

## WSF 2024 Status Report

**Project:** Upper Big Blue NRD – Vadose zone study

**Date:** March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

WSF Application #5322

### **Project to Date**

The Upper Big Blue NRD allocated the 2024-2025 winter and spring for drilling of UBBNRD zones 1-3. As of March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, all anticipated coring sites have been drilled and samples collected. There were samples taken from Polk, York, Hamilton, Clay, and Adams counties. This year we totaled 44 sites, with 9 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 35 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.

### **Fall 2025/Spring 2026 Plan**

Following harvest 2025 UBBNRD anticipates completing the remaining drilling for the study. The remaining sites TBD will be located in UBBNRD zones 9-12 residing in Butler, Seward, and Saline counties. We anticipate to pull a similar number of samples with 45 sites currently in mind. 36 of the sites are allocated for shallow samples and the remaining 9 are allocated for deep samples.

### **Potential Cause for Delays**

This project was originally scheduled for 4 years from start to completion. Upon realization that this would not happen we extended the project one more year. We currently see no reason for another extension as we have one more phase remaining. The only delays we realistically forecast are weather and mechanical issues we may run into next fall. Final samples will be collected in early 2026. The lab testing carried out by UNL will take a few months after receiving the samples. We are anticipating full completion by the end of 2026.