

July 2018

# *Out of the Blue* NEWSLETTER

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## LITTLE BLUE DISTRICT NO LONGER IN DROUGHT!

What a difference a month can make! The weather lately brings to mind the old adage:

*"If you don't like the weather in Nebraska, wait an hour."*

Parts of our district have gone from being classified by the *U.S. Drought Monitor* as a D1 - Moderate Drought as of June 5th to having no signs of drought one month later. However, localized areas within the district have experienced severe storms and flood damage during the month of June. Jefferson County, located in the far southeast portion of the Little Blue district, received flood warnings in the areas surrounding Reynolds and Fairbury as they received eight inches of rain in one storm. While the Little Blue stream gauge located near Fairbury did not actually reach full flood stage of 18.5 feet, it did experience approximately 4.5 foot rise to 11 feet in less than a week.

Several NeRain stations within our district (trained volunteers reporting their precipitation daily) showed 8 inches below their 30 year averages, yet jumped to slightly above the average after a single rain event on June 20th.

With the Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) Three-Month Outlook made June 21st calling for 40% probability of being above normal temps and the Precipitation Probability Map not giving any clear indication of future precipitation; we may be in for a long summer within the district.



## FORESTRY UPDATE | Kent Thompson

*Over two million trees planted by Little Blue NRD since 1973!*

May marked the end of the 2018 tree planting season for Little Blue staff. Total trees planted by the district since 1973 hit an astonishing 2,055,031 trees.

According to Americanforest.org, each mature tree absorbs 48 pounds of carbon dioxide a year. That means that if each of the 2 million plus trees planted survived to adulthood, these trees would have removed over 2.5 trillion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>! To put that in perspective: 1.3 million one ton vehicles worth of carbon dioxide has been taken from our atmosphere and converted into clean, breathable oxygen. right here in the Little Blue NRD.

This year we experienced a slight decline in total trees planted in the district. While last years totaled over 18,000; this year saw 11,659 trees planted both by NRD staff and hand-planted by local owners and operators.

It's never too early to start planning for the spring tree planting season next year. The local NRCS office should be your first stop if you decide you'd like to plant some trees. They will help develop a tree and shrub planting job sheet, which is then turned over to the Little Blue NRD Operations Supervisor, Kent Thompson. Kent then places you on the schedule and orders your trees.

If you are interested in adding trees to your conservation practices, please contact Kent Thompson at [kthompson@littlebluenrd.org](mailto:kthompson@littlebluenrd.org).

## POLLUTION | Trailblazer RC & D

Trailblazer RC&D in cooperation with the Little Blue & Lower Republican NRDs will again be holding the bi-annual tire recycling drive! More info to come as it is determined.

Counties	Tentative Dates
Clay & Thayer	October 26
Webster & Franklin	November 2
Harlan	November 5
Fillmore	TBD

## SHELTER BELT | Newly planted conifers

A newly planted row of conifers is planted on the north side of this landowner's already established shelter-belt (not pictured). The soil needs to be properly worked in order for the black weed barrier to stay in place. Slits are made in the weed barrier to allow for tree growth.



## WATERSHED PROJECTS | Dylan Long

July 2018 - Out of the Blue

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is working with landowners in the Big Sandy watershed to protect water quality. Funds are available to landowners within this watershed through the Water Quality Initiative to install conservation practices that improve water quality. The deadline to sign up for these funds has been extended to July 20, 2018. Landowners interested in applying for conservation practice funds should visit their local NRCS office.

This Initiative provides eligible landowners financial assistance to install conservation practices like cover crops, terraces, irrigation water management and buffer strips to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality in the Big Sandy Watershed located in portions

of Thayer and Fillmore counties (see map).

The targeted watershed was identified with help from the Little Blue Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Department of

Environmental Quality. According to NRCS, targeting this watershed through the Water Quality Initiative will strengthen the overall effort to improve water quality in impaired streams in Nebraska.

Interested landowners and operators should check with the local NRCS office to see if their farm or ranch is in the area eligible to

receive Water Quality Initiative funding.

