

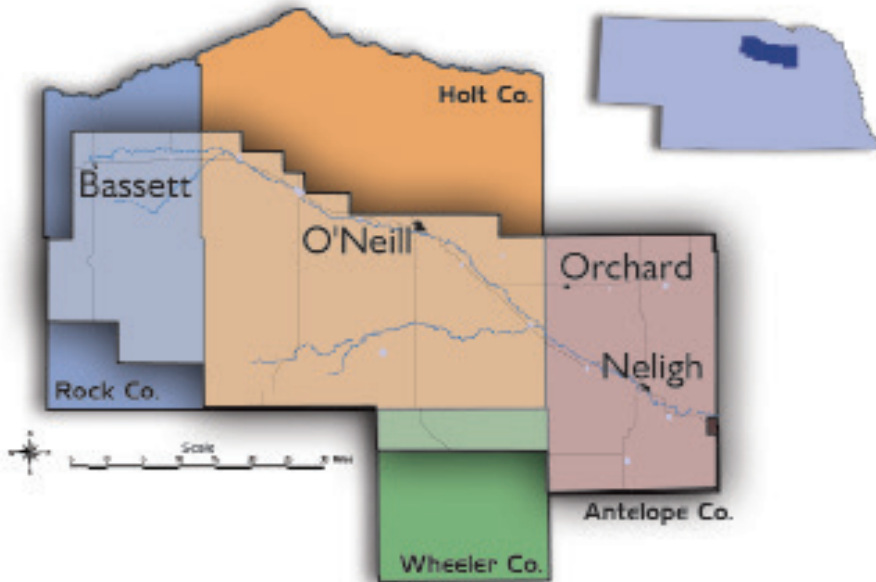
KNOW YOUR NRD



UPPER ELKHORN
Natural Resources District
O'Neill, NE

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

2016



UPPER ELKHORN NRD

UENRD QUICK FACTS:

- UENRD encompasses 3,052 sq miles or 1,953,280 acres
- Niobrara River Basin Designation 233 square miles
- Lower Platte River Basin Designation 2803 sq miles
- District Population - 17,935
- 8149 Registered Wells of which 4781 are for Irrigation
- Collect Data from approximately 600 Irrigation & Monitoring Wells
- Certified over 1,600 Producers in Nitrogen Management
- Maintain a District wide Groundwater Management Area
- Distributed Cost Share to local Co-operators for Conservation Practices throughout the District

Protecting Lives

Protecting Property

Protecting the Future

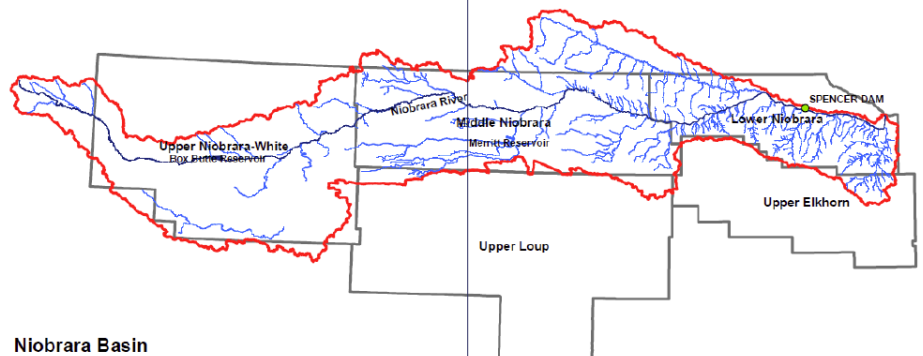
Governor Signs Law to Protect the Niobrara River

LINCOLN -- On April 18th, Governor Pete Ricketts signed Legislative Bill (LB) 1038 into law furthering the process of protecting the flow of water in the Niobrara River.

LB1038, introduced by District 43 Senator Al Davis, allows for the transfer of the water rights associated with the Nebraska Public Power District's (NPPD) Spencer Dam to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission) and the Niobrara River Basin Alliance (NRBA), which is made up of five Natural Resource Districts: Lower Niobrara, Middle Niobrara, Upper Elkhorn, Upper Loup and Upper Niobrara White.

