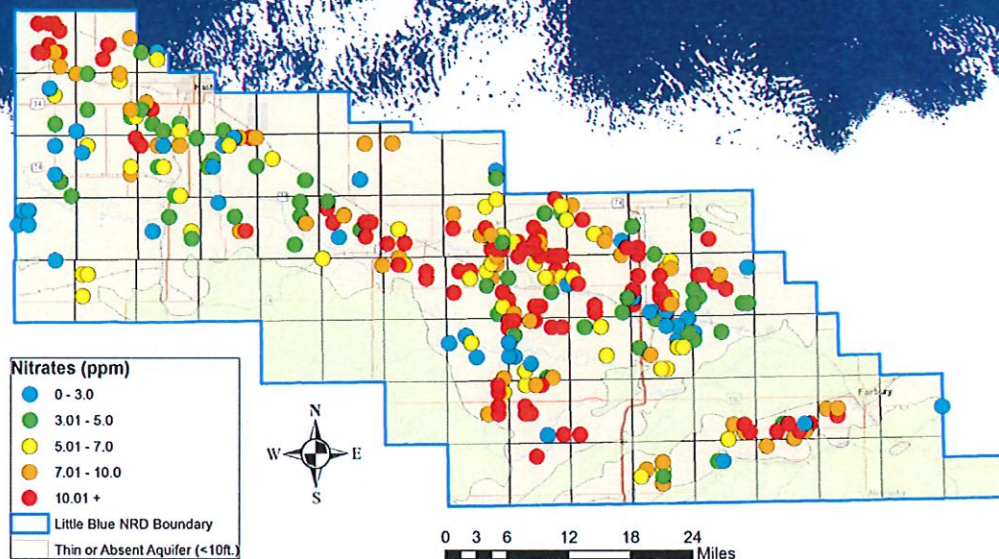


Out of the Blue

Newsletter for Little Blue Natural Resources District

Fall 2021



Summer 2021 Nitrate Testing

by: Tyler Goeschel

The Little Blue Natural Resources District (LBNRD) took 325 water samples from irrigation wells this past summer.

If one of your wells was one that was tested, you received a postcard from us telling you your well's nitrate result and how to figure out the nitrogen credit associated with it.

Nitrates are down from the previous year in most all of the LBNRD which is great to see. Average nitrates within water quality sub-areas came in at 10.6 parts per million (ppm), still above the EPA's maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 ppm, but down 0.6 ppm from a year ago. Average nitrates outside of water quality sub-areas were 5.7 ppm, up slightly from a year ago. While it's great to see a slight tick down this year in areas with historically high nitrates, long term trends are

still rising.

Nitrates in Nebraska's groundwater is a serious issue facing our state. Nitrates are responsible for higher rates of blue baby syndrome and have been correlated to higher rates of various cancers, also, making elevated nitrates a significant public health issue.

The best way a farmer can reduce nitrates in groundwater is to apply nitrogen fertilizers when the crop is able to take up the excess nutrients, and in the right amount, only giving the plant what it needs, not more or less.

If you have any further questions, comments, or would like more information regarding nitrates in drinking water, please contact me at tgoeschel@littlebluenrd.org, or call me at 402-984-3131.

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Sub-Area	Nitrates Average (ppm)
Bruning	13.1
Carleton/Davenport/Ruskin	10.3
Clay/Nuckolls	10.1
Deshler/Broyn/Ruskin	11.6
Fairbury	9.4
Hastings	6.5
Kennesaw/Prosser	14.1
Superior/Hardy	10.3

CONNECT WITH US

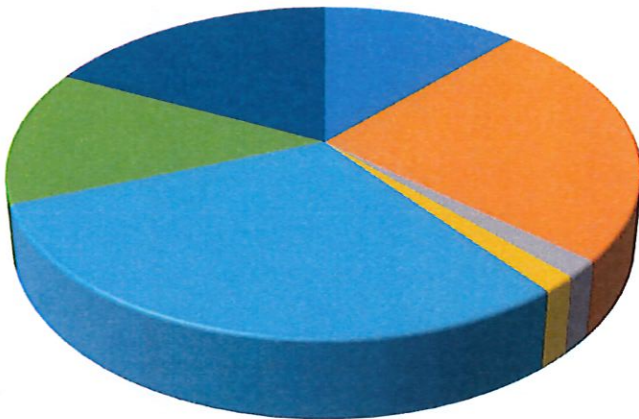
Little Blue Natural Resources District
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 @littlebluenrd
www.littlebluenrd.org
lbnd@littlebluenrd.org

