

EVERGREENS	QUANTITY
CONCOLOR FIR	
BLACK HILLS SPRUCE	
COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE	
NORWAY SPRUCE	
EASTERN WHITE PINE	
JACK PINE	
PONDEROSA PINE	
RED CEDAR	
DECIDUOUS TREES	
AMERICAN LINDEN	
BLACK WALNUT	
BUR OAK	
CATALPA	
COMMON PERSIMMON	
COTTONWOOD (SEEDLESS)	
CRABAPPLE	
EASTERN RED BUD	
HACKBERRY	
HAZELNUT	
RED MAPLE	
RED OAK	
SHAGBARK HICKORY	
SILVER MAPLE	
SUGAR MAPLE	
SWAMP WHITE OAK	
SHRUBS	
AMERICAN PLUM	
BUFFALOBERRY	
CARAGANA	
CHOKEBERRY	
CHOKECHERRY	
COTONEASTER	
ELDERBERRY	
GOLDEN CURRANT	
GRAPEVINE	
HARDY APRICOT	
LILAC (COMMON)	
NANKING CHERRY	
REDOSIER DOGWOOD	
SANDCHERRY	
SERVICEBERRY	
SKUNKBUSH SUMAC	
TOTAL TREES ORDERED	
PRICE PER TREE	\$1.25

WEED BARRIER SQUARES	=	PRICE		QUANTITY
MESH TREE PROTECTORS +	=	\$1.00	X	
5 SPECIES ACREAGE PKG*	=	\$65.00	X	
5 SPECIES WILDLIFE PKG*	=	\$65.00	X	
5 SPECIES FLOWERING PKG*	=	\$65.00	X	
TOTAL				
TAX 7.50%				
Subtotal				
HANDLING				\$2.20
TOTAL DUE =				

5 SPECIES ACREAGE PKG* 10 EACH: BUR OAK, COTONEASTER, SWAMP WHITE OAK, CRABAPPLE, REDOSIER DOGWOOD.
5 SPECIES WILDLIFE PKG* 10 EACH: CHOKECHERRY, ELDERBERRY, AMERICAN PLUM, GOLDEN CURRANT, REDOSIER DOGWOOD.
5 SPECIES FLOWERING PKG* 10 EACH: SERVICEBERRY, REDOSIER DOGWOOD, COMMON LILAC, CRABAPPLE, CARAGANA.

HAND PLANTS 2024

RETURN YOUR ORDER TO:
Lower Big Blue NRD
P.O. Box 826 Phone: (402) 228-3402
Beatrice NE 68310

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

MEMO

Pay Online or Find More Information at:
www.lbbnrd.net

PLEASE MARK WHERE YOU WILL PICK UP YOUR TREES

BEATRICE

FAIRBURY

WILBER

ORDERING INFORMATION

Trees are not guaranteed
Order in multiples of 25 per species only
Payment required when order is placed
Payment by cash, check or credit card
Last day to order is March 1, 2024

WEED BARRIER SQUARES: \$1.50 EACH
3X3 SQUARE & FIVE 9-GAUGE PINS
MESH TREE PROTECTORS: \$1.00 EACH
18" HIGH, EVERGREENS, BAMBOO STAKE

Now Accepting



NO SPECIES SUBSTITUTIONS FOR PKGS*

OFFICE USE ONLY

Payment Method: Check ☐ Cash ☐ Credit Card ☐

Payment Amount

Check Number

Prepared by

Date

Protecting Lives. Protecting Property. Protecting the Future.

Lower Big Blue
Natural Resources District

805 Dorsey Street
Beatrice, NE 68310
Phone: (402) 228.3402
Fax: (402) 223.4441
www.lbbnrd.net

Watershed Capital of Nebraska

“Protecting Lives, Protecting Property,
Protecting The Future”

January 2024

THE BLUE BUZZ

LOWER BIG BLUE NRD

Groundwater Management Update

The Directors and Staff of the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District continue working to proactively manage groundwater quality and quantity. Following the annual review of fall groundwater levels at its regular monthly board meeting on December 8, 2022, and recognizing the impacts of the ongoing drought, the Board of Directors took action to impose an immediate 180-day moratorium, or stay, on the construction of new wells and increases in irrigated acres pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §46.707(2).

