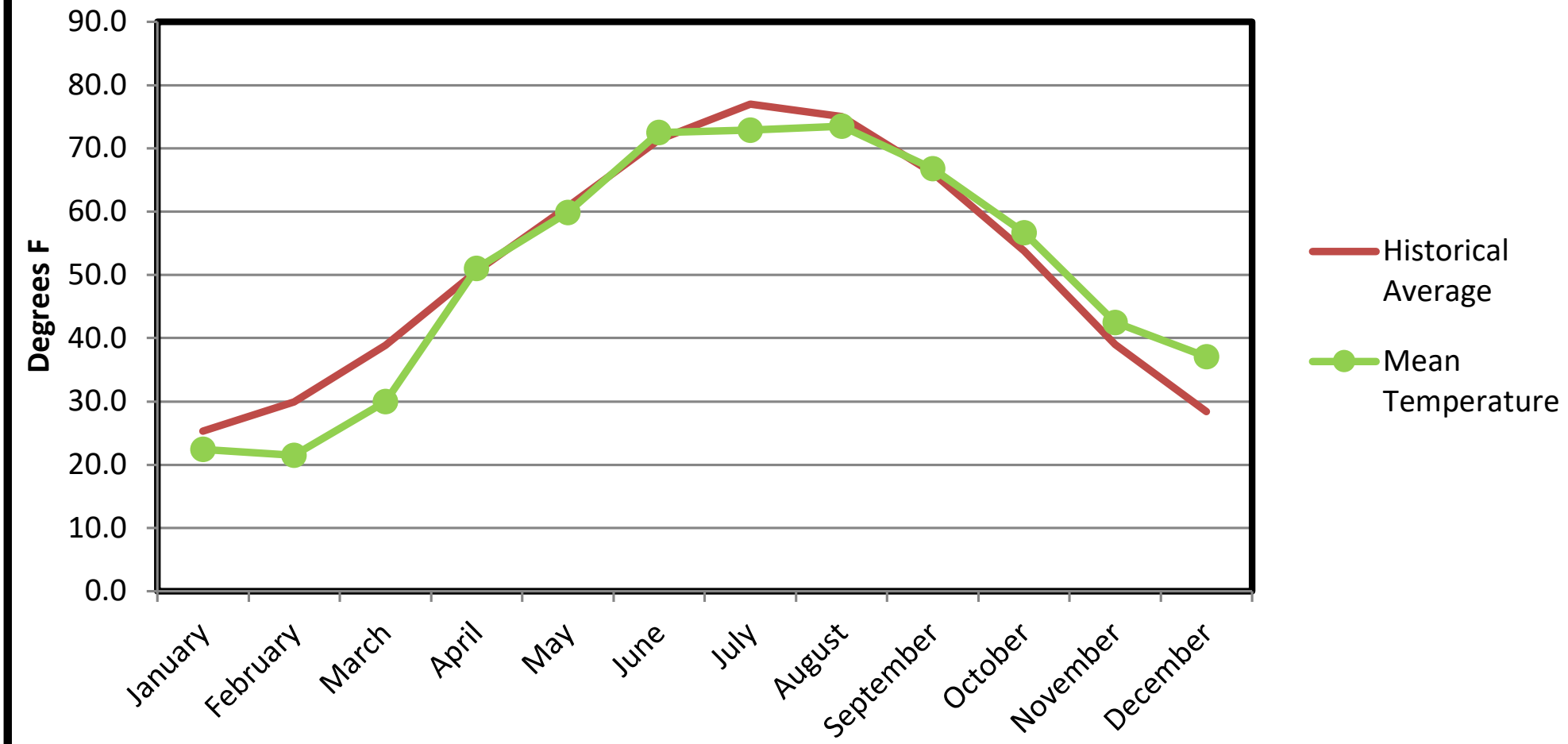
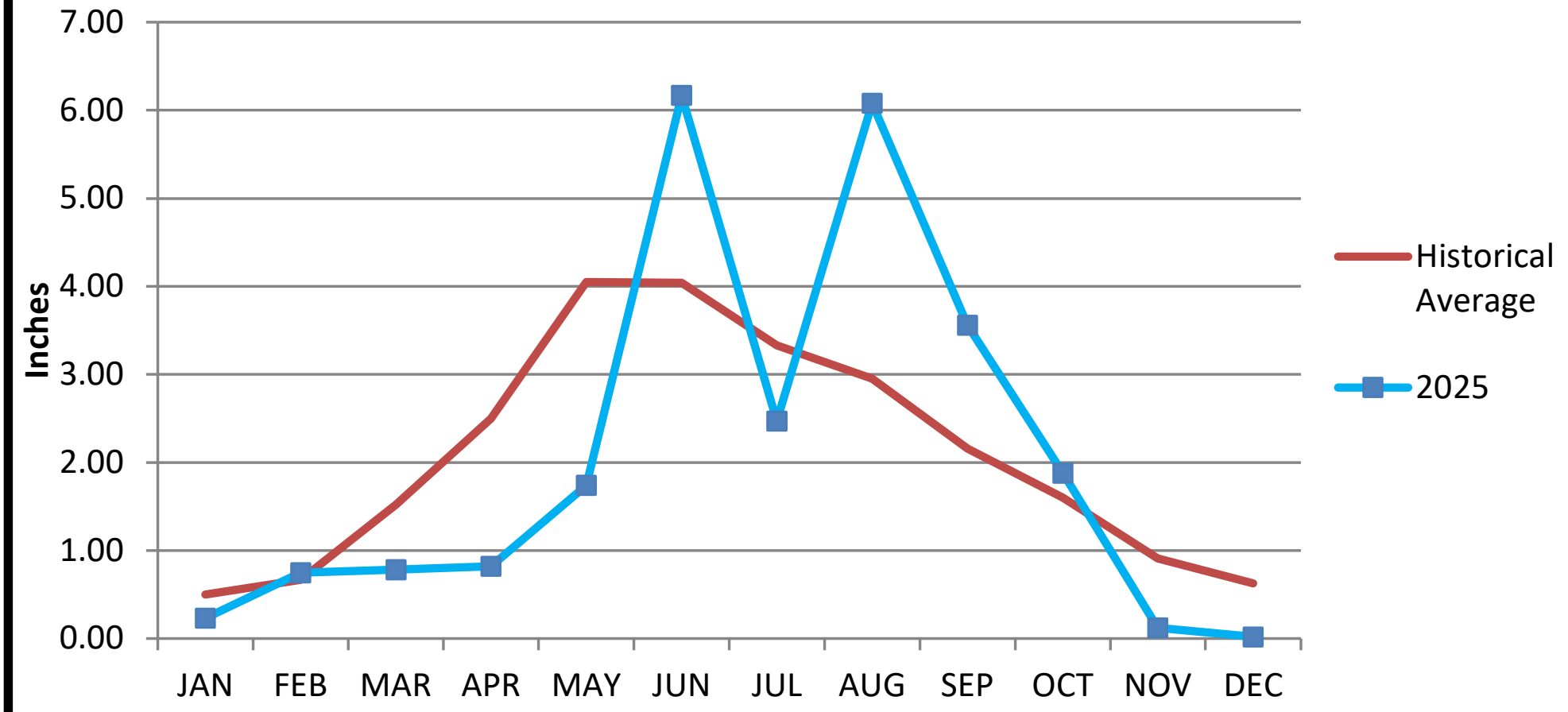
Tri-Basin NRD
Holdrege Monthly Mean Temperature - 2025



