

Cub Creek Recreation Area Rehabilitation

Its mid-August, southwest of Plymouth, NE. A heavy dew blankets the grass around Cub Creek reservoir 12-A. The morning sun is just peeking over the horizon. Ron Juneman of R.L. Juneman Construction is on-site with his crew, greasing and fueling his fleet. Excavator, dozer, scrapers, and tractors all have a long day of moving dirt ahead of them.



Completed in 1969, Cub Creek 12-A was developed as a recreation area in 1977. 50 years of sediment has built up in the lake. By the end of 2020, more than 100,000 cubic yards of sediment will be removed. This is the final component of a plan to remove the watershed from the National 303d list of impaired watersheds.

During phase 1, land treatment practices were applied over 80% of the watershed which reduced nutrient loading by 47%, exceeding the 30% goal.



During phase 2, contractors will remove sediment, deepen certain areas, install breakwaters which will double as fishing piers, reshape and stabilize banks, and finally Nebraska Game and Parks officials will restock the area with fish. Electrical camping spots and other amenities may be added in the future. “This project has been in the works for quite some time. We are excited to see work taking place. This is a fantastic accomplishment for residents of the watershed, both in terms of improvements to water quality and recreation opportunities”, said Lower Big Blue NRD Assistant Manager Scott Sobotka.

New Subdistrict 5 Director

At their September board meeting, the Lower Big Blue NRD board of directors elected Jason Sand to the vacant subdistrict 5 position. Jason will complete the term of Ron Wiens which expires in January 2021. He has also filed for election to the position in the November 3rd general election.

Jason, his wife Melissa and their daughter Ryan live in Beatrice. He is a postal carrier for USPS. Melissa teaches Spanish at Tri County Public Schools and Ryan is a senior there this year. We welcome Jason and thank him for his commitment to preserving Nebraska's Natural Resources.



THE

BLUE BUZZ

LOWER BIG BLUE NRD

Protecting Lives. Protecting Property. Protecting the Future.

Lower Big Blue
Natural Resources District

Watershed Capital of Nebraska

“Protecting Lives, Protecting Property,
Protecting The Future”

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City of Wilber Project

Situated northwest of Wilber-Clatonia High School, the small structure, built in the mid-1970s and known simply as Wilber #1, was easy to overlook. That is until a group of citizens decided they wanted to see the area turned into a park that everyone in Wilber could enjoy, and be proud of. What started as a small group with big ideas soon became the Pathways to Progress Committee. The committee, made up of community members, city councilmen, NRD, UNL Extension, NRCS staff and city employees began to plan and solicit grants for the project. Grant funds were received from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, the Land & Water Conservation Fund managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District and the City of Wilber. These funds allowed for the removal of sediment as well as the installation of a handicapped fishing pier, sidewalks, shelter, parking lot and grading & utilities for a future restroom. The Lower Big Blue NRD is pleased to have been a partner in this project. More information on the project can be found on the Pathways to Progress Facebook page.



Front Row: Jason Ripa, Scott Bohaty, Roger Chrans, Randy Sasek, Tad Eickman and Taylor Cervený
Back Row: Scott Sobotka, Sheryl Kastanek, Darla Chrans, Nick Behring, Randy Pryor, and Russ Kalkwarf.
Not Pictured: James Bates, Jean Cervený, Dusten Bruss, Tim Lempka.

