



## **For Immediate Release**

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# **Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) Celebrate 45 Years of Protecting Lives, Property and Future**

(Lincoln, NE) For 45 years, Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) have been protecting lives, property and future of this beautiful state. July 1, 2017, marks the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the creation of the NRD system in Nebraska. With the local public participation, Nebraska has made monumental progress in all 23 NRDs with soil and water conservation and protection efforts.

"Nebraska's natural resources are precious and need to be protected," said Jim Bendfeldt, president of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts. "We commend the public for working with their local NRD to protect the natural resources for future generations. They need clean water to drink, nutrient-rich soil to grow food to sustain Nebraska's economic viability."

The Nebraska Legislature enacted Legislative Bill (LB) 1357 in 1969 to combine Nebraska's 154 special purpose entities into the Natural Resources Districts by July 1972. The 23 NRDs were organized based on the state's major river basins. Each District has a publicly-elected board that makes local management decisions to help conserve our valuable natural resources and groundwater. Throughout the decades, the NRDs have worked with landowners to protect natural resources, provided and protected public water supplies, assisted urban and rural areas with flood control, provided recreation opportunities and have planted more than 95 million trees throughout Nebraska.

"The Natural Resources Districts are celebrating this amazing milestone," said Bendfeldt. "Other states are struggling with water and soil management because they do not have a local NRD system to provide opportunities for local citizens to protect natural resources. Without the NRDs, Nebraska would be in the extremely tough situation we see so many other states dealing with right now. With the NRD system, we have clean water, good soil and wonderful, hardworking people who believe in this state's success and future."

**Here are several facts about the Nebraska's natural resources as we look back on the last 45 years of success:**

## **Groundwater**

- Nebraska is #1 in irrigated acres while maintaining groundwater levels at pre-developed levels.
- Nebraska's center pivot manufacturers work closely with the NRDs and help lead the charge by creating and manufacturing more efficient irrigation systems.
- Nebraska farmers and ranchers work with the NRD on water quality and quantity management to protect this valuable resource for future generations.
- Wise management of the water resources also helps Nebraska agriculture lead the nation in several categories. We are #1 in cattle on feed and commercial red meat production, #2 in ethanol production, #3 in corn production, #5 in soybean production and # 6 in swine production.
- Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts work with private landowners to monitor thousands of wells across the state each year for groundwater quality and quantity.

## Flood Control

- There are hundreds of effective NRD flood control programs and activities across Nebraska directed at keeping our floodplains safer and reducing the potential for loss of life and property.
- Districts construct and maintain watershed structures or dams to help reduce the effects of flood damage during large rain events.
- Levee systems are also operated and maintained by the districts to protect property and lives.
- By installing this structures, thousands of homes and businesses have been removed from the federal floodplain maps saving those millions in federal flood insurance premiums and liability.

## Forestry

- NRDs have planted more than 95 million trees since 1972.
- Trees shade and shelter homes, reduce energy costs, protect and increase crop yields, reduce soil erosion caused by water and wind, improve water quality, control snow and preserve winter moisture, protect livestock, provide food and cover for wildlife, control noise, capture atmospheric carbon, raise property values, and add beauty to our landscape.
- Check out <http://www.nrdtrees.org> for more information on tree planting and species available for purchase by each NRD.

## Soil

- NRDs assist landowners to implement conservation practices to reduce soil erosion, improve soil health and improve surface water quality.

- NRDs work with state and federal agencies to modify programs to fit local resources needs.
- Best management practices, terraces, waterways, filter strips, and buffer strips all help to improve the quality of surface water in a watershed.

## Recreation

- There are over 80 recreation areas across the state run by the NRDs. These areas include public access lakes, trails, and wildlife areas. There's something for every outdoor enthusiast to enjoy!
- Please visit <http://www.nrdrec.org> for more information on the amenities and recreation opportunities in your area!

## Education

- The NRDs work closely with the University of Nebraska Research and Extension to help improve farming and ranching practices that save soil, protect grass lands and protect water resources.
- The NRDs work with local schools, 4-H, FFA and local natural resources science clubs to provide additional natural resources education and information programs.

Visit <https://www.nrdnet.org/nrds> for more information about local NRDs and programs to protect natural resources.

Visit <http://www.nrdstories.org> for more information on important individuals critical to the history and formation of the NRDs.

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The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD), the trade association for Nebraska's 23 natural resources districts, works with individual NRDs to protect lives, protect property, and protect the future of Nebraska's natural resources. These districts are unique to Nebraska. NRD's are local government entities with broad responsibilities to protect our natural resources. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries of the 23 NRDs, enabling districts to respond best to local conservation and resource management needs. To learn more about Nebraska's NRDs visit [www.nrdnet.org](http://www.nrdnet.org). Or you can head to the Natural Resources Districts' Facebook page at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) or follow NARD's Twitter page at [@nebnrd](http://www.twitter.com). NARD is located at 601 S. 12<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 201, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508. Email NARD at [nard@nrdnet.org](mailto:nard@nrdnet.org) or call NARD at (402) 471-7670.