Source - Nebraska NRCS

**NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST JANET VALASEK SAID, "THE CONSERVATION PRACTICES AVAILABLE THROUGH THIS INITIATIVE WORK TO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH AND PREVENT EROSION, KEEPING SOIL OUT OF STREAMS AND IMPROVING WATER QUALITY."**

## CERTIFIED ACRES | Alicia Epps

January 1st, 2019 is the deadline to get any acres that are irrigated claimed with the Little Blue NRD!

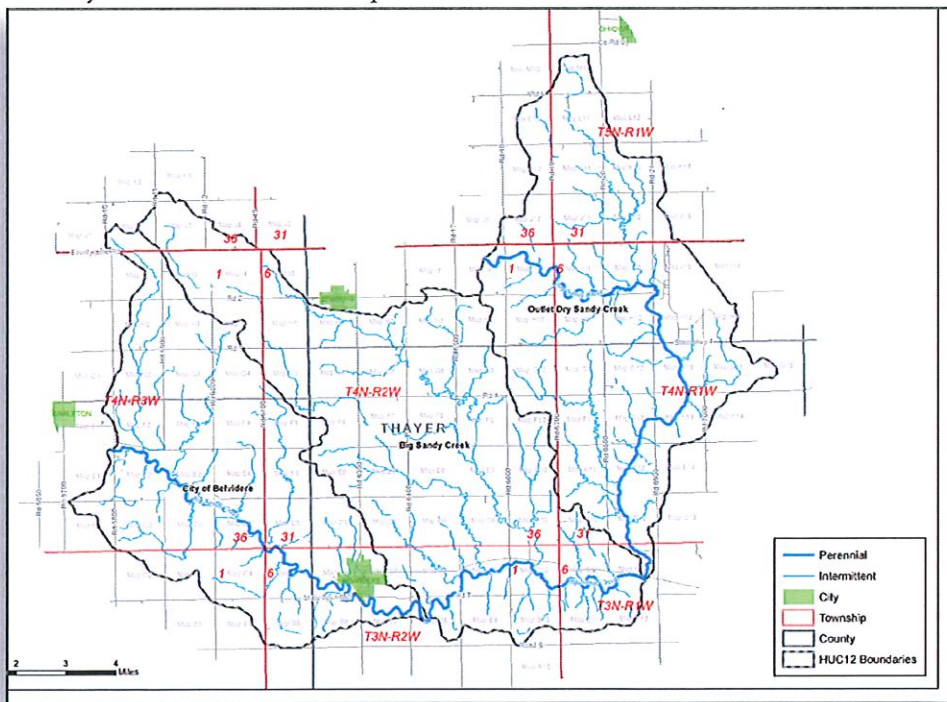
To prevent long wait times for patrons, we ask that you certify as soon as conveniently possibly.

LBNRD staff is working with NRCS and FSA to obtain signatures on Third Party Release forms for landowners and operators. We are requesting these forms to be signed to expedite the certification process for everyone.

In having these forms, we can contact the FSA or NRCS offices directly with any questions that might arise, instead of having to contact the landowner to turn around and contact the FSA or NRCS. These release forms grant us permission to obtain Power of Attorneys, FSA-Form 578s & maps. These forms only provide permission for us to access the information that the signee allows; nothing more.

If you have not received your certified acre report and wish to submit your acres now, please contact Alicia Epps.

**Alicia's Contact Info:**  
[aepps@littlebluenrd.org](mailto:aepps@littlebluenrd.org)  
(402) 364-2145



## BIG SANDY WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE MAP | Deadline Extended to July 20th

This Initiative provides eligible landowners financial assistance to install conservation practices like cover crops, terraces, irrigation water management and buffer strips to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality in the Big Sandy Watershed located in portions of Thayer and Fillmore Counties.





## CRYSTAL LAKE UPDATE | Dylan Long

*Crystal Lake Recreation Area near Ayr receives a much needed makeover thanks to several agencies.*

Improvements to Crystal Lake started in early June to improve water quality and the fishery at the recreation area north of Ayr. The planned improvements include excavation of approximately 16,000 cubic yards of sediment from the lake, reshaping and stabilization of the shoreline, and additional access for anglers. To improve the quality of water entering the lake, a wetland will be constructed on the south end of the lake. Additionally, a recreation trail, kayak and canoe launch, and ADA accessible parking will be added.

