LOWERLOUP
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

2025

Columbus Area Recharge Report

Platte County Nebraska

Christopher's Cove Homeowners Association

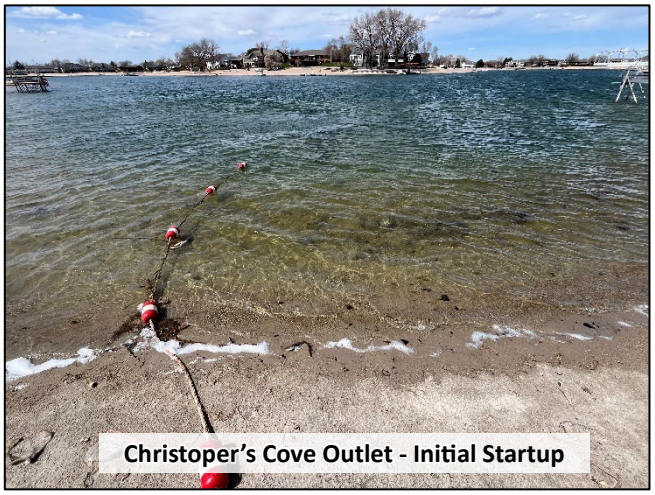
Project Description

The project partners, consisting of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District (LLNRD), Archers Daniel Midland (ADM), City of Columbus, Platte County, and the Christopher's Cove Homeowners Association, worked collectively to develop and complete the Columbus Area Recharge Project. The project transfers water from the nearby Loup Tailrace Canal and discharges it into the Lost Creek channel near the city. The water infiltrates into the dry channel, recharging the area's groundwater. The project also discharges recharged water from an auxiliary well into Christopher Cove, which is a nearby water body used by the project for additional groundwater recharge storage. The recharged water provided by the project offers more stable groundwater levels for public use, especially in dry years. Construction of the project started in 2021 and ended in 2022. The LLNRD began pumping recharge water in June 2022 following construction.

Project Operations

The surface intake pump station (SIPS) operated between April 8, 2025, and September 17, 2025, for approximately 97 days. The SIPS is equipped with a variable speed pump which was operated at the lowest rated operating capacity to maximize water infiltration and minimize the potential of water loss downstream to the Loup River. Significant precipitation at the project area allowed substantial rainfall runoff to enter the channel during the operating season. As a result, the SIPS remained off for large periods of time during the operating season to prevent high water conditions in the Lost Creek channel.

Lost Creek Channel - Initial Startup



Christoper's Cove Outlet - Initial Startup

The auxiliary well site operated between April 1, 2025, and August 22, 2025, for approximately 65 days. The auxiliary well is a single speed pump which operates at maximum capacity during use. The auxiliary well remained inactive for much of the operating season because significant precipitation at the project area increased water levels in Christophers Cove making pumping unnecessary.

Project Operations - Pumping Totals

Pump Location	Description	2022 Totals	2023 Totals	2024 Totals	2025 Totals
SIPS	Pumping Days	86 days	129 days	193 days	97 days
	Average Pumping Rate	2300 gpm	1750 gpm	1558 gpm	1467 gpm
	Pumping Total	878 Ac-Ft	998 Ac-Ft	1326 Ac-Ft	627 Ac-Ft
Auxiliary Well	Pumping Days	73 days	226 days	129 days	65 days
	Average Pumping Rate	525 gpm	544 gpm	549 gpm	538 gpm
	Pumping Total	169 Ac-Ft	545 Ac-Ft	313 Ac-Ft	154 Ac-Ft

Project Operational Cost

The operational cost for the 2025 season includes water delivery by the Loup Power District, Lost Creek channel vegetation control, water level telemetry and the electrical service powering both the SIPS and auxiliary well delivered by the Loup Power District. The LLNRD personnel time and miscellaneous channel maintenance expenses have not been included in the reported project operational cost.

Project Operational Cost					
Pump Location	**Cost Description**	**2022 Cost**	**2023 Cost**	**2024 Cost**	**2025 Cost**
SIPS	Electrical Service	$7,760	$9,031	$10,185	$5,793
	Surface Water Service	$0	$3,180	$13,260	$6,260
	Channel Vegetation Control	$0	$1,255	$4,740	$2,725
	Water Level Telemetry	-	-	$2,376	$2,376
Auxiliary Well	Electrical Service	$3,496	$10,764	$6,513	$3,651
	Water Level Telemetry	-	-	$264	$264

Project Groundwater Recharge

The estimated groundwater recharge amounts are based on data collected throughout the 2025 operating season. The calculations consider the volume of water pumped, recharge area, evapotranspiration rates, operation time length and weather factors that may affect groundwater recharge. The recharge estimates do not consider amounts from Christopher's Cove although groundwater recharge is evident when comparing pumped volumes to measured lake water levels. Project groundwater modeling demonstrated Christopher's Cove effectively retains and retimes water in the project area. The benefits are realized through enhanced groundwater recharge and reduced conflict among groundwater users during periods of drought.

