



ELKHORN RIVER BASIN

Elkhorn River Basin Facts:

- Population: 106,806
- Total Acres: 4,479,980
- Irrigated Acres: 1,083,725
- Registered Wells: 21,325
- Active Irrigation Wells: 10,080
- Monitoring Wells: 156

The Elkhorn River Basin has conservation tree seedlings available each spring. Contact your local NRD for more information.

Protecting Lives

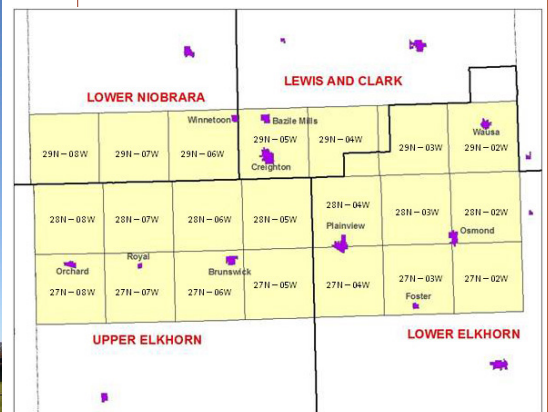
Protecting Property

Protecting the Future

Bazile Groundwater Management Area to Map Aquifer

The Bazile Groundwater Management Area encompasses 21 townships in Northeast Nebraska; and, is located in parts of Antelope, Knox and Pierce counties. The Project is sponsored by the Lower Elkhorn, Upper Elkhorn, Lewis & Clark and Lower Niobrara NRDs which the project area lies within. Through an Environmental Trust Grant and the Water Sustainability Fund, the Bazile Groundwater Management Area project was able to conduct aerial electromagnetic surveys or AEM surveys to map the underground aquifer. This summer Aqua Geo Frameworks flew over the area to help producers and NRD personnel gain a greater insight into the underground aquifer systems; and, how to better manage our water resources. The report for this study should be

completed in early 2017. A portion of the Bazile Creek Watershed is also eligible for the National Water Quality Incentives program. This program is designed to work with landowners in an effort to improve water quality.



Governor Signs Law to Protect the Niobrara

On April 18th, Governor Pete Ricketts signed Legislative Bill LB 1038 into law furthering the process of protecting the flow of water in the Niobrara River.

LB 1038, introduced by District 43 Senator Al Davis, would allow for the transfer of the water rights associated with the Nebraska Public Power District's (NPPD) Spencer Dam to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission) and the Niobrara River Basin Alliance (NRBA), which is made up of five Natural Resource Districts: Lower Niobrara, Middle Niobrara, Upper Elkhorn, Upper Loup and Upper Niobrara White.

In 2015, NRBA, the Commission and NPPD entered into a memorandum of understanding in which the NRBA and the Commission agreed to purchase Spencer Dam from NPPD. By purchasing the dam and acquiring the associated surface water rights, the NRBA and Commission would be able to preserve flows necessary for wildlife conservation, recreation, agriculture and other uses in the Niobrara River.

The transferred water rights will assist the state of Nebraska in satisfying the National Park Service and United States Fish and Wildlife Service's flow needs on the Wild and Scenic portions of the river. The legislation also protects existing users by allowing water right holders to enter into agreements with the NRDs and the Commission at no additional cost.

"This is a local plan for conserving a Nebraska jewel," said Jim Douglas, director of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. "The Commission, the NRDs and NPPD want to ensure that the future of the Niobrara River will be decided by the citizens of the state, with the best interests of all stakeholders and users in mind. All parties are proud to be working together to achieve a diverse set of goals for a valuable Nebraska resource."



Flowmeter Cost Share Available at LENRD

All irrigation wells in the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District (LENRD) will need a district approved flow meter installed by January 1, 2018. The LENRD has received a grant from Nebraska's Water Sustainability Fund (WSF), administered by the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, to assist landowners with the expense of this requirement.

At their August board meeting, the LENRD Board of Directors voted to allow producers who installed meters at any time after November 24th, 2015, to be eligible for the cost-share dollars. This is a change to the original policy. Therefore, cost-share is now available for producers who have installed flow meters on their irrigation wells on or after November 25th, 2015, or for producers who have yet to install their flow meters. The LENRD will provide financial support of \$500 per flow meter. Application for the flow meter cost-share can be completed by visiting your local NRCS office or the LENRD office in Norfolk.

LENRD water resources manager, Brian Bruckner, said, "These incentives are available for producers on a first-come, first-served basis. The maximum payment that a producer can receive is \$5,000 per year for irrigation practices."

Nebraska's Natural Resources Commission approved nearly \$11.5 million in projects through the WSF, with \$900,000 being awarded to the LENRD for water and soil conservation. The LENRD will provide a match of \$600,000. This will allow the district to have \$1.5 million available for cost-share assistance on irrigation flow meters.

The LENRD has cost-share available for 3,000 meters. Producers are encouraged to apply at their local NRCS office or the LENRD office right away.

Your Elkhorn River Basin NRDs

We Care about what you think!
Stop in or give us a call. We are here to work with YOU!

Lower Elkhorn NRD
601 E Benjamin Ave
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-7313
www.lenrd.org

Upper Elkhorn NRD
301 N Harrison Street
O'Neill, NE 68763
(402) 336-3867
www.uenrd.org

The Upper and Lower Elkhorn NRDs along with several other NRDs and state agencies are working together on various projects to further understand the water resources of Nebraska. The ELM model is designed to study the relationship between ground and surface water as well as aquifer recharge. The ENWRA project will study the geophysical characteristics of the aquifers underlying eastern Nebraska.

Created by the Nebraska Legislature in 1969 with the passage of LB 1357, Nebraska's NRDs began operating on July 1, 1972. NRDs were formed using Nebraska's 13 major river basins to offer local solutions to local problems. Locally elected officials establish District policies to address the needs of our specific area. This unique form of local government assures that the concerns of the Elkhorn River Basin are addressed by the people being affected. Locally led conservation for your future.

The NRDs inform Nebraska's young people by supplying information, education and other outreach efforts. It is vital that future generations understand the importance of securing Nebraska's Natural Resources.