

Water Sustainability Report

April 1, 2026

Lewis & Clark NRD

Application # 10114

Progress up to April 1, 2026

Since the project start date of August 21, 2025, the following progress has been made.

1. Development of Guidelines, Applications, and Cost-Share Requirements

LCNRD staff developed comprehensive program guidelines, a detailed cost-share application, and a full set of eligibility requirements to support the successful implementation of this project's goals and objectives. This included defining the technical specifications, documentation standards, and approval procedures for each conservation practice and technology included in the program. The cost-share opportunities cover a wide range of tools and practices—such as soil moisture sensors, flow meters with telemetry, variable-rate irrigation system enhancements, chemigation upgrades, sensor-based nutrient management tools, weather stations equipped with telemetry, conservation crop rotations, alternative cash crop trials, and the conversion of irrigated cropland to perennial grass systems. These materials collectively ensure that producers understand the program expectations, the environmental and operational benefits of each practice, and the steps needed to participate successfully.

2. Combined Outreach and Producer Engagement Efforts

LCNRD staff organized and facilitated two outreach meetings for local producers to introduce them to the program's goals, conservation opportunities, and cost-share options. The first meeting was held in Hartington on February 26th and the second was held in Center on February 27th, between the two meetings we had 21 producers and crop consultants attended. These meetings were designed to encourage open dialogue, answer questions, and build strong working relationships within the producer community. In addition to group sessions, we conducted one-on-one meetings with producers to provide individualized guidance, discuss how specific practices could fit their operations, and address unique concerns or technical needs. To maximize participation, a broad communication campaign was initiated that included sending personalized letters, creating and mailing program flyers and postcards, and placing advertisements in local newspapers. These combined group, individual, and multi-channel outreach efforts ensured that producers had clear, accessible information and direct support, ultimately strengthening engagement and interest in the program.

3. Began Accepting and Processing Applications

After completing outreach and program setup, the formal application acceptance process began. This included reviewing incoming applications for completeness, verifying eligibility requirements, and organizing documentation for further evaluation. LCNRD staff also responded to producer questions, provided guidance on practice selection, and assisted applicants in navigating the technical and

administrative components of the program. Beginning the intake process marks a major milestone in project implementation, transitioning the program from planning into active participation. To date, two applications have been accepted with some practices anticipated to be implemented in June 2026.



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program Application



1. NAME AND ADDRESS OF LANDOWNER

2. NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT/ TENANT

Cell Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

3. Legal description: QTR-QTR _____ QTR _____ Section _____ Township _____ Range _____

4. Field Name: _____

5. What Management Practices will be included in your application? (One application per field)

Acres Impacted or enrolled	Check all that Apply	Description
		Soil Moisture Sensors (W-1) -Soil Samples
		Flow Meter with Telemetry (W-2)
		Variable Rate Irrigation (VRI) System Upgrade (W-3)
		Chemigation Equipment Upgrade (W-4)
	Contact Local Sentinel Rep	Sensor- Based Nutrient Management (W-5)
		Weather Station with Telemetry (W-6)
		Conservation Crop Rotation (W-7) -Soil Samples
		Alternative Cash Crop (W-8) -Soil Samples
		Irrigated Cropland Conversion (W-9) -Soil Samples
		No-Till Management (W-10)

6. Applicator License #: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Chemigation Permit # (s) _____

7. Previous 3 years of crop information:

Crop Year	Crop	Yield	Total N Applied

Program Terms & Conditions

LANDOWNER AND/OR APPLICANT CERTIFICATION: I request assistance administered by the Lewis and Clark Natural Resources District (LCNRD). I agree if any or all above installed practices should be removed, altered, or modified to lessen their effectiveness without consent of the LCNRD after receiving payment and prior to contract completion, a portion of the claimed amount will be refunded to LCNRD. The Practice Payments will be paid upon approval and at the end of the contract, the educational requirement must be completed and verified before final payment can be made. I give LCNRD permission to share my data to third-party software where no data is shared with anyone except the LCNRD. I have received a copy and agree to the terms and conditions of the "Water Resources Technology & Conservation Project Cost- Share Guidelines and Requirements".

