

Staff Update—New Water Resources Technician



The Nemaha NRD team is excited to welcome Correy McClintock as the District's new Water Resources Technician this March. A Tecumseh native, Correy studied wildlife biology at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. In her spare time, she loves listening to music and exploring the great outdoors. Be sure to wave hello if you see her out conducting chemigation inspections this summer!

2025 Park Permits Available

As a reminder, you must have a valid day pass or annual park permit on your vehicle to enter Nemaha NRD recreation areas including; Iron Horse Trail Lake, Kirkman's Cove Recreation Area, Wirth Brothers Recreation Area, and Duck Creek Recreation Area. 2025 Park Permits are available by going online, stopping in the office, or at the park entry.

Not sure if you want a permit? Try the parks for free the weekend of May 17-18, 2025!



Insight is a publication of the Nemaha NRD. Requests to be placed upon the Insight mailing list and/or comments regarding information in this publication should be directed to Maddie Million at 62161 Hwy 136 Tecumseh, NE 68450 or at mmillion@nemahanrd.org. For more information on the Nemaha Natural Resources District please visit our website www.nemahanrd.org



Nemaha NRD
62161 Hwy 136
Tecumseh, NE 68450



Upcoming Events

- April 10: Nemaha NRD Board of Directors Meeting
- April 27-May 4: NACD Stewardship Week
- May 17-18: Nemaha NRD Free Park Permit Weekend
- May 26: Memorial Day, Nemaha NRD Office Closed
- June 12: Nemaha NRD Board of Directors Meeting
- June 19: Juneteenth, Nemaha NRD Office Closed



Insight

Nemaha Natural Resources District

New Directors Welcomed to NRD Board

The Nemaha Natural Resources District (NRD) welcomed two new board members this winter. Ed Ehmen of Sterling and Dick James of Verdon will play a crucial role in guiding conservation efforts, water management, and natural resource stewardship across the district. "We are excited to welcome our new board members and look forward to their contributions," said Kyle Hauschild, Nemaha NRD General Manager.

In November, 2024, Dick James filled the vacancy in Subdistrict 8. Dick and wife Jenifer reside on a family farm that will celebrate its 150th anniversary this summer. They have two grown children, Sarah and Matthew. Dick works part-time as a lab tech for J-Six Enterprises at Fairview Mills and in his free time is an avid runner. Dick looks forward to serving on the board and giving back.



General Manager Kyle Hauschild welcomes Dick James of Verdon to the Board of Directors in November

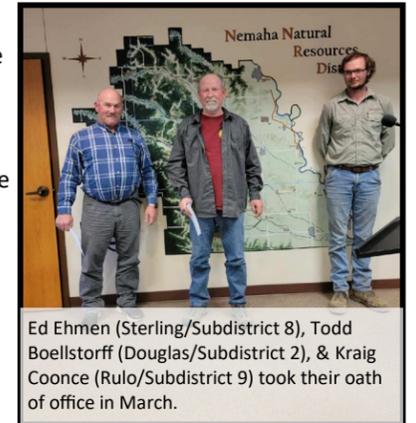
Following the November, 2024, election, Ed Ehmen secured the vacant subdistrict 6 seat through a write in campaign. Ehmen and wife, Colleen, have been married 37 years. They have two children Evan and Elizabeth, and two grandchildren, with one more on the way! Ed grew up around farming, with his family pioneering irrigation development on their farms in the 1960's and 70's. Today his operation manages 13 irrigation wells. His background in irrigation, combined with the vacancy in subdistrict 6 due to re-districting, motivated him to run for the board. Ed is particularly interested in groundwater management as a director.

In January the NRD Board also elected new executive committee members to help guide the district's leadership and decision making process. Russel Moss will serve as Board Chairman, Alan Romine will

serve as Vice-Chair, and Tim Loseke will remain Secretary-Treasurer.

Outside committee representatives remain the same for 2025 with Randy Fox serving on the Natural Resources Commission and Orval Gigstad serving on the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts Board.

The Nemaha NRD encourages residents to stay informed about board meetings and initiatives. Meetings are open to the public, providing an opportunity for community members to engage with elected officials and representatives. Board meetings are held at 7:00pm on the second Thursday of the month. Agendas are posted the Friday before the meeting on the NNRD's website, www.nemahanrd.org/about/nemaha-nrd-board-members.



