

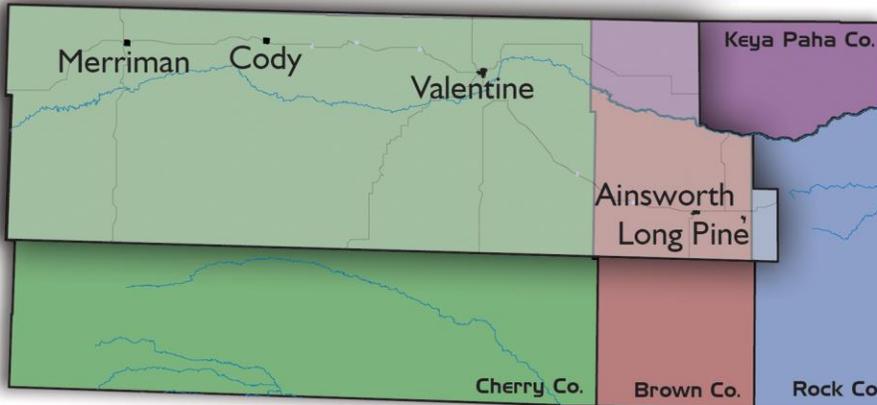
# KNOW YOUR NRD



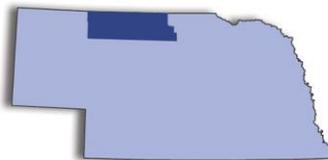
**MIDDLE NIOBRARA**  
Natural Resources District  
Valentine, NE

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

**2016**



**MIDDLE NIOBRARA NRD**



Water Quality Facts (FY 2016)

- 380 nitrate samples
- 517 total chemigation permits
- 270 chemigation inspections

Water Quantity Facts

- 574 registered domestic wells
- 197 static water level monitoring sites
- 151,383 certified irrigated acres
  - 112, 046 groundwater
  - 31,933 surface water
  - 7,403 combination

Land Improvement Facts

- 2,522,816 trees sold since 1980
- 60,971 trees sold in FY 2016

## Protecting Lives

The NRBA initiated a Basin Wide Voluntary Integrated Management Plan (VIMP) with the NDNR, and the public. The goals of the integrated management process are to ensure a balance between water supplies and uses, and to protect the rights of existing surface water and groundwater users.

Since the initiation of the Basin Wide VIMP the NRBA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the NGPC and NPPD in September 2015 to purchase the NPPD Spencer Hydro Facility and water rights. NDNR would like to see the

## Protecting Property

Niobrara NRD's work on their district IMP's at this time during the transition of ownership at the hydro facility.

At the December 2015 Board Meeting the MNNRD Directors voted to extend the temporary stay on new irrigated acres until the District IMP is completed. This temporary stay had originally been put in place on June 29, 2015. The Nebraska Department of Natural resources also extended their temporary stay on new surface water irrigated acres to coincide with the MNNRD's stay. The plan is to let the LB 1038 process work.

## Protecting the Future



The MNNRD is maintaining the Brewer Bridge Landing to allow public access on the Niobrara River.

## Projects and Programs

### Woody Biomass Utilization

The latest project the MNNRD has undertaken is tree chipping. Fallen or piled trees are chipped, and the chips are then used for various projects. The research and projects include mixing the chips with liquid nitrogen fertilizer, or hog or cattle manure, and then apply the chips to irrigated cropland. This increases nutrients available to the plants. Another project applies the wood chips to recreational trails to stabilize them and prevent future erosion.



The MNNRD was also awarded a Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) grant to help purchase a skid steer and tree shear. Services available are windbreak renovation, wood chipping, woody biomass utilization, and landscape and vegetation management work.

### Long Pine Creek Watershed



The Middle Niobrara NRD & JEO Consulting are addressing threats to water quality & infrastructure within the Long Pine Creek Watershed. The watershed, approximately 328,000 acres primarily in Brown County is mostly irrigated farming & rangeland & the communities of Ainsworth & Long Pine. A NDEQ & Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant are helping to fund the project. A watershed advisory group consisting of local representatives is forming to facilitate the development of the watershed plan and engage the public.

### Tree Program

To encourage tree planting, the MNNRD makes low-cost tree and shrub seedlings available to landowners. Cost share programs, project design weed barrier, drip irrigation and planting services are available as well. Trees are planted throughout the district for livestock and farmstead protection from the sun and wind, reducing soil erosion, flood control, wildlife habitat, reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide, aesthetic value, and as a “living snow fence”. This year 17,000 trees were planted, and 94,700 feet of fabric weed barrier was installed by the MNNRD crew. The MNNRD has assisted with the Big Rock Fire Replant for the last ten years. The Valentine school kids have done most of the planting in the fire area.



## Your NRD

- Protects lives through water testing
- Are leaders in groundwater management
- Uses taxpayer dollars efficiently

Nebraska's system of local natural resources management is unique in the United States. Unlike most states which have districts based on counties, Nebraska's 23 Natural Resources Districts are based on river basin boundaries which enables Nebraska to manage resources on a watershed basis. While all NRDs share a common set of responsibilities, each district is autonomous, governed by a locally-elected Board of Directors. Each district sets its priorities and develops programs to best serve local needs. Since being created in 1972, NRDs have experienced tremendous growth in the responsibilities given to them by state statute, especially in protecting groundwater.

The NRDs are partially funded by property taxes and make very efficient use of those tax dollars. A typical NRD takes only 1-2 % of all property taxes in a county. The MNNRD tax collections amount to less than a penny a day per resident, or 29 cents per acre. This continues conservation practices which give back locally.

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