General Program Requirements

- Must be in compliance with all NRD rules and regulation requirements before application can be approved
- Data collection
 - Must sign up for *ProducerConnect* to submit annual end of year report
 - Irrigation event amounts
 - Crop/ Yield
 - Nitrogen Application amounts and events
- No- till is required on W-7 & W-8 and encouraged on all-other practices
 - Cost- Share is available on new adoption
- Complete an approved education program(s) (four clock hours) pertaining to the cost-share practice
 - Field days, workshops, ag conferences, online classes
- Receipts and reports must be provided for cost- share reimbursement
- Must not exceed UNL’s fertility and irrigation recommendations- *NebGuides* available
- Acres to be enrolled would not qualify if the acres were sod busted in the last ten years
- All irrigation wells must be registered and all irrigated acres must be certified with the LCNRD
- Applicants agree to allow LCNRD to conduct inspections and collect water and/or soil samples at any reasonable time
- Any changes to the above requirements during the contract period must be made in coordination with the LCNRD, before doing so
- Applications for cost share are not effective until approved by the LCNRD Board of Directors
 - Applications must be approved before the project can be started
- Claims for payment will not be accepted more than five months after the growing season application is completed

1. I agree to receive texts and emails from the LCNRD. Yes____No____

2. If you are enrolling in practice(s) W-5, W-7, and/ or W-8, are you interested in allowing LCNRD to conduct Vadose Sampling? (Required for W-9) Yes_____ No_____

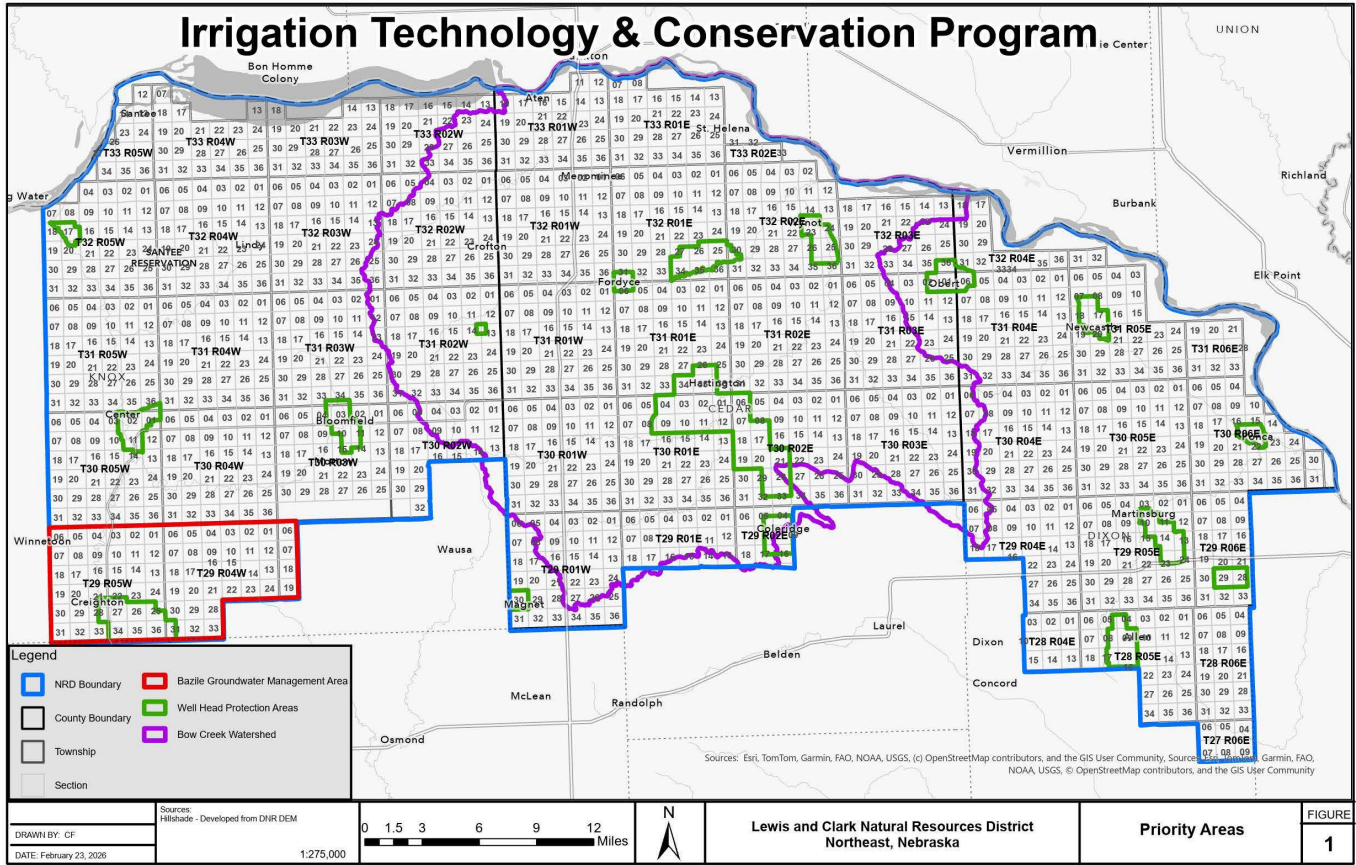
3. Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