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Approved

by: Marie Herbek

The Little Blue NRD Board of Directors approved the FY 2022 budget of \$4,168,252 with a tax levy of .020879 at their September 14th meeting. Included in this budget is the Rural Water Project North budget of \$286,004, and the Rural Water Project South budget of \$263,106.

FY 2022 BUDGETED INCOME



Personnel 30% Rural Water 13% Projects/ Programs 18%
Contingency Cash Reserve 12% Operations 24%
Information & Education 2% Water Management 1%

Some of the projects included in the budget are:

Installation of 20 electrical camper pads at Prairie Lake Recreation Area just southwest of Hastings. Updated double restrooms at both Lone Star and Liberty Cove Recreation Areas. A grant application has been submitted to the Nebraska Game & Parks and if approved Lone Star will receive an additional single restroom and both recreation areas will have new playground equipment installed.

Partial remodel of the district's office to create three separate offices and painting throughout the building. Funding for this will come from sinking funds already set aside for the project.

Completion of the Kenesaw Watershed Study to seek solutions to flooding issues.

Completion of the All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

which is a joint effort with the Lower Big Blue NRD with funding coming from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

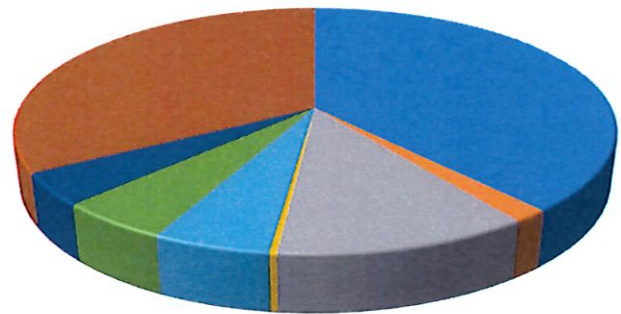
Continuation of the Blue River Basin Modeling project being done in cooperation with the Upper Big Blue and Lower Big Blue NRD's. NE Department of Natural Resources is paying for 50% of this project.

Urban Conservation Program grants being provided to four towns and villages within the district to be used on drainage issues.

Urban Park & Recreation Program grants to four towns.

Search for a new water source for the Rural Water Projects and seek funding through grants and loans from USDA Rural Development.

FY 2022 BUDGET EXPENSES



Property Taxes 39% Cash & Investments 33% Miscellaneous 2%
Rural Water Income 12% Investment Income 0%
Local Sources 5% State Sources 5% Federal Sources 4%

Other items included are cost-share assistance for land treatment, irrigation, and water quality practices; dam cost share; tree program; buffer strip payments; flow meter maintenance.



2021 Water Jamboree

by: Jessica Hedges

Over 154 students from 6 schools participated in this year's Water Jamboree at Liberty Cove Recreational Area near Lawrence, Nebraska on September 22nd.

The water jamboree is an educational, fun day for fifth and sixth grade students from schools located in the Little Blue Natural Resources District. Students were able to attend sessions on The Power of Water, Life at Liberty Cove, Irrigation Flows, Bird Migrations, Wildlife, how rivers have effects on our environment and much more.

The event wouldn't have been such a good success if it wasn't for the numerous volunteers from the Little Blue NRD, Nebraska Game and Parks, University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension Office, and U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Participating schools were Lawrence-Nelson, Shickley, Sutton Christian, Deshler Lutheran, Sutton Public and St. Michaels in Hastings.

According to students from Sutton Christian Schools, they enjoyed the River Run Fun, where they learned about erosion and how livestock can pollute water. These student also enjoy the Life at Liberty Cove, a session to teach them how to identify different plants.

The overall goal of the Water Jamboree is to teach these concepts early with hands-on activities.



