

IN THE LOUP

Koehlmoos, Bowder Honored at Conference

Former Lower Loup NRD Manager Leon “Butch” Koehlmoos and St. Paul High School Ag Instructor Boyd Bowder were each honored by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) at its annual conference.

Koehlmoos was one of three men selected for the Hall of Fame in 2020. Due to the COVID pandemic, his induction was delayed to 2021. He retired in 2017 after 40 years with the NRD.

Bowder was named the recipient of the Natural Resources Educator of the Year Award for 2020. The

NARD presents the award annually to recognize outstanding natural resources education efforts in Nebraska.



Koehlmoos

Under Koehlmoos’ management, the Lower Loup NRD designated its first groundwater quality areas, and using a study known as the Elkhorn-Loup Modeling Project, sought to determine the effects on future groundwater development. This included process development

for granting variances and certifying irrigated acres.

Bowder has been an agriculture education instructor for 17 years. He has taught at SEM and St. Paul. His students have a tradition of success at Envirothon and range judging contests, as well as other agricultural competitions.

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District nominated both men for their awards.



Bowder

LLNRD Grants New Irrigated Acres in 3 Basins

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District Board of Directors has approved applications for 2,950.96 new irrigated acres across three sub-basins.

New Irrigated Acres by County

Howard County	853.99 acres
Valley County	540.52 acres
Greeley County	519.91 acres
Boone County	514.61 acres
Custer County	273.05 acres
Platte County	138.35 acres
Nance County	89.37 acres
Garfield County	16.01 acres

At their October meeting, the Board agreed to approve applications which scored up to, but did not exceed the maximum acres for each sub-basin. Those limits were 1,500 acres in the North Loup Basin, 750 acres in the Middle Loup Basin, and 750 acres in the Beaver Creek/Plum Creek/Loup River Basin.

Additional acres could be granted in an area of groundwater increase in Valley, Garfield, and Loup Counties. The LLNRD’s Variance Committee will consider the possibility and make a recommendation on a variance to the District’s rules to the Board.

Letters have been mailed to all applicants notifying them of their outcomes. Certification forms have been sent with all approval letters. The deadline for certification of the new irrigated acres is July 1, 2022.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Watershed/Flood Plan Developed	2
Cover Crop Cost-Share Programs	2
Message From The Manager	3
Flowmeter Cost-Share in Final Year	3
Conservation Tree Sales Underway	4

Watershed/Flood Prevention Plans Developed

Work on development of Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Plans continues in two watersheds - the Mud Creek Watershed in central Custer County and the Mira Creek Watershed in southeastern Valley County. The watershed residents, the Lower Loup NRD, NRCS, and other agencies are part of the process to create the two plans.

In Mud Creek, the plan includes implementing flooding prevention projects to protect the communities of Merna, Broken Bow, Berwyn, Ansley, Mason City, and Litchfield. The area encompassed in the watershed totals 474,080 acres.

In the Mira Creek Watershed, only the community of North Loup is impacted by the development of the plan, but the community has historically struggled with major flooding events.

Both plans have a goal of increasing flood prevention and providing overall watershed protection, specifically targeting communities that would gain the most benefit while also implementing conservation practices identified in the plan. If the plan is accepted, both the conservation practices and future projects would be eligible for federal funding through the NRCS.

One of the primary requirements of the plan is to have guided input through local stakeholders, public agencies, landowners, the communities impacted, and any other interested parties. Successful development and implementation of the projects associated with the plan depend on an active group of stakeholders.

For both the Mira Creek and Mud Creek WFPOs, the LLNRD has contracted JEO Consulting of Lincoln to develop the plans. The development will follow NRCS guidelines and take approximately two years to complete.

Cover Crop Cost-Share Offered in Two Areas

The LLNRD will be offering a voluntary cost-share program to encourage the use of cover crops as a nutrient management tool on irrigated cropland in Groundwater Management Area 29 in northeastern Wheeler County and Area 30 in eastern Platte County. Cover crops have been shown to be beneficial in limiting nitrate movement through the soil profile. Eligible fields in Area 29 include all groundwater irrigated corn acres. Eligible fields in Area 30 include all groundwater irrigated acres within the management area.

To apply for cost-share, eligible producers will apply on LLNRD forms and commence with planting of the cover crop after approval. Producers must adhere to the NRCS's cover crop standards and

specifications for planting and terminating the cover crop. The cost-share payment is a flat \$30/acre rate up to \$4,500/field and split into two payments, with 50% of the payment paid after planting in the fall and submitting invoices/receipts to the LLNRD. The remaining 50% is distributed in the spring after ensuring the cover crop has been allowed to produce as much biomass as possible following LLNRD inspection.



Cover crop cost-share is available in two LLNRD Groundwater Areas.

