

Lower Loup Natural Resources District

# IN THE LOUP

**Static Water Levels (SWL) are taken from wells across the Lower Loup Natural Resources District each spring.**

**Here are the average increases/declines in feet by county from Spring 2012 to Spring 2013:**

- Boone -4.17
- Buffalo -3.31
- Custer -2.30
- Garfield -0.81
- Greeley -2.71
- Howard -2.49
- Loup -0.80
- Nance -2.82
- Platte -4.35
- Sherman -2.59
- Valley -1.48
- Wheeler -2.90

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## Groundwater Levels Average 2 1/2 Feet Drop

In spring 2013, groundwater levels across the Lower Loup Natural Resources District showed the biggest decline since the NRD began measurements in 1976. Groundwater levels across the District averaged a 2 1/2 feet decline when measured by NRD staff this spring.

Assistant General Manager Russ Callan said that the readings showed that there was only a one foot average recovery in the static water levels from the readings taken in the fall, which showed a 3 1/2 feet decline.

The Lower Loup NRD is divided into ten water quantity areas. The readings taken in the spring

are compared to levels taken in 1982, the base year for water quantity measures in the District.

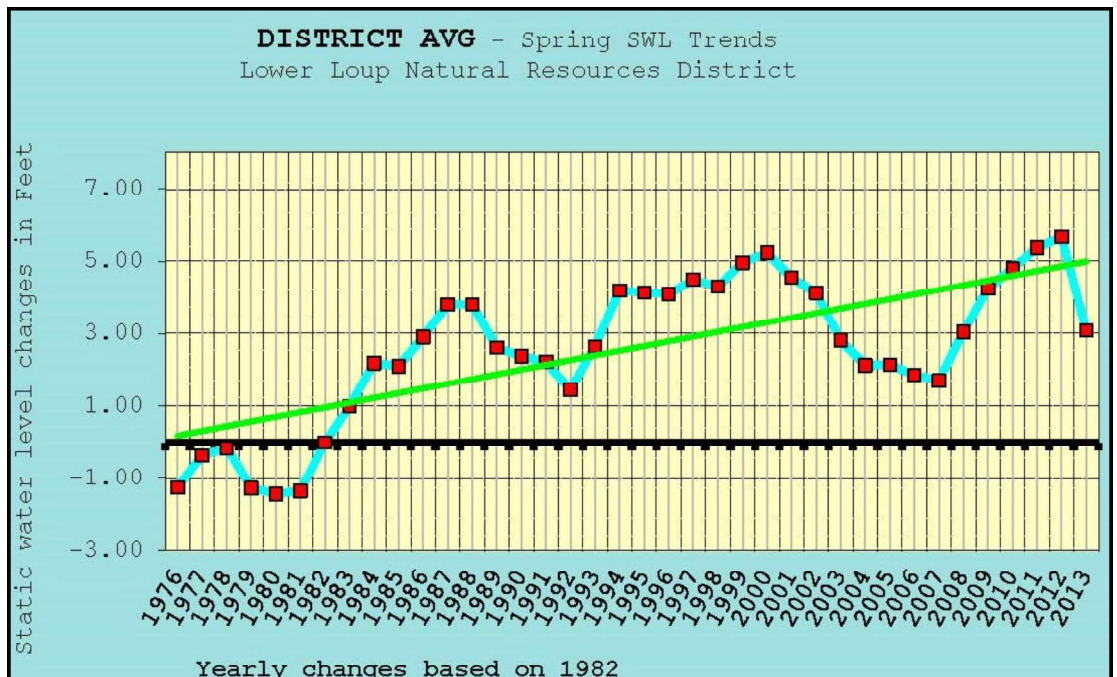
Callan said that 350 wells in the District are measured twice a year. He said that the NRD attempts to measure a well within every nine square miles, with more readings in areas showing problems or discrepancies.

The groundwater measurements were taken in March and April, prior to the early May snow and rain showers which crossed the District.

The graph below shows that groundwater levels in the

LLNRD declined an average 2 1/2 feet from the previous spring readings. However, levels remain above the baseline set in 1982 and continue to reflect an overall upward trend in levels.

Complete static water level data is available on the Lower Loup NRD web site, [www.llnrd.org](http://www.llnrd.org). Just click on the "2013 Spring Static Water Level Monitoring Program" approximately halfway down the page on the right side.



