

# The Makings of a Successful Watershed Project

**Phase 1**

**Land Treatment:** Management practices should first be applied to as much of the watershed as possible. These practices, like the gradient terrace seen here, limit the runoff of soil and excess nutrients into bodies of water.

**Phase 2**

**Improvement of existing structures**



**Construction of breakwaters:** Provides an obstacle for the water to further slow its travel time from one end of the lake to the other. The longer it takes, the more sediment is removed.

**Sediment Removal:** helps slow the incoming water so that sediment can fall out. Also adds depth for future fish habitat.

**Landowner Involvement:** Every acre within a watershed has value in the fight to limit pollution, runoff, and erosion. Therefore every landowner has a voice and every opinion matters.



**Recreation Amenities:** the opportunity to install amenities such as a protected swimming beach, parking, camper pads, boat dock, restrooms and picnic shelters are an added benefit.

## 2021 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 2021 county average readings are listed below. Please visit the 'Groundwater' page at lbbnrd.net for an interactive map of water levels.

County	No. of Wells	Change Spring '20 to Spring '21	Change Fall '20 to Spring '21
Gage	27	+0.06'	+ 2.05'
Jefferson	24	+1.03'	+ 2.39'
Saline	42	+0.59'	+ 2.42'
Monitoring Wells	45	+0.65'	+3.32'

THE

BLUE BUZZ

LOWER BIG BLUE NRD

Protecting Lives. Protecting Property. Protecting the Future.

Lower Big Blue

Natural Resources District

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Watershed Capital of Nebraska  
"Protecting Lives, Protecting Property,  
Protecting The Future"

Stick To What You Know

The term watershed is pretty ubiquitous at the Lower Big Blue NRD. In fact, a day without doing something watershed related is almost unheard of around here. Staff are continuously inspecting structures, conducting routine maintenance, answering questions from landowners or working at a recreation area. When there is a lull in those activities, planning for the future is the task at hand. This issue of the *Blue Buzz* will focus on watersheds, specifically, some of our most recent projects. After all, there is a reason our motto around here is "The Watershed Capital of Nebraska"- its been a major focus of the Lower Big Blue for nearly 50 years.

September 2021






# Little Indian 15-A

Anyone who’s ever owned anything knows that maintenance is a part of ownership. Sometimes you can choose what projects to take on and sometimes they are chosen for you. NRDs are no exception to that fact of life. All NRD dams are inspected by both district personnel and officials from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. All dams are also assigned a rating through the Federal Dam safety rating program. This rating, known as a hazard classification, reflects the potential for the loss of human life and property damage should the dam fail. Older dams, like those that dominate the Lower Big Blue were built before development occurred downstream. Downstream development can increase the potential for damages, which in turn can change the hazard classification. In the case of Little Indian 15-A, just north of Pickrell, the development of Hwy 77 from a two lane blacktop to a major 4 lane highway led to a change in hazard class. A higher hazard class means the dam must be built to a stricter standard. Since Hwy 77 cant move, the dam was updated to comply with its new classification. That process can be lengthy and initial planning begins years before the first dirt is moved onsite.



## Project Highlights

-  Added a second emergency spillway
-  Replaced existing principal spillway and concrete tube
-  Added sand drains to the structure

## Lower Big Blue NRD Newsletter

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Questions or comments regarding the newsletter may be directed to the office of the Lower Big Blue NRD by phone at (402) 228.3402; by fax at (402) 223.4441; by email at [kimmerling@lbbnrd.net](mailto:kimmerling@lbbnrd.net); or by mail at:

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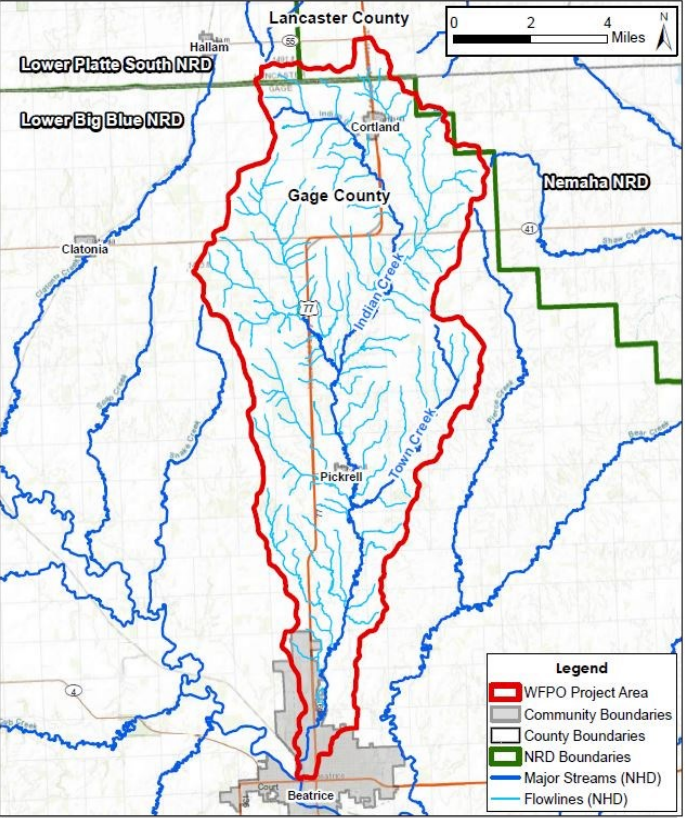
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# Little Indian Watershed Flood Prevention and Operations Funding

Avid readers of the *Blue Buzz* may remember an article featured in the September 2020 issue on the funding received to study the Little Indian watershed in northern Gage County. One year into the project, the study is well underway. The district began the process by notifying land owners within the area. Many of those people reached out to the NRD with thoughts, comments, and concerns. Now, District staff are working with engineers to determine which options provide the best cost-to-benefit ratio. At this point in the process, all options are being considered including rehab of existing structures or construction of new ones. LBBNRD plans to have a landowner meeting sometime this winter to discuss the project in depth. This meeting provides a valuable opportunity to be included in the planning process. Don’t miss the opportunity to share your thoughts or ask questions. If you would like more information on the project, call the office at 402-228-3402 or Jake Miriovsky, JEO Consulting Group at 402-474-8771



## Cub Creek 12-A

Cub Creek 12-A has been undergoing renovation over the last 2 years. The years’ worth of work that has taken place just southwest of Plymouth is the culmination of nearly a decade of work to improve water quality and ultimately remove the structure from the Federal 303d list of impaired watersheds. This watershed, in particular, has long been listed as impaired for E.coli bacteria. The best way to manage the E.coli flowing into the lake, and ultimately stop it from flowing out downstream is fairly simple; slow down the movement of the water and allow the nutrient rich sediment suspended in that water adequate time to “fall out” and settle on the lakebed. That process is achieved by adding depth throughout the structure and with the addition of rock jetties which increase the time it takes for water to move from the upstream to downstream sides of the lake, allowing for the maximum benefits.

