

KNOW YOUR NRD



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

Summer 2010

LBNRD QUICK FACTS:

The Little Blue Natural Resources District serves all or parts of seven counties.

Water Quality

To ensure safe drinking water 404 water samples are tested annually for nitrates.

20 Community Wellhead Protection area plans have been completed with LBNRD assistance.

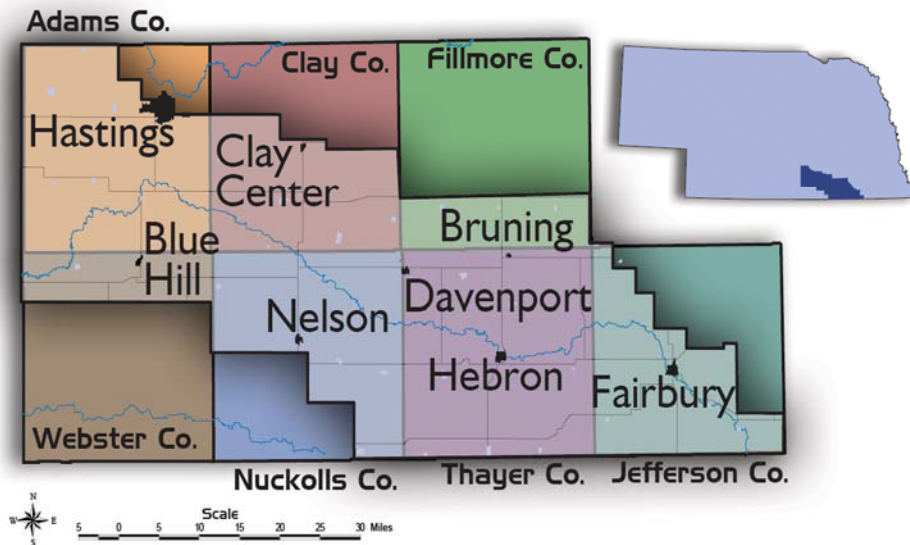
LBNRD has established five water quality areas totaling over one million acres to address nitrates.

Water Quantity

The LBNRD tracks groundwater levels by monitoring 343 wells in the spring and fall of each year.

Registered irrigation wells -6,110

LITTLE BLUE NRD



Protecting Lives – Protecting Property – Protecting the Future

LBNRD Co-Sponsored Household Hazardous Waste Collections

The Trailblazer Resources Conservation and Development (RC&D), Little Blue NRD, Nuckolls County Road Department and local County Commissioners sponsored a hazardous waste collection in Nuckolls County. The Superior FFA Chapter also was on hand to assist in the collection. Other counties in the district participating were Clay, Fillmore, Thayer, and Webster counties.

This was a FREE service provided by a coalition of organizations and volunteers concerned about the health of our environment, with financial support provided through a grant to the Trailblazer RC&D from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Waste Reduction & Recycling Program. The Red Willow County Hazardous Waste Team was hired to do the collection and accepted old paint, pesticides, herbicides, oil, cleaning chemicals, yard and garden chemicals, antifreeze, florescent bulbs, mercury items such as thermometers and thermostats, and batteries all FREE OF CHARGE!

• **Clay County collected: 4,280 pounds of paint; 2,180 pounds of pesticides, 152 gallons of oil; 580 pounds of herbicides and lawn chemicals and 28 batteries.**

• **Thayer County collected: 3,640 pounds of paint; 1,720 pounds of pesticides; 200 gallons of oil; 350 pounds of herbicides and lawn chemicals; and 7 batteries.**