Tri-Basin NRD
Holdrege Monthly Precipitation - 2025



Tri-Basin NRD
1723 Burlington
Holdrege, NE 68949

Tri Basin
Natural Resources District

Phone: (308) 995-6688
Fax: (308) 995-6992
Email:
tribasin@tribasinnrd.org

December 2025 - Holdrege

Temperature: (°F)

* High: 68° (Recorded December 23 & 27)
* Low: 4° (Recorded December 1)

* Mean: 37.1° (Normal for December 39.2")
  Mean High: 48.1° (Normal: 39.4°)
  Mean Low: 26.1° (Normal: 17.9°)

NOTES:

Precipitation for December 2025: .02"
(Normal for December: .61")
Precipitation for the year through December: 17.73"
(Normal for the year through December: 23.99")

NOTES: Damaging Winds 1 day
Snow Total: 5 inches
Snow for season: 5"

December 2024

Temperature:		**Precipitation:**	
High:	73 °	For the month:	.33"
Low:	7°	For the year:	17.70"
Mean:	33.8°	Snow for Season:	3"

Dec 2025

(05-09)

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

RECORD OF RIVER AND CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

STATE	COUNTY	RIVER
NE	Phelps	

TIME (local) OF OBSERVATION RIVER	TEMPERATURE	PRECIPITATION	STANDARD TIME IN USE
	08:00	08:00	

TYPE OF RIVER GAGE	ELEVATION OF RIVER GAGE ZERO	FLOOD STAGE	NORMAL POOL STAGE

DATE	TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MAX	TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MIN	TEMPERATURE: AT OBSN	PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Rain, melted snow, etc. (In and hundredths)	PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Snow, ice pellets, hail (Ins.and tenths)	PRECIPITATION: AT OB: Snow, ice pellets, hail ice on ground (In)	WEATHER (Observation Day) Mark 'X' for all types occurring each day: Fog	Ice pellets	Glaze	Thunder	Hail	Damaging winds	Time of occurrence if different from above	RIVER STAGE: Condition	RIVER STAGE: Gage reading at ___AM	RIVER STAGE: Tendency	REMARKS (SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS, ETC.)
1	15	4	12	0.02	0.5	1											
2	27	12	22	0.00	0.0	0											
3	44	22	31	0.00	0.0	0											
4	37	18	20	0.00	0.0	0											
5	34	19	26	0.00	0.0	0											
6	51	19	29	0.00	0.0	0											
7	52	19	26	0.00	0.0												
8	30	19	23	0.00	0.0	0	X										Frost
9	57	23	32	0.00	0.0	0											
10	61	32	33	0.00	0.0	0											
11	47	27	27	0.00	0.0	0											
12	65	23	34	0.00	0.0	0											
13																	
14	18	4	9	T	T	T											
15	M	7	15	0.00	0.0	0											
16	60	15	25	0.00	0.0	0											
17	60	25	32	0.00	0.0	0											
18	58	32	35	0.00	0.0	0											
19	41	19	25	0.00	0.0	0						X					Very high winds yesterday
20	57	25	37	0.00	0.0	0											
21	47	30	32	0.00	0.0	0											
22	48	30	31	0.00	0.0	0											
23	68	31	33	0.00	0.0	0											
24	59	28	29	0.00	0.0	0											
25	65	26	29	0.00	0.0	0											
26	51	25	35	0.00	0.0	0											
27	68	32	37	0.00	0.0	0											
28	66	12	13	T	T	0											
29	25	11	11	0.00	0.0	0											
30	32	11	18	0.00	0.0	0											
31	53	17	24	0.00	0.0	0											
	48.1	20.6	SUM	0.02	0.5												

Draw a straight line (——) through hours precipitation was observed, and a wavy line (~~~~) through hours precipitation probably occurred unobserved

A.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 NOON P.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

CONDITION OF RIVER AT GAGE			

A. Obstructed by rough ice
B. Frozen, but open at gage
C. Upper surface smooth ice
D. Ice gorge above gage
E. Ice gorge below gage
F. Shore ice
G. Floating ice
H. Pool stage

CHECK BAR (for wire weight) NORMAL CHECK BAR	
READING	DATE

Fog	Ice pel	Glaze	Thund	Hail	Dam winds

OBSERVER

SUPERVISING OFFICE
GID Hastings

STATION INDEX NO.
25-3910-08

STATION *(Climatological)* Minden | *(River Station, if different)* | MONTH Nov | 2025

STATE NE | COUNTY Kearney | RIVER

TIME *(local)* OF OBSERVATION RIVER | TEMPERATURE 08:30 | PRECIPITATION 08:30 | STANDARD TIME IN USE

TYPE OF RIVER GAGE | ELEVATION OF RIVER GAGE ZERO | FLOOD STAGE | NORMAL POOL STAGE

WS FORM B-91
(03-09)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

RECORD OF RIVER AND CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

DATE	TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MAX	TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MIN	TEMPERATURE: AT OBSN	PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Rain, melted snow, etc. (in and hundredths)	PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Snow, ice pellets, hail (ins and tenths)	PRECIPITATION: AT OB: Snow, ice pellets, hail ice on ground (in)	PRECIPITATION: Draw a straight line (——) through hours precipitation was observed, and a wavy line (~~~) through hours precipitation probably occurred unobserved — A.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 NOON P.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	WEATHER (Observation Day) Mark 'X' for all types occurring each day: Fog	Ice pellets	Glaze	Thunder	Hail	Damaging winds	Time of occurrence if different from above	RIVER STAGE: Condition	Gage reading at ___ AM	Tendency	REMARKS *(SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS, ETC.)*
1	54	27	29	0.00	0.0	0											
2	49	29	34	0.00	0.0	0											
3	69	34	42	0.00	0.0	0											
4	62	35	48	0.00	0.0	0											
5	72	40	41	0.00	0.0	0											
6	57	37	44	0.00	0.0	0											
7	56	34	48	0.00	0.0	0											
8	66	39	M	T	0.0	0											
9	56	22	23	0.00	0.0	0											
10	40	13	17	0.00	0.0	0											
11	43	17	35	0.00	0.0	0											
12	71	31	41	0.00	0.0	0											
13	68	39	46	0.00	0.0	0											
14	70	38	49	0.00	0.0	0											
15	82	46	48	0.00	0.0	0											
16	70	34	35	0.00	0.0	0											
17	63	33	45	0.00	0.0	0											
18	58	31	40	0.00	0.0	0		X									
19	45	28	36	0.00	0.0	0		X									
20	49	29	41	0.00	0.0	0											
21	44	37	39	0.02	0.0	0	~ ~ ~										
22	43	35	41	0.19	0.0	0											
23	61	28	43	0.00	0.0	0											
24	61	43	49	0.00	0.0	0											
25	53	36	40	0.00	0.0	0											
26	45	18	28	0.00	0.0	0											
27	42	18	25	0.00	0.0	0											
28	44	24	26	0.00	0.0	0											
29	31	23	24	0.15	0.2	T											
30	26	8	9	T	T	T											
31																	
	55.0	30.2	SUM	0.36	0.2		CHECK BAR (for wire weight) NORMAL CHECK BAR										