4. Landowner Signature: _____ Date: _____
(*Required when applying for W-2, W-3, & W-4)

5. NRD Rep Signature: _____ Date: _____

Focus Areas:

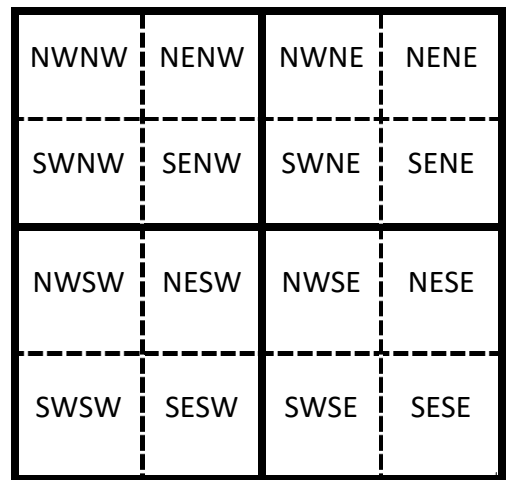
Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas



Comments/ Notes:

Legal Description :

(Draw Field Outline)



1 Mile

1 Mile



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Soil Moisture Sensors (W-1)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Up to 75% cost-share with a maximum of \$1,250 per year per sensor
- Max 2 sensors per applicant
- One sensor up to 160 acres with a minimum of 33 acres
- Length of contract is 3 consecutive years and includes all data collection requirements
- Payments will be made after installation and annually until the end of contract
- Option to lease and/ or purchase with maintenance and service contract

❖ Requirements of Operator/ Landowner

- Have soil samples taken annually by approved contractor- Reimbursable by LCNRD up to \$4/ac
 - One sample per 40 acres
 - Individual depths of 0"-8" (Routine Test, Ward Lab S-4), 8"-24" (Nitrate), 24"-36" (Nitrate)
- Must have a flow meter installed- **Cost- share is available on new adoption**
 - Flow meter readings must be submitted at the start of contract, then annually
- Sensors must be installed by a contractor immediately after planting throughout the root zone based on the crop grown
- Equipment purchases and installer will need to be approved prior to installation
- No- till is encouraged, but not a requirement- **Cost- Share is available**



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Flow Meters with Telemetry (W-2)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Up to 75% cost-share with a maximum of \$2,250 per meter
- Telemetry data plan will be cost- shared at 75%, up to \$160 per year for three years
- One flow meter per irrigation system that irrigates a minimum of 33 acres
- Length of contract is 3 consecutive years and includes all data collection requirements
- Payments will be made after installation and at the end of the contract