Lower Big Blue NRD Newsletter

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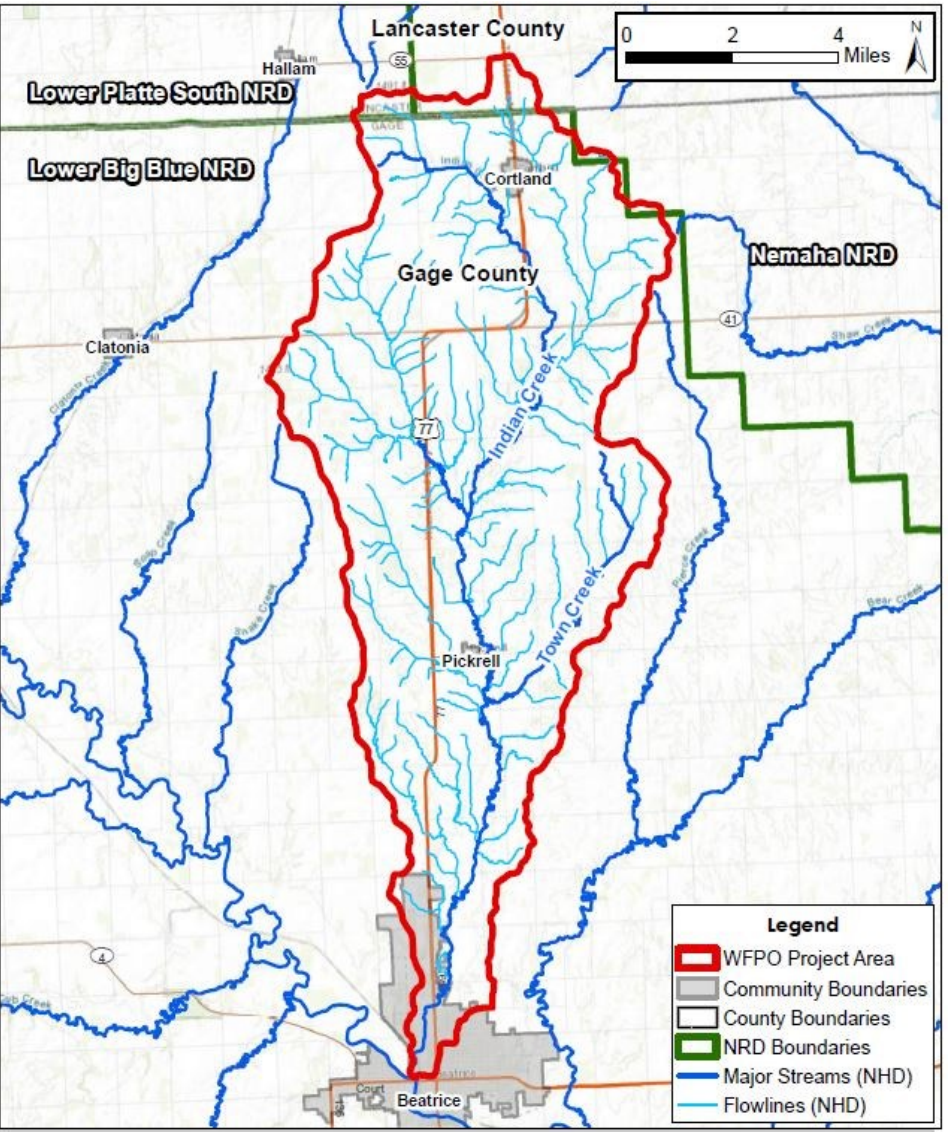
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NRD Receives WFPO Funding

In the early morning of May 8th, 1950, four inches of rain fell on the farm land north of Beatrice in a matter of hours. This triggered lowland flooding in Beatrice and caused the road heading east of Pickrell to become impassable. Again in 1951, similar rains caused 18 of the 21 bridges over Indian Creek to become unusable throughout the summer. A report published in December 1963 by the USDA Soil Conservation Service tells of the damage in Beatrice: “damage in the City of Beatrice has been quite extensive. Considerable loss was caused during the 1951 flood to the Beatrice Hay and Feed Company through the loss of hay and commercial feeds. The Kees Mfg. Co. moved the location of its industry because of high annual loss caused by the flooding of Indian Creek. Floods often disrupted the operations of Storecraft manufacturing.”

With regular flooding a constant threat, residents of the watershed were searching for help to lessen the impacts of rainfall events. That help would come in the form of the Little Indian Watershed Project. This watershed was one of four pilot watersheds in the state of Nebraska to be authorized in 1954.

Construction was completed in June 1963. A total of 24 dams and 39 grade stabilization structures make up the project. The pilot project was viewed as a model for the success of treating a watershed with small dams and land treatment programs for flood prevention. The benefits were seen even before the project’s completion. The December 1963 report speaks to the usefulness of the watershed. “In May of 1959, rainfall varying from 4 to 5 and a half inches fell in 1.5 hours no overbank flooding occurred on these sub-watersheds where floodwater retention reservoirs were constructed. In the sub-watersheds not controlled, culverts and bridges were damaged and there was considerable flooding. The value of the project has been so aptly demonstrated in Gage County that there are now all, or part of, 9 other watersheds organized. This has led the people of Gage County to boast that they are the *Watershed Capital of the World*”



The Lower Big Blue NRD has recently received USDA Watershed and Flood prevention Operations Funding to evaluate the Little Indian watershed in northern Gage County. The project aims to reduce flood damage to the City of Beatrice and agricultural lands, improve flood resiliency, stabilize streambanks and examine recreation opportunities.

“This area has regularly and repeatedly experienced flooding. This project will provide valuable information the Lower Big Blue NRD can use to improve this watershed and mitigate future flood damages to the City of Beatrice, area farmers, and the communities of Pickrell and Cortland,” said LBBNRD General Manager, Dave Clabaugh.

“This project represented a shift in thinking in the 1950’s from a rebuild and repair mentality to active planning and prevention,” said NRD Assistant Manager, Scott Sobotka. “It served as a model for what could be achieved when watersheds were treated as a whole with regard to flooding. However, The 24 dams control only 19,150 acres of the 48,000 acre watershed. The potential is there to mitigate flooding even further. This funding will allow us to explore those possibilities.”