

Out of the Blue

Newsletter for Little Blue Natural Resources District

I & E Committee Tour

On March 26th & 27th, 2024, The Little Blue NRD hosted the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) quarterly Information & Education (I & E) Meeting in Hastings, NE. The NARD I&E Meeting brings together I & E staff from across the State to participate in training, tour the hosting district's projects, and share educational outreach opportunities for the public across the state.

On March 26th, The I & E staff participated in a Project Water Education Today training workshop with Jack Hilgert from Nebraska Forest Service. After the training, I & E staff went for a tour of City of Hastings Water Treatment Plant, Ensign Beverage, and Lake Hastings.

On March 27th, the I&E staff gathered at the Heartland Bank to discuss statewide educational and outreach programs. Programs like: Stewardship Week, 2024 Poster Contest, Range & Land Judging, Children's Groundwater festival, Envirothon, Walk to Unlock Nebraska, Bike Ride Across Nebraska, NRD Recreation Exploration, Conservation Tree Program, and Nebraska

bird Month.

If you are interested in any of the programs listed above, please feel free to contact Jessica Hedges at the Little Blue NRD at jhedges@littlebluenrd.org or call at 402.364.3732.

Directors Tour District Projects

On Tuesday, March 19th, 2024, the LBNRD hosted a Board of Directors Tour. The tour featured six sites in Jefferson, Fillmore, and Thayer Counties where directors visited several recreation areas and toured future sites of rural water project development.

The tour sites included: Buckley Creek Recreation Area, Bruning Dam Recreation Area, Gladstone Water Tower, Glenn Wellfield, Kujath Pump Station, and Lone Star Recreation Area.

The purpose of the tour was to show the directors projects and programs in the Little Blue NRD in order to assist them in making sound decisions when these items are presented during board meetings. Seeing these projects and programs in person allows the directors to gain a fuller grasp and understanding of the projects and their challenges.

Marty Stange, with Hastings Utilities, gives a tour to the I & E Committee Tour of City of Hastings Reverse Osmosis Treatment Plant.



NOTICE TO IRRIGATORS

Little Blue NRD staff will be collecting water samples from irrigation wells M - F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from April 15th to October 15th. This effort is part of the NRDs mission to maintain an adequate supply of acceptable quality groundwater to forever fulfill the reasonable groundwater demands within the Little Blue NRD.

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-  @littlebluenrd
- www.littlebluenrd.org
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Trigger Level Rules

In the Winter 2023/2024 newsletter it was noted that 2023 fall static water levels were below the trigger levels in both Hydrogeologic Units 1 and 2 (See map), which if water levels remained below the trigger level in Spring of 2024, a stay on well drilling would be enacted. Any action of stays or groundwater allocations are based on spring levels, not the fall measurements. 2024 spring water level collections will begin on April 3rd, with a report to the board being given during the May 14th meeting.

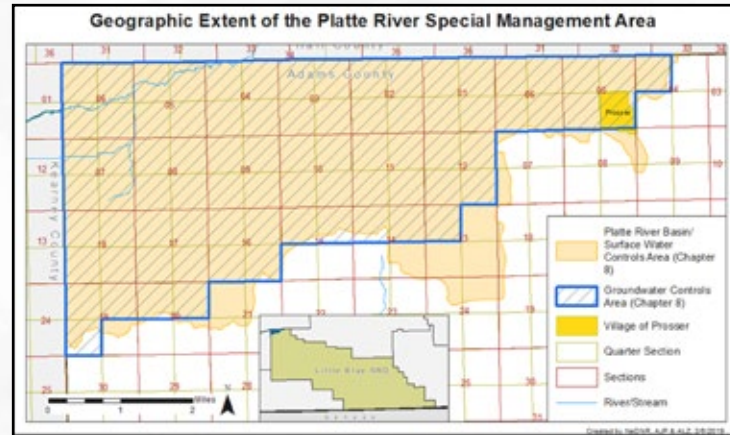
Little Blue NRD's rules state that immediately upon the first year's announcement that the allocation trigger for a Hydrogeologic Unit has been met the Board shall impose an immediate stay on the construction of all high-capacity wells and prohibit the expansion of irrigated acres. The rules state that the stay will be in effect indefinitely unless the Board takes action to lift it. The Board may, however, allow construction of a permitted well to continue for wells which construction hasn't been completed before the implementation of the stay if substantial completion has begun prior to the announcement of the stay.

evant information such as well drilling dates, cost expenditures, pre-paid bills, etc. that would document substantial completion regarding that development.