## LLNRD Board Says No New Irrigated Acres



After a vote of the NRD Board of Directors, there will be no new irrigation granted in the Lower Loup NRD in 2013

There will be no applications for new irrigated acres in the Lower Loup Natural Resources District this year.

District General Manager Leon “Butch” Koehlmoos said that the LLNRD Board decided instead to monitor groundwater levels following last year’s drought and then reconsider new irrigation in 2014.

NRD Assistant Manager Russ

Callan said that the LLNRD granted 10,000 acres of new irrigation over four years, under LB-483, a bill passed by the Nebraska Legislature.

That bill allowed limited groundwater irrigation development by NRDs in river basins where a fully-appropriated designation had been reversed. Such a designation was reversed for the lower Platte River Basin in

2008. The new irrigated acres were granted from 2009 to 2012.

Callan said that there is often a one-year lag in effects on the aquifer from groundwater pumping, so better data on the drought’s effect on aquifer levels will be available in the spring of 2014.

## Ord Team Third At State Envirothon Contest

A team of students from Ord High School finished third in the Nebraska Envirothon contest held May 4, 2013, at the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District in Omaha.

The Nebraska Envirothon is a competition designed to test students’ knowledge of the natural environment. Students compete in seven categories: forestry, range, soils, wildlife, aquatics, policy and

a current environmental issue. For 2013, that topic was sustainable rangeland management.

Ord, the lone team from the Lower Loup NRD competing in the contest, had the top scores in two areas of the competition, first in Range and tied with Medicine Valley for first in Soils. The Ord team members were Hannah Wadas, Sydney Boden, Taylor Hornickel, and Elizabeth

Todsens.

A team from Concordia High School in Omaha finished first in the contest and will represent Nebraska at the North American Envirothon in Bozeman, Montana the first week of August. Over 50 teams from across the U.S. and Canada are expected to participate.

*Nebraska’s NRDs...  
Protecting Lives  
Protecting Property  
Protecting The Future*

## Electrical Service Approved For Rec Area



Electricity at Davis Creek Recreation Area means security lighting for restrooms, boat ramps and picnic shelters.

A bid for electrical service at the Davis Creek Recreation Area south of North Loup has been approved by the LLNRD Board of Directors.

The recreation area currently offers no overhead security lighting or electrically pumped water. The process to bring electrical service will require overhead lines to be connected to existing service by Loup Valleys Rural Public Power District.

Those lines will then be buried at the entrance to the recreation area to comply with US Bureau of Reclamation rules. Three transformers would also be placed on the recreation area grounds. Security lighting will be established at restrooms, the boat ramps, and the picnic shelter.

NRD General Manager Leon “Butch” Koehlmoos said that the addition of electrical security lighting means improved safety for users of the

recreation area. The electric pumps for water will also improve water quality over the old hand pumps.

Koehlmoos said that having electrical service in place means that electrical outlets could eventually be offered in the campground area. That addition will be considered by the Lower Loup NRD Board of Directors sometime in the future.

## A Message From The Manager

Welcome to another edition of *In the Loup*. Thank you for taking a look at all the information we have gathered for this newsletter.

In past editions, I have described the NRD and some of its programs and projects. In this edition, I'd like to introduce some of the people who get this work done on a daily basis. With a headquarters office and eight field offices located over nearly 8,000 square miles, all the work takes good and dedicated staff. Currently, we have 28 full-time people working for the Lower Loup NRD.

The NRD's Columbus and Albion Field Offices are located in your local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offices. The NRCS is our federal partner in getting conservation on the land and NRD staff work in partnership with NRCS staff to provide services to the public.

In Columbus, Ona Foland has been with the District for a distinguished 40 years of ser-

vice. In Albion, Kandis Bremer has been with the NRD for 14 years. Ona and Kandis' duties include serving as receptionists for the office and working with the public on both federal and NRD programs.



The pair are the NRD's local contacts for constituents in their areas. NRD Field Office Secretaries are familiar with all our programs and can assist you in heading the right direction for cost-share assistance, well and chemigation permitting, irrigated acre questions, and other programs of the District.

