

Spring 2020

Out of the Blue

Newsletter for Little Blue Natural Resources District



A Message from the Little Blue NRD Staff

I want to share with you information about the district's many cost-share programs, as well as a few other updates.

The Little Blue Natural Resources District (LBNRD) offers over 20 cost-share programs, falling into three general categories: Water quality, water quantity, and land treatments. The district's water quality programs include cost-share assistance with sprinklers or drop nozzles, fertilizer control systems, soil health tests, and well decommissioning. Land treatment cost-share programs include terracing, windbreaks, and dam construction. Water quality practices include cost-share on soil moisture sensors, ET gauges, and flow meter repair.



Tyler Goeschel
Assistant Manager

filled out at your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

Additionally, the LBNRD's staff will be out measuring the Spring water table levels beginning April 1st. The staff expects the water table to show a rise compared to Spring 2019 levels due to the excess rainfall our region experienced in 2019. In essence, reduced demand for irrigation in 2019 is also a contributing factor to the expected rise.

The LBNRD staff will begin water quality testing in the district starting in June. One of the district's primary responsibilities is to monitor and test groundwater quality. The LBNRD works diligently to prevent nitrate contamination throughout the district by testing wells for nitrate levels. Informational and educational requirements for operators in the LBNRD also help to prevent the over-application of nitrogen fertilizer.

Happy planting season!

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2019-2020 Water Quality Sub-Areas Operator Training

Heidi McClintock | Media & Communications

The Little Blue Natural Resources District wrapped up the 2019-2020 operator training sessions with over 180 farmers and operators who completed the training this year.

All farm operators who farm in the designated water quality sub-areas are required to attend operator training. Recertification is required every four years.

Crop consultants were also encouraged to attend the training, and they received continuing education credits for their participation.

This year, the Little Blue NRD hosted six different training sessions where the farm operators could attend training. The various locations included Hastings, Clay Center, Fairbury, Hebron, Davenport, and Superior.

Each training session consisted of a Little Blue NRD update, cost-share program information, guest speakers from Natural Resources Conservation Service who talked about soil health and cover crops, and guest speakers from Hastings Utilities, who discussed a variety of information that focused on water quality.

According to assistant manager, Tyler Goeschel, the training was effective by the number of questions and comments from the farmers as they wanted to know more ways to farm their fields effectively.

“I hope these events were a great reminder to the farmers, the importance of what they are doing every single day for the future generations to come,” said Goeschel. “I was happy with the attendance and participation of all the men and women attending operator training this year.”

If any farm operator is past due on their recertification or is a new operator farming in a sub-area and missed one of the training sessions, they will need to complete the training online on the Little Blue NRD website under the online operator training section found at <https://littlebluenrd.org/groundwater-management/water-quality/>.



Alicia Epps, a database specialist with the Little Blue NRD, gives water quality and quantity update to farmers during Operator Training in Superior, Neb., on Feb. 20.



Doug Garrison from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, speaks to farmers about soil health during Operator Training, Jan. 16 in Davenport, Neb.



Keith Miller of Hastings Utilities speaks to farmers about water quality during Operator Training, Jan. 9 in Hebron, Neb.

Science Olympiad

Patriot Invitational 2020



Students test their irrigation system during the Science Olympiad, Feb. 21 in Hastings, Neb.

Heidi McClintock | Media & Communications

Numerous area and Little Blue Natural Resource District schools came together for the 2020 Patriot Invitational Science Olympiad at Adams Central High School in Hastings, Neb., on Feb. 21st. The Science Olympiad is a day of STEM competitions that elementary through high school students participate in.

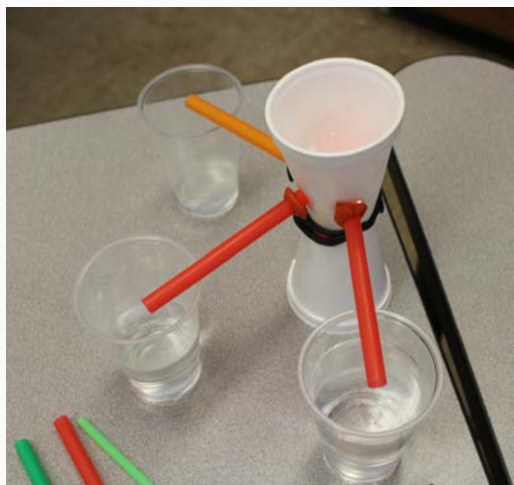
This year was the first year that elementary-aged students were able to participate in the Hastings area science Olympiad.