**WATERSHED  
COORDINATOR, DYLAN  
LONG, CREATED A  
SHORT PROJECT  
SYNOPSIS OF THE  
CRYSTAL LAKE  
AQUATIC HABITAT  
PROJECT TO EXPLAIN  
THE PROJECT  
PURPOSE. PLEASE  
TAKE A FEW  
MINUTES TO VIEW IT  
AT  
[HTTPS://GOO.GL/USRF2X](https://goo.gl/USRF2X)**

While the lake will be closed to recreational activities and fishing during construction, the camping area of Crystal Lake will still be open. Pruss Excavation from Dodge, Nebraska has been awarded the bid to complete the project, which is expected to run through the end of August, weather permitting.

The project is a component of the Little Blue River Basin Water Management Plan. The Plan was developed in 2015 and identified priority projects and programs to improve water quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water throughout the Basin.

Funding for the project has been provided by the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Game & Parks, Little Blue Natural Resources District, and the Village of Ayr. If you have questions about the project please contact the Little Blue NRD at 402-364-2145.

# UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**PRE-CONSTRUCTION** | May 15, 2018



Aerial photo by assistant manager, Donnie Engelhardt, shows Crystal Lake prior to the construction process.

**DURING CONSTRUCTION** | June 19, 2018



This drone photo shows Crystal Lake during construction. Water was drained and dirt work has begun.

*Less than 1% of the  
world's water supply is  
suitable for drinking.*





# Little Blue Job Openings

*Seeking motivated individuals!*

Little Blue Natural Resources District, an Equal Opportunity Employer, is seeking qualified job applicants for the following openings: District Secretary, Database Specialist, & Resource Technician. All interested applicants will need to fill out a LBNRD Job Application and submit to our office by July 25th.

More info on job openings can be found at <https://goo.gl/EBmGKk>

## DISTRICT SECRETARY

The District Secretary is a full-time position with the District and works out of the Davenport office. This employee will be directly responsible to the General Manager in carrying out normal secretarial functions. The District Secretary will work independently but coordinate all office activities with the District's Administrative Secretary. In addition, certain other duties may be assigned at the discretion of the General Manager.

The educational requirement to qualify for this position is a high school graduate, however a degree from an accredited college or university with emphasis in secretarial services, bookkeeping, or office management would be desirable.

At least two years of satisfactory employment with an agency or organization, where secretarial duties are experienced, is desirable. Computer operation and some bookkeeping experience is a requirement. An agricultural background, although not a requirement, would be very beneficial.

## DATABASE SPECIALIST

The Database Specialist position is a full-time position in the Davenport office. Duties include but are not limited to enter data from various source documents into the computer system for storage, processing and data management purposes. This position will be working along side the other Database Specialist in the office, Alicia Epps.

Applicants should possess a working knowledge of databases and data analysis as well as basic computer operations. Applicants should have a keen understanding of MS Office products and clerical and administrative procedures.

High school diploma with one year of data entry desirable.

## RESOURCE TECHNICIAN

The Resources Technician will assist in carrying out specific water-related and operational programs and projects of the District. The employee will conduct many essential field functions, which are instrumental in bringing services and resource opportunities to the public.

The desirable experience for this position would generally be at least one year of satisfactory employment with an agency or organization involved in natural resources management or conservation. A farm or ranch background with conservation experience is highly desirable.

## STAFF UPDATE | Database Specialist

*Alicia Epps of Nelson takes on database specialist position.*

A familiar face steps into the roll of Database Specialist. You may recognize her from her previous roll as Database Technician with the Little Blue NRD or possibly from her former employer in Superior. Alicia Epps, a Nelson resident, will be the "girl behind the screen."

Alicia will be handling certified irrigated acre reports, power of attorneys, third party releases, data analysis and much, much more.

We welcome her to her new desk!





## CEDAR TREE | TVWMA



The Twin Valley Weed Management Area (TVWMA) has recently adopted a cost-share assistance program for cedar tree cutting from pastures. The area included by this program is the Little Blue River riparian area from the Franklin-Webster County line to the Thayer-Jefferson

County line in Nebraska. Area eligible must be within one-half mile of the Little Blue River or within one-half mile of a perennial stream or intermittent stream which provides significant water flows and empties into the Little Blue River.