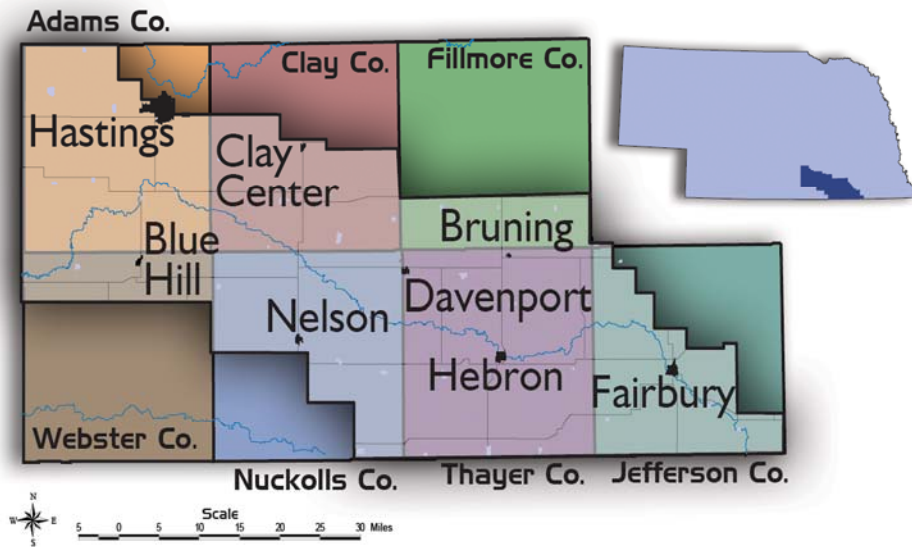
• **Nuckolls County collected: 4,040 pounds of paint; 980 pounds of pesticides; 100 gallons of oil; 110 pounds of herbicides and lawn chemicals and 2 batteries.**

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LBNRD Drills New Observation Wells



Groundwater levels have been collected, on a limited basis, since the 1930s in the Little Blue Basin. The data on water levels was originally compiled by the United States Geological Survey and the University of Nebraska's Conservation and Survey Division, both of which continue to monitor sites across the state. But when Natural Resources Districts were created by the Nebraska Legislature, each began officially recording static water levels within their watershed. The depths to water in the Little Blue NRD were measured twice a year, in the spring and fall. Originally 165 irrigation wells were checked across the District. As irrigation development expanded the number of sites available for collecting data grew as well, currently the District measures 344 sites.

The USGS has utilized five dedicated observation wells to gather historic monthly water level data since 1936. The monthly levels reflect how the aquifer responds to withdrawals and re-charge through the year, a more comprehensive view than taking biannual readings as the NRD does. However, only 5 sites across the District are not adequate to represent the extent aquifer.

When funds became available from Nebraska's Department of Natural Resources to assist NRDs in projects directed at groundwater management, an application was submitted to install more dedicated monitoring wells to track water levels. This grant, funded through the Interrelated Water Management Plan Program, was approved in 2009.

The intent of developing this dedicated observation well network is to install one site per irrigated township or about 48 wells in the District. An automatic recorder will also be installed to record depths to water on a daily basis. This well network will provide a comprehensive and timely record of groundwater levels throughout the District and information gathered during drilling will provide a more complete record of geology.

The Blue River Basin NRDs recently developed a model to determine the interconnected surface sites and groundwater (the 10/50 areas) of the three Districts. The 10/50 areas are where 10 percent of the groundwater withdrawn would have made it to a river or stream as surface water flow in a 50 year time period. This information is used in an annual evaluation, completed by the Department of Natural Resources, to determine if any watershed is "fully appropriated". This designation means no new development of ground or surface water would be allowed without offsets.

To ensure that any such mapping or designation is accurate, both the geologic and water level information gathered from the dedicated observation well network will be invaluable. As water level information is gathered through the network and how the groundwater pumpage, drought, and re-charge will be better understood.

2010 LBNRD Facts

- The LBNRD operates and maintains 25 flood control dams and one levy.
- LBNRD has properly decommissioned 44 wells, in 2010.
- In 2010 LBNRD sold 20,957 trees and installed 8.58 miles of weed barrier.
- Land Conservation and Water Quality cost share for producers - \$346,883.00

Education

The LBNRD is committed to providing natural resource information to adults and youth. We sponsor or partner with the following events:

- Water/Earth Jamboree
- Water/Earth Festival
- Land & Range Judging Contests
- Outdoor Classrooms
- Arbor Day Tree Program
- Sub-Area Operator Training
- Technology and Irrigation Field Days

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts are local government entities with broad responsibilities to protect our natural resources. NRDs help Nebraskans respond to natural resource challenges with local control and local solutions. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries of the 23 NRDs.

Little Blue NRD is governed by a locally-elected 17-member board of directors. The board sets policy for the district and directs the staff in carrying out the district's goals. The LBNRD works cooperatively with other local and state groups to promote good stewardship of natural resources in the district.

Find out more about Nebraska's NRDs at www.nrdnet.org and www.littlebluenrd.org

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