CONDITION OF RIVER AT GAGE

READING	DATE

A. Obstructed by rough ice
B. Frozen, but open at gage
C. Upper surface smooth ice
D. Ice gorge above gage
E. Ice gorge below gage
F. Shore ice
G. Floating ice
H. Pool stage

OBSERVER
Closed by WFO GID (wfogid) on 25 Dec 2025 06:17PM

SUPERVISING OFFICE
GID Hastings

STATION INDEX NO.
25-5565-08

STATION *(Climatological)* Elwood 8S | *(River Station, if different)* | MONTH Nov | 2025

STATE NE | COUNTY Gosper | RIVER

TIME *(local)* OF OBSERVATION RIVER | TEMPERATURE 08:00 | PRECIPITATION 08:00 | STANDARD TIME IN USE

TYPE OF RIVER GAGE | ELEVATION OF RIVER GAGE ZERO | FLOOD STAGE | NORMAL POOL STAGE

WS FORM B-91
(03-09)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

RECORD OF RIVER AND CLIMATOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

DATE	TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MAX	TEMPERATURE: 24 HRS ENDING AT OBSERVATION MIN	TEMPERATURE: AT OBSN	PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Rain, melted snow, etc. (in and hundredths)	PRECIPITATION: 24 HR AMOUNTS: Snow, ice pellets, hail (ins.and tenths)	PRECIPITATION: AT OB: Snow, ice pellets, hail ice on ground (in)	WEATHER (Observation Day): Fog	Ice pellets	Glaze	Thunder	Hail	Damaging winds	Time of occurrence if different from above	RIVER STAGE: Condition	RIVER STAGE: Gage reading at ___ AM	RIVER STAGE: Tendency	REMARKS (SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS, ETC.)
1				0.00	0.0	0											
2				0.00	0.0	0											
3				0.00	0.0	0											TEMPERATURE WAS CLOSE TO 80 DEGREES YESTERDAY.
4				0.00	0.0	0											
5				0.00	0.0	0											
6				0.00	0.0	0											
7				0.00	0.0	0											
8				0.00	0.0	0											
9				0.00	0.0	0											
10				0.00	0.0	0											
11				0.00	0.0	0											
12				0.00	0.0	0											
13				0.00	0.0	0											
14				0.00	0.0	0											
15				0.00	0.0	0											
16				0.00	0.0	0											
17				0.00	0.0	0											
18				0.00	0.0	0											
19				0.00	0.0	0	X										
20				0.00	0.0	0											
21				M	0.0	0											
22				0.37	0.0	0											
23				0.00	0.0	0											
24				0.00	0.0	0											
25				0.00	0.0	0											
26				0.00	0.0	0											
27				0.00	0.0	0											
28				0.00	0.0	0											
29				0.05	T	T											
30				0.00	0.0	0											
31																	
			SUM	0.42	T												

Draw a straight line (——) through hours precipitation was observed, and a wavy line (~~~~) through hours precipitation probably occurred unobserved

A.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 NOON P.M. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Mark 'X' for all types occurring each day

CHECK BAR (for wire weight) NORMAL CHECK BAR

Fog	Ice pel	Glaze	Thund	Hail	Dam winds

CONDITION OF RIVER AT GAGE

A. Obstructed by rough ice
B. Frozen, but open at gage
C. Upper surface smooth ice
D. Ice gorge above gage
E. Ice gorge below gage
F. Shore ice
G. Floating ice
H. Pool stage

READING	DATE

OBSERVER
Closed by WFO GID (wfogid) on 25 Dec 2025 06:22PM

SUPERVISING OFFICE
GID Hastings

STATION INDEX NO.
25-2690-08

First Quarter 2026 Overton Stream Gauge

	Jan Act	Jan Tar	We	Feb Act	Feb Tar	Well	Mar Act	MarTar	Well Ran
1	329	1000			1800			2250	
2	1080	1000			1800			2250	
3	1610	1000			1800			2250	
4	1490	1000			1800			2250	
5	401	1000			1800			2250	
6	868	1000			1800			2250	
7	971	1000			1800			2250	
8	833	1000			1800			2250	
9	1010	1000			1800			2250	
10	2110	1000			1800			2250	
11	1020	1000			1800			2250	
12	374	1000			1800			2250	
13		1000			1800			2250	
14		1000			1800			2250	
15		1000			3500			2250	
16		1000			3500			1200	
17		1000			3500			1200	
18		1000			3500			1200	
19		1000			3500			1200	
20		1000			3500			1200	
21		1000			3500			1200	
22		1000			3500			1200	
23		1000			3500			1700	
24		1000			3500			1700	
25		1000			3500			1700	
26		1000			3500			1700	
27		1000			3500			1700	
28		1000			3500			1700	
29		1000						1700	
30		1000						1700	
31		1000						1700	

