

KNOW YOUR NRD



LOWER PLATTE NORTH
Natural Resources District
Wahoo, NE

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

Fall 2016

NRD QUICK FACTS:

The Lower Platte North NRD manages natural resources for parts of seven counties along the Platte River.

Flood Control Dams: 46

Irrigation Wells: 4,600+

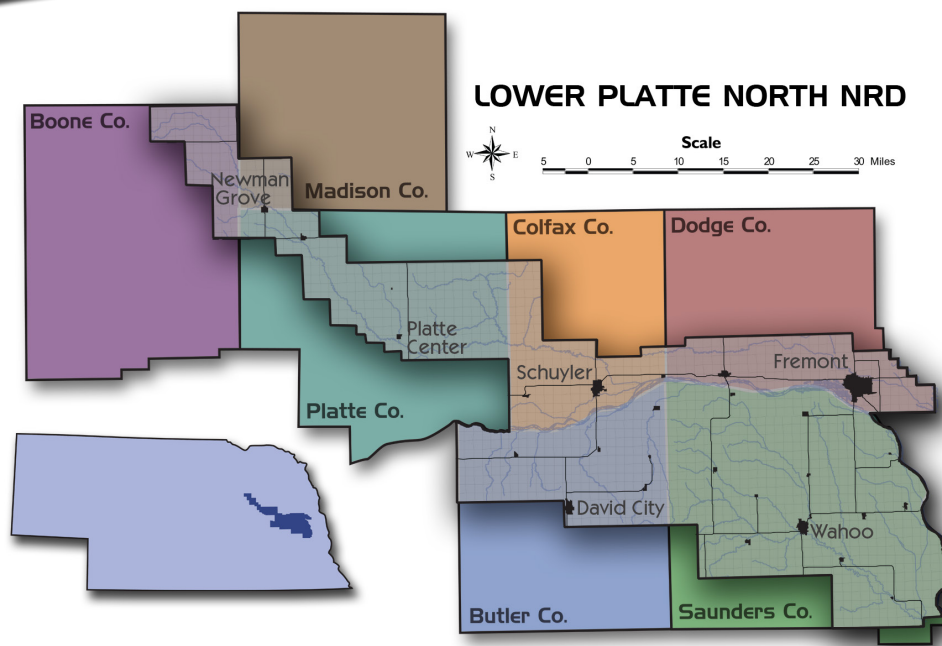
Abandoned Wells: 613 plugged since 1992

Producers Certified in Nitrogen Management: 1,400+

Trees Planted: 862,000+ since 1973

Feet of Terrace & Outlet Constructed in 2014: 23,000+

Residents Served by Rural Water Systems: 250+



PROTECTING LIVES

Dealing With High Nitrates

In 2003 and 2004, the NRD established "Phase II areas" near Bellwood and Richland-Schuyler to deal with elevated nitrate levels in groundwater. Since then, parts of the Bellwood area have shown a slow but steady decline in nitrate, and 11 square miles of the Bellwood Phase II area were moved back to the less restrictive Phase I in spring 2015. Unfortunately, challenges remain for the Richland-Schuyler area. From 2011-2015, more than 60% of the sections in that area were above the trigger level for moving to Phase III management. As a result, all 55 sections in the Richland-Schuyler Phase II area moved to Phase III on September 1, 2015, & 10 sections directly north of the current area moved from Phase I to Phase II.

PROTECTING PROPERTY

Schuyler Levee Project

Major construction was completed in late 2014 on a levee project to help protect Schuyler from flooding. 2½ miles of levee were built along Shell Creek north and east of town. If funding becomes available in the future, Phase 2 of the project will involve additional levees along the Platte River south of town.

With both levees now complete, the project would reduce flooding in Schuyler enough to remove the city from the 100-year flood plain, and residents will no longer be required to carry flood insurance.

The total project cost for Phase I was \$3.9 million, with 65% coming from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the remainder (\$1.37 million) from the local partners (the city of Schuyler and the NRD).

PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Being Water Wise

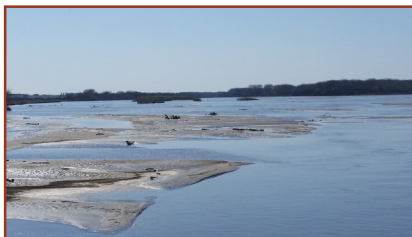
The Lower Platte North NRD works with producers and landowners across the district to protect and conserve the water resources we all depend on.

In 2015, the NRD introduced groundwater allocation for the first time in two "Special Quantity Subareas" within portions of Platte/Colfax and Butler/Saunders counties where groundwater declines are particularly concerning. The district is also working on an Integrated Management Plan that will help guide future water policy.

The ongoing Irrigated Acre Certification program helps protect water rights for existing irrigators in the event that the Lower Platte Basin is declared "fully appropriated" by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

Platte River Protection

The Lower Platte North NRD participates in a number of cooperative projects to help preserve and protect the Platte River and the homes and businesses near it. These projects include ice jam prevention, invasive weed control, and flood and damage reduction. Various partners on the local, state, and federal levels collaborate on many of these efforts.



Soil Conservation and Land Treatment

To help keep water clean and prevent soil erosion, the Lower Platte North NRD provides cost-share assistance to landowners for constructing terrace systems, grassed waterways, small dams, and other conservation measures.



The district also responds to erosion and sediment runoff complaints from area landowners.

Tree Planting and Wildlife Habitat

To encourage tree planting, the Lower Platte North NRD makes low-cost tree and shrub seedlings available to area landowners and communities. The district also

provides planting services, as well as design and technical advice for preparing planting sites. Nearly 1 million trees have been planted through this program since 1973. The district also donates trees to schools and youth groups for Arbor Day and other occasions.

Flood Damage Reduction

At any given time, the Lower Platte North NRD is typically involved in one or more large flood damage reduction projects. Dams, dikes, ditches, and other measures have been built across the district that have prevented millions of dollars in flood damage to farmland and urban areas.



Spring Conservation Sensation

Education

The NRD hosts a variety of activities to help educate the next generation about natural resources issues, including land judging contests for high school students and a natural resources festival for elementary students.

Outdoor Recreation

Looking for a low-cost destination for outdoor fun for the entire family? The

NRD operates three public recreation facilities that offer fishing, hunting, camping, boating and more. Find out more at www.lpnrd.org or www.nrdrec.org.

Water Management

The Lower Platte North NRD closely monitors groundwater quality and quantity throughout the district.

The NRD has taken proactive action to guard against falling water levels with a moratorium on expansion of irrigated acres in parts of Butler and Saunders Counties. The district also hosts training sessions each spring for producers to promote efficient use of water and fertilizer.



Water Quality Initiatives

On September 1, 2015 sections of the Richland-Schuyler Phase II area moved to Phase III of the Groundwater Management Area Plan.

Various requirements for producers in this area were developed to address concerns of high nitrate levels. Additional requirements in Phase III include fertilizer restrictions during the fall and winter, split applications for commercial nitrogen fertilizer use or use of an approved inhibitor, and fertilizer use reporting for pre-plant fertilizer use.

About the NRD

The Lower Platte North NRD is dedicated to the conservation, preservation, and wise use of our natural resources. We are based in Wahoo and cover parts of seven counties in eastern Nebraska. There are 14 staff members at the main office and four clerks and one technician in NRCS field offices. We are governed by 19 locally-elected directors.

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