



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH
natural resources district

Know Your NRD • Spring 2025

PROTECTING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

3125 Portia St, Lincoln, NE



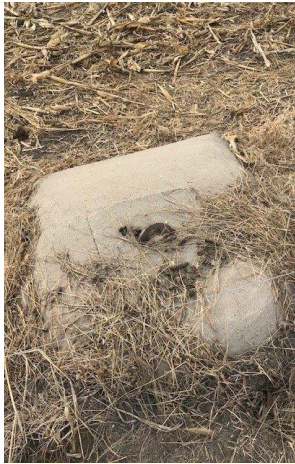
402-476-2729

HIDDEN DANGERS BELOW:

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND SAFELY SEAL OLD WELLS ON YOUR PROPERTY

If you own property in the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD), you may have an old well without realizing it. Unused or improperly sealed wells can pose serious risks to groundwater quality, as well as to people and animals.

Wells that are no longer in use can serve as direct pathways for contaminants—such as fertilizers, pesticides, and animal waste—and reach the underground aquifer, which supplies drinking water to local communities. Additionally, open or unsealed wells are dangerous; children, pets, and wildlife can fall into them, resulting in serious injury or even death.



Signs That You May Have an Old Well on Your Property

If you are unsure whether an old well exists on your land, here are some clues to look for:

- A low spot or depression in your yard
- A windmill or remnants of one (such as a concrete pad where legs once stood)
- A fenced-off area with pipes sticking out of the ground
- Flat stones, concrete slabs, old boards, or metal sheets that might be covering a well shaft
- An old stock tank in an overgrown section of your property
- A pitless adapter or well pit inside a shed, pump house, or crawl space

Assistance for Decommissioning a Well

Lower Platte South NRD provides cost-share assistance to help landowners properly decommission unused wells. Sealing a well correctly is a straightforward way to protect our water supply and community health. Contact the NRD for information on the well-decommissioning program or assistance in determining if you have an abandoned well.

PROTECTING PRAIRIE

75 ACRES CONSERVED NEAR 9-MILE

In a collaborative effort to preserve Nebraska's native prairie lands, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (NRD) have partnered with landowner Bill Oberg to establish a conservation easement on a 75-acre property adjacent to Lincoln's Nine Mile Prairie.

This easement aims to protect drought-tolerant prairie grasses, which are vital for maintaining wildlife habitats and providing natural flood protection.

As Will Inselman, Resources Coordinator for the Lower Platte South NRD, explains, these native prairies are resilient:

"...even in extreme drought years in the

spring, when other things aren't greening up, you'll see native prairies green up quicker, green up sooner, be more lush and they can survive these droughts."

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program provided funding for this initiative, underscoring the importance of preserving native prairie ecosystems. Oberg's commitment to sustainable land use practices not only safeguards these critical habitats but also promotes environmental resilience for future generations.

This story was also featured on Nebraska Public Media's website, highlighting the significance of the conservation efforts near Nine Mile Prairie.

WELCOME TO LPSNRD BRIDGET MCKINLEY

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) is pleased to welcome Bridget McKinley as our new Resources Technician based at the Lancaster County NRCS Office. Bridget brings a strong commitment to conservation and natural resource management, and we are excited to have her on board!



TEST YOUR H2O IQ TRIVIA AT CODE BEER COMPANY EVENT RECAP

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, University of Nebraska Medical Center, and NE Extension hosted a packed Test Your H2O IQ Trivia Night on January 23rd at Code Beer Company. Ten teams competed, answering questions on water science, conservation, and policy in a fun, interactive setting.

The event successfully raised awareness about water issues while fostering community engagement. Encouraged by the enthusiasm, LPSNRD plans to continue hosting similar educational events. Stay updated by following us on social media!

COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER FOR WATER TESTING IN ASHLAND/GREENWOOD

On March 6th, Ashland-Greenwood residents tested their drinking water for nitrates at Ashland/Greenwood Middle School. Community members brought 60 water samples, with FFA students conducting tests for hands-on learning.