Payment will be made at 50% of an hourly rate (not to exceed \$85.00 per hour) for contractual work. There will be a budget limitation of \$2,000.00 per cooperator. If work is done by an individual landowner the work must be monitored by TVWMA personnel. No matching funds from another program will be allowed. Work must be completed by March 31, 2019. Funding for the project is being provided by the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

For additional information, you can contact TVWMA Coordinator Merle Illian at 402-746-4558 or your respective County Weed Control Superintendent.

Applications are due by December 31, 2018.

According to NRCS.USDA.Gov, "Research has shown that red cedar is a dominant factor in displacing grassland birds from the native prairie and as few as 3 red cedar per acre will displace birds (prairie chickens) from their habitat. Red cedars can provide some value to wildlife but the value is generally not unique and can often be fulfilled by other vegetation. As cedars invade, vegetation that supplies food and nesting cover for quail and mast (acorns) for turkey and deer are squeezed out. Turkeys routinely abandon roost sites that have grown up into red cedars. Areas infested with cedars often attract raccoons, opossums, skunks, and snakes which displace bobwhite quail coveys and turkeys mainly through nest predation."

## Upcoming Events

Clay County Fair, Clay Center	July 11-14
Jefferson County Fair, Fairbury	July 12-14
Soil Health Clinic, Mead	July 18
Nuckolls County Fair, Nelson	July 18-22
Adams County Fair, Hastings	July 18-22
<b>Big Sandy Water Qty Initiative Deadline</b>	<b>July 20</b>
Webster County Fair, Bladen	July 26-28
Thayer County Fair, Deshler	Aug 1-4
Nebraska Grazing Conference, Kearney	Aug 6-8
Soybean Mgmt Field Day, Kenesaw	Aug 7
Flame Weeding Workshop, Concord	Aug 13
LBNRD Board of Directors Meeting,	Aug 14
Climate & Crops Field Day, Concord	Aug 14
Platte Valley Antique Show, Crystal Lake	Aug 17-19
CSI: Estimating Yields, Jenny Rees	Aug 20
Midwest Soybean Production, Mead	Aug 22
Midwest Corn Production, Mead	Aug 23
Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island	Aug 23-Sept 3
SC Ag Lab Field Day, Clay Center	Aug 29
Labor Day - LBNRD Office Closed	Sept 3
Husker Harvest Days, Grand Island	Sept 11-13
Earth Jamboree, Clay Center	Sept 18-19

## CHEMIGATION | Jim Oltmans

Chemigation, also known as fertigation, utilizes an irrigation system to apply fertilizer and/or pesticides to growing crops. New chemigation permits issued in 2018 must be inspected prior use. Spot checks may be conducted if needed. If your new chemigation system has not been inspected, please call Jim at 402-364-2145 to schedule your inspection.





# STAY CONNECTED!



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[@littlebluenrd](https://twitter.com/littlebluenrd)



[littlebluenrd.org](http://littlebluenrd.org)

July 2018 - Out of the Blue

Little Blue NRD set to  
launch new website soon!  
Keep checking in for  
**BIG** changes!

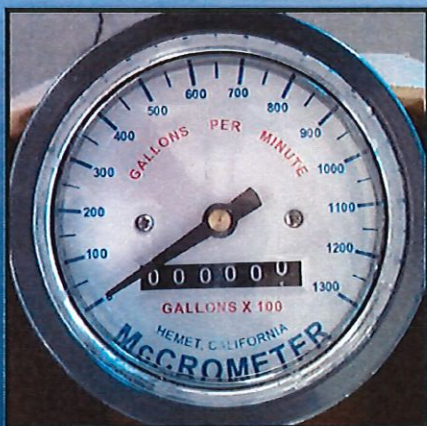
## READING YOUR FLOW METER

**IMPORTANT:** Before you begin - Make sure you know how your meter reads!

- For Gallons x 100, add 2 zeros to the 6-digit dial face reading.
- For Gallons x 1000, add 3 zeros to the 6-digit face reading.
- For Acre-Inches x .01, place the decimal point 2 places to the left.
- For Acre-Inches x .001, place the decimal point 3 places to the left.

