



# Little Blue Natural Resources District

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## **Little Blue NRD 2020 Blue River Compact Report**

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It has been another good year for the static water levels in the Little Blue NRD. 2019 fall water levels were up .82 feet district wide. We also had above average precipitation in 2019 which led to less groundwater irrigation. 2020 spring water levels showed the highest rise on record, 1.60 feet district wide. This rise is obviously good news, because a increase in ground water levels is always good, but with the rise it moves the district away from the point of stays on wells and allocations. Currently water levels are roughly -4.5 feet, "zero" was given to the water level in 1974 which was the first-year levels were taken. The trigger point for allocations was set to 1 foot below the 2016 water level making it -8 below the 1974 level. With the increase in the static water levels stays and allocations will not be imposed in the foreseeable future.

The district is also trying to finish up some recharge projects that were in construction last year but were damaged from the bomb cyclone. The projects consist of instream weirs, or reconnection of oxbows. The goal of these projects is to promote groundwater recharge by storing water either in steam or in the oxbow for an extended amount of time to allow water to infiltrate. We had to work through NRCS to get funding through EWPA to help with the rebuild/reconstruction of these projects. The damage was significant and repairs were needed so the projects would function correctly. We plan to have these repairs completed by the end of the summer.

We were also planning on doing a second-round vadose zone sampling with the use of 319 grants this past winter. Crews were unable to get the drill rigs onsite because of the fear of getting stuck or damaging the fields. Since we didn't have long stretches of cold weather over the winter there was not enough frost in the ground to feel comfortable enough to complete the field work. Along with the field sampling we planned to set up some field demo days to show ways to reduce nitrogen loss with the use of cover crops. We had to delay the demo day work due to the outbreak of COVID-19, we hope to resume this project in 2021.

The last large project that the district has been working and continues to work on is find a new water source for the Little Blue Rural Water District. The current water system that provides our rural water district with water finding themselves with a rising nitrate levels. Another issue with the current water source is that the water district is limited to 200 gal/min, the issue with the limited water amount is that we have potential users that would like to connect to the water district, but with the limitation there is not enough water to provide them service. We are currently working with USDA on funding, and with Miller and Associates to design a connection from the existing system to the new water source.

Last but not least, the Little Blue NRD adopted the Voluntary Integrated Management Plan. The board voted and accepted the IMP July 2019.

This concludes the Little Blue report.