

Farmers, ranchers and landowners can access multiple NRD programs for dams, flood control and water quality

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Dams provide your community with a number of benefits, from water for irrigation and livestock to flood control, and there's recreation opportunities for residents as well. Maintaining or installing dams of all sizes can provide a return on investment for farmers, ranchers and landowners.

The Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District's Private Dams Program provides technical assistance and financial incentives to those who want to install a new structure or rebuild existing structures that are damaged. The Private Dams program offers 75% of the project costs, up to a maximum cost-share of \$75,000. Eligible costs include construction and design services provided by a private engineering firm.

Two structures were recently completed with the support of this program. One is a private structure rebuild near Sutton, NE (pictured above) and the other is a private new structure near Ulysses, NE.

The Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District's staff is proud to have partnered with the local Natural Resources Conservation Service offices to complete these projects. The dam near Sutton was completed using NRCS staff and a private engineering. NRCS was responsible for the structure design as well as construction coordination and oversight on the dam near Ulysses.

For information about the program, contact your local NRCS office, the Upper Big Blue NRD office or visit upperbigblue.org and look for the "Private Dams Program" tab.

INNOVATIVE PIPE REPLACEMENT PRACTICES

Upper Big Blue NRD is responsible for maintenance and operation of 51 dams and flood control structures within the district. This includes public recreation areas like Bruce L. Anderson Recreation Area (Recharge Lake), and privately owned dams and channels that control flooding and erosion on smaller scales.

One of these structures is Bulgrin Dam on Road 8 in York County near Waco. In 2024, district staff identified degradation of the corrugated metal conduit pipe running through the dam. This is a concern because rusting in the pipe can cause erosion of the



PHOTO PROVIDED BY UPPER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

Private dam structure rebuild near Sutton, NE

dam embankment, voids and eventually dam failure. In 2025, staff published an RFP (request for proposal) for contractors to submit bids to reinforce the conduit pipe with a cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) lining.

This is relatively new technology that uses UV light to cure a seamless resin liner within the existing pipe. The cured resin forms to the shape of the existing pipe without reducing the pipe diameter significantly.

In March 2025, private contractors installed a cure-in-place pipe liner in the Bulgrin Dam conduit pipe. This ensures structural integrity of the dam for years to come. Upper Big Blue NRD continues to work with landowners, stakeholders and other agencies to address flood control and erosion control in the district.

HOME REVERSE OSMOSIS FUNDING IS AVAILABLE

Concerned about your drinking water? The Upper Big Blue NRD has a program to address drinking

water quality concerns in the district. The program will provide up to \$500 per home for a point-of-use reverse osmosis system on properties where the drinking water quality exceeds 10 PPM of nitrate.

Private well users in Nebraska are responsible for maintaining the integrity of their own water supply and should have it tested annually for contaminants — a process that residents of the NRD can do for free.

A new program from the state of Nebraska also provides a tax credit for eligible citizens for the installation of a reverse osmosis system. You can find information about this program as well as the NRD program by visiting upperbigblue.org.



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