		First Quarter 2026 Grand Island Stream Gauge Data						
	Jan Act	Jan Tar	Well Run	Feb Act	Feb Tar	Well Run	Mar Act	Mar Tar
1	2550	1000			1800			2250
2	2770	1000			1800			2250
3	2400	1000			1800			2250
4	1660	1000			1800			2250
5	1160	1000			1800			2250
6	1220	1000			1800			2250
7	752	1000			1800			2250
8	1050	1000			1800			2250
9	1200	1000			1800			2250
10	1010	1000			1800			2250
11	1120	1000			1800			2250
12	1390	1000			1800			2250
13	1180	1000			1800			2250
14		1000			1800			2250
15		1000			3350			2250
16		1000			3350			1200
17		1000			3350			1200
18		1000			3350			1200
19		1000			3350			1200
20		1000			3350			1200
21		1000			3350			1200
22		1000			3350			1200
23		1000			3350			1700
24		1000			3350			1700
25		1000			3350			1700
26		1000			3350			1700
27		1000			3350			1700
28		1000			3350			1700
29		1000			3350			1700
30		1000			3350			1700
31		1000			3350			1700

Tri-Basin NRD
1723 Burlington St.
Holdrege, NE 68949

(308) 995-6688
Fax: (308) 995-6992
tribasin@tribasinnrd.org

Natural Resources District

December 22, 2025

Jesse Bradley, Director
Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment
245 Fallbrook Blvd., Suite 100
Lincoln, Nebraska 68521

Dear Mr. Bradley:

On December 17, 2025 the Board of Directors (Board) of the Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (District) unanimously approved a motion to hold a public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed Joint Second Generation Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the Republican Basin portion of the District. Enclosed please find a copy of the version of the proposed IMP approved by the Board for review at the hearing and upon which testimony at the public hearing will be taken. The proposed IMP includes:

1. The proposed goals and objectives of the IMP;
2. The proposed geographic area subject to the controls; and
3. Surface water controls, groundwater controls, and incentive programs proposed.

If you agree that the proposed IMP is acceptable, then it is our understanding that pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute § 46-718, the District and Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (Department) are required to hold a joint public hearing to take testimony on the proposed IMP and the proposed controls. Additionally, per agreement between the District and Department, a joint information session will be held before the hearing. The Board recommends that such information session and hearing be held as outlined below and will publish the required notices pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat.§ 46-743.

Information Session:
February 4, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. (CDT)
Tri-Basin NRD Office
1723 Burlington St.
Holdrege, NE 68949

Public Hearing:
February 4, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. (CDT)
Tri-Basin NRD Office
1723 Burlington St.
Holdrege, NE 68949

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Resources.

DEPT. OF WATER, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

Jim Pillen, Governor

December 23, 2025

John Thorburn, General Manager
Tri-Basin NRD
1723 Burlington Street
Holdrege, Nebraska

Sent via electronic mail only

Dear Mr. Thorburn:

The Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (Department) received your December 22, 2025 letter stating that the Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors (Board) has reached agreement on the attached draft Integrated Management Plan (IMP). As discussed, the Department and NRD will continue making minor, non-substantive changes to the IMP before the hearing is held.
The Department mutually agrees with the Tri-Basin NRD's Board on the draft IMP which is enclosed. This agreement includes the following components of the draft IMP:

1. The proposed goals and objectives of the IMP for the Tri-Basin NRD;
2. The proposed geographic area to be subject to controls; and
3. The proposed surface water and ground water controls.

The Department will assist in preparations for the public hearing scheduled for February 4, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at the Tri-Basin NRD offices, Holdrege, Nebraska.
The Department greatly appreciates the Tri-Basin NRD's Board, staff, and stakeholders' time and effort in developing the IMP. We look forward to a continued partnership as we collaboratively work together to adopt and implement the IMP.

Sincerely,

Jesse Bradley, P.G., Director

Attachment (1)

Cc: Todd Garrelts, Board Chair, Tri-Basin NRD, *todd.garrelts@gmail.com*

Department of Water, Energy, and Environment
245 Fallbrook Blvd., Suite 100
Lincoln, Nebraska 68521

Jesse Bradley, P.G., Director
OFFICE 402-471-2186 FAX 402-471-2909
dwee.nebraska.gov

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Resources.

DEPT. OF WATER, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

Jim Pillen, Governor

December 4, 2025

Dave Olsen
Olsen Cattle Company, LLC
1293 28th Road
Minden, NE 68959

RE: Olsen Cattle Company, LLC Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
DWEE ID: 68478
Program ID: NPDES GENERAL PERMIT
Subject: **NPDES General Permit for CAFOs**
Permit Coverage Application No. NEG021093
N 1/2, NE 1/4, Section 05, Township 06N, Range 15W, Kearney County
Consultant: Settje Agri-Services & Engineering, Inc.

Dear Mr. Olsen:

The Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (Department) hereby issues coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) (NEG021000) to your operation. This General Permit becomes effective April 1, 2026 and will expire on March 31, 2031. It may be modified or reissued to reflect regulatory changes.