❖ Requirements of Operator/ Landowner

- Must be a McCrometer flow meter including telemetry
- Equipment purchases need to be approved and installed by a contractor prior to first irrigation event
- No- till is encouraged, but not a requirement- **Cost- Share is available on new adoption**



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Variable Rate Irrigation Upgrade (W-3)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Option to upgrade to variable speed and/or section control
- Up to 75% cost-share with a maximum of \$15,000 per producer
- Annual subscriptions will be cost- shared at 75% up to \$225 per year for three years
- Minimum of 66 acres irrigated per system
- Max 2 system upgrades per applicant
- Length of contract is 3 consecutive years and includes all data collection requirements
- Payments will be made after installation and at the end of the contract

❖ Requirements of Operator/ Landowner

- Share VRI prescriptions created by crop consultants
- Must have a flow meter and a soil moisture sensor- **Cost- share is available on new adoption**
- Must have been irrigated for two of the last five years
- Equipment purchases need to be approved and installed by a contractor prior to first irrigation event
- Nutrient management plan is strongly encouraged – **Cost-share is available**
- No- till is encouraged, but not a requirement- **Cost- Share is available**



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Chemigation Equipment Upgrade (W-4)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Up to 75% cost-share with a maximum of \$1,350 per system
- Max 1 system upgrade per applicant irrigating a minimum of 33 acres
- Length of contract is 3 consecutive years and includes all data collection requirements
- Payments will be made after installation and at the end of the contract
- Eligible components include:
 - Variable rate pump
 - Standard pump can be cost-shared if pivot is set up for variable rate
 - Slam Valve (If none is present)
 - Not eligible for new construction

❖ Requirements of Operator/ Landowner

- Chemigation permit
- Operator must have certified chemigation applicator license
- Equipment purchases need to be approved and installed by a contractor prior to first irrigation event
- No- till is encouraged, but not a requirement- **Cost- Share is available on new adoption**



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Sensor- Based Nutrient Management (W-5)- (Contact Local Sentinel Rep)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Up to 75% cost-share with a maximum of \$11 per acre per year
- Max 320 acres of prescription cost- share per applicant with a minimum of 20 acres
- Length of contract is two corn years and includes all data collection requirements
 - Can be consecutive or can move to second field in year two
 - Must be approved by LCNRD prior to growing season
- Payments will be made at the beginning and the end of the contract

❖ Requirements of Operator/ Landowner

- Chemigation permit (If applicable)
- Operator must have certified chemigation applicator license (If applicable)
- **Must have Variable Rate fertilizer capabilities to be eligible-** can enroll irrigated and dryland acres
 - Share prescriptions created by crop consultants with LCNRD
- Must work with an approved provider
- No- till is encouraged, but not a requirement- **Cost- Share is available on new adoption**



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Weather Station with Telemetry (W-6)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Up to 75% cost-share with a maximum of \$3,000 per station
- Telemetry data plan will be cost- shared at 75% up to \$240 per year for three years
- Max 2 weather stations per applicant
- One station up to 160 acres with a minimum of 33 acres
- Length of contract is 3 consecutive years and includes all data collection requirements
- Payments will be made after installation and annually until the end of the contract

❖ Requirements of Operator/ Landowner

- Must have a flow meter and soil moisture probe with capabilities to connect to the weather station- **Cost-Share available**
- Equipment purchases need to be approved and installed prior to first irrigation event
- No- till is encouraged, but not a requirement- **Cost- Share is available on new adoption**



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Conservation Crop Rotation- Small Grain (W-7)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- A flat rate payment of \$40 per acre on a small grain (Only on year planted)
- Payment will be made after the small grain is established and at the end of the contract
- Acres enrolled must be irrigated, payments will not include dryland acres
- Max 80 acres per applicant with a minimum of 20 acres
- Length of contract must include 2 years following the small grain year and includes all data collection requirements
- Eligible small grain crops include, but are not limited to:
 - Rye, wheat, oats, triticale, barley
- Allowed to double-crop with normal 2 crops in rotation
- Alfalfa is not accepted as a small grain crop

