

Nebraska's NRDs . . .

Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future.

IN THE LOUP is a publication of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District. It is published quarterly by the LLNRD and is distributed to the residents of the 16 counties that make up the District. IN THE LOUP is edited by Larry Schultz and Alan Bartels, NRD Information staff.

Cover Crop Cost-Share Programs Coming in Fall

The LLNRD will be offering a voluntary cost-share program to encourage the use of cover crops as a nutrient management tool on irrigated cropland in Groundwater Management Area 29 in northeastern Wheeler County and Area 30 in eastern Platte County. Cover crops are beneficial in limiting nitrate movement by absorbing excess nitrates in the soil profile. Eligible fields in Area 29 include only groundwater irrigated corn acres. Eligible fields in Area 30 include all groundwater irrigated fields within the management area.

To apply for cost-share, eligible producers must apply on LLNRD forms and only plant the cover crop after approval. Producers must

adhere to the NRCS cover crop standards and specifications for planting and terminating the cover crop. The cost-share payment is a flat \$30/acre rate up to \$4,500/field, split into two payments. Fifty percent of the payment will be paid after planting in the fall and submission of invoices/receipts to the LLNRD. The remaining 50% is distributed in the spring after ensuring the cover crop



Cover crop cost-share is coming for Groundwater Areas 29 & 30

has been allowed to produce as much biomass as possible following LLNRD inspection.

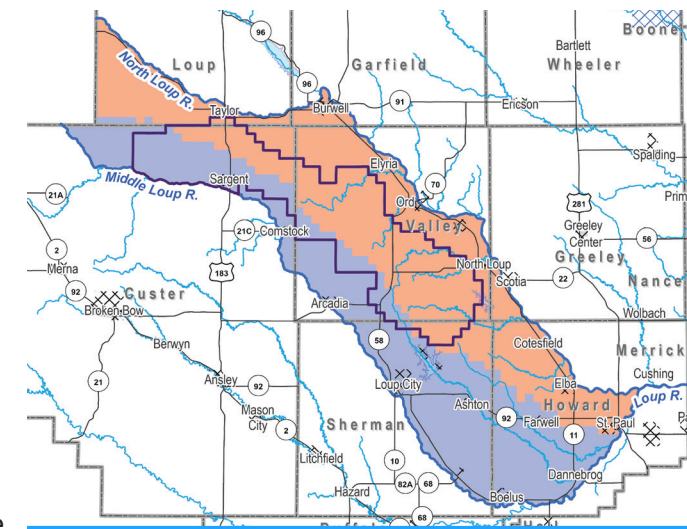
As a condition of receiving the cost-share, the participant must plant a minimum of three (3) species in the cover crop mix. Multi-species of cover crops have been shown to be more beneficial to cropland and soil health by introducing diversity into the field and maximizing nutrient uptake. All cover crops must be planted by November 1st.

If your field is in Areas 29 or 30 and you are interested in implementing multi-species cover crops this fall, contact Dan Ruterbories at the Lower Loup NRD, 308-728-3221.



New Irrigation OKed for Area Between Rivers

Starting this fall, landowners between the North and Middle Loup Rivers in the Lower Loup Natural Resources District (LLNRD) may apply for new groundwater irrigated acres for 2023. A total of 1,000 new irrigated acres will be available – 500 south of the North Loup River, 500 north of the Middle Loup River. The Beaver Creek basin, the easternmost river basin in the NRD, will not be receiving new irrigated acres due to well interference problems and water quality issues.



New irrigated acres applications approved for the North Loup and Middle Loup Basins.

The LLNRD Board of Directors approved the new acres at their May meeting. General Manager

Nance County Aerial Aquifer Assessment to Start

Starting in August, residents of Nance County might witness a very large hoop-shaped device being hauled throughout the area by a low-flying helicopter. Maintaining an average airspeed of 50 mph, the helicopter will be flying roughly 200 feet off the ground with a data collection device suspended 100 feet below it.

The Lower Loup NRD is conducting a study using aerial electromagnetic (AEM) survey equipment. This study is expected to provide the NRD with detailed information on

Russell Callan stated that with the ongoing drought conditions across most of the District, only those areas with consistent groundwater rises

should be targeted for new groundwater development. An additional criterion is that acres with surface water rights will not qualify for an application. Callan stated that in the past, these acres had a distinct advantage as they already had all the irrigation equipment present and occupied the best quality of ground.

Applications for new irrigation will only be accepted Sept. 1-20, 2022. A non-refundable fee of \$500 will be required with each application. Limit one application per field. Details can be found at www.llnrd.org.

aquifer properties throughout Nance County. Coupled with depth-to-water measurements and an observed base of aquifer, the NRD will get a better estimate on volume of water as well as identify those areas that have lower yielding material and are more susceptible to high drawdown.

