

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



MISSOURI TRIBUTARIES RIVER BASIN

## **BASIN FACTS:**

### **Papio-Missouri River and Lewis and Clark NRDs**

- \* Over 200 Missouri River miles border these two NRDs.
- \* The NRDs serve the needs of all or parts of nine counties.
- \* They provide a safe water supply to over 2,000 rural water customers plus 7 urban areas in five counties.
- \* They Save local tax dollars by partnering with citizen groups and other government agencies.

## Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting Our Future

### **NRDs are active guardians of the Missouri's future**

Much has been done to protect against the loss of life and property from disastrous flooding along this river. But unprecedented high water in 2011 and the loss of wildlife habitat remain difficult issues drawing national attention.



The Lewis and Clark and Papio-Missouri River NRDs are actively involved in finding solutions that will enhance this waterway. Both NRDs pursue projects with the Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and NE Game and Parks Commission. Wetland habitat is being increased and oxbow chutes are being reconnected to the river, restoring life to these

valuable ecosystems.

The Lewis and Clark NRD took the lead, contracting with the Corps as local sponsor of five riverbank stabilization sites in Dixon and Cedar Counties. As sponsor, the NRD obtained all easements, at no cost to taxpayers, for this \$2.64 million project.

Downstream, the Papio-Missouri River NRD continues to be a key player - guarding against Missouri River flooding by operating many miles of levees and serving as the catalyst to bring about significant river restoration. Oxbow channels, once connected to the river and teeming with wildlife, had dried. The NRD, working with the Corps and others, continues to revitalize these areas and, in some cases, open them to passive recreation. Boyer Chute near Fort Calhoun is now flowing freely and is an honored wetland under the National Wildlife Refuge System. Other success stories are Hidden Lake in Fontenelle Forest and California Bend near Blair.

### **Safe, clean water supplied to rural homes and businesses**

Over 2,200 rural water customers in five counties plus seven urban communities depend on these two NRDs for their daily supply of drinkable water. Nearly 700 miles of pipeline convey a plentiful supply of high-quality domestic water to areas not served by municipal systems.

The Cedar-Knox Rural Water Project operates and maintains one of five surface water treatment plants in Nebraska with a production capacity of one million gallons per day.

Appointed Citizen Advisory Boards give recommendations to the NRD Boards. These valuable projects are paid for by the sale of water, without the use of tax funds.



## Geography adds to flood threat

The majestic Missouri River bluffs, found throughout much of the Lewis and Clark and Papio-Missouri River NRDs, offer unique challenges to agencies charged with saving lives and preventing extensive property damage due to flooding.



The Papio-Missouri River NRD is meeting the challenge of addressing flood control needs along three major rivers - the Missouri, Platte and Elkhorn. The NRD has built and patrols 25 miles of river levees that protect urban and rural areas alike. Yet, the most serious threat to lives and property is found within the flood-prone Papillion Creek Watershed. Nine flood control reservoirs and 60 miles of levees and channel improvements are maintained by the NRD. Although effective, they offer too little ongoing protection. The NRD is pursuing additional structures while continuing to offer floodplain buyouts and enhancing floodplain management. Recent studies show that Metro Omaha floodplains are expanding due to urbanization, putting hundreds more Douglas and Sarpy County citizens in harm's way. The NRD is working diligently through a partnership with flood-threatened cities and counties to find workable solutions to prevent the loss of lives, property and public infrastructure.

The Lewis and Clark NRD also faces unique challenges. A flood prevention/erosion control project to protect 55,350 acres and the community of Ponca in Dixon County consists of 50 structures, including two with recreation benefits. In Cedar County, the NRD has created two successful projects. The Antelope Creek Project, protecting 2,180 acres and county roads plus the Buffalo Creek Project protecting Aten, Highway 121 and county roads.

## Groundwater always a major concern

The Papio-Missouri River NRD is joining with other nearby NRDs to put new restrictions in place to allow some irrigation development while also working to keep the lower Platte River "not fully appropriated" under state guidelines. Local management by Natural Resources Districts gives water consumers the best possible access to the decision making process, according to NRD General Manager, John Winkler. The Papio NRD has recently placed a moratorium on the construction of new irrigation wells and the expansion of irrigated acres along the lower Platte River in areas where the Nebraska Dept. of Natural Resources has determined groundwater and surface water are hydrologically connected.

To protect the future of Lewis and Clark NRD groundwater, that District approved a contract with Olsson Associates to create maps of the aquifers located within the district. The study was completed in 2010.

District Manager, Tom Moser, stated; "The district needs to be proactive in protecting our groundwater resources. We need to protect property owners against potential conflict of use issues." The Aquifer Study better defines the bedrock geology and depth, geologic cross-section, as well as aquifer thickness, transmissivity, and location. State funding from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources was used to help finance the study. The maps are available to the public and used to guide Board policy decisions to protect groundwater resources.

## Missouri River Tributaries Natural Resources Districts

These two NRDs:

- Protect lives, property and public infrastructure through effective flood prevention efforts.
- Maintain 137 small dams for erosion and flood control.
- Use property tax dollars efficiently through partnerships with other NRDs, state and federal agencies
- Represent Nebraska's interests on national and regional Missouri River advisory committees

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Find out more about these NRDs:  
[www.papionrd.org](http://www.papionrd.org)  
[www.lcnrd.org](http://www.lcnrd.org)

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts are locally-elected government entities with broad responsibilities to protect and enhance our soil, water, forest and wildlife resources.

Created in 1972 by the NE Legislature, NRDs have a long history of government consolidation and innovation.

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