❖ Requirements

- Must have an existing 2 crop rotation
 - Acres enrolled cannot have current harvested small grain rotation
- Must plant a small grain once in the contract term
- Must be harvested as small grain
 - A minimum of 6 inches of stubble must be left after harvest
 - Can be followed by a forage mix to graze (must have 75% soil cover after grazing)- **Cost- Share is available**
- Must do No-Till into bean and/or small grain stubble and encouraged through the entire length of the contract - **Cost- Share is available on new adoption**
- No baling or silage production
- Have soil samples taken annually for the length of the contract by approved contractor- Reimbursable by LCNRD up to \$4/ac
 - One sample per 40 acres
 - Individual depths of 0"-8" (Routine Test, Ward Lab S-4), 8"-24" (Nitrate), 24"-36" (Nitrate)
- Must have a flow meter- **Cost- share available**
- A crop/ rotation plan will need to be approved before seeding



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program



Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements

Alternative Cash Crop (W-8)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Payments are a flat rate of \$115 per acre on an Alternative Crop (Only on year planted)
- Payments will be made after the alternative crop is planted and at the end of the contract
- Acres enrolled must be irrigated, payments will not include dryland acres
- Max 80 acres per applicant with a minimum of 20 acres
- Eligible alternative cash crops include, but are not limited to:
 - Grain sorghum, sunflowers, canola, buckwheat, millet
 - Small grains will not qualify for an alternative cash crop (Wheat, Rye, Oats, Triticale, Barley, etc.)
- Alfalfa is not accepted as a third cash crop

❖ Requirements

- An alternative third cash crop must be added into a three-year rotation (Small grains excluded)
- Must have an existing 2 crop rotation
- Acres enrolled cannot have current alternative cash crop rotation
- Must be harvested as grain or grazed
 - A minimum of 6 inches of stubble must be left when mechanically harvested
 - Grazed forage mix must have 75% soil cover after grazing
- Must do No-Till into bean and/or alternative crop residue and encouraged through the entire length of the contract- **Cost- Share is available on new adoption**
- No baling or silage production
- Have soil samples taken annually for the length of the contract by approved contractor- Reimbursable by LCNRD up to \$4/ac
 - One sample per 40 acres
 - Individual depths of 0"-8" (Routine Test, Ward Lab S-4), 8"-24" (Nitrate), 24"-36" (Nitrate)
- Must have a flow meter- **Cost- share available**
- Crop/ rotation plan will need to be approved before seeding
- Seeding rates and grazing plan will need to be approved before seeding



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements



Irrigated Cropland Conversion (W-9)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Payments are a flat rate of \$450 per acre per year
- Payments will be made after the perennial is planted and annually until end of the contract
- Max 40 acres per applicant with a minimum of 30 acres
- Forgone income included in payment
- Alfalfa is not accepted as a perennial crop

❖ Requirements

- May be grazed or harvested as a forage crop
 - Must leave 75% soil cover
 - Cannot cut stubble below 6 inches
 - Paddock grazing is encouraged but not required- **Cost- share is available**
- Have soil samples taken annually for the length of the contract by approved contractor- Reimbursable by LCNRD up to \$4/ac
 - One sample per 40 acres
 - Individual depths of 0"-8" (Routine Test, Ward Lab S-4), 8"-24" (Nitrate), 24"-36" (Nitrate)
 - Vadose Sampling down to 50 ft
- Irrigated two of the last five years
- Implementation for 5 consecutive years
- Must have a flow meter- **Cost- share available**
- Seeding rates and grazing plan will need to be approved before seeding



Irrigation Technology & Conservation Program

Cost- Share Guidelines & Requirements

No- Till Management (W-10)

Focus Areas:

Bow Creek Watershed, Bazile Groundwater Management Area, Wellhead Protection Areas

❖ Guidelines

- Must be adopted with another practice
- Payment of \$8 per acre
- Max 160 acres with a minimum of 20 acres
- Payments will be made only where new no-till management practices are performed
- Length of contract will follow contract length of other practice
- Payments will be made annually