Ed Ehmen (Sterling/Subdistrict 8), Todd Boellstorff (Douglas/Subdistrict 2), & Kraig Coonce (Rulo/Subdistrict 9) took their oath of office in March.

Keithley & Niedfeldt Move On From Nemaha NRD Board

In December the Nemaha NRD honored Jon Keithley of Falls City and Bill Niedfeldt of Shubert for their time on the board. Keithley joined the board in 2013 and decided not to run for re-election in 2024. Niedfeldt joined the board in 2011 and resigned after moving out of his subdistrict. The Nemaha NRD would like to thank these gentlemen for their time and dedication while serving on the board of directors. We wish them all the best going forward!



Jon Keithley (left), Doug Iske (right)

Bill Niedfeldt (left), Doug Iske (right)



The Nemaha NRD board of directors is composed of 21 members. Ten equally populated subdistricts are represented by two members each with one additional member elected from at-large. Elections occur in even numbered years with one member from each subdistrict up for election each time; the at-large is elected once every four years (the next at-large election will be in 2026).

Landowners Encouraged to Apply for Conservation Programs

Nebraska Buffer Strip Program

The Nemaha NRD partners with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to administer the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program. This program pays landowners for using filter strips (narrow strips of grass) or riparian forest buffer strips (strips containing trees and grass).

These strips are placed next to seasonal or permanent streams, wetlands and ponds. These practices provide protection between cropland and waterbodies by helping to stabilize the environment and filter agricultural chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides.

Contracts run from 5 to 10 years. State program payments vary from \$20 to \$250 per acre, depending on soil type, whether the acres are irrigated or not, and whether payments are received from other programs. In addition, there are incidental haying and grazing allowances through the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program. This program can be partnered with the USDA CRP for additional incentives.

The program is designed to be used in conjunction with the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), or other programs, however it can be used by itself, as well.

Interested landowners should contact their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office to learn more about the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program and to begin the application process.

For more information on our conservation programs, visit:
www.nemahanrd.org/programs

Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Program

New for 2025 is the Nemaha NRD's Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Program, funded by \$30,535.52 from LB1368. This initiative encourages corn producers to reduce nitrogen inputs by 15% or 40 pounds per acre, whichever is less, during the 2025 growing season. Approved applicants will receive incentives ranging from \$10 to \$15 per acre, provided they can demonstrate the required reduction from their historical application rates.

Priority was given to producers located within wellhead protection areas or the Nemaha NRD's Phase II Water Quality Area. Applications for nitrogen reductions on 12,141 acres were accepted through January 15, 2025, with an estimated total application amount of \$127,000.

Excitement about the program from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources resulted in an additional \$96,000 in funding for the Nemaha NRD to ensure all applicants can participate.

The program aims to reduce excessive nitrogen applications, helping to protect groundwater resources from contamination and promote long-term water quality improvements.

If you missed the 2025 deadline, keep an eye out for announcements from the NNRD, as the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Program is expected to be available for the 2026 growing season.

Sharing Our Message & Information Overload

Remember the days of encyclopedias and how much room they took up on the library shelves? Now imagine printing out everything from the internet and putting it on a shelf... With technology, the amount of available information has exponentially grown, to the point where sometimes it is hard to distinguish between truth and opinion, or to find what you are looking for. People and places are constantly vying for your attention. Did you know that while scrolling social media there is only a short window – just a few seconds – for someone or something to grab your attention. Radio has expanded from local airwaves to a universe of podcasts, and now, you can listen to stations online from anywhere in the world. Meanwhile, newspapers are closing as many people turn to social media platforms, online personalities, and digital subscriptions to get their news. It is incredible to see these changes, but it also highlights how incredibly challenging it has become to reach people effectively.

In light of this challenge, the Nemaha NRD works hard to keep the public informed about how we are using your hard-earned tax dollars. Despite our best efforts we understand that reaching everyone in our district is an uphill battle. We can't force people to read or listen to what we are sharing, but we remain committed to making information as accessible as possible. Our website, www.nemahanrd.org, is the best place to start looking for information regarding what we do and how we operate. From project updates to important resources, it's all available at your fingertips. We have a variety of programs that support natural resource con-

servation and education. Don't hesitate to call our office directly if you have any questions about any of our programs, projects, or rules of operation.