The majority of well-owners received immediate results and discussed their nitrate levels with NRD staff from Lower Platte South and Lower Platte North. These events provide vital water quality insights, strengthen community ties, and offer students valuable experience with resource professionals.

Such initiatives highlight the importance of education, conservation, and community engagement in protecting our water.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Here are your LPSNRD Board representatives. The Board meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month at the NRD office in Lincoln.

SUBDISTRICT 1

Don Jacobson, SW Lincoln
Gary Hellerich, Valparaiso

SUBDISTRICT 2

Seth Hawkins, Plattsmouth
Mark Spangler, Murray

SUBDISTRICT 3

Melissa Baker, NE Lincoln
Ken Vogel, NE Lincoln

SUBDISTRICT 4

Gary Aldredge, SE Lincoln
Larry Ruth, Walton

SUBDISTRICT 5

John Yoakum, W Lincoln
Susan Mealer, W Lincoln

SUBDISTRICT 6

Anthony Schutz, NW Lincoln
Deborah Eagan, NW Lincoln

SUBDISTRICT 7

Chuck Hassebrook, C Lincoln
Luke Peterson, C Lincoln

SUBDISTRICT 8

Christine Lamberty, SE Lincoln
Tom Green, SE Lincoln

SUBDISTRICT 9

Lisa Lewis, SE Lincoln
Bob Andersen, SE Lincoln

SUBDISTRICT 10

Stephanie Matejka, S Lincoln
Susan Seacrest, S Lincoln

AT-LARGE

Dave Landis, Lincoln

ELMWOOD-MURDOCK FFA TEAM ADVANCES TO NATIONALS IN OKLAHOMA FOR LAND JUDGING CONTEST

Look out, Oklahoma! The Elmwood-Murdock FFA High School team has qualified for the National Land Judging contest this spring in Oklahoma City. Alan Barnes, a first-year Agriculture Education teacher, will lead a team of five students on this exciting journey. The road to Oklahoma was not easy. Alan established the new FFA chapter last August and immediately hit the ground running. The team earned first place at the district event in October, with half of its members placing in the top 25. They then advanced to the state competition in Norfolk, where they secured second place overall, earning their spot at nationals. Mr. Barnes has received tremendous support from the community, as well as active participation from students

in his agriculture classes. Starting a new program requires resources, and the Elmwood-Murdock community has stepped up to the challenge, contributing with jacket donations and membership t-shirts. Barnes, an Elmwood-Murdock graduate himself, notes that past students had limited opportunities in agricultural education, often participating only in land or livestock judging through Palmyra High School. The students competing at nationals include four juniors—Lane Mills, Leo Rikli, Jacob Stewart, and Hadley Belina—and one alternate, Nolan Platt. These five individuals were the top scorers at the district competition. As they prepare for nationals, the team is practicing using soil samples from Oklahoma State

University, as the soil types and properties differ significantly between states. Their preparations involve testing their knowledge of soil profiles, texture, erosion, and recommended treatments. According to Alan, the team is "thrilled to represent our district and Nebraska at nationals!" Go Knights!



UPCOMING EVENTS

April
Lincoln Earth Day
April 19th

May
Explore a Saline Wetland @
Marsh Wren Saline Wetland
May 1st, 2025 • 6-7:30pm

Late Summer
Tree-via Event
NE Statewide Arboretum collaboration

KLOEFKORN ELEMENTARY HOSTS RECORD-BREAKING FAMILY NATURE NIGHT

The Kloefkorn Elementary community came together for an unforgettable evening of environmental discovery at their latest Family Nature Night, setting a new attendance record with 436 participants! Families and students eagerly cycled through interactive stations, each offering a unique opportunity to engage with Nebraska's natural world.

Family Nature Nights, held each fall and spring in schools across the district, are designed to foster a deeper connection between families and the environment. These free events welcome all students

and their families to explore hands-on activities, such as potting plants, creating nature-inspired art, making paper, and even interacting with live animals. Whether making tree cookies, crafting beeswax candles, or testing their knowledge with nature quizzes, attendees get a firsthand look at the wonders of Nebraska's natural resources.