Coverage under this NPDES General Permit is for the number of livestock waste control facilities (LWCF) and the number of livestock listed below:

Type of LWCF	No. Each Type
Holding Pond	1
Debris Basins	2
Wet Basins	4
Lift Stations	2
Truck Washout	1

Species	Number of Head
Feeder Cattle	3,500

Open Lot Area: 18.5 acres
Total Drainage Area: 32.2 acres

Your CAFO shall be operated and maintained according to the approved application, this NPDES General Permit, the site-specific permit terms in Attachment 1 to this letter and the requirements in Title 130, *Livestock Waste Control Regulations.* Please review this permit carefully as you are responsible for your operation's compliance with all permit requirements. Copies of the General Permit and of your Request for Coverage are enclosed for your records. A copy of both documents must be kept on-site at your operation.

Department of Water, Energy, and Environment
245 Fallbrook Blvd., Suite 100
Lincoln, Nebraska 68521

Jesse Bradley, P.G., Director
OFFICE 402-471-2186 FAX 402-471-2909
dwee.nebraska.gov

NEBRASKA

DEPT. OF WATER, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

Jim Pillen, Governor

December 1, 2025

John Thorburn
Tri-Basin
1723 Burlington Street
Holdrege, NE 68949

RE: Nebraska ILS Feeders, Inc. - McClymont Feed Yard Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
NDEE ID: 69060
Program ID: LWC 37-030
Subject: Notified Natural Resources District of Application Received - Major Modification
S 1/2, Section 12, and E 1/2, SE 1/4, Section 11, Township 05N, Range 19W,
Phelps County
Prepared By: Settje Agri-Services & Engineering, Inc.

Dear Mr. Thorburn:

An application for a Construction and Operating Permit for the above referenced concentrated animal feeding operation, received by the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (Department), in accordance with Title 130, *Livestock Waste Control Regulations.* The application can be viewed at dee.ne.gov > public records search. If a hard copy is required, please notify the Department to have one sent.

Your office has thirty (30) days to comment to the Department about any factors or conditions existing at the site that should be considered when making a decision on the application. If the application is approved, the Department will send you a copy of the Construction and Operating Permit for your files.

Please submit comments to:

Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment
Livestock & Agriculture Section
245 Fallbrook Blvd, Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68521

If you have any questions, please contact me at 402-471-0282.

Sincerely,

Brad Edeal, Supervisor
Livestock & Agriculture Section
Inspection & Compliance Division
brad.edeal@nebraska.gov

STATE OF NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF Water, Energy, and Environment

In the Matter of Water Administration of the Republican River Basin, Water Division 1-B.	)))))	ORDER COMPACT CALL YEAR IN EFFECT

This matter came on for consideration before the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment ("Department") upon its own motion. The Chief Water Officer finds and orders as follows:

1. The Department is an executive agency that has been granted exclusive and original jurisdiction under Neb. Rev. Stat. § 61-206 over all matters pertaining to water rights for irrigation, power, or other useful purposes.

2. On July 16, 2004, the Department designated the Republican River Basin as fully appropriated pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-714.

3. As a result of this designation, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-715 required the Department to jointly develop Integrated Management Plans (collectively, "Basin IMPs") with the Natural Resources Districts ("NRDs") encompassing the Republican River Basin including the Upper Republican, Middle Republican, Lower Republican, and Tri-Basin NRDs (collectively, "Basin NRDs"). Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 46-715 through 46-718.

4. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-715(4)(b) requires that the groundwater and surface water controls adopted in an IMP shall be "…sufficient to ensure that the [State of Nebraska] will remain in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and with any applicable interstate water compact or decree or other formal state contract or agreement pertaining to surface water or ground water use or supplies."

5. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-715(6) requires that "…in any river basin, subbasin, or reach that is designated as fully appropriated or overappropriated and whenever necessary to ensure that the [State of Nebraska] is in compliance with an interstate compact or decree or formal state contract or agreement, the Department, in consultation with the affected Basin NRDs, shall forecast on an annual basis the maximum amount of water that may be available from streamflow for beneficial use in the short term and long term in order to comply with the requirement of § 46-715(4)(b)."

6. To ensure compliance with the Republican River Compact ("Compact") and Final Settlement Stipulation ("FSS"), the Basin IMPs contain surface water controls to be administered by the Department as provided in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 46-715 and 46-716.

7. Based on the forecast procedures set forth in each of the Basin IMPs, the Department has determined that 2026 is a Compact Call Year. This Compact Call Year determination will require the State of Nebraska to comply with the terms of the Compact Administration's "Resolution Approving Long-Term Agreements Related to the Operation of Harlan County Lake for Compact Call Years" ("RRCA Resolution"), dated August 24, 2016. Compliance with the RRCA Resolution constitutes compliance with the FSS and the Compact.

8. The Compact, enacted by Congress in 1943, and ratified by the legislatures of the three signatory states of Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska, allocates the Republican River Basin's annual water supply among the three states.

