

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Watershed Projects Bring Nebraska Estimated Benefits of \$80 Million a Year**

*Support Soil and Water Stewardship Week - April 29-May 5 – Share Pictures of What Water Means to You*

(Lincoln, NE) In honor of Soil and Water Stewardship Week's theme "Watersheds, Our Water, Our Home," the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are celebrating the watershed projects that benefit Nebraska. Through the 900+ watershed projects the NRDs and NRCS have developed together, over \$80 million in average annual damages from flooding and erosion are prevented every year.

These economic numbers are based off the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act benefits for each watershed project NRCS and the NRDs have worked on together since 1954 and indexed up to 2018 dollar values. Before these watershed projects were built, an economic analysis was conducted. These projects were required to reach a cost/benefit ratio threshold high enough to receive funding. This careful planning has resulted in a tremendous return on investment over the past 60 years.

The watershed dams constructed through the Federal Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program are working to protect Nebraskans from flood damage. Watershed Program project results include watershed protection, flood prevention, erosion and sediment control, water supply, improved water quality, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, wetland creation and restoration, and public recreation.

"This partnership between the public, NRCS, NRDs, Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality has been vital in Nebraska's long-term success," said Dean Edson, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts executive director. "We all work with landowners every day. Without these projects and their willingness to improve their land and prevent potential flooding, Nebraskans could potentially be dealing with flood damage costs on their properties and in their homes every year."

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NRCS and the NRDs work with landowners to install flood control measures like small dams, grade stabilization structures and apply conservation practices such as reduced tillage, terraces and waterways. These flood prevention and conservation practices work together throughout the watershed to catch and slow runoff from heavy rains preventing damage to infrastructure, homes, cropland and roads.

Craig Derickson, state conservationist with NRCS said, “The Watershed Program in Nebraska has been a perfect partnership between Federal and State agencies working together to protect natural resources. This year’s watershed theme for Soil and Water Stewardship Week provided a great opportunity to remind Nebraskans of the benefits these watershed structures provide.”

Soil and Water Stewardship Week is April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 5<sup>th</sup>, and the NRDs and NRCS are calling on YOU to show us what water means to you! Snap selfies and fun pictures of how you value the water you use. Tweet us @NebraskaNRCS and @NebraskaNRDs. “Like” us on Facebook at Nebraska’s Natural Resources Districts at [www.facebook.com/NebraskaNRDs](http://www.facebook.com/NebraskaNRDs).

During Soil and Water Conservation Week, the NRDs and NRCS encourage all Nebraskans to spend time outside appreciating our natural resources and especially our “Watersheds, Our Water, Our Home.”

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*Watershed structures like this one in Sarpy County protect home downstream from flood damage to roads, homes, and cropland. The 900+ watershed projects developed across Nebraska provide an estimated \$80 million dollars in benefits each year due to the damage from flooding and erosion they prevent. (USDA-NRCS photos available by contacting Joanna Pope [Joanna.pope@ne.usda.gov](mailto:Joanna.pope@ne.usda.gov))*



This year's theme for Soil and Water Stewardship – "Watersheds, Our Water, Our Home" highlights the many benefits watershed projects provide across Nebraska.

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 [@nebraskanrds](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.

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