In addition to exploring our website, we also encourage the public to attend our monthly board meetings to hear more about our ongoing work. The agendas for these meetings are posted on our website the week prior, giving you a chance to see what will be discussed. You can also find meeting minutes from previous board meetings to learn more about what is discussed. Beyond staying informed, we encourage you to take a more active role in shaping the future of our district. Consider getting involved by serving on the board, where you can directly influence decisions that impact your community. If serving on the board is not for you, get involved in your communities to encourage conservation. As always, if you find our work valuable, please spread the word to others who might not be aware of what we do. Your engagement helps us to serve our community better!



Spring Reminders

Spring is a busy time of the year for everyone! Here are a couple of friendly reminders about ongoing programs:

- If you ordered conservation trees, you will receive a phone call or a post card when they come in. Please be patient as we wait on the nurseries to lift and deliver your saplings!
- Park permits are REQUIRED for all motorized vehicles entering Duck Creek Recreation Area, Iron Horse Trail Lake, Kirkman's Cove, and Wirth Brothers. Permits can be purchased at the park using the blue envelopes, online, or at the NNRD.
- Beach sampling at NNRD recreation areas will begin in May. Samples are collected on Monday and results are posted on NDEE's website by that Friday.
- Chemigation permits must be returned to the NRD by June 1st! If you misplaced your permits or need a new permit for a new injection site, please contact the office.



Steamboat Trace Nebraska City Trailhead Update

The Nemaha Natural Resources District (NRD) continues to enhance recreational opportunities in the region. As part of these efforts, the Board of Directors recently took action on a key project effecting the Steamboat Trace hiking and biking trail.

In November, 2024, the Nemaha NRD Board reviewed and approved a resolution for a project near the Steamboat Trace, which will relocate the Nebraska City trailhead from its current location on Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) property.

Work to complete the relocation of the trailhead has begun with an anticipated completion date of March 31, 2025. "Relocating the trailhead is advantageous to both OPPD and the NRD and will provide safe access to the north end of the Steamboat Trace. We appreciate OPPD's input and assistance with the new trailhead project" said Jane Kuhl, Nemaha NRD Assistant Manager.



Nemaha NRD Attends Annual Legislative Conference

Directors and staff from the Nemaha Natural Resources District (NRD) attended the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) Legislative Conference held January 28-29 in Lincoln. This annual event brings together NRDs, elected officials, and public-private partners involved in conservation, technology, and policy-making. It also highlights how Nebraska's NRDs collaborate with landowners, state and federal agencies, and the public to protect the state's natural resources.

This year's conference was especially significant for the Nemaha NRD, as a number of its directors attended for the first time. The event provided a valuable opportunity for directors to gain insight into NRD operations, engage with policy makers, and learn more about the legislative process affecting Nebraska's natural resources.

Governor Jim Pillen opened the conference, followed by a panel discussion on property tax reform featuring representatives from the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska Farm Bureau, and Nebraska Association of School Boards. Attendees also reviewed proposed legislation relevant to NRDs.

Breakout sessions covered a range of key topics, including nitrogen efficiency and management, dam rehabilitation, irrigation infrastructure revitalization, agency program updates, director responsibilities, hydrology, geology, and ecosystem restoration.



Pictured above (left to right): Kyle Hauschild, Ashley Rippe, Charlie Pierce, Tracy Ensor, Chuck Wingert, Brooke Gerdes, Doug Iske, Dan Hodges, Orval Gigstad, Alan Romine, Dan Stukennholtz, Russel Moss, Patty Coates, Tim Schaardt, Duane Suggden, and Dick James

More than 300 natural resource stakeholders attended the conference, which was organized by Nebraska's NRDs with support from local and national sponsors, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, Eastern Nebraska Water Resources Assessment (ENWRA), HDR, Houston Engineering Inc., JEO Consulting Group, Olsson, the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute, and the Nebraska Water Center.