Elementary students were able to participate in four different sessions that involved hands-on STEM activity.

The Little Blue NRD hosted a session called "Fill your Cup." The presentation discussed the importance of groundwater and the effects it can have on the drinking water for the public, farmers, and producers. The presentation was followed by an activity where teams of two-four students had to build an irrigation system out of the supplied materials, which included different sized straws, cups, and modeling clay.

The overall goal was to build and construct an irrigation system that will divide the water into specific amounts per cup (field) to conserve groundwater.

Science Olympiad puts science and engineering practices in action, said Kristen Slechta, ESU 9 Professional Learning Specialist and planner of the Science Olympiad. It's a phenomenal opportunity to participate in activities with peers who also have an affinity for science. Today's youth are craving the chance to problem-solve and collaborate! It is ESU 9's great pleasure to help facilitate and coordinate such a youth event.



Above: Over 50 elementary students from multiple schools attended the *Fill your Cup* session, a hands-on irrigation project, taught by Heidi McClintock of the Little Blue Natural Resources District.

Lawrence-Nelson Science Fair

The Little Blue Natural Resources District had the honor of supporting the Lawrence-Nelson Public School Science Fair on Feb. 25 in Nelson, Neb.

The annual science fair allowed Lawrence-Nelson students to present their individual and group science projects to guest judges. The students had already tested their science projects and collected their data before the science fair. But this gave the students the chance to explain their plans in detail, determine if the project worked as they expected, and effectively communicate the specifics of their science projects to the judges.

Tyler Goeschel, assistant manager, and Heidi McClintock, media and communications specialist for Little Blue NRD, both judged different categories of the science fair.

“It was a great opportunity to listen to all the students as they went into detail about their science projects,” said McClintock. “They were all so proud of their work, and you could see it in their presentation boards and speeches.”

Also, the students and local community were invited to the science fair open house portion of the day, which consisted of seeing all the students’ science projects, hands-on science activities, and more.

Goeschel and McClintock provided a Little Blue NRD booth during the open house portion on the day, which provided families with information about water quality and the option to test their well water for nitrates during the open house.

McClintock coordinated the water testing ahead of time with high school science teacher, Abby Hongsermeier, so students had the option to take home a water testing kit to collect their home water.

The idea of testing the Lawrence-Nelson students well water all started with the approval of the 2020 Vadose Zone Assessment. It is our goal at the Little Blue NRD to increase the knowledge and awareness of nitrate contamination in rural drinking water, irrigation wells, livestock water supplies, and all groundwater.

According to members of the community, they liked the nitrate testing station and thought it was valuable to have at the science fair.

“I hope by bringing this hands-on opportunity of students being able to test their well water for nitrates to the communities of Lawrence and Nelson was educational and eye-opening for them and their families,” said McClintock.



Above: Over 20 families of the Lawrence-Nelson school district tested their well water for nitrates during the Little Blue NRD booth at the 2020 Lawrence-Nelson Science Fair on Feb. 25 in Nelson, Neb.

Updates

Pumpage Reports

Farm operators your pumpage report summaries were mailed out in March. You will see acres inches applied for the years 2017, 2018, and 2019. Please make sure to double-check the certified irrigated acres and flowmeter. The acres listed are attached to that flowmeter.

With planting season ahead, please make sure that if you make changes, submit an FSA 578 and map to Alicia Epps at aepps@littlebluenord.org, Little Blue NRD, PO Box 100 Davenport, NE 68335 or drop them off at the office in Davenport. Also, make sure to include the legal and irrigation type.

Chemigation

The State of Nebraska gives each NRD the task of collecting payments, inspecting, and reporting chemigation permits. By state law, a chemigation permit MUST be obtained before any person can legally chemigate.

New Permits: New chemigation permits cost \$60.00 per injection site. Permits should be paid prior to or at the time of inspection.

