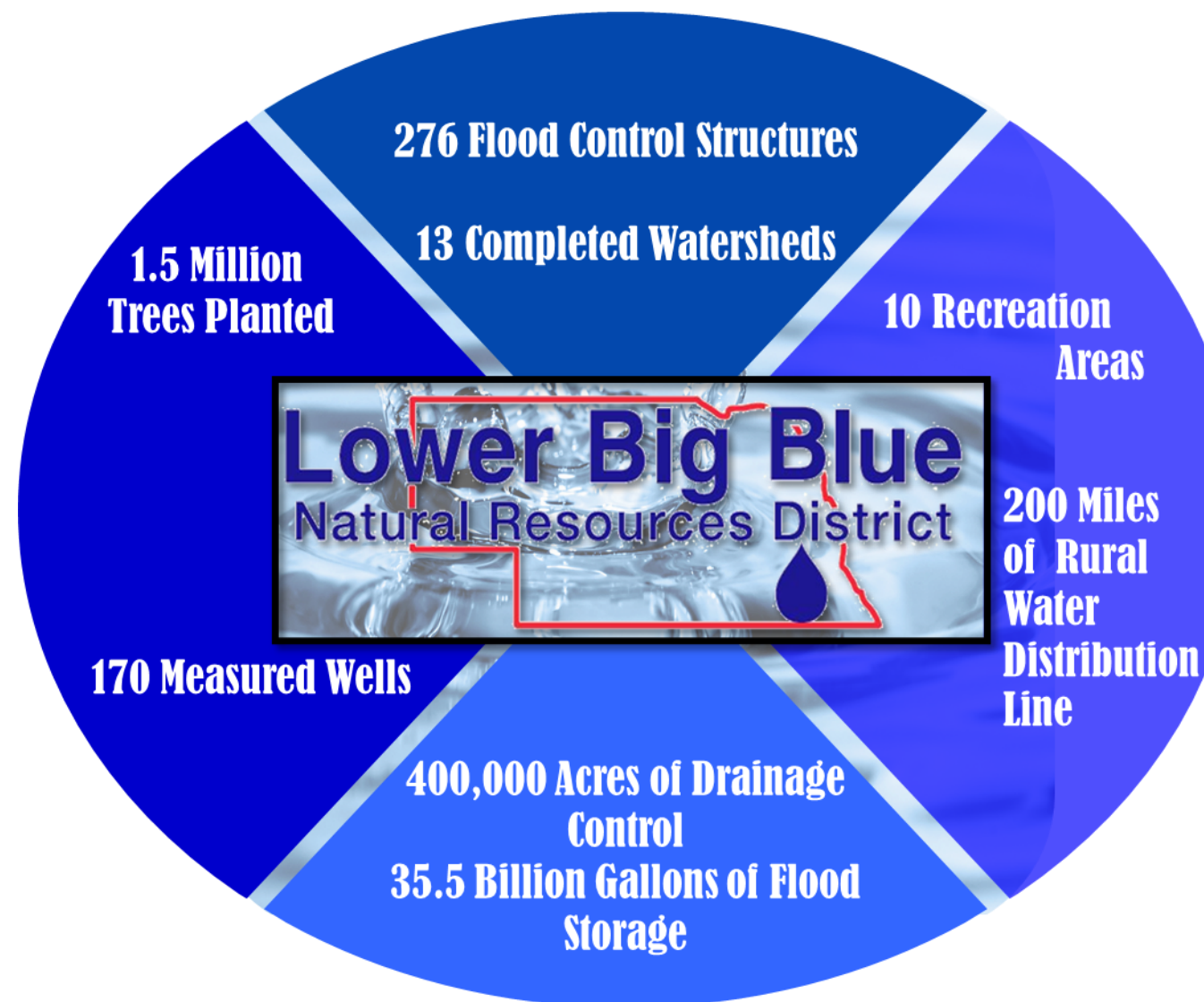


## Watershed Dams

276 dams and grade stabilization structures are strategically placed throughout the district. Most of these structures are on private property, however, the NRD holds a permanent maintenance easement with these landowners, this means that NRD staff have access to the site for inspection and maintenance. NRD staff inspects dams on an annual basis, however, we ask landowners to help us identify maintenance needs. If you have an NRD structure on your property, please take note of any trees, debris on trash racks or around tubes, rodent holes, or evidence of beaver activity. All of these things can affect the functionality of the structure. If you see any of these, please contact the office so we can conduct an inspection and address any issues.



## Lower Big Blue NRD: By the Numbers



## LBBNRD COVID-19 Update

The Lower Big Blue NRD office remains closed to the public. A drop box is available to make payments, and many questions can be handled over the phone. When necessary, staff can meet by appointment. At this time, LBBNRD plans to follow the lead of the Nebraska Game and Parks with regard to opening recreation areas for camping. Visitors are encouraged to practice social distancing and avoid contact with high traffic items such as playground equipment. Please watch our website, social media and news outlets for updates on this fluid situation. Be safe, and stay healthy!