2024 Nemaha Natural Resources District Water Report

Groundwater Levels

A local network of 116 wells (irrigation, livestock, domestic, and public water supply) located throughout the District were measured in the spring and fall of 2024. 86 of the 116 wells measured were used to create a lifetime average, minus a 10-year average groundwater level change. The District lifetime average change was a decrease of 16 feet (this is for all well types). Lifetime average water levels for irrigation wells were down 0.44 feet.

Well Abandonment

A total of 21 abandoned wells were decommissioned in the past fiscal year. \$8,934.47 toward cost share was paid out for this program.

Nitrate Testing (Limit is 10ppm)

196 well samples were collected and tested for nitrate concentration. The district average nitrate concentration was 4.6 parts per million (ppm) with a median concentration of 1.6 ppm.

54 of the wells sampled were domestic. The average nitrate concentration of domestic wells was 7.7 ppm and the median was 6.6 ppm. Irrigation wells sampled averaged a nitrate concentration of 3.4 ppm.

35 of the wells sampled were from within the District's Phase II Groundwater Quality Management Area in northwestern Richardson county. The average nitrate concentration was 8.2 ppm, with a median concentration of 9.2 ppm.

Chemigation

In 2024 the District received 358 permit applications and inspected 77 systems for safety equipment and compliance with chemigation regulations. Out of the 358 applications received, 329 were renewals; 28 were new 1 was special; and 0 were emergency.

If your injection site has not been inspected in the past two years, you will need an inspection in 2025. All new chemigation injection sites will be inspected in 2025.

As a reminder, applicator certification is required prior to chemigating. Training sessions are held through the state every year and available online year-round. Contact the NNRD or visit www.deq.state.ne.us and click on the Licenses and Certification drop box located on the top right center of the page and then click Chemigation for a current list of training dates, locations, and materials. On this webpage, applicators can also find their certification number and expiration year.

Permitted Wells

The Nemaha NRD permitted 28 high capacity (over 50 gallons per minute) wells in calendar year 2024.

Humor Highlight

Why don't groundwater and surface water ever get along?
Because they always *run* into each other!



Plans for FY25

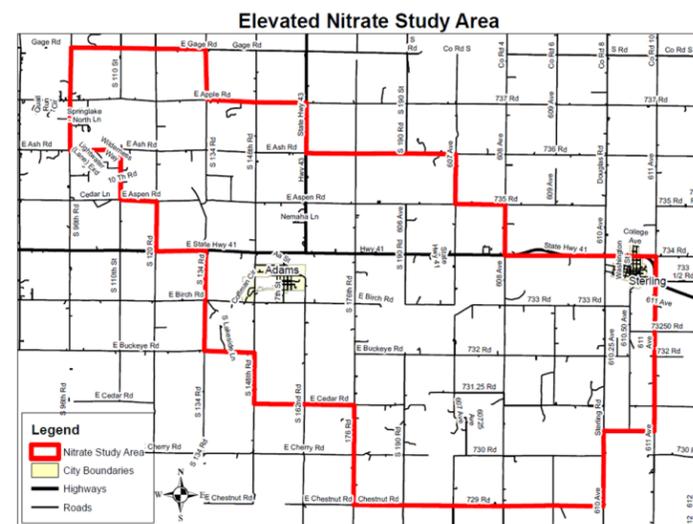
Technological advances are helping the Nemaha NRD to do more with the staff and budget we have. In the Fiscal Year 2025 budget which spans from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, four replacement transducers were purchased to aid in monitoring groundwater levels across the District.

Telemetry allows water resources staff at the Nemaha NRD to view groundwater level logs remotely. A transducer is used to measure the depth of groundwater using a pressure sensor. When the transducer is placed in the water column of the monitoring well, it is calibrated to a known depth. Any fluctuation in pressure from the original calibrated depth's pressure results in a change in static water level. More pressure indicates a higher water level, and less pressure indicates lower water level.

The NNRD is also contributing to a GIS based data management tool called Longitude 103. This program will allow staff to collect data in the field on a phone application and will assist in data management in office.