Since that time, the Board has been working to revise its *Groundwater Quantity Rules and Regulations*, which has included contracting with Olsson Inc. to study the hydrogeologic characteristics of the district. In June 2023, following a public hearing on the temporary 180-day stay, the options available to the Board were to let the stay expire or essentially transition to a permanent stay. Due to the ongoing drought and the ongoing study and work toward more localized groundwater management, the Board opted to transition to a permanent stay. It is not the intent, however, of the NRD to remain in a permanent districtwide moratorium any longer than it takes to complete this important work.

Simultaneously, the NRD has begun airborne electromagnetic hydrogeologic mapping (AEM) efforts utilizing the Natural Resources Commission’s (NRC’s) Water Sustainability Fund (WSF). This data, collected using a helicopter and electromagnetic induction, does not replace borehole data, but augments it to help delineate aquifer formations. Ultimately, the NRD intends to collect this data districtwide with the support of WSF funding, as it is incredibly useful for potential well siting for producers and communities, studying aquifer characteristics and extents for sustainable groundwater management, and helping to determine connectivity for understanding groundwater quality and quantity conflict implications. Over time, the District will develop a hydrogeologic framework for even better understanding and managing groundwater supplies.

2024 Tree Program

Convenient Ways to Order

Scan the QR code with your smartphone
AND
Mail the form with a check
OR



Pay the total online via Credit Card or Echeck
OR

Call the NRD @ 402-228-3402
OR

Fill out the form on the back of this newsletter
AND

Mail the form with a check or pay online

- 6 Evergreens
- 16 Conifers
- Planting, design assistance, tree protectors, weed barriers and ground preparation available*
- 16 Deciduous
- 3 Plant packages

*Some services require a minimum order; trees must be ordered in multiples of 25; trees are not guaranteed.

It may seem hard to believe but its time to start planning for spring planting. The Lower Big Blue NRD is once again taking orders for bare root seedlings Order your trees and shrubs today! A well placed wind-break reduces snow loads, provides shelter for livestock and can dramatically reduce home energy costs.

Order Tree Seedlings!!
Now-March 1st

Lower Big Blue NRD Hosts contests for Nebraska High School Students

Schools from around the state gathered at the Homestead National Historical Park on September 27th, 2023, for the State Range Judging contest. There were 428 contestants representing 46 schools. Contestants competed both individually and in teams and were tested on grassland characteristics and plant identification of rangelands which makes up half of Nebraska's land area. In the senior division team competition, the winning team was from West Holt, with teams from Burwell and St. Paul claiming second and third, respectively. In the junior division, West Holt, Burwell and Sargent teams held the top three spots. Full results are available at: https://www.nrdnet.org/sites/default/files/state_range_judging_results_2023.pdf The range judging contest is sponsored by the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District, the Nebraska Society for Range Management and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Range Management students from Southeast Community College provided help with the scoring of cards.



On October 4th, 2023, 335 students converged on the Joe and Deb Thimm farm near Beatrice for the southeast area land judging contest. Contestants represented Beatrice, Diller-Odell, Fairbury, Falls City, Johnson Brock, Johnson County Central, Lewiston, Meridian, Nebraska City, Palmyra, Pawnee City, Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca, Wymore and Tri County participated. Students are tested on physical features of the soil that included: texture, permeability, thickness, wetness, slope, erosion, depth, and organic matter. Johnson Brock placed first in the team competition with Falls City, Pawnee City and Syracuse placing second, third and fourth, respectively.



Full results can be found at: <https://www.nrdnet.org/nebraska-land-judging-soil-evaluation> The Land Judging Contest is sponsored by the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District, in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Top Right: Students walk tallgrass prairie at the Homestead National Historical Park. The Heritage Center in the background takes its shape from the ploughshare which shaped the untouched earth for early settlers. Bottom: Retired NRCS Soil Scientist Mark Willoughby gives instructions to student competitors from the bed of a pickup.

