

NRD Hosts Southeast Area Contests

Range Judging

On Wednesday, September 18th, 146 students from 13 area schools competed in the Southeast Area Range Judging contest at the Divoky Wildlife Management Area. Students competed both individually and in teams of up to four. Winning individuals and teams were



determined based on an understanding of basic principles of range ecology, including soil-plant and plant-animal interactions and plant successions. The Range Judging Contest was hosted by the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management, Nebraska Game and Parks and Saline Center Lodge.



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Land Judging

On Wednesday, October 9th, 172 students competed in the Southeast Area Land Judging contest held at the Joseph and Debra Thimm farm West of Beatrice. There were 43 teams representing 12 area schools. Contestants competed both individually and in teams of 3 or 4 and were tested on physical features of the soil that included: texture, permeability, thickness, wetness, slope, erosion, depth, and organic matter. The Land Judging Contest is sponsored by the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District, in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Agriculture students from Southeast Community College assisted with the scoring.



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Lower Big Blue NRD Conference Honorees

On September 23rd and 24th, NRD staff from across the state gathered in Kearney for the fall conference. The annual event is an opportunity to collaborate with other NRD's, meet new employees and most importantly, share ideas and methods to achieve our common goal of Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, and Protecting the Future. NRD staff and directors are also recognized for their service.

Steve Kelly was awarded NRD Director of the year for his work protecting public water supplies. Tom Pesek was elected to the NARD hall of fame for his support of NRD's. Bob Lorenz was recognized for 25 Years of service. Scott Sobotka was recognized for 20 years of service. Dave Clabaugh was recognized for 40 years of service. Congratulations to all this year honorees.



Clockwise from top: David Clabaugh, Scott Sobotka, Bob Lorenz, Steve Kelly. **Center:** Tom Pesek and wife, Gretchen.

THE BLUE BUZZ

LOWER BIG BLUE NRD

Protecting Lives. Protecting Property. Protecting the Future.

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Lower Big Blue
Natural Resources District

Watershed Capital of Nebraska

*"Protecting Lives, Protecting Property,
Protecting The Future"*

Busy Times.....

Timely rains this year helped to stem many area producers' irrigation needs during the growing season. While that is good for groundwater recharge in the summer, rain is not always so welcome in the fall as farmers grow anxious to get in the fields and gather their reward for a year of hard work. As soon as fields and crops dry, farmers will be out in combines, tractors and trucks working feverishly to finish another harvest. We would like to remind everyone to be vigilant for slow moving farm equipment. Adding a few minutes to your drive could save a life.



NRD Recreation Areas Closed

The Lower Big Blue NRD will officially close its recreation areas for the season on October 28, 2019. The areas are still open to foot traffic but are gated to vehicle access. Typically the Lower Big Blue NRD will reopen recreation areas the following March. As always, when the weather turns warm again, we hope to see you out there enjoying everything the NRD's recreation areas have to offer.



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October 2019

Well Decommissioning Cost-share

An abandoned water well can pose a serious safety concern if not properly sealed. Since all water wells provide a path from the surface directly to an aquifer, unused wells can allow pollutants to enter our groundwater. The Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District (LBBNRD) has cost-share available to landowners who have an unused well to decommission. The Lower Big Blue NRD will provide cost share in the amount of 60% of the actual cost to decommission a well, up to \$500 (this does not include the cost of pump or tower removal.) In order to be eligible for cost share, the well must be decommissioned by a licensed well driller or pump installer. Applicants will need to submit the well decommissioning form which is available from our office or on our website. In addition, original receipts, W-9 and a copy of the Notice of Water Well Decommissioning as submitted to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. Cost-share is available on a first-come, first-served basis.



Flow Meter Cost-share

Any landowner in the district may apply for flow meter cost-share on an existing well. All new and replacement wells are required to have a flow meter installed and are also eligible for the program.



Cost-share is paid at a rate of 50% up to \$500. All you need to do is fill out a cost share form and provide us with a w-9 form and a copy of the paid invoice for the meter. Cost-share is limited to two flow meters per land owner per calendar year. Additionally, cost-share is paid to the owner of the parcel where the meter is installed.

