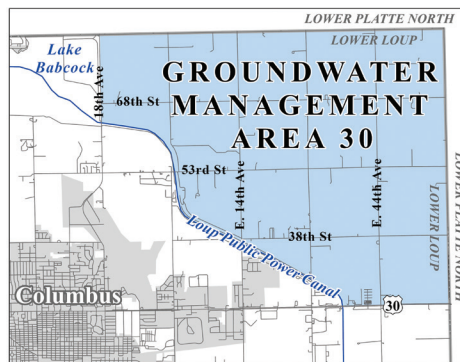
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Nitrates Lead To Potential New WQ Sub-Area

The Lower Loup NRD Board of Directors has approved a recommendation from its Water Resources Committee that a public hearing be held to consider the creation of a new Water Quality Sub-Area in WQ Area 19 north and east of Columbus.

The Committee recommendation said that WQ Area 19 contains an area of high nitrates that should be separated into Water Quality Sub-Area 30. Nitrate levels have been trending upward in that area of the Lower Loup NRD and the adjacent area in the Lower Platte North NRD.

Lower Loup NRD Assistant General Manager Tylr Naprstek said wells sampled in the proposed sub-area



Proposed Water Quality Sub-Area 30

are primarily domestic and have reached nitrate levels as high as 48.1 parts per million. He said the average and median nitrate levels are above 10 ppm, the federal limit for nitrates in drinking water.

If the sub-area were removed from Area 19, the overall nitrate levels there are drastically reduced. Naprstek said staff also reviewed the AEM data gathered in that area, as well as information on manure applications.

Naprstek said that well owners in the proposed sub-area have been notified of their well's nitrate levels annually in the continuous sampling done by the LLNRD.

District General Manager Russell Callan said that a public hearing will be scheduled in January. A public information meeting will also be held to present details on the situation and answer questions from the public.