As a condition of receiving cover crop cost-share, the participant must plant a minimum of three species in the cover crop mix. Multi-species cover crops have been shown to be more beneficial to cropland and soil health by introducing diversity into the field and maximize nutrient uptake. All cover crops must be planted prior to November 1st. The producer also must allow the cover crop to produce as much biomass as possible without hindering the planting of the following year's crop.

If your fields are located within Areas 29 or 30 and you are interested in implementing multi-species cover crops in Fall, 2022, contact Dan Ruterbories at the LLNRD, (308) 728-3221.

A Message From The Manager

Welcome to another edition of “In The Loup,” the LLNRD’s quarterly newsletter.

One of our current projects is called the “Columbus Recharge Project.” This project addresses groundwater declines in an area southeast of Columbus. This issue was discovered as groundwater levels in wells in this area were measured.

The use of agricultural, domestic, and industrial wells was identified as one of the causes. The success of the Lost Creek Flood Project, which diverted water around the community to avoid flooding, added to the declines as it moved potential aquifer recharge water around town.

The District hired HDR Engineering to investigate options to reverse the declines in the aquifers in this area. The consulting engineers developed a plan to move water from the Loup Power Canal into the old Lost Creek channel. There, the water can seep into the soil to recharge the aquifer.

The second phase of the project pipes water into the lake at Christopher’s Cove. That lake, a former sand pit, is a direct conduit to groundwater and will serve as another point of recharge. The power canal water source will have completed its primary purpose, power generation, and can now be used for a secondary purpose, replenishing groundwater.



**LLNRD General Manager
Russell Callan**

The Columbus Recharge Project is the result of a successful partnership developed by the Lower Loup Natural Resources District, the City of Columbus, Platte County, ADM, and the Christopher’s Cove Homeowners Association.

NRD Flowmeter Cost-Share Enters Final Year

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District (LLNRD) is again offering a cost-share program for flowmeters. This is the final year for the program.

The LLNRD is combining Environmental Trust funds with matching funds from the District toward the purchase of flowmeters to accurately record water use. The NRD received \$25,000 this past year from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the “Integrated Management Data Acquisition Program.”

Flowmeters are a management tool that can aid producers in supplying the right amount of water at the correct time to their growing crops.

As inputs like fertilizer continue to increase in price, it is important to remember that over-watering can drive those critical nutrients past the active root zone.



LLNRD cost-share for flowmeters is in its final year.

In areas where nitrate from fertilizer has already reached the water table, irrigators can use well pumping numbers to know how much nitrogen credit they can capitalize on each time they apply water, thus reducing the amount of nitrate that needs to be applied to the current crop and ultimately saving money.

The Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992, providing over \$349 million in grants to over 2,400 projects in the state.

For information on cost-share assistance, contact Water Programs Specialist Jason Moudry at the LLNRD, (308) 728-3221.



2620 Airport Drive
Ord, Nebraska 68862

Phone: 308-728-3221

Fax: 308-728-5669

E-mail: larrys@llnrd.org

www.llnrd.org

Nebraska's NRDs . . .

**Protecting Lives, Protecting
Property, Protecting the Future.**

IN THE LOUP is a publication of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District. It is published quarterly by the **LLNRD** and is distributed to the residents of the 16 counties that make up the District. **IN THE LOUP** is edited by Larry Schultz, NRD Information/Education Coordinator.

Conservation Tree Sales Are Underway

The Lower Loup Natural Resources District began accepting orders for conservation tree and shrub seedlings on November 1st. The trees are sold across the District to landowners seeking to implement windbreaks, wildlife habitat, buffer strips, or other conservation practices.

Each tree or shrub is a two-year-old bare root seedling and approximately 12 to 18 inches tall. The price on all trees and shrubs is \$1.05 per seedling plus sales tax. Each species must be ordered in lots of 25. Property owners can hand plant the trees and shrubs or request the NRD machine plant them.

The Lower Loup's machine planting charge is 75 cents per tree, plus tax,

and the minimum charge is \$200. The District also provides a weed spraying service. The charge is \$45 plus \$3 per hundred feet of row.

Cost-share assistance may be available. More information can be found from your nearest Natural Resources Conservation Service office or from the Lower Loup Natural Resources District.

North Central District Forester Richard Woollen of the Nebraska Forest Service said seedlings are sold on a first come, first served basis and supplies are limited. The forester suggested landowners contact the NRCS to get the planning process underway. He said that getting an early start will ensure a good species selection.

To order conservation trees, contact your local NRCS office, visit llnrd.org, or call the Lower Loup NRD at (308) 728-3221.



LEARN ABOUT ALL THE BENEFITS OF
PLANTING CONSERVATION TREES
AT LLNRD.ORG
OR CALL (308) 728-3221