9. The annual volume of water to which Nebraska has legal rights can vary depending on the applicable Compact accounting metric (accounting metrics can modify the accounting point and averaging period) and is not known in the course of any given year, until after that year has concluded and the Republican River Compact Administration ("RRCA") has completed the annual accounting. Therefore, all persons using water in the Nebraska portion of the Republican River Basin, are advised that their legal rights to store, access, and use water in Nebraska are subject to the Compact Call until the Department has confirmed that RRCA annual accounting indicates that Nebraska has remained in compliance with the Compact and the RRCA Resolution. A copy of the Compact is located at Neb. Rev. Stat. § A1-106.

10. During Compact Call Years, as determined from the procedures and analysis set forth in the most recently adopted Basin IMPs, the Department will regulate surface water in the Republican River Basin as necessary to administer NRD management actions and ensure Compact compliance. During Compact Call Years, the Department will issue a Compact Call on the Republican River at Hardy or Guide Rock to carry out water rights administration for the Compact in a manner consistent with Nebraska law and the Basin IMPs.

11. The Department will issue the necessary closing notices on natural flow and storage permits in the Republican River Basin until such time as the Department, in consultation with the Basin NRDs, determines that administration is no longer needed to ensure Compact compliance.

It is therefore ORDERED:

That a COMPACT CALL YEAR is in effect. Through the course of the year (2026), the necessary natural flow and storage appropriations in the Republican River Basin upstream of Hardy, Nebraska will be closed at such times that the Department determines that closure is necessary to carry out the administration of natural flow and storage surface water appropriations within the basin consistent with NRD management actions and Compact requirements, including effectuating terms of the RRCA Resolution.

It is further ORDERED:

That when determined to be necessary, closing notices shall be sent, along with a copy of this Order, to the necessary surface water appropriators requiring administration. Such closing notices will include, as appropriate, specific water rights administration instructions, directions, or actions relevant to the individual appropriation subject to such closing notice.

DEPARTMENT OF Water, Energy, and Environment

December 31, 2025

Matthew T. Manning, P.E., J.D., Chief Water Officer

Farmers can learn how much federal aid they will get

Josh Funk and Didi Tang, Associated Press

Kearney Hub 1/3/2026

OMAHA – Farmers are now learning how much they can expect to receive from a $12 billion package that President Donald Trump announced earlier this month.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture released the figures Wednesday for how much aid per acre famers can plan on for each row crop. The details arrived after most farmers have already met with their bankers to arrange financing for next years' crops and placed orders for the seed and fertilizer they will need. But officials have promised that the payments should arrive by the end of February.

Soybeans farmers have been hit especially hard by Trump's trade war with China, which stopped buying any American crops after Trump announced his tariffs this spring. China is the world's largest buyer of soybeans. This aid package is expected to help farmers weather the trade disruptions until China buys more soybeans under an agreement announced in October and until provisions of Trump's massive budget bill take effect later this year.

Soybean farmers will get $30.88 per acre while corn farmers will receive $44.36 per acre. Another crop hit hard when China stopped buying was sorghum, and those famers will get $48.11 per acre. The amounts are based on a USDA formula on the cost of production.

But farmers say the aid won't solve all their problems as they continue to deal with the soaring costs of fertilizer, seeds and labor that it make it hard to turn a profit right now. Some agricultural trade groups have said they worry that thousands of famers could go out of business, but others have said they believe most farmers have the financial resources and equity needed to survive.

Kentucky soybean farmer Caleb Ragland, who was president of the American Soybean Association until recently, said the aid is a "Band-Aid on

a deep wound. We need competition and opportunities in the market to make our future brighter."

The President of the National Corn Growers Association Jed Bower also urged the Trump administration to focus on cultivating additional uses for their crops. Farmers will benefit form have more buyers whether it is for ethanol and animal feed at home or for international markets.

"Corn growers have been sounding the alarm about the fact famers have been faced with multiple consecutive years of low corn prices and high input costs," Bower said. "While this financial assistance is helpful and welcomed, we urgently need the administration and Congress to develop markets in the United States and abroad that will provide growers with more long-term economic certainty."

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said that is the goal and promised to continue working to open new markets while strengthening the safety net for farmers.

Minnesota Soybean Growers Association President Darom Johnson said the aid number for soybeans fell short of what farmers had been hoping for, so more help could be needed though this package will help.

Most farmers remain steadfast supporters of Trump even after the disruptions caused by the trade wars. They generally support many of his other policies and believe they will get a better trade deal in the end.

White House and farmers encouraged by China's purchases

These aid payments will add up to $11 billion for row crop farmers who raise corn, soybeans, wheat, sorghum and other crops. Another $1 billion has been set aside for specialty crops and sugar, but the administration hasn't released any details of aid for those crops.

After Trump met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in South Korea in October, the White House said Beijing had promised to buy at least 12 million metric tons of U.S. soybeans by the end of the calendar year, plus 25 million metric tons in each of the next three years. Officials have said China is on track to meet the 12 million metric ton goal by the end of February.

As of Dec. 18, China has bought about 6 million metric tons of soybeans, according to the latest USDA's weekly report. Separately, the federal agency reported that China since then bought at least three more batches totaling 600,000 metric tons.