Project Groundwater Recharge Estimates			
2022 Recharge	**2023 Recharge**	**2024 Recharge**	**2025 Recharge**
466 Ac-Ft (Conservative)	958 Ac-Ft (96% SI Volume)	1260 Ac-Ft (95% SI Volume)	595 Ac-Ft (95% SI Volume)

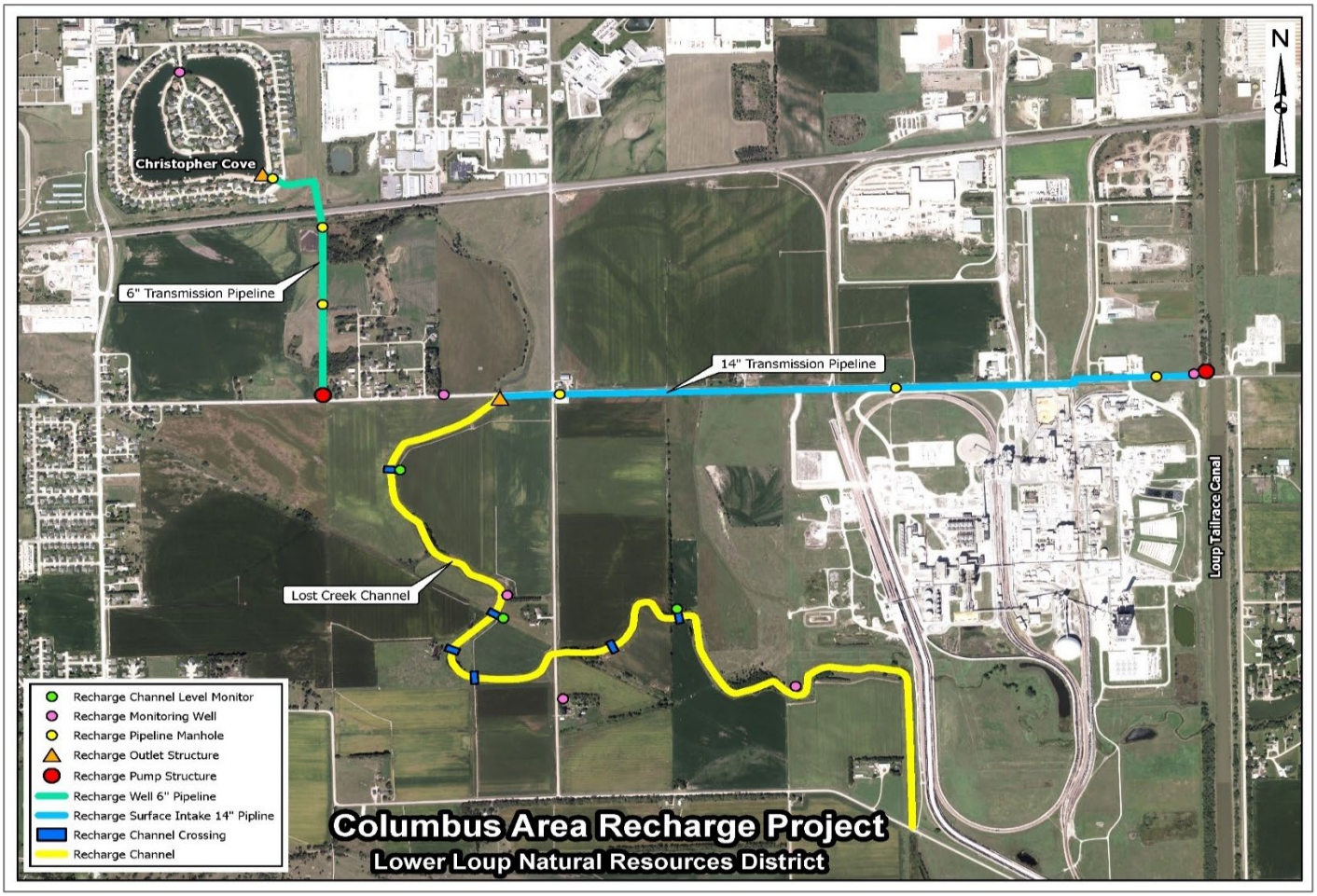
Project Maintenance

The LLNRD performed Lost Creek channel maintenance throughout the 2025 season to promote groundwater recharge and to ensure that the channel provides adequate storm water drainage. The channel was cleaned of debris, mowed, trees removed and undesirable vegetation was controlled. The channel bottom is deep tilled every year to loosen the soil structure and promote water infiltration. The LLNRD will continue channel maintenance to maintain function and enhance groundwater recharge.

Channel Tillage – Upper Channel Beginning

Channel Tillage – Upper Channel Finished

Project Monitoring

During all periods of project operation, the LLNRD monitors potential impacts from the recharge project. The project is monitored onsite daily and remotely via water level sensors that communicate data to HydroVu online services. The HydroVu service allows both LLNRD staff and the public to view project water conditions. The public can access HydroVu by using the LLNRD website and navigating to the Columbus Recharge Project real time well data.

Project Map