While no additional Nature Nights are currently scheduled for this spring, plans are already in motion for next fall. The overwhelming success of this event highlights the enthusiasm of the Kloefkorn

community and reinforces the value of these immersive educational experiences.

As the seasons change, families can look forward to more opportunities to engage with nature through upcoming outreach events. The record-breaking turnout at Kloefkorn Elementary serves as a testament to the growing interest in environmental education and the power of community-driven learning.

Stay tuned for future Family Nature Nights - where curiosity, discovery, and a love for the natural world come together!



THE SUCCESS OF KLOEFKORN ELEMENTARY'S NATURE NIGHT WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE DEDICATED COLLABORATION OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS, EACH COMMITTED TO PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION. PARTNERS INCLUDED:

NE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

UNL
School of Natural Resources

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Sustainability

WACHISKA AUDUBON

NE STATE MUSEUM
Morrill Hall

LINCOLN SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL
Environmental Science Club

PIONEERS PARK NATURE CENTER

LINCOLN ELECTRIC SYSTEM

NE GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION

NE FOREST SERVICE

KEEP LINCOLN BEAUTIFUL
Lancaster County

MOPAC STUDY UPDATE

THE JOURNEY FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION IS CAREFULLY MAPPED OUT:

Design Phase

Underway now, with completion expected by fall 2025

Construction Kickoff

Targeted for fall 2026

Phased Implementation

Ensuring a strategic and efficient rollout

Exciting news for trail enthusiasts and community adventurers! On February 19th, the Board officially greenlit the Scope of Services Agreement with JEO Consulting Group, setting the wheels in motion for the highly anticipated MoPac East Connector Trail. This game-changing project will finally bridge the gap between Lincoln and Omaha, creating a seamless, scenic, and safe connection for cyclists, walkers, and outdoor lovers alike.

JEO Consulting Group, a trailblazer in design and engineering, emerged as a top contender in a rigorous selection process. With deep-rooted community ties and experience leading last year's evaluation study, JEO is primed to hit the ground running. Their

expertise ensures a smooth path forward, bringing this vision to life with precision and efficiency.

Beyond linking communities, the MoPac East Connector Trail plays a pivotal role in the Great American Rail Trail—a 3,700-mile coast-to-coast route redefining cross-country travel for outdoor enthusiasts. Once completed, the MoPac extension will provide a continuous passage from the Elmwood/Wabash area to the Lied Platte River Trailhead, expanding Nebraska's reputation as a premier destination for recreation and eco-friendly transportation.

As excitement builds, the District remains committed to open communication and collaboration with landowners and

stakeholders. By prioritizing partnerships with those directly impacted, we aim to streamline the process, minimize disruptions, and maximize success. Key design milestones will be unveiled at a public open house, giving the broader community a chance to stay engaged.

Together, JEO and LPSNRD are shaping a safe, efficient, and lasting trail system—one that will serve generations to come. Stay tuned as we embark on this transformational journey to connect cities, communities, and adventurers through the MoPac East Connector Trail!

SCAN
TO
FOLLOW
ALONG



SYSTEM-WIDE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) serves as the local sponsor for a federally constructed levee and channel system along Salt Creek in Lincoln. It oversees the operation and maintenance of the system and trains staff to monitor the levee, particularly during high-water events. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducts periodic inspections of the levee, and any necessary improvements are addressed by LPSNRD through its System-Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) plan, approved by the Board of Directors in 2016. This framework enables levee systems to address weaknesses while ensuring continued eligibility for rehabilitation assistance under

the PL 84-99 Federal Rehabilitation Program after construction. The SWIF plan includes technical assessments, risk communication strategies, and cost estimates for long-term improvements.

In December 2024, an inspection was conducted by a firm hired by USACE, and ongoing assessments and inspections continue. The LPSNRD remains focused on implementing the plan to meet USACE requirements. While results are still pending, no significant issues are anticipated.

