

WSF 2025 Status Report

Project: Upper Big Blue NRD – Vadose zone study

Date: March 30th, 2026

WSF Application #5322

Project to Date

The Upper Big Blue NRD allocated the 2025-2026 winter and spring for drilling of UBBNRD zones 9-12. As of March 27th, 2026, all anticipated coring sites have been drilled and samples collected. There were samples taken from Butler, Seward and Saline counties. This year we totaled 48 sites, with 8 sites being considered deep. At the deep sites the core samples are collected at intervals of 5 feet until the water table is reached. Upon striking water, a water sample is collected. Each deep site additionally included 4 shallow samples around the central sample hole. The remaining 40 sites sampled from were classified as shallow. These shallow samples reached a depth of 15 feet commonly understood as the root zone. All samples upon collection are delivered to the University of Nebraska for various testing and procedures.

2026 Plan

All of the zones in the district have now been completed during the Fall 2025/Spring 2026 drilling event. The University of Nebraska Lab is working to get all the samples analyzed for the report. The Final Report is scheduled to be presented to the Upper Big Blue NRD Board of Directors in November or December.

Delays

This project was originally scheduled for 4 years from start to completion. Upon realization that this would not happen we extended the project 18 months. We currently see no reason for another extension as we have only one more phase remaining—the final report. The only delays we realistically forecast is UNL keeping the Lab fully staff so the samples can be analyzed in a timely manner. The lab testing will take a few months after receiving the samples to be completed. We are anticipating full completion by the end of 2026.