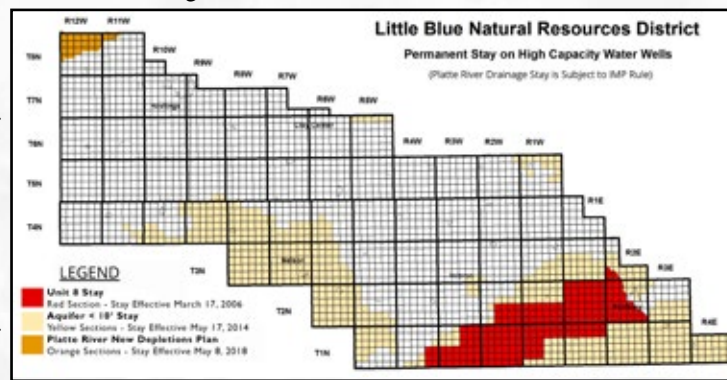
Current Stays in the Little Blue

The colored areas shown on the map below are known as Unit 8, Aquifer < 10 feet, and The Platte River Special Management Area. All three areas have been under stays since the dates listed in the legend on the map.

A stay means to halt, stop, or delay a well permit, action of development, or the expansion of irrigated acres.



the Unit.



The portion of the Platte River Drainage, seen in detail above, is an area in Northwest Adams County where groundwater uses have been determined by Nebraska Department of Natural Resources modeling to impact Platte River stream flow by 10 percent in 50 years is known as the Platte River Special Man-

agement Area. This area is part of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan (PRRIP) which was developed by the federal government along with basin states of Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming and was signed in 2006. The purpose of the PRRIP is to enhance, restore, and protect habitat lands and flows for the endangered Whooping Crane, Piping Plover, and Pallid Sturgeon, and the threatened Interior Least Tern. The PRRIP calls for plans to mit-

Unit 8, (Red Area, a subunit of Hydrogeologic Unit 2) is the portion of the paleovalley where high-capacity well permits, the expansion of new irrigated acres and groundwater transfers are prohibited. The stratigraphic boundaries for this stay area are from

the land surface through the underlying water bearing silts, clays, sands, and gravels, and include the sandstones, siltstones, chalk, and shale formations which may contain groundwater below the Unit.

Lands identified as Aquifer < 10 feet (Yellow Area) is where high-capacity well permits are prohibited, howev-

Allocations of irrigation water go into effect only if the trigger level is hit for a second consecutive Spring. This means that the absolute earliest an allocation could go into effect is Spring of 2025.

If you're in a position where development for irrigation has begun for the 2024 irrigation season, please note the dates mentioned. Keep handy any rel-



The PRRIP target species (clockwise from upper left) are the Interior Least Tern, Whooping Crane, Pallid Sturgeon, and Piping Plover.

igate, offset, or prevent any new depletions to the Platte River flows from the Program area. To meet the PRRIP's objectives, there is a stay on the issuance of new high-capacity water well construction permits and on any new and expanded use of groundwater within the Program area.

You can contact Kevin Orvis if you have any questions about these current stay areas at (402) 364-2145.

Farming For The Blue River

The Farming for the Blue River project is a partnership between the Little Blue Natural Resources District (NRD), Lower Big Blue NRD, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Nature Conservancy.

The goal of this project is to co-learn with farmers to develop nutrient management plans to reduce nitrogen losses and improve nitrogen use efficiency.

Project partners will work with farmers to create a nutrient management plan in line with the plant's nitrogen needs, provide farmers technical assistance in adopting precision nutrient management, and participation in a peer-to-peer learning network to scale practices regionally.

