

YOUR NRD BASIN

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972

BLUE RIVER

Fall / Winter 2010



BLUE RIVER BASIN

Blue River Basin Water Quality & Quantity FACTS

Groundwater irrigated acres: 1,735,381

Free home water tests (1997-2010):

Nitrate tests: 5,612

Bacteria tests: 927

Wellhead Protection Areas established:

47 communities

*The Blue River Basin is the
"Watershed Capital of Nebraska"...*

Flood control dams built (1972-2010):

194 structures

Recreation areas: 20 sites = 2,833 acres
of water and land managed

Forestry (1975-2010): 4,931,396 trees
sold

Protecting Lives

Hazardous Waste Collections

Trailblazer Resources Conservation and Development, Little Blue NRD, Nuckolls County Road Department, local County Commissioners, and the Superior FFA Chapter sponsored a hazardous waste collection in the Blue River Basin.



This was a FREE service provided by a coalition of organizations and volunteers concerned about the health of our environment, with financial support provided through a grant to the Trailblazer RC&D from the Nebraska Dept. of Environmental Quality Waste Reduction & Recycling Program.

The Red Willow County Hazardous Waste Team performed collections accepting old paint, pesticides, herbicides, oil, cleaning chemicals, fluorescent bulbs, yard/garden chemicals, antifreeze, thermometers/thermostats (mercury items), and auto batteries all FREE OF CHARGE!

11,960 lbs. of paint. *Collection results were astounding!*
4,880 lbs. of pesticides.
452 gallons of oil.
1,040 lbs. of herbicides/lawn chemicals.
37 automotive batteries.

Protecting Property

Groundwater Management Saves Our Most Precious Resource

The first Groundwater Management Area for Quantity was established in 1977 in order to preserve and maintain groundwater levels. As a result, groundwater rules and regulations were first adopted in 1979. Groundwater Management Areas for Quality were put into place across the Blue River Basin in 1993.



Groundwater Management Areas for both Quantity and Quality provide for water metering, allocation, domestic well monitoring, and nitrate and bacteria testing.

These controls protect and preserve our valuable groundwater resources, while at the same time ensuring the economic security of irrigated agriculture.

Protecting the Future

Wellhead Protection Assures Safe Drinking Water

Blue River Basin NRDs are working diligently with communities to develop plans and actions to protect municipal water supplies. This includes educating community members about potential pollution sources, enacting local ordinances, closing abandoned wells, and working with other local and state agencies on Wellhead Protection Area lands in and around cities and villages.

The Blue River Basin NRDs have helped established 46 community Wellhead Protection Area plans across 7,000 square miles.



These communities account for over half of the protection plans for the entire state of Nebraska.



Personal Safety: Knowing my Family is Safe

The Blue River Basin NRDs carry out a variety of projects and programs in groundwater management, flood control, soil erosion prevention, forestry, recreation, and provision of safe drinking water through rural water projects. Blue River Basin NRD staff work hard because they too have families who daily rely upon and use the same resources that they monitor and test.

Flood Control Measures Stand the Test of Heavy Rains to Protect Lives and Property...

While heavy rains throughout much of 2010 had flood control on the minds of many Nebraskans, flood control is always on the minds of NRD officials. Home to the "Watershed Capital of Nebraska," the Blue River Basin consists of many separate watersheds, and as a result, flooding poses a serious risk to lives and property across the basin. In an effort to protect lives and property, the three NRD's across the Blue River Basin have undergone measures to combat the flooding potential. Over 190 flood control dams throughout the basin are realizing that effort by reducing and slowing the rate of run-off into streams and rivers during and after heavy rainfall events.



Flooding disasters have been avoided because of NRD flood control dams and their continual maintenance.

Despite the worthy challenge from storm events in early 2010, all dams across the Blue River Basin withstood the challenge and significantly reduced the impacts from flooding. With a series of new dams being constructed along Turkey Creek, and continued maintenance of existing dams, NRD's are ensuring lives and property will be protected from flooding well into the future.

Irrigation Scheduling Equipment and Water Management Protect Groundwater Resource for Future Generations of Nebraskans...

With higher energy costs and an increased strain on the limited natural resource that is groundwater, never before has the importance of irrigation scheduling and management been more important. With cost-share and educational assistance from the NRD's, producers across the Blue River Basin are using new tools that increase efficiency in irrigation. These tools (Watermark sensors and ET Gages) provide producers with site specific information on the amount of water available to the crop, as well as the crop water use via evapo-transpiration.

Many producers using the equipment have found that they are saving as much as two irrigations without any decrease in yield; saving two irrigations can result in savings as high as \$2,000 for the producer, and save as much as 3 acre-inches of water. The unique ability of the equipment to assist producers' profits, while also accomplishing the goal of protecting water resources for the future, has resulted in an enormous amount of interest, with over 290 producers taking advantage of the cost-share opportunities for purchasing and implementing the irrigation scheduling equipment across the Blue River Basin.



The installation of irrigation scheduling equipment is aiding producers in conserving more water.

Nebraska's NRDs

- Protects lives through flood protection
- Leaders in groundwater management
- Use taxpayer dollars efficiently

Find out more about the Blue River Basin NRDs:

Little Blue NRD
www.littlebluenrd.org

Lower Big Blue NRD
www.lbbnrd.org

Upper Big Blue NRD
www.upperbigblue.org

Formed in 1972, Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts are local government entities with broad responsibilities to protect our natural resources.

NRDs help Nebraskans respond to natural resource challenges with local control and local solutions. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries of the 23 NRDs, each of which is governed by locally elected boards of directors. These directors are elected by registered voters within the Districts. The boards set policy for the Districts and work closely with NRD staff through a committee system to carry out the Districts' goals.

Statewide, NRDs are largely funded by property taxes and make efficient use of those tax dollars; typically a Natural Resources District uses only 1% to 2% percent of all property taxes collected in a county.

Find out more about all of Nebraska's 23 NRDs at
www.nrdnet.org