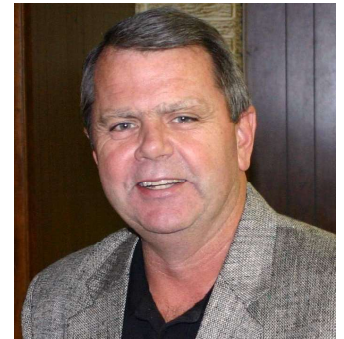
Ed Drozd is also your local NRD contact in the region. His duties include water



quantity and quality monitoring, chemigation inspections, tree sales and planning, field inspection and working with local landowners in a multitude of programs. Ed has served the NRD for 17 years and has been a tremendous asset to the Nance, Platte, and Boone Counties area.



I hope those of you who reside in the eastern part of our District, as well as the rest of the LLNRD, take the opportunity to meet our staff and allow us to assist you in any way we can to protect and conserve our natural resources.



Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos is the General Manager of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District.

## More Funding Approved For Grazing Program

Livestock producers in the Lower Loup Natural Resources District waiting for funds for planned grazing systems may see progress in cost-share assistance after a transfer of funds has been approved by the Lower Loup Natural Resources District Board of Directors.

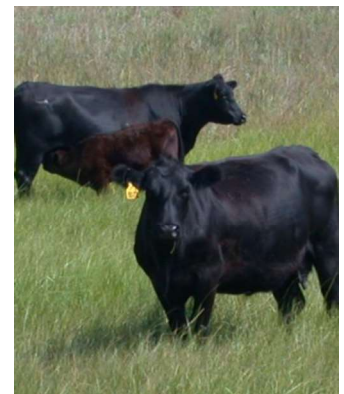
The Board approved a recommendation from the District's Programs/Projects Committee to utilize \$200,000 in funding from the project participation budget to fund a shortfall in

the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP) funding. As part of their approval, the LLNRD Board put a hold on any new approvals for cost-share requests from NSWCP until state funding can be determined.

NRD General Manager Leon "Butch" Koehlmoos told the NRD Board that the drought had ramped up the number of requests for program funding for planned grazing systems. He said that demand had cre-

ated a backlog.

NSWCP provides state financial assistance to Nebraska landowners for the installation of approved soil and water conservation measures that improve water quality, conserve water, and help control erosion and sedimentation.



Additional funds for planned grazing systems have been released by the LLNRD Board of Directors for cost-share assistance .





2620 Airport Drive

Phone: 308-728-3221  
Fax: 308-728-5669  
E-mail: larrys@llnrd.org  
www.llnrd.org

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*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. Questions regarding information in this newsletter can be directed to the NRD using the contact information at left. IN THE LOUP is edited by Larry Schultz, NRD Information/Education Coordinator.*

## NRD Receives ET Grants For Recreation Area & Grass Drill

Grants awarded to the Lower Loup Natural Resources District by the Nebraska Environmental Trust will benefit landowners and recreation users in the NRD. The Environmental Trust has announced that two grant applications from the District will receive funding in 2013.

The LLNRD will receive \$240,000 over three years for work at the Pibel Lake Recreation Area in Wheeler County. The work includes improved recreation facilities at the lake and construction of a sediment trap on the upper end of the lake to improve water quality. Work has been done to remove large, hazard-

ous trees to improve the landscape.

The NRD will work with an engineering consultant to design the sediment structure to accommodate inflows coming into the lake from Clear Creek. This structure will slow the influx of water to allow sediments and nutrients to settle out before they can get into the lake.

ADA-compliant handicap parking will be created and fishing docks will be added at two spots on the lake. The NRD will also repair damage to the dam from flooding events

in 2009 and 2010, including improvements to the outlet structure downstream from the lake to control bank erosion.

During the final phase of the project, a picnic shelter and new playground equipment will be installed in the picnic area on the dam. This project will work in tandem with the NRD's EPA 319 project to improve water quality in the Clear Creek Basin.



The LLNRD was also awarded an ET grant of \$20,000, matched by \$10,000 in NRD funds, for a new no-till grass drill. The new Truax

OTG 7512 will be the District's second no-till drill.

Conservation Technician Jason Moudry said that the new drill will allow landowners to plant both cool and warm season grasses and promote soil conservation, water quality, and wildlife habitat plantings. No-till drills better handle light, fluffy grass seeds like big and little bluestem.