**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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June 2020

# THE BLUE BUZZ

## LOWER BIG BLUE NRD



## Water Work....

Nebraska's NRD system has served the people of our great state for nearly 50 years. Yet, some people have no idea of the vital role NRD's play in Nebraska's ecosystem. Much of what NRD's do involves efforts to manage, conserve, and protect water, our most important resource, now and in the future.

NRDs are tasked with 12 responsibilities. Many of these deal directly with water. They are:

1. Development, Management, Use and Conservation of Groundwater and Surface Water.
2. Soil Conservation
3. Erosion Prevention and Control
4. Flood Prevention and Control
5. Pollution Control
6. Public Water Supply for Beneficial Use
7. Prevention of Damages from Flood Water and Sediment.
8. Development and Management of Recreational and Park Facilities.
9. Forestry and Range Management
10. Development and Management of Fish and Wildlife Habitat
11. Drainage Improvement
12. Solid Waste Disposal



## Killer Rivers

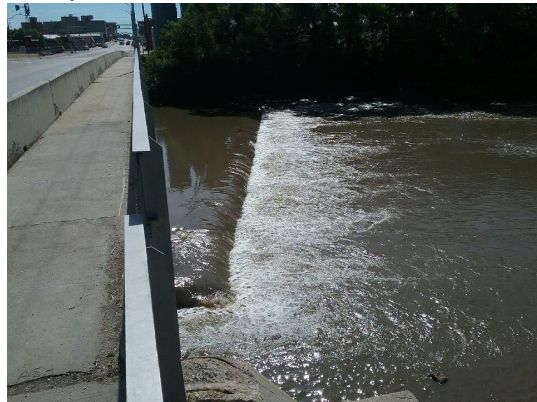
The embodiment of Nebraska ingenuity, tanking or floating are summer rituals for many. But, many rivers can pose a danger that not even the most prepared kayaker or experienced swimmer is equipped to handle. A phenomenon known as a hydraulic roller claims lives in Nebraska each summer. Below is an excerpt from an article titled *The Killers in our Rivers*, written by Tim Gokie, Chief Dam Safety Engineer for Nebraska.

Hydraulic rollers develop anywhere large quantities of water go over a vertical drop into a pool of water. Any vertical wall spanning from one side of a river to the other can create a hydraulic roller. What is surprising, a drop as small as six inches under certain flow conditions can create this deadly roller effect while the surface of the water can appear calm, hiding the submerged dangers below.

Most of these structures are not well marked and there are no signs warning of the dangers. Therefore, before going out on a tube or kayak:

- Plan your trip.
- Scan aerial photos along the route, looking for potential hazards.
- Avoid fallen trees.
- Talk to someone who has made the trip before.
- Get on the Nebraska Canoe and Kayak Public Facebook Page and ask for advice.

- Always wear a life jacket.
- Check out the Nebraska Game and Parks Water Trails Guide for well-traveled routes.
- Give friends a trip itinerary and let them know when you expect to be home.
- If you see a hydraulic structure ahead, get out and go around it. The thrill of going over or through the structure is not worth the risk.
- Concrete walls encroaching from the banks of a river are a sign there may be trouble ahead.
- If you are swimming in a river, do not go near dams, spillways, bridges or culverts, even if there are no signs warning of potential danger.
- Be mindful that rivers are constantly changing. For a more in-depth look at this topic, check out the online PBS documentary *Over, Under, Gone: The Killer in Our Rivers*.



Dangerous low head dam below the Court Street bridge on the Big Blue River at Beatrice.

## Lower Big Blue NRD Newsletter

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## 2020 Spring Water Level Measurements

The Lower Big Blue NRD measures the static water level of 93 irrigation wells, 32 Blue River Compact wells and 45 dedicated monitoring wells around the District every Spring (usually the first week in April) and Fall (usually the first week in November). These biannual readings help the NRD make appropriate regulatory decisions regarding groundwater. Spring 2020 county average readings are listed below. This year's data shows an overall increase in water levels. This can be attributed to last year's abundant rainfall and minimal irrigation pressure in much of the district. The graph at the bottom of this page shows average water levels district wide in relation to the 1982 baseline. Please visit the 'Groundwater' page at [lbbnrd.net](http://lbbnrd.net) for an interactive map of water levels.

County	No. of Wells	Change	
		Spring '19 to Spring '20	Fall '19 to Spring '20
Gage	27	+3.22'	+ 1.56'
Jefferson	24	+3.62'	+ 2.52'
Saline	42	+1.98'	+ 0.97'
Monitoring Wells	45	+1.97'	Baseline to Spring '20 +.046'