Beijing has yet to confirm any commitment to buy 12 million metric tons of soybeans for this season, but the Chinses embassy in Washington said earlier this month that "agriculture trade cooperation between China and the United States is proceeding in an orderly manner."

However, the recent increase in international purchases is encouraging to farmers, said Tim Lust CEO of the National Sorghum Producers, who has seen mor the 1 million metric tons of sorghum purchased in just the past few weeks. Like soybeans more than half of the sorghum crop is exported each year with China traditionally being the biggest buyer.

The USDA says the average size of the 1.88 million farms nationwide was 466 acres last year, but many farmers are much larger operations have continued to buy up neighboring farms over time.

Farmers doubt aid will solve problems for the ag industry

Josh Funk and Mark Vancleave

Kearney Hub 12/13/2025

RANDOLPH, Minn.- When Donald Trump promised new tariffs while running for president , Gene Stehly worried that trade disputes would jeopardize his international sales of corn, soybeans and wheat.

A little more than a year later, Stehly said his fears have become a reality , and Trump's latest promise of federal assistance is insufficient to cover farmers losses.

"Maybe this will all come out to be better at the end, but I can tell you right now, it certainly isn't the case at the moment ," Stehly said.

Trump announced Monday that his Republican administration would distribute $12 billion in one-time payments to farmers, who have suffered from persistently low commodity prices, rising cost and declining sales after China cut off all agricultural purchase from American during the trade war.

While rural areas remain conservative Bastions, farmers' patience with Washington is wearing thin. Several of them described the government bailout, an echo of similar polices during Trump's first term, as a welcome stopgap, but one that will not solve the agricultural industry' problems.

"It's a bridge. It's not the ultimate solution we're looking for," said Charlie Radman, a fourth-generation former who grows corn and soybeans on the land his family has owned near Randolph, Minnesota, since 1899. "What we really want to have is a little more certainty and not have to rely on these ad hoc payments."

But famers' support for Trump remains steadfast.

Kansas sorghum farmer Garrett Love, who was at the White House when the aid was announced, said farmers know that securing fair trade deals is a "hard process," and farmers "appreciate lowering regulation, increasing freedom and Trump has definitely done that."

American soybeans and sorghum farmers typically export at least half their crops/ They were hit the hardest by Trump's trade dispute with China, the world's largest buyer of soybeans that has increasingly relied on harvest from Brazil and other South American nations.

Trump and his Cabinet have boasted about the deal he struck with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October. But Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy, said this week that "Agriculture trade cooperation between China and the United States is proceeding in an orderly manner" without giving specifics.

So far, China has bought only a little more than one-quarter of the 12 million metric tons of soybeans that the U.S. officials said would be purchased before the end of February, raising doubts on whether Beijing would follow through on that pledge of commitments to buy 25 million metric tons annually in the next three years. China has not confirmed those numbers.

"In general, I don't trust their motives and integrity of their promises," said Bryant Kagay, who farms in northwest Missouri.

Even if China does buy the agreed amount of American soybeans, that would only bring U.S. farmers near to the amount they were selling every year before Trump took office.

The is big part of why Minnesota farmer Glen Groth said he'd "liked to see the administration focus more on opening up markets outside of China." In addition to finding other international buyers, agriculture groups are pushing to expand domestic uses like biodiesel, ethical aviation fuel and animal feed.

Dan Keitzer, a soybean and corn farmer in southeast Iowa, said recent bumper crops and technological advancements that produce bigger harvest mean that the industry needs more customers.

"I think most farmers would tell you that they don't want to go to the mailbox and get a check from the government . That's not why we farm," he said. "We need more demand for our product.

Trump has placated farmers with money before. During his first term, he provided $22 billion in 2019 to help cushion them form trade disputes with China. There was $46 billion in 2020, an expanded number that reflected financial challenges for the COVID –19 pandemic.

The $12 billion that he announced this week will not quell famers' fears about the future. They already are ordering supplies for next year's crops and meeting with their bankers to discuss the loans they will need. But they're trying to stay optimistic that crop prices will improve if they find more buyers. Famers will find out exactly around Christmas.

The aid payments that are due to arrive by the end of February will be capped at $155,000 per farmer or entity, and only farms that make less than $900.000 in adjusted gross income will be eligible. During the first Trump administration, a number of large farms found ways around the payment limits and collected millions.

Farmers would like to see Trump aggressively tackle concerns about higher cost that are tearing into their bottom line.

Trump signed an executive order over the weekend directing the Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission to investigate anti-competitive practices and anywhere in the food supply chain, starting with the fertilizer, seed, and equipment that farmers rely on and continuing to deal with meat packing companies and grocers who help determine what price consumers pay.

CNPPID board Oks annual budget

Holdrege Citizen 12/4/2025

The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's board of directors approved its budget for the 2026 fiscal year at its monthly meeting on Dec. 1.

The 2026 budget year beginning in January anticipates total revenues from various business operations, including $