Farmers can enroll up to 160 acres per year, up to three years, and will receive \$10/acre per year for each acre enrolled in the program. Additional financial assistance is available for annual soil sampling throughout the timeline of the project to inform the revised nutrient management plan. Additionally, the Farming for the Blue River partners encourage farmers to layer additional cost-share incentives by enrolling in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) with NRCS.

Interested parties can contact Tyler Goeschel at Little Blue NRD at tgoeschel@littlebluenrd.org or call at 402-364-3172. Signing up is easy and

I'll happily assist you!

(Find the Application Here)



Chemigation

The State of Nebraska gives each NRD the task of collecting payments and 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 with a renewal permit, are on 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/>.

Heitmann Dam Cost Share Project

Construction of a dam on property owned by Heitmann Farms, Inc., located 5 miles west of Chester, Nebraska, began in February and is currently nearing completion. CES Engineering from Marysville, Kansas was hired to design a structure to control runoff from a 50-year storm event involving 513 drainage acres. Lottman Excavating from Beatrice, Nebraska was hired to build the 16,000 cubic yard earth fill structure at a cost of \$125,000. When complete and filled, this structure will create a 20-acre pond holding 91 acre-feet of permanent water storage. Funding from the NRD's Small Dam Cost-Share Program contributed \$50,000 towards this project.

2024 District Scholarships

In March, The LBNRD Board of Directors awarded our 6 College Scholarships. This year's scholarship recipients are Thomas Thomas of Hastings, Jack Trausch of Juniata, Wyatt Ozenbaugh of Ohiowa, Connor Janda of Lawrence, Libby Macklin of Blue Hill, and Ashley Bonifas of Roseland. This year's scholarships are a total of \$500.00 each. Congratulations to our Scholarship recipients and Good Luck at College!

FSA

With planting season ahead, please make sure that if you make changes, submit an FSA 578 and map to Alicia Epps at aepps@littlebluenrd.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.



Heitmann Dam Construction in Mid March 2024.



P.O. Box 100
100 E 6th Street
Davenport, NE 68335
lbnrd@littlebluenrd.org
littlebluenrd.org
402-364-2145

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sub-District 1: Mason Hoffman, Roseland
Sub-District 1: Glen Bonifas, Roseland
Sub-District 2: Brent Hoops, Hastings
Sub-District 2: Courtney Luebben, Hastings
Sub-District 3: Jessi Hoeft, Hastings
Sub-District 3: Glen Bredthauer, Hastings
Sub-District 4: Lyle Schroer, Lawrence
Sub-District 4: Warren Taylor, Glenvil
Sub-District 5: Jesse VonSpreckelsen, Clay Center
Sub-District 5: Aaron Paus, Fairfield
Sub-District 6: Steve Shaw, Edgar
Sub-District 6: Kyle Knight, Clay Center
Sub-District 7: Alan Wiedel, Hebron
Sub-District 7: Alan Kenning, Hebron
Sub-District 8: Bill Glenn, Fairbury
Sub-District 8: Jay Meyer, Daykin
At Large: Russ Ochsner, Roseland

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 & Communications Specialist
Kevin Orvis - Project Manager
Tim Hecke - Operations Supervisor
Johnathan Novotny - Natural Resources Technician
Lindsay Eichelberger - Water Resources Technician
David Bergeron - Water Resources Technician

FIELD OFFICES

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

Upcoming Tire Recycling

July 3 1st: Clay County Tire Recycling
8am - 12pm | Clay County Fairgrounds

August 1st: Thayer County Tire Recycling
8am - 12pm | 873 N 4th St, Hebron

August 6th: Webster County Tire Recycling
8am - 12pm | 102 University, Guide Rock

August 7th: Fillmore County Tire Recycling
12pm - 4pm | Fairmont Air Base, Fairmont

Calendar

April 1st: April Fool's Day

April 9th: Regular Board Meeting

April 22nd: Earth Day

April 26th: Arbor Day (Office Closed)

May 14th: Regular Board Meeting

May 27th: Memorial Day

June 1st: Chemigation Renewals Due

June 11th: Regular Board Meeting

June 19th: Juneteenth

July 4th: Independence Day (Office Closed)

July 9th: Regular Board Meeting

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