Board Updates

Courtney Luebben



Courtney Luebben, serving Sub-District 2, professionally serves as the Good Samaritan Foundation Development Officer for Good Samaritan Society – Hastings Village. Courtney was raised in Central Texas, and received a Bachelor's in Communication Arts from Texas Lutheran University, Seguin, Texas. She has spent the past 25 years focused on donor relations and marketing with non-profit organizations. The Texas native is now 5th generation of her maternal side, to live in Hastings; as she arrived in 2008; and makes no plans to leave as she and her son have settled in and enjoy all that the community has to offer.

"The opportunity to serve on the LBNRD Board of Directors, allows me to learn more about the farming community as well as help the small communities thrive for generations to come."

Jessi Ensign-Hoeft



Jessi Ensign-Hoeft is a Nuckolls County native and now lives in Hastings with her Husband, Nathan. After moving back to the area in 2012 they opened the first full scale production brewery the area had seen in 100 years. First Street Brewing is in Downtown Hastings, and they invite you to the tap room to discuss all kinds of community topics over a beer or Ensign Beverage kombucha.

"Abundant waters sources for all kinds of Nebraska industries, quality recreational areas and clean drinking water is something I care about. I look forward to learning more and helping the Little Blue NRD move forward and keep the water flowing."

Jessi also serves on the board of directors for The Hastings Economic Development Group, The Hastings Business Improvement District, The Hastings Community Foundation and The University of Nebraska Food Processing Center in Lincoln.

Jay Wilder

Jay Wilder, serving subdistrict 3, joined the Little Blue Natural Resources District's Board of Directors in May. Jay was born and raised in Hastings, he attended Hastings Public Schools, graduated from Hastings Senior High School in 1976. Jay has been married for 41 years, he has two children and six grandchildren all who live in Hastings.

Jay has worked in the water well industry for approximately 30 years. He has worked with civil engineers and private engineer firms throughout the United States on Irrigation Systems, Wastewater, recharge and drainage systems. He dealt with contractors, well drillers and pump setters.

When he wasn't working in the water well industry, he was working in the industrial heating and air moving equipment. Starting on the production floor, Jay worked his way up to plant manager of 180 employees.

Jay hopes his experience and knowledge he can benefit the LBNRD on the many water issues facing the district.

Staff Updates



Scott Nelson

In March of 2021, the Little Blue NRD hired Scott Nelson as their new General Manager. Scott worked as the Assistant Manager for the Nemaha NRD in Tecumseh the past 20 years and prior to that he began his career in the NRD system as a Water Resources Specialist with the Lower Platte North NRD in Wahoo.

Scott grew up in Elgin, Nebraska and after high school he served in the U.S. Army and the Nebraska Army National Guard. Scott's service in the military helped fund his college education at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Water Science.

Scott is married to Jill, and they have a 17-year old daughter, Megan who attends Freeman High School in Adams, Nebraska. Scott says that Davenport and the Little Blue NRD are a good fit for him and that he looks forward to working with area landowner and producers and taking on new challenges.



Tim Hecke

Tim Hecke grew up just east of Glenvil, Nebraska. After graduating from Sandy Creek High School in 2006, Tim joined the U.S. Army. He served in the U.S. Army for 7 years and has deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. After his military service he has since worked in finance and plumbing. He now provides services for the NRD as a Natural Resource Technician.

Tim currently lives in Geneva, Nebraska with his wife, Sydney, and their two girls. When Tim isn't busy going to his girls school events and extracurriculars, he enjoys hunting, golfing and riding his motorcycle. Tim really has a passion for the outdoors and looks forward to being able to use his diverse skills at the NRD.



Jessica Hedges

Jessica Hedges joined the Little Blue Natural Resources District team in the beginning of August! She is our new Media and Communication Specialist. Jessica was born and raised in Wahoo, NE. She graduated from the Creative Center, in Omaha, NE in 2014 with an Associate Degree in Computer Sciences focused on Graphic Design, and a Bachelor of Fine Art.

Prior to coming to Little Blue NRD, Jessica was the Marketing Manager for Aluma Trailers, in Bancroft, IA. Before that, she was a print specialist for Prism Signs in Omaha, NE and was Marketing Specialist for Ark Financial Services, in Ashland, NE.

