

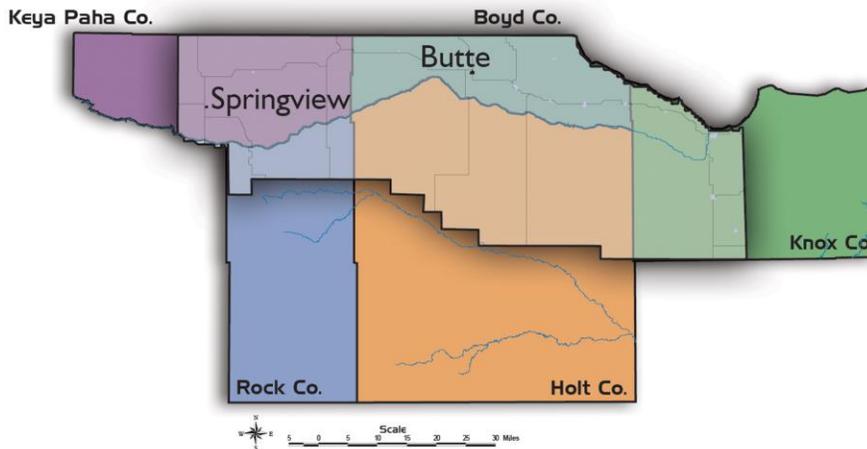
# KNOW YOUR NRD



**LOWER NIOBRARA**  
Natural Resources District  
Butte, NE

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts  
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

2019



## LOWER NIOBRARA NRD



### NRD QUICK FACTS:

- Static water levels are measured spring & fall
- 2 wellhead protection areas
- 769 chemigation inspections completed in 2019
- 1416 chemigation permits issued in 2019
- Free nitrate water testing
- 300 monitoring wells are sampled for nitrates levels
- Ultrasonic flowmeter checks
- Sold 11,672 total trees and shrubs
- Adding 52,600 + acres into Phase II Groundwater Management for water quality

### Protecting Lives

#### Secure Water Source

The Lower Niobrara NRD established the West Knox Rural Water System in 1984. The WKRWS provides clean safe high quality drinking water to the residents of Verdigre and Winnetoon along with 222+ rural residents and pasture hookups

To protect and provide quality drinking water to more residents of Knox County, Nebraska, the Lower Niobrara NRD has developed a new well field on an 80 acre tract of land south of the existing well field which provides 500 gpm to the system. The system is monitored 24/7 and the staff has access to the system via their smart phones. During the March 14<sup>th</sup> "Bomb Cyclone" the 8-inch mainline under the Verdigris Creek pulled apart. This cut off service to about 1/2 of

### Protecting Property

the system's (continued on back)

#### Tree Planting and Wildlife Habitat

To protect property and to encourage tree planting, the Lower Niobrara NRD makes low cost conservation tree and shrub seedlings available to District residents. Over the past five years the District has planted an average of 35,000 trees per year. These trees and shrubs are planted in windbreaks for livestock and homestead protection, prevention of soil erosion, wildlife habitat, as



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### Protecting the Future

#### Environmental Trust Grant

The Lower Niobrara NRD received \$48,500.00 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for grant funding to drill test holes, record geological data, construct observation wells, and install water-level data loggers to acquire information about aquifer composition, ground water hydrology, ground water quality and ground water quantity. The observation wells will support a long term ground water monitoring program that will supply data to efficiently manage the ground water resources of the LNNRD.

Currently, LNNRD has a very limited number of dedicated observation wells in a small area of the District. Expansion of this observation well network will allow (continued on back)

Nebraska

## Local Leader in Conservation

### Secure Water Source (continued from front)

customers. Even though the storm was still ragging the staff was able to complete a temporary repair and restore service within 10 hours. The temporary repair has been replaced with a new 8-inch High Density Poly pipe along with a 2 hydrants to by-pass the creek if needed. The storm also caused issue at 13 of our creek crossing. We are working with FEMA to get these issues resolved. WKRWS adds two to six new rural homes, cabins, pasture or feeding operations hookups each year. The system is a vital part in keeping the area growing and prospering

### Tree Planting and Wildlife Habitat (continued from front)

“living snow fences” and for aesthetic value. The District also offers conservation mulch and mulch squares at a reasonable price.

### Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant (continued from front)

for increased understanding of aquifer attributes, ground water flows, year around water level monitoring, and an increased level of accuracy of ground water data. The target areas have intensive, irrigated cropping systems that overlay areas located along aquifer boundaries, areas previously declared aquifer absent, and areas that have well interference issues between irrigators, livestock producers and domestic well owners. Also included in the target areas are the Wellhead Protection Areas of the Boyd #2 Rural Water District, the West Knox Rural Water District, and the LNNRD’s portion of the Bazile Groundwater Management Area.



### Natural Resources Awareness

To increase awareness of natural resources the LNNRD hosted an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Day. We had 25 local 8<sup>th</sup> Graders present this last year. Do to the weather we had to hold it in Butte Community Center instead of the Butte Golf Course. We had 8 different natural resources professionals from across the areas sharing their expertise with the students.

Office Staff of the LNNRD promotes awareness of natural resources through other educational activities including: Co-sponsor the Natural Resources Festival with the UENRD, Partnering Sponsor of the Wonderful World of Water, County Government Day, Hosting Land Judging Contests, and Hosting Range Judging Contests, elementary class presentations to explain responsibilities/duties of NRDs, and on Natural Resources upon request. LNNRD offers scholarships to youth who attend the Nebraska Range Youth Camp or Adventure Camp about the Environment (ACE). The scholarships consist of paying 75% of the registration fee.

### Protecting Resources

The Lower Niobrara NRD Board voted to allow up to 500 new irrigated areas in the District. With the increase in static water levels over the last few years, the completion of certifying irrigated acres in the District and requests received from irrigators the Board approved the Groundwater Management Committee recommendation. The Lower Niobrara NRD will be accepting applications starting July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending August 31<sup>st</sup> with a nonrefundable fee for new acres. Each application will go through a ranking process and be reviewed by the Groundwater Management Committee. Their recommendations will then be presented at the September board meeting. The highest priority will be given to applications which complete circles. There is a stipulation of not more than 25% of currently irrigated acres can be added to these systems and not to allow transfers of irrigated acres, no adding towers or end guns at this time and no new wells allowed. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can also allow new surface water acres up to 167 acres.



## Nebraska's NRDs

- Protect lives and property through flood protection
- Are leaders in groundwater management
- Use taxpayers dollars efficiently

Formed in 1972, Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts are local government entities with broad responsibilities to protect our natural resources.

NRDs help Nebraskans respond to natural resource challenges with local control and local solutions. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries of the 23 NRDs, which are governed by locally elected board of directors. A 17-member board of directors governs the Lower Niobrara NRD; they are elected by registered voters within the District. The board sets policies for the District and works closely with the staff through a committee system to carry out the District's goals.

In the 47 years since they were created, NRDs have experienced tremendous growth in the responsibilities given to them by state statute, especially in protecting ground water.

Find out more about  
Nebraska's NRDs at  
[www.nrdnet.org](http://www.nrdnet.org)