In 2015, NRBA, the Commission and NPPD entered a memorandum of understanding in which the NRBA and the Commission agreed to purchase Spencer Dam from NPPD.

Niobrara River Basin Alliance: Upper Niobrara-White; Middle Niobrara NRD; Lower Niobrara NRD; Upper Loup NRD; and, Upper Elkhorn NRD



- Niobrara Basin**
- Spencer_Dam
 - Niobrara_River
 - Merritt_Reservoir
 - Box_Butte_Reservoir
 - NiobraraBasin
 - NRD_Nio_Basin_Boundary

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Niobrara River continued.....

By purchasing the dam and acquiring the associated surface water rights, the NRBA and Commission will be able to preserve flows necessary for wildlife conservation, recreation, agriculture and other uses in the Niobrara River. Legislation necessary for the transfer of water rights came in the form of Davis' bill.

"The NRDs, the Commission and NPPD appreciate Sen. Davis bringing this bill forward and recognize the efforts of Senator Ken Schilz and the entire Natural Resources Committee for guiding this legislation through the process," said Middle Niobrara Board Member Marty Graff.

Under the legislation, the current hydropower use can be changed to an instream basin management use that will continue to protect flows for fish, wildlife, recreation and agriculture and will allow more flexibility in the implementation of integrated management plans. Such actions could include using excess stream flows for enhancing groundwater recharge, or retiming excess flow using storage to release water into the river during periods of high water demand. Once changed, the water rights will then be transferred to the Commission and the NRDs.

In Nebraska, surface water rights are based on the date issued with older rights getting preference for water in times of shortage. Because of this, a key component of the bill will allow the NRDs and the Commission to maintain the priority dates of NPPD's water rights when they are transferred. The transferred water rights will assist the state of Nebraska in satisfying the National Park Service and United States Fish and Wildlife Service's flow needs on the Wild and Scenic portions of the river. The legislation also protects existing users by allowing water right holders to enter into agreements with the NRDs and the Commission at no additional cost



"This is a local plan for conserving a Nebraska jewel," said Jim Douglas, director of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. "The Commission, the NRDs and NPPD want to ensure that the future of the Niobrara River will be decided by the citizens of the state, with the best interests of all stakeholders and users in mind. All parties are proud to be working together to achieve a diverse set of goals for a valuable Nebraska resource." The law goes into effect July 21, 2016.

BGWMA Maps Area Aquifer

Through a grant, the Bazile Groundwater Management Area project was able to conduct aerial electromagnetic surveys or AEM surveys. This summer Aqua Geo Frameworks flew over the area to help producers and NRD personnel gain a greater insight into the underground aquifer systems; and, how to better manage our water resources.

UENRD Certifying GW Irrigated Acres

The Upper Elkhorn NRD is Continuing to CERTIFY ALL Groundwater Irrigated Acres within the district. Historically irrigated acres or acres that have been brought back into production need to be certified for any possibility of future groundwater irrigation. Get started by visiting the UENRD website at www.uenrd.org for further information on the certification process. Also, landowners who have not responded to the certification letters that were sent to you should do so as soon as possible! To complete the certification process, please contact the UENRD office at 402-336-3867 and schedule an appointment.

- Protecting Your Health through Water Quality
- Protecting Your Taxes through Local Control
- Protecting Our Natural Resources for Future Generations

Created by the Nebraska Legislature in 1969 with the passage of LB 1356, Nebraska's NRDs began operating on July 1, 1972. NRDs were formed using Nebraska's 13 major river basins to offer local solutions to local problems. Locally elected officials establish District policies to address the needs of our specific area. This unique form of local government assures that the concerns of the upper reaches of the Elkhorn River Basin are addressed by the people being affected. Locally led conservation for your future.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD continues to maintain a responsible budget to lessen the property tax burdens of its friends and neighbors. This has been accomplished by obtaining additional funding through the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Dept of Environmental Quality 319 Grants. The FY 15-16 budget request is only 1.78 cents per \$100 of valuation and a total of \$712,400 in property tax asking.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD Board of Directors meet on the 4th Monday of every month at the Upper Elkhorn NRD Office in O'Neill, unless otherwise noted in the public notice. Everyone is welcome to attend and share their thoughts or concerns for our natural resources.