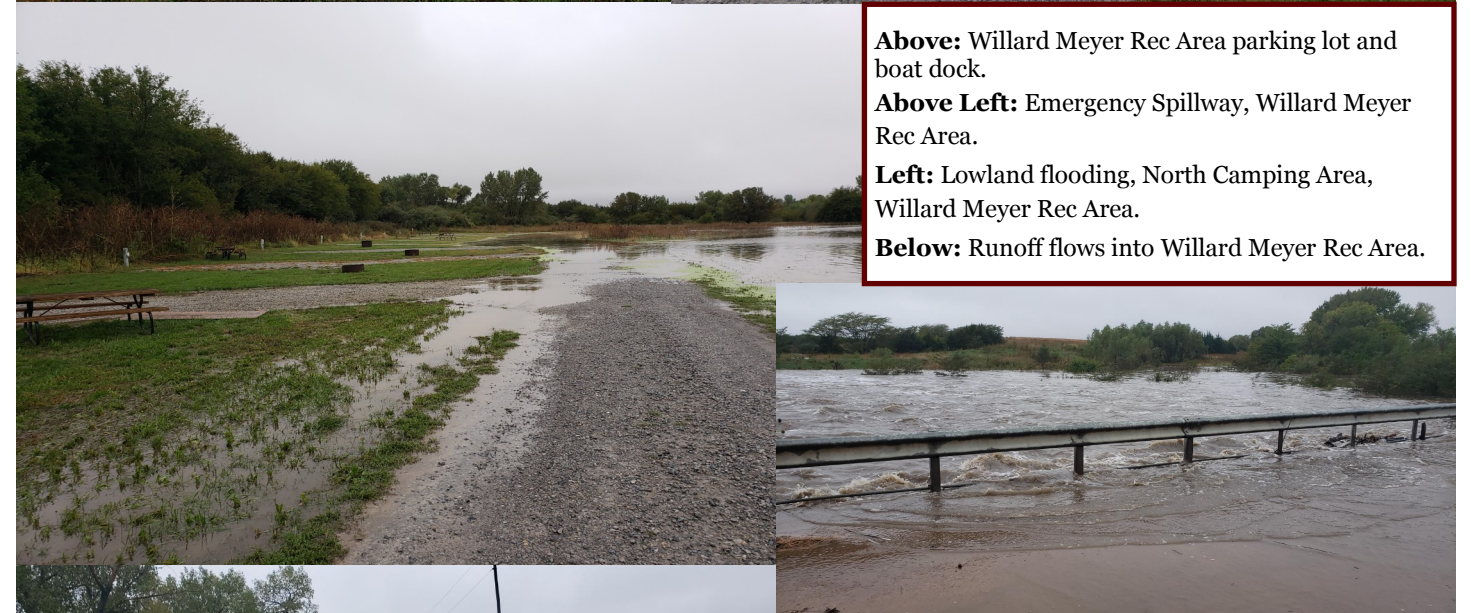
NRD Appoints New Director

Ryan Birkett has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the Lower Big Blue NRD board of directors. Ryan and his wife, Stacey raise corn, soybean, sorghum and wheat on their farm near Wilber. The couple have a seven year old daughter, Emmalyn. We welcome Ryan to the board and thank him for his commitment to helping preserve Nebraska's Natural Resources.



Watershed Dams: The Silent Protector

This year has been one for the books when it comes to moisture. Spring rains and snow melt pushed rivers out of their banks and covered thousands of acres with water, silt, and sand. Recreation areas like Harlan and Milford were filled to capacity. Luckily, the Lower Big Blue was spared from major flooding. District staff have been closely monitoring our floodwater retention structures. These structures provide 98,000 acre-feet of flood control, holding water which would otherwise inundate homes, roads and fields. On October 1st, roughly five inches of rain fell on parts of the district. That amount of rain over a short period caused a significant amount of



Above: Willard Meyer Rec Area parking lot and boat dock.
Above Left: Emergency Spillway, Willard Meyer Rec Area.
Left: Lowland flooding, North Camping Area, Willard Meyer Rec Area.
Below: Runoff flows into Willard Meyer Rec Area.



Lower Big Blue NRD Newsletter

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Questions or comments regarding the newsletter may be directed to the office of the Lower Big Blue NRD by phone at (402) 228.3402; by fax at (402) 223.4441; by email at kimmerling@lbbnrd.net; or by mail at:

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