Additionally, the District submits an annual report to USACE to track progress and a bi-

annual update of completed and upcoming projects for eligibility renewal. Recent projects have included repairs to drainage structures and culverts. A briefing with USACE and the inspecting firm reviewed completed projects and identified areas for additional maintenance.

As part of the SWIF, a risk communication plan has also been developed to inform the community about flood risk reduction efforts. Information will be shared through social media, newsletters, and direct outreach. While the LPSNRD works diligently to maintain the levee, it is important to recognize that flooding may still occur.

PROJECT UPDATE SEDIMENT REMOVAL

The LPSNRD maintenance crew was hard at work this winter clearing sediment—including sand, gravel, soil, and organic matter—from the Antelope Creek channel near "J" Street. Over time, rainfall in the watershed carries these materials into storm sewers, where they accumulate at the Antelope Valley Project weir. If left unchecked, this buildup can reduce the channel's capacity to handle high creek flows, increasing the risk of localized flooding and water backup. To prevent this, our team

routinely removes the sediment as part of ongoing maintenance efforts to keep the waterway functioning efficiently. Once the material has been removed by our in-house crew, a contractor will be brought in to load out and properly dispose of the collected sediment, ensuring the channel remains clear and ready to handle future storm events. Regular upkeep like this is essential for maintaining the long-term health and effectiveness of the Antelope Creek drainage system.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESCRIBED BURNS IN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Prescribed burns, also known as controlled burns, are a critical tool for managing grasslands and woodlands. These carefully planned fires are set under specific weather conditions to maintain ecosystems, reduce wildfire risks, and enhance biodiversity. When executed responsibly, fire provides numerous environmental benefits. As a natural process in many ecosystems, fire plays a significant role in sustaining certain plant species. Some plants require heat to germinate, while others depend on fire to clear dead vegetation or create space for new growth.

By mimicking natural fire cycles, prescribed burns help restore habitats and promote plant diversity, preventing overgrowth that can

crowd out other species. These burns support a balanced ecosystem, benefiting a wide range of wildlife, including birds, deer, and insects. Additionally, prescribed burns are an effective tool in controlling some invasive plant species. Regular controlled burns reduce the accumulation of these invasive species, fostering a healthier and more resilient landscape.

Soil health also benefits from prescribed burns, as they remove dead plant matter, returning valuable nutrients to the soil. The resulting ash acts as a natural fertilizer, enriching the land for future plant growth. However, while prescribed burns offer many ecological advantages, they come with risks. Conducting a controlled

burn requires expert knowledge and precise planning. Fire managers assess factors such as weather, wind speed, relative humidity, and fuel load to ensure the fire remains within safe parameters. Before initiating a burn, land managers inform neighbors, fire departments, and relevant agencies to ensure public safety and awareness and obtain required permits.

In summary, prescribed burns are an essential practice for ecosystem management, wildfire risk reduction, soil health improvement, and biodiversity enhancement. With thorough planning and expert oversight, prescribed burns help restore natural balance and create more resilient landscapes, making them a vital component of sustainable land management.

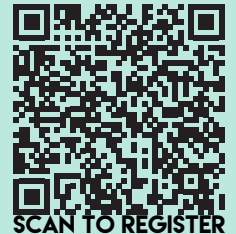


EXPLORE *a Galine Wetland*

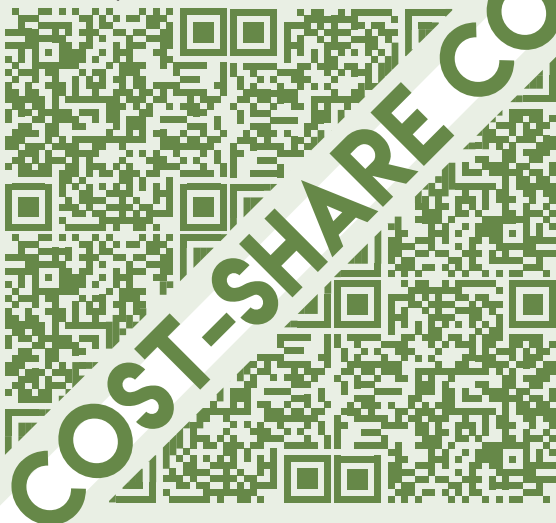
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LOWER PLATTE SOUTH
natural resources district