This will be the third study of this kind conducted by the Lower Loup NRD. An AEM survey first was done near Columbus in 2016 and results from the study led to the Columbus Area Recharge Project. The second

was completed south of Ravenna in 2019 in Buffalo County and has led to more information on potential recharge areas along the South Loup River.

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Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Is Approved

The Lower Loup NRD's Hazard Mitigation Plan update has received final approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Hazard mitigation plans, like the one approved for the LLNRD, 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 NRD as well as participating communities,

counties, or districts. It sets goals, establishes mitigation alternatives, and prioritizes projects which may alleviate potential damages to property and provide protection when future disasters occur.

Participation in the HMP makes each of the 64 member entities eligible for up to a 75% cost-share for a wide variety of projects listed in the plan. Hazard mitigation plans are required to be updated on a five-year cycle. The new Lower Loup NRD plan will remain in effect until June, 2027. Each participant in the plan now has

one year to approve their portion of the plan.

For every \$1 spent on hazard mitigation, \$4 in post-storm cleanup and rebuilding is saved, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The hazard mitigation plan update was funded, in part, by a FEMA planning grant. The cost is shared 75% through federal funding and 25% through a local match. The Lower Loup NRD provided the 25% local match.

LLNRD Photo Contest Winners Are Selected

Winning photographs have been selected in the Lower Loup NRD's 2022 Photo Contest. Forty-three photographers from across the Lower Loup NRD and beyond submitted 495 images. Subjects photographed included community events, landscapes, cityscapes,

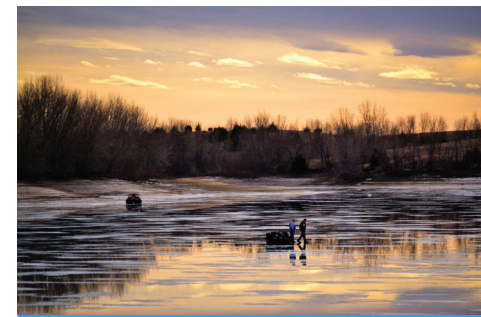
people, architecture, nature, recreation, and wildlife.

Gary Micek of Elyria won first place for his scenic image of Turtle Creek. Robyn Koelling of Ord finished in second place for an image of anglers ice fishing on Davis Creek Reservoir.



Gary Micek's 1st Place photo of Turtle Creek

Columbus resident Alex Hall's aerial image of Columbus at sunset took third place in the contest.



Above - Robyn Koelling's 2nd Place photo

Below - Alex Hall's 3rd Place photo



A Message From The Manager

Welcome to the latest edition of "In The Loup," the LLNRD's quarterly newsletter. This publication provides you with information on our natural resources conservation efforts in the District.

Five decades ago, in 1972, Nebraska began an innovative way to handle natural resources conservation. Natural Resources Districts started their work in the river basins across Nebraska.

As NRDs celebrate their 50th birthday, the time is right to reflect on the work of these "one of a kind" agencies. No other state handles natural resources on a river basin basis. The other 49 states deal with conservation on a county by county

basis. County lines are rarely the measure of a natural resources issue. Instead, dealing with them on a basin-wide basis allows for a more complete solution to most problems.

The Lower Loup NRD has a long history of tackling the concerns of our residents. Groundwater concerns, both quantity and quality, are key topics in our agricultural district. The NRD's Board of Directors has implemented numerous measures to keep groundwater clean and plentiful for future generations.

Numerous NRD projects have provided the solutions needed for local problems too. A good



LLNRD General Manager Russell Callan

example is the Columbus Area Recharge Project. The NRD partnered with the city, county, and others to create groundwater recharge using water from the Loup Power Canal, thereby avoiding pumping regulations on industry and agriculture.

From all of us at LLNRD, here's to the next 50 years of NRDs!

Pibel Lake Recreation Area Suffers Fish Kill

A fish kill at the Lower Loup NRD's Pibel Lake Recreation Area south of Bartlett in Wheeler County has affected a variety of sport fish and set back the size quality of fish in the popular fishing spot.

Thousands of largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and channel catfish died June 21-22 in the 24 surface-acre lake. High water temperature combined with a rapid die-off and decay of aquatic vegetation resulted in extremely low dissolved oxygen levels in the lake.

The kill affected larger size fish in each species. A sampling conducted by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission after the kill showed a good number of smaller sized bass and bluegill survived.



The Pibel Lake fish kill occurred due to high water temperatures and vegetation die-off.

The remaining fish should grow rapidly, and the fishery is expected to recover. However, anglers should note the quality size of fish in the lake will be set back for a year or two. The fishery will be monitored accordingly.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission said that fish die-offs in Nebraska are not unusual. Reports of fish kills – which have been due to natural causes – have come from a variety of water bodies across the state.

Pibel Lake is a popular fishing spot for area anglers and travelers. The facility is located just east of Highway 281.