### GALLONS

This is a standard 8" dial face with **gallons** totalizer.  
So, assuming the above meter reads 890572  
(89,057,200)....



#### Step 1: Determine Total Gallons Used

Present meter reading	89,057,200
Subtract previous reading	85,288,700
Total Gallons Used	3,768,500

#### Step 2: Convert Total Gallons to Acre-Inches

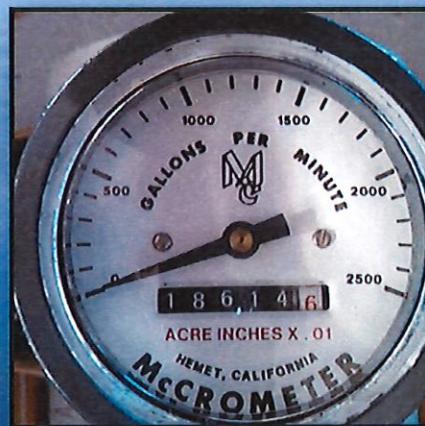
Convert by dividing gallons used by 27,154  
 $3,768,500 / 27,154 = 138.78$  acre-inches

#### Step 3: Figure Acre-Inches used

Divide acre-inches by acres in field (Ex: 137 acres)  
 $138.78 \text{ ac. in.} / 137 \text{ acres} = 1.01$  inches applied

### ACRE INCHES

This is a standard dial face with **acre inches** totalizer.  
So, assuming the above meter reads 186146 (1861.46)...



#### Step 1: Determine Total Acre-Inches Used:

Present meter reading	1861.46
Subtract previous reading	1731.28
Total Acre-Feet Used	130.18

#### Step 2: Calculate application

Divide acre-inches by acres in field  
(Ex: 137 acres)

$130.18 \text{ ac. in.} / 137 \text{ acres} = .95$  inches applied

**FRIENDLY REMINDER:** Make sure your flowmeters are working properly prior to and during the irrigation season. Report any issues to the LBNRD Staff as soon as you know there is a problem.







"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 Elysabeth Kierl, Media & Communications Specialist, 100 East 6th Street, PO Box 100, Davenport, NE 68335.

#### **LITTLE BLUE STAFF**

Michael Onnen — General Manager  
Donnie Engelhardt — Assistant Manager  
Alicia Epps—Database Specialist  
Dylan Long—Watershed Coordinator  
Elysabeth Kierl — Media & Communications Specialist  
Jamie Benes—District Secretary  
Jed Bergen— Water Resources Technician  
Jim Oltmans—Water Resources Technician  
Kent Thompson — Operations Supervisor  
Kevin Orvis — Project Manager  
Marie Herbek —Administrative Secretary

#### **FIELD OFFICES**

Adams County NRCS Secretary—Robin Leichty  
Clay County NRCS Secretary—Rachelle Tompkin  
Fillmore County NRCS Secretary—Sylvia Jividen  
Fillmore NRD/NRCS Technician—Christine Zabokrtsky  
Jefferson County NRCS Secretary—Paula Schultz  
Nuckolls County NRCS Secretary—Patsy Ord  
Thayer County NRCS Secretary—Melanie McPherson  
Webster County NRCS Secretary—Lynetta Snelling

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Sub-District 1: Mason Hoffman, Hastings  
Sub-District 1: Randy Uhrmacher, Juniata  
Sub-District 2: Warren Brakhahn, Hastings  
Sub-District 2: Charles Rainforth, Hastings  
Sub-District 3: Edward Fleharty, Hastings  
Sub-District 3: Everett Kellogg, Hastings  
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Sub-District 7: Alan Wiedel, Hebron  
Sub-District 8: Jay Meyer, Fairbury  
Sub-District 8: Gene Thomas, Fairbury  
Member At Large: Marlin Kimle, Kenesaw

#### **RURAL WATER PROJECTS**

Project Manager – Kevin Orvis  
Rural Water Supervisor – Bruce Dux  
Clerk – Paula Schultz