NEBRASKA
- GAME PARKS -

 **PLATTE BASIN**
TIMELAPSE



LPSNRD provides a variety of cost-share programs for landowners & producers. In addition, LPSNRD has community cost-share programs for forestry, trails, flood control, stream stabilization, etc. A complete list of cost-share programs, descriptions, requirements, and applications can be found at: <https://www.lpsnrd.org/programs/landowner-cost-share> or scan the QR code below:



LPSNRD Expands Summer Conservation Program

The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) is promoting the Summer Conservation Program to encourage landowners to implement conservation practices on cropland during the summer months. This effort aims to distribute contractors' workloads more evenly and increase the number of completed projects annually.

Eligible conservation practices include terrace systems and water and sediment control basins, which must be certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). To qualify for the program's increased cost-share incentive, projects must be completed between May 1st and September 15th. Participants can receive an additional 15% cost-share, with total cost-share assistance reaching up to 85% of project costs. Maximum funding limits have been increased to \$20,000 in non-targeted areas and \$25,000 in targeted areas.

The process involves submitting an application through NRCS, followed by project evaluation and approval by LPSNRD. Upon approval, NRCS finalizes project designs, and landowners hire contractors to complete the work. Once verified, LPSNRD processes the cost-share payment.

Participants must maintain the installed practices for ten years. This program highlights LPSNRD's commitment to sustainable land management and conservation efforts, ensuring long-term benefits for Nebraska's agricultural landscape.

TRAILS

MoPac East Trail
Homestead Trail
Oak Creek Trail
Lied Bridge - Platte River
Connection

WETLANDS

Lincoln Saline Wetlands
Nature Center
Marsh Wren Saline Wetland
Whitehead Saline Wetland

WMAS

Bobcat Prairie
Cottontail
Little Salt Fork Marsh
Preserve
Little Salt Springs
Meadowlark
Merganser
Red Cedar
Tanglewood
Timber Point
Wild Plum
Wildwood

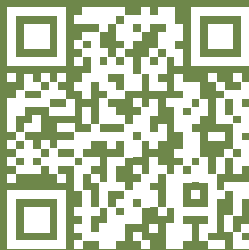
EXPLORE YOUR NRD

With spring in full bloom, it is the perfect time to step outside and experience the vibrant renewal of the Lower Platte South NRD. As nature awakens, our scenic trails, glistening lakes, and lush wetlands invite you to explore their beauty in a whole new way.

Enjoy a peaceful stroll, a refreshing hike, or a morning of birdwatching as wildlife returns and wildflowers emerge. Whether you are looking for

a quiet escape or an active outdoor adventure, spring is the ideal season to reconnect with nature. Best of all, our recreation areas are open to the public—no park pass required!

The Lower Platte South NRD is dedicated to preserving our natural resources. Through ongoing conservation efforts, we ensure these beautiful landscapes remain a place of discovery and enjoyment for generations to come.



SCAN TO SEE ALL OF THE
LPSNRD RECREATION
OPPORTUNITIES!

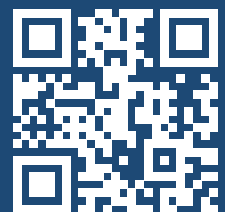
Or visit: www.lpsnrd.org/recreation

Get Digital

Know Your NRD is available in print from district newspapers and electronically by subscription through LPSNRD.org, where you can access district news and other information in a variety of languages. You can also keep up with us by subscribing to our regular email updates.

LPSNRD shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, disability, familial status, veteran status, or marital status in any of its activities or operations.

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