She enjoys everything outdoors. Fishing, camping, kayaking, and hunting, are some of her favorite past times. She is happy to be joining the Little Blue NRD Team.



Lucas Slieter

In February of 2021, the Little Blue Natural Resources District hired Lucas Slieter as their new Operations Technician. The Little Blue NRD has Lucas focused on maintaining our recreational areas, dams, doing equipment maintenance and much more.

Lucas comes to us from a family farm. Lucas currently lives in Red Cloud with his wife, Erin and son, John Roy. Lucas and his family are enjoying growing their cow herd, riding motorcycles in their down time, and any outdoor activities.

Area 6 Range Judging Competition

by: Jessica Hedges

The Area 6 Range judging competition was held Tuesday, September 14th near Hebron. Teams from all across the southeastern corner of the state competed range site evaluation, identifying and classifying range plants, calculating stocking rates and making range management decisions.

We had 18 schools bring their Future Farmers of American Programs to Hebron to test their skills. Participating schools were Blue Hill, Bruning-Davenport, Deshler, Hastings St. Cecelia, Johnson-Brock, Lawrence-Nelson, Lewiston, Meridian, Milford, Norris, Osceola, Palmyra, Red Cloud, Sandy Creek, Superior, Sutton, Syracuse, and Tri-County.

In the Senior Competition, the winner was Noah Niemeyer from Norris, closely followed by Nicholas Loxterkamp (Second place) and Carter Siems (third place) of Tri-County. The team winner was the team from Norris, consisting of Noah Niemeyer, Grace Kohler, Anna Rahrer, and Kate Osterhaus. The Second place team was from Tri-County, making up that team was Nicholas Loxterkamp, Carter Siems, Carter Holtermeier, and Gracin Hahn. Third place was claimed by the team from Deshler: Mallory Kleen, Lacey Schmidt, Pahton Nash and Avery Eitzmam.

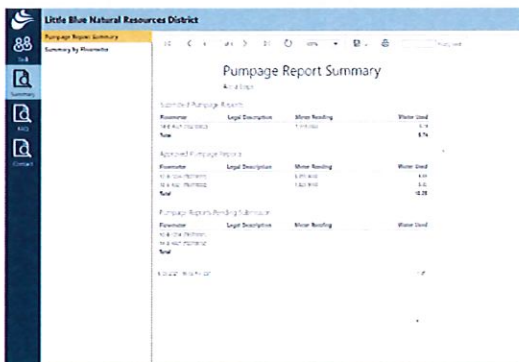
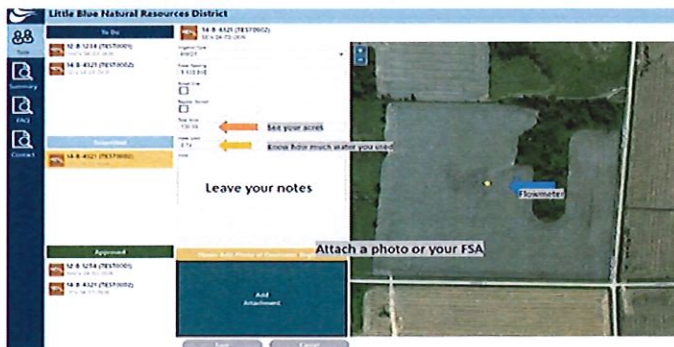
In Junior competition, Tri-County schools had an outstanding day on the range, sweeping up first, second and third place. First place went to John Wehrman, Dustin Kapke took second and third went to Caden Bales. Junior



team of John Wehrman, Dustin Kapke, Caden Bales, and August Gerlach from Tri-County placed First in the Area 6 competition. Tri-County took second place in the team competition as well, this team was made up of Ellie Peters, Evan Quakenbush, Samuel Wagner, Tayden Gronemeyer. Third place was claimed by the team from Blue Hill, consisting of Eli Karr, Tate Korre, Ellie Mangers, and Aidyn Bonifas.

The adult competition was a close run race for first, second, and third, with only 47 points separating the three. Colin Kubik claimed first place, Johnson Brock's Ashton Bohling took second place, Erin Fay Statz of Lawrence-Nelson took third place.

