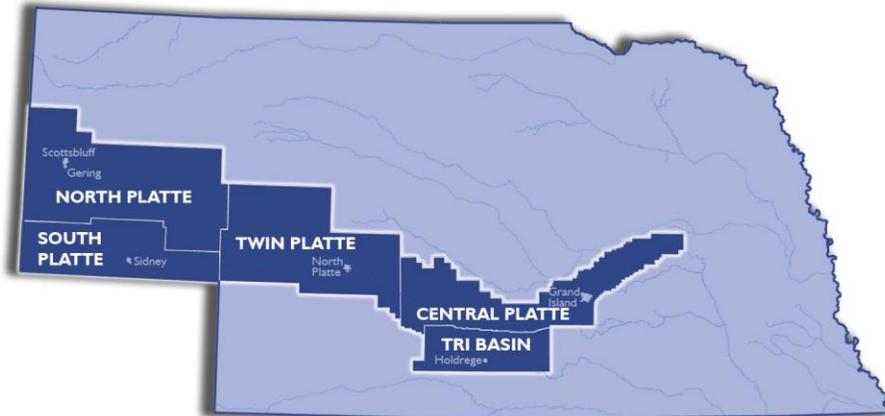


YOUR NRD BASIN

PLATTE RIVER

Summer 2013

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



PLATTE RIVER BASIN

BASIN FACTS: The Platte River Basin includes the following:
North Platte NRD - Scottsbluff
South Platte NRD - Sidney
Twin Platte NRD - North Platte
Central Platte NRD - Grand Island
Tri-Basin NRD - Holdrege

BASINWIDE - TOTAL LAND ACRES:
North Platte NRD - 3,226,880
South Platte NRD - 1,651,690
Twin Platte NRD - 2,660,480
Central Platte NRD - 2,136,304
Tri-Basin NRD - 974,720

OVER 1,900 ground water monitoring wells used for nitrate and static water levels basin-wide.

Protecting Lives

Safe Water Supplies

Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) throughout the Platte River Basin sample more than a thousand wells annually to **monitor nitrate levels** in ground water. This is one of many things the Platte River Basin NRDs are doing to protect the lives, property, and future of Nebraskans. Safe ground water is crucial for all residents who depend on a quality source of drinking water. In high nitrate areas, local Groundwater Quality Programs have helped water users reduce nitrate levels to acceptable EPA standards.

NRDs also provide ground water testing services, ground water **education** for residents, producers and area school students and assist well owners with **decommissioning programs** that help them protect their drinking water supplies.



Protecting Property

Ground Water Management

By adopting local **Integrated Management Plans (IMPs)** and the **Basin-Wide Plan** in 2009, the basin's NRDs are protecting the state's ground and surface water supplies. Methods include the use of **water banking** systems, which enable NRDs to purchase water rights to be used for future agricultural and economic development; and some NRDs use regulation such as moratoriums on new well drilling in fully appropriated areas or require **well metering** and limit ground water pumping as part of their long-term ground water management plans for protecting the basin's stream flows.



Protecting the Future

Flood & Hazard Planning

Flood control structures are built to protect the lives of people and livestock and property from costly flood damage. NRDs can leverage local tax dollars by utilizing flood control projects for recreation, enhanced wildlife habitat, more effective water run-off and storage, all of which improve our communities. **NRD flood control structures** pay for themselves by preventing millions of dollars worth of damages to homes, property, and helping protect the safety of Platte Basin residents and their property. Some NRDs also partner with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), area municipalities, County Boards and school districts to develop regional **Hazard Mitigation Plans**, making these jurisdictions eligible for cost-share funds to develop plans and projects to help prepare residents for floods, earthquakes, wildfire, severe storms and other natural disasters.

Platte River Basin - Learn More about Nebraska's NRDs at www.nrdnet.org

NRD Projects and Programs

Better Science Provides Better Management

Platte River Basin NRDs are using accurate, efficient and cost-effective ways to protect natural resources. The **Platte River Cooperative Hydrology Study (COHYST)** and the **Western Water Use Model** provide water managers with better understanding of the whole water system. Because of the models, the NRDs are able to make sound decisions by using the best available information. Light Detection and Ranging, LiDAR, has also been used by the Basin NRDs. LiDAR provides a highly accurate picture of the topography, and it can be utilized by NRDs, municipalities, utility companies, and producers.



With the technology available to the NRDs, we have a more accurate understanding of the whole water system. That understanding has allowed the NRDs to be more effective in protecting water resources. Programs such as recharge projects, voluntary retirement of acres, and other conservation efforts are use more effectively because of the technology.

Protecting Nebraska's Natural Habitat

NRDs partner with other agencies to help landowners enroll in **conservation programs** for better land use and enhancement. These programs include cost-share assistance to plant the corners of center pivot fields to native grasses, small shrubs and trees. This helps attract more wild game birds like pheasant and quail. Much of this land is open for public hunting. Preserving CRP Benefits combines with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs like the Environmental Quality and Incentive Program (EQIP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), to allow for highly erodible land to become stabilized and used for grazing while improving air and water quality.

Protecting Nebraska's Streams and Rivers

The five NRDs and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources have partnered to establish the Platte Basin Water Project Coalition, to plan, implement and monitor activities that result in better infrastructure and more effective water management in Nebraska's Platte River Basin.



Using funding from the partners and the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Project focuses on goals to help water users optimize timing and efficiency of water use, enhance stream flows, and reduce water consumption. The goals will be addressed through a combination of physical projects that store water for retiming and optimize stream flow accretions and depletions through leases and limited purchase of voluntary easements restricting irrigation use.

One of the Initiative's major benefits is that it will help meet Nebraska's requirements for complying with the Nebraska New Depletion Plan portion of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan.

Many projects to meet the Initiative's goals are being discussed for key points throughout the basin. They include alternative management of NRD-owned reservoirs, groundwater pumping for stream flow enhancement, recharge projects and other conjunctive management projects.

Platte River Basin NRDs

- Protect lives through flood control and ground water monitoring
- Use taxpayer dollars efficiently
- Protect our ground water for future use

NRDs were created by the Nebraska Legislature in 1972, and given regulatory authority over the state's ground water. Platte River Basin NRDs have used this authority to make sure ground water is available in this region for generations to come.

Nebraska's NRDs are governed by locally elected boards. They have a statutory responsibility to protect the economic well-being of their districts, which means making people and property safe from potentially damaging floods, as well as making sure ground water is safe for human consumption and readily available.

Major river basins form the boundaries of Nebraska's 23 Natural Resources Districts.

Find out more about Nebraska's NRDs at www.nrdnet.org