

18th Annual Fishing Derby Draws Record Crowd

On Saturday May 18th 2019, over 160 youth of all ages gathered at the Willard L. Meyer Recreation Area near Tobias for a day full of outdoor activities. The day began with the fishing derby, followed by the casting contest by Beatrice Optimist Club, hands-On Archery Demonstration by Big Indian Archery Club Members, Nebraska Game & Parks Fishery Display, Nebraska National Guard Aircraft Display, trapping demo by J&J Outdoors, a free hot-dog lunch and boat rides. The Lower Big Blue NRD would like to thank the Swan 5 Advisory Council, and all the other sponsors and volunteers who help make this event possible.



Protecting Lives. Protecting Property. Protecting the Future.

Lower Big Blue
Natural Resources District

Watershed Capital of Nebraska

*"Protecting Lives, Protecting Property,
Protecting The Future"*

805 Dorsey Street
Beatrice, NE 68310
Phone: (402) 228.3402
Fax: (402) 223.4441
www.lbbnrd.net

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June 2019

THE BLUE BUZZ

LOWER BIG BLUE NRD

All Fun and Games

This issue of the Blue Buzz is focused on recreation. The Lower Big Blue NRD is always working to improve recreation opportunities in the district. This summer will see new handicapped accessible picnic shelters at Big Indian and Willard Meyer Recreation areas, The first season of use for new camper pads at Willard Meyer, and the 18th Annual Youth Fishing Derby. If relaxing outdoors is on your spring to-do list, we at the Lower Big Blue NRD hope you'll take advantage of all the things our ten recreation areas offer. As always, no park permit is required at any of our recreation areas. Current camping fees are \$5/night per tent or non-electrical camper and \$10/night for electrical hookups available at Big Indian and Willard Meyer Recreation Areas. Stays are limited to 14 days in any 30-day period. From everyone here at the Lower Big Blue NRD, have a safe, fun and relaxing summer!



Nebraska Game and Parks Take 'Em Fishing Campaign

This spring, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is launching the exciting Take 'Em Fishing campaign to encourage anglers to introduce someone new to the sport of fishing. Anglers who take someone fishing can submit a photo of themselves fishing with a new or lapsed angler in order to be entered to win great prizes. Visit OutdoorNebraska.org/TakeEmFishing to submit your photos. Anglers who take the pledge will receive a pin and will be recognized on Nebraska Game and Parks social media channels after they share their photos.

Fishing is essential to the health of Nebraska's lakes, streams and rivers. Money generated through the sale of fishing permits and aquatic habitat stamps is used to maintain healthy fisheries in Nebraska water bodies, and to improve access for anglers. But Nebraska anglers are getting older, and a new generation of anglers is needed to take their place to ensure the health and vitality of Nebraska's aquatic resources for generations to come. Take someone fishing today!

Well Decommissioning Cost-share

An abandoned water well can pose a serious safety concern if not properly sealed. Since all water wells provide a path from the surface directly to an aquifer, unused wells can allow pollutants to enter our groundwater. The Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District (LBBNRD) has cost-share available to landowners who have an unused well to decommission. The Lower Big Blue NRD will provide cost share in the amount of 60% of the actual cost to decommission a well, up to \$500. In order to be eligible for cost share, the well must be decommissioned by a licensed well driller or pump installer. Applicants will need to submit the well decommissioning form which is available from our office or on our website. In addition, original receipts, W-9 and a copy of the Notice of Water Well Decommissioning as submitted to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. Cost-share is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

276....

That's the number of dams and grade stabilization structures dotting our district. Most of these structures are on private property, however, the NRD holds a permanent maintenance easement with these landowners, this means that NRD staff have access to the site for inspection and maintenance. If you have a favorite fishing hole in our district, the odds are fairly good that its an NRD maintained body of water. Stop to think about the ponds you drive by on your way to work....Again, odds are that is one of these 276 sites. Imagine for a moment where all that water would go if not for these storage areas. That's called flood control and its one of the biggest responsibilities of NRD's across the state. Its why we say we're Protecting People, Protecting Lives, and Protecting the Future.... And its why the Lower Big Blue is known as the Watershed Capital of Nebraska.

Handicapped Accessible Picnic Shelters

This summer, new handicapped accessible picnic shelters are being constructed at Big Indian and Willard Meyer Recreation Areas. Made possible by generous grants from the Martha and Margret Thomas Foundation and TransCanada, these shelters are part of our commitment to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy our facilities. *Right: Shelter construction is underway and will be complete by mid summer.*



Willard L. Meyer Gets New Camping Spots

The addition of 8 electrical hookups at the north end of the camping area was completed last summer, just in time for Memorial Day Weekend. The new pads proved to be a welcome addition, seeing use almost immediately. We are excited to be able to expand camping availability at Willard Meyer. This spring, LBBNRD crews will sew grass around the new pads. While the hookups are available to use, we ask that vehicle traffic be kept off the seeded areas and foot traffic kept to a minimum until the grass can be established. Thank you in advance for your co-operation. *Right: 8 newly completed camper pads await spring visitors*



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; or by mail at:

Lower Big Blue NRD
805 Dorsey Street
P.O. Box 826
Beatrice, NE 68310

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Lower Big Blue NRD Staff

David S. Clabaugh, Manager
Email: clabaugh@lbbnrd.net
J. Scott Sobotka, Assistant Manager
Email: sobotka@lbbnrd.net
Scott Theis, Operations Supervisor
Email: theis@lbbnrd.net
Teresa Langley, Admin. Secretary
Email: langley@lbbnrd.net
Ryan Thomas, Resource Specialist
Email: thomas@lbbnrd.net
Nick Schroeder, Technical Specialist
Email: schroeder@lbbnrd.net
Tyler Weishahn, Resource Specialist
Email: weishahn@lbbnrd.net
Adam Kimmerling, Admin. Assistant
Email: kimmerling@lbbnrd.net
LaRita Sudik
Gage County NRCS Clerk
Email: larita.sudik@ne.nacdnet.net
Jane Filipi
Saline County NRCS Clerk
Email: jane.filipi@ne.nacdnet.net
Paula Schultz
Jefferson County NRCS Clerk
Email: paula.schultz@ne.nacdnet.net

Spring 2018 Groundwater Level Measurements

The LBBNRD measures the static water level of 93 irrigation wells, 32 Blue River Compact wells and 44 dedicated monitoring wells around the District every Spring (usually the first week in April) and Fall (usually the first week in November). Spring 2019 county average readings are listed below.

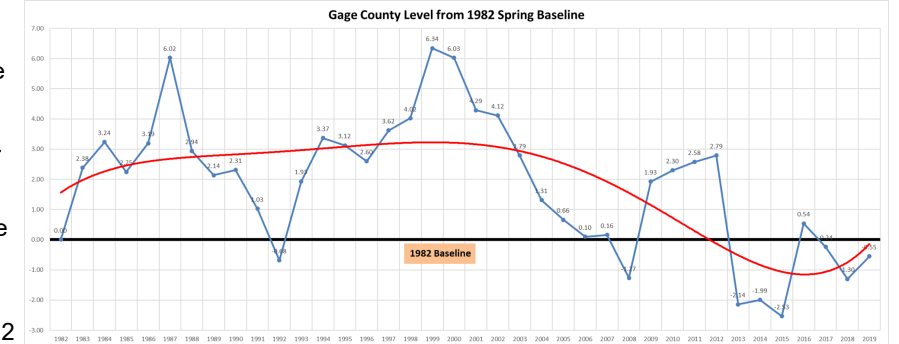
County	No. of Wells	Change Spring '18 to Spring '19	Change Fall '18 to Spring '19
Gage	27	+1.04'	+ 2.18'
Jefferson	24	+0.86'	+ 2.97'
Saline	42	+1.39'	+ 2.77'
Monitoring Wells	44	+1.34'	Baseline to Spring '18 +.046'

*Please visit the 'Groundwater' page on our website for an interactive map of water levels.



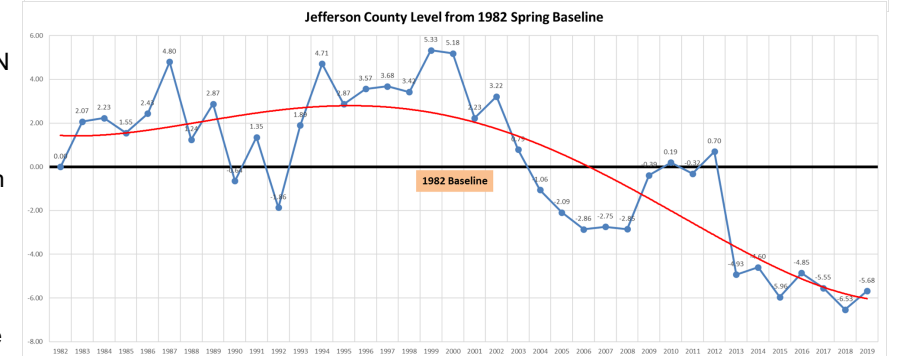
Gage County Report

The LBBNRD measures 27 irrigation wells in Gage County. Of those 27, 7 wells exhibited a drop in the water level from last spring to this spring, while the other 20 showed increases. The overall county average change can be found for the time periods between last spring and this spring and last fall and this spring, respectively, in the table above. The highest increase in water level in any one well in the county was 6.11 ft in the NE 1/4 of Section 32-5N-R5. The lowest change in water level in any one well in the county was a drop of 11.63 ft in the SE 1/4 of Section 27-5N-R5. 6 wells fall into the phase 2 category defined as wells measuring 5 ft. (or 5% of saturated thickness) less than its baseline reading for three consecutive years....3 of those six lie in 2N-5E.



Jefferson County Report

The LBBNRD measures 24 irrigation wells in Jefferson County. Of those 24, 7 wells exhibited a drop in the water level from last spring to this spring, while the other 17 showed increases. The overall county average change can be found for the time periods between last spring and this spring and last fall and this spring, respectively, in the table above. The highest increase in water level in any one well in the county was 6.54 ft in the NW 1/4 of Section 23-4N-R3. The lowest change in water level in any one well in the county was a drop of 6.98 ft in the NE 1/4 of Section 30-3N-R4. 15 wells fall into the phase 2 category defined as wells measuring 5 ft. (or 5% of saturated thickness) less than its baseline reading for three consecutive years. 2 more wells met the phase 2 criteria this year, making 63% of the irrigation wells measured in Jefferson County as "phase 2 wells."



Saline County Report

The LBBNRD measures 42 irrigation wells in Saline County. Of those 42, 3 wells exhibited a drop in the water level from last spring to this spring, while the other 39 showed increases. The overall county average change can be found for the time periods between last spring and this spring and last fall and this spring, respectively, in the table above. The highest increase in water level in any one well in the county was 4.85 ft in the SE 1/4 of Section 14-5N-R4. The lowest change in water level in any one well in the county was a drop of 0.92 ft in the SE 1/4 of Section 35-5N-R1. 2 wells in northern Saline county came out of phase 2. 5 wells still remain in the phase 2 category defined as wells measuring 5 ft. (or 5% of saturated thickness) less than its baseline reading for three consecutive years.