Regenerative Ag Conference to be held in Seward

This event for producers and crop consultants will be an opportunity to learn about regenerative ag practices, what funding is available for these practices, and how to utilize them to be more profitable and sustainable. It will feature speaker Mitchell Hora, farmer and CEO of Continuum Ag, and will be hosted by the Upper Big Blue, Little Blue, Lower Big Blue, and Lower Platte South NRDs, In addition to Mitchell Hora, Keith Berns of Green Cover Seed will present, as will a panel of producers who are incorporating regenerative ag practices. The day will also include a screening of the film To Which We Belong, followed by a discussion led by Berns, who is featured in the film. Register by February 14th using the QR code provided or by visiting <https://www.upperbigblue.org/regenerative-ag>



Lower Big Blue NRD Newsletter

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Questions or comments regarding the newsletter may be directed to the office of the Lower Big Blue NRD by phone at (402) 228.3402; by fax at (402) 223.4441; by email at kimmerling@lbbnrd.net; or by mail at:

Lower Big Blue NRD
805 Dorsey Street
P.O. Box 826
Beatrice, NE 68310

The Lower Big Blue NRD is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Lower Big Blue NRD Board of Directors

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Ryan Birkett

Wilber—Sub-District 1

Darrell Rains

Beatrice—Sub-District 2

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Beatrice—Sub-District 6

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What's in Your Water?

Levels of nitrates in drinking water over 10 parts per million are considered high. Elevated nitrates can pose health risks to infants, children, the elderly and expectant mothers. High nitrate water should be treated by reverse osmosis or ion exchange systems. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy will begin administering funds in April 2023 to provide cost-share for these types of systems. \$1.2 million in funding will be available on a first come, first serve basis and homeowners may apply beginning January 1, 2023 . If applications outweigh available funds, applicants will be ranked based on their nitrate levels. Private wells are eligible for up to \$4,000 in rebates to install treatment systems. In order to be eligible for the program, homeowners must:

1. Register their well with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.
2. Submit a test of their water to the state lab.
3. Obtain and submit a quote from an installer for the system.

A test will be completed after the installation to confirm the levels have dropped to 10 ppm. More information can be found at <http://dee.ne.gov/Publica.nsf/pages/22-051>, by calling 402-471-2186 or use your smartphone to scan the QR codes at the right.

PRIVATE WELLS MUST BE REGISTERED WITH THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Check if your well is registered:



Water well registration instructions:



GET YOUR WELL TESTED BY THE STATE LABORATORY

Request a test kit:



Fall 2023 Groundwater Level Measurements

The Lower Big Blue NRD measures the static water level of 172 irrigation and dedicated monitoring wells around the District every Spring (usually the first week in April) and Fall (usually the first week in November). Fall 2023 county average readings are listed below.

County	No. of Wells	Change Fall '22 to Fall '23	Change Spring '23to Fall '23
Gage	27	-0.41'	-5.96'
Jefferson	24	-0.92'	-6.49'
Saline	42	-1.05'	-4.32'
Monitoring Wells	47	-0.09'	-5.89'
Blue River Compact	32	-1.91'	-4.01'
District-Wide	172	-0.88'	-5.33'



Phase II Nitrogen Management Area Reminders

Since 1997, 60 square miles of the Lower Big Blue have been designated as a Phase II Nitrogen Management Area. Anyone who oversees the application of nitrogen fertilizer to fields within this area must do so in accordance with special provisions in the Lower Big Blue NRD groundwater management plan. If you farm in the one of the outlined sections, the following rules apply to you.

- **Application Window:** Fall application of commercial nitrogen is not permitted until after November 1st; applications to fall seeded crops like wheat are permitted.
- **Education:** Operators are required to attend certification classes every four years.
- **Demonstration Field:** operators must use their largest irrigated field or largest dryland field if they have no irrigation; operators with multiple land-lords are required to have one demonstration field per landlord.
- **Annual Reporting:**
Irrigation water analysis for nitrate concentrations; tests are available free of charge from the NRD.
Deep soil nitrate analysis— 3 samples are eligible for cost share from the NRD at \$50/sample
Fertilizer applications; amount of water applied & actual yield
- Certification forms **must** be returned to the NRD by March 1st of each year.