This event promotes agriculture education across all the state. So not only did these students enjoy a beautiful day outside but they also were able to learn something while having fun!



Online Submission for Reports

by: Alicia Epps

GUESS WHATS NEW!

You now have the opportunity to report your water usage on-line, even on your phone! You can see your certified acres, water usage, attach a photo, or not worry about the mail and see your pumpage report summary as soon as the readings are verified.

THIS IS NOT MANDATORY, JUST A CONVENIENCE, IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE IT!

Just email aepps@littlebluenrd.org if you are interested in signing up.

Prairie Lake Construction Update

by: Scott Nelson

Over the past year, the Little Blue Natural Resources District has set in motion a plan to develop electrical RV camping at Prairie Lake and in June, hired Consolidated Concrete to construct 20 RV camping pads.

In October, Ideal Electric was hired to install 30/50 Amp electrical pedestals at each pad and to date, approximately 75% of this work is complete. The Little Blue NRD staff spent a few days in October making the area the best that it can be by planting shade trees and installing fire rings at each pad. Each pad will also be outfitted with a picnic table which should be delivered and installed in November.

The Little Blue NRD is planning to have this New Camping Area open by April 1st, 2022.



Tree Sales

by: Erika Brinegar

Producers should start contacting local NRCS offices to get tree plans complete as soon as they can. Please do some research on tree species to choose what best fits their situation.

The producer must do adequate site preparation in the fall AND spring if they want cost-share on windbreaks.

It is recommended to elongate the slits in the weed barrier in the third year after the weed barrier has been installed to prevent girdling.

Go to: <https://littlebluenrd.org/forestry/tree-program/> for more information under "Helpful Documents" or Contact your local NRCS office or Erika at NRD for more information.

Nov

9 | Board Meeting, Davenport 7pm
11 | Office Closed for Veteran's Day
25 | Office Closed for Thanksgiving

Dec

7 | (UBBNRD) Operator Training / Holthus Convention Center/ 8:15 am
10 | Operator Training/ Heartland Bank Hastings 9am-12pm
17 | (UBBNRD) Operator Training / Harvest Hall / Seward / 9am -11am
24 | Office Closed for Christmas
31 | Office Closed for New Year's
31 | Pumpage Reports Due (Reports were mailed out at the beginning of September.)
Call the office and ask for Alicia if you didn't receive yours or if you have questions.
31 | Superior - Hardy Subarea Soil Samples Due





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402-364-2145

LITTLE BLUE STAFF

Scott Nelson - General Manager
Tyler Goeschel - Assistant Manager
Marie Herbek - Office Administrator
Kathy Boysen - Administrative Assistant
Alicia Epps - Database Specialist
Jessica Hedges - Media & Communication Specialist
Erika Brinegar - Natural Resources Coordinator
Kevin Orvis - Project Manager
Jim Oltmans - Water Resources Technician
Tim Hecke - Natural Resources Technician
Lucas Slieter - Operations Technician

FIELD OFFICES

Adams County NRCS Secretary - Vacant
402-462-5412
Clay County NRCS Secretary - Allyson Peshek
402-762-3569
Fillmore County NRCS - Sylvia Jividen
402-759-4017
Jefferson NRD/NRCS Technician - Christine Zabokrtsky
Jefferson County NRCS Secretary - Paula Schultz
402-729-6134
Thayer County NRCS Secretary - Jessica Hynek
402-768-6228
Webster County NRCS Secretary - Lynetta Snelling
402-746-2268

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sub-District 1: Mason Hoffman, Roseland
Sub-District 1: Robert Trausch, Juniata
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Sub-District 3: Jay Wilder, Hastings
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Sub-District 7: Joseph Hergott, Hebron
Sub-District 8: Bill Glenn, Fairbury
Sub-District 8: Jay Meyer, Daykin
At Large: Marlin Kimple, Kenesaw

"Little Blue Natural Resources District is an Equal Opportunity Employer & Provider."

The Little Blue NRD's Out of the Blue is a publication of the Little Blue Natural Resources District. Requests to be placed on the Out of the Blue mailing list and/or comments regarding information in this publication should be directed to Jessica Hedges, Media & Communications Specialist, 100 East 6th Street, PO Box 100, Davenport, NE 68335.