Renewing Permits: Renewal cost is \$20.00 per injection site. Renewed permits must be received by June 1, along with payment. Any permits not renewed before June 1 will be considered a new permit.

Inspections: Chemigation systems for new permits MUST be inspected and approved by the Little Blue NRD staff before initial use. Systems already inspected and have a renewed permit, are on a three-year rotation for inspections.

Contact Information: Please provide the best contact information on the permits so that we can call you to schedule any inspections that are needed.

Completed application and payments can be remitted to: LBNRD, P.O. Box 100, Davenport, NE 68335. For more information and chemigation permits go to <https://littlebluenrd.org/groundwatermanagement/chemigation/>.

Upcoming Events

Board Meeting

April 14th 7pm | Davenport

May 12th 7pm | Davenport

Electronic Recycling

April 15th 8am-noon | Webster County | Blue Hill

April 16th 8am-noon | Clay County | Clay Center

April 16th 1pm-5pm | Nuckolls County | Nelson

April 20th 8am-noon | Fillmore County | Geneva

April 21st 8am-noon | Thayer County | Hebron

Household Hazardous Waste Recycling

May 1st 4pm-6pm | Clay County | Clay Center

May 2nd 8am-10am | Fillmore County | Geneva

May 2nd 11am-1pm | Thayer County | Hebron

May 2nd 2pm-4pm | Nuckolls County | Nelson

May 8th 8am-10am | Webster County | Blue Hill



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

ENVIROTHON
NEBRASKA 2020

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts seek volunteers to help with the NCF-Envirothon, an international environmental competition for high school students. The NRDs are excited to welcome more than 500 guests from the U.S., Canada and China to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln July 26-31, 2020.

SIGN UP TO HELP: NRDNET.ORG/EVENTS

8 Seats Up for Election for NRD Board

The Little Blue NRD has 17 directors, and they serve a four-year term with half the board's membership up for election each even-numbered year. Board meetings are the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in Davenport, Neb.

Directors receive per diem and reimbursement of expenses. Maps and descriptions of each subdistrict are available on the Little Blue NRD's website or by contacting the Little Blue NRD office. Directors are elected in the May primary and/or the November general election.



Little Blue

Natural Resources District

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402-364-2145

LITTLE BLUE STAFF

Kyle Hauschild - General Manager

Tyler Goeschel - Assistant Manager

Marie Herbek - Administrative Secretary

Mandy Klipp - District Secretary

Alicia Epps - Database Specialist

Heidi McClintock - Media & Communications Specialist

Erika Brinegar - Natural Resources Coordinator

Kent Thompson - Operations Supervisor

Kevin Orvis - Project Manager

Jed Bergen - Resources Technician

Jim Oltmans - Water Resources Technician

FIELD OFFICES

Adams County NRCS Secretary—Robin Leichty

402-462-5412

Clay County NRCS Secretary—Allyson Peshek

402-762-3569

Fillmore County NRCS Secretary—Sylvia Jividen

402-759-4017

Jefferson NRD/NRCS Technician—Christine Zabokrtsky

Jefferson County NRCS Secretary—Paula Schultz

402-729-6134

Nuckolls County NRCS Secretary—vacant

Thayer County NRCS Secretary—vacant

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

Sub-District 2: Zachary Hollister, Hastings

Sub-District 2: Charles Rainforth, Hastings

Sub-District 3: Warren Brakhahn, Hastings

Sub-District 3: Everett Kellogg, Hastings

Sub-District 4: Kevin Kissinger, Glenvil

Sub-District 4: Jesse VonSpreckelsen, Clay Center

Sub-District 5: Steve Shaw, Edgar

Sub-District 5: Warren Taylor, Glenvil

Sub-District 5: Lyle Schroer, Lawrence

Sub-District 6: Lyle Heinrichs, Shickley

Sub-District 7: Joseph Hergott, Hebron

Sub-District 7: Alan Wiedel, Hebron

Sub-District 8: Jay Meyer, Daykin

Sub-District 8: Bill Glenn, Fairbury

Member At Large: Marlin Kimle, Kenesaw

RURAL WATER PROJECTS

Project Manager - Kevin Orvis

Rural Water Supervisor - Bruce Dux

Clerk - Paula Schultz

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