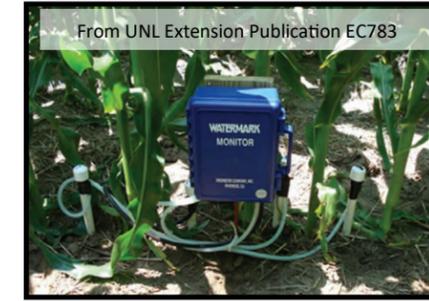
Plans for FY25

In November of 2024, the NNRD Board designated a study area between Sterling and Adams. Historical water quality analysis from the area indicated there may be a rising nitrate concern. The study seeks to collect as many groundwater samples from domestic wells as possible to better understand nitrate levels. The NNRD has groundwater quality rules and regulations in place and this information will help us to assess the overall water quality in the area and guide future management decisions.



Well Abandonment

Cost share is available for a licensed well contractor to close hand-dug or drilled abandoned wells to prevent contaminants from entering groundwater. 75 percent cost-share assistance on approved well abandonment costs up to a maximum of \$500.00 for each cased well and \$700.00 for each hand dug well.



Soil Moisture/ET Gauges

Producers can install soil moisture probes and evapotranspiration sensors to help make irrigation decisions on their farm. Cost share is 50% up to \$300 for equipment.



Flow Meters

All new or replacement high capacity wells are required to have a flowmeter. Up to \$750 is available toward the purchase of a qualifying meter. Limit of one flowmeter per landowner per fiscal year.

For more information on our Cost Share programs, visit: www.nemahanrd.org/programs
Or scan the QR code:



Department of Natural Resources Corner: Domestic Well Registration

Importance of Registering Domestic Water Wells

By Mike Thompson, NE DNR Groundwater Registrations Division Head

The well registration program in Nebraska began with the passing of legislation in 1957. The original process was treated much like making an application for a surface water right. The first registered wells were given a prefix of 'A', ex. A-1234. Later it was decided to have the prefix be a 'G', signifying a groundwater source. Initially there was not a requirement to register domestic wells and a sub-category which we refer to as range livestock wells. Irrigation, industrial and municipal wells, those with generally higher pumping capacity, were required to be registered. Domestic wells are defined as follows in the Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) NAC Title 456 Rules for Ground Water:

A well that provides ground water required for human needs as it relates to health, fire control, and sanitation or for domestic livestock as related to normal farm and ranch operations, or for irrigation of lands not exceeding a total of two acres in area, and the water use is of a domestic and non-commercial nature. The domestic water well must be constructed to potable well drinking water standards according to applicable statutes and rules for water well construction.

In 1993 the Nebraska Legislature decided that all new domestic wells should be registered with the passage of LB131. The effective date of that law was September 9, 1993. The law exempted and still exempts domestic wells that were completed before that date. As time has passed and especially after the drought of 2012 it has become recognized that optionally registering older domestic wells is beneficial. It is estimated that there are over 100,000 unregistered domestic wells in Nebraska.

Several NNRDs in eastern Nebraska are providing spacing protection from high-capacity wells, such as irrigation wells. Often the spacing

protection is contingent upon the well being registered. The registration process makes the location of the well readily available to anyone planning to drill a new well and to NRD staff who issue permits.



If there is a possible groundwater contamination event a registered well owner will be easily reachable for emergency warnings.

Knowledge of groundwater quality initiatives such as the recently concluded reverse osmosis treatment system rebates can be easily transmitted to registered well owners.

Water well drillers can use resources on NeDNR's website to locate domestic wells as part of their planning for drilling new wells.

If you are interested in registering your older domestic well please refer to the recently updated FAQ at the top of the groundwater homepage: <https://dnr.nebraska.gov/groundwater>. From that section you can find a link to a specific guidance document to accomplish this task.

Nemaha NRD Places Temporary Stay on Well Permits

On March 13, 2025, the Nemaha NRD Board of Directors voted to impose an immediate temporary stay, due to continued drought conditions and declining groundwater levels in areas of the district, for a period of up to 180 days on the issuance of any new well permits. Previously approved, unexpired well permits, replacement wells, public water supply wells, and well permits for wells designed to pump 50 to 150 gallons per minute will continue to be allowed along with test hole drilling and conversions from gravity to pivot irrigation. The stay will also allow staff time to update the District's Groundwater Quantity Management Area Rules and Regulations and well permit ranking system methodology last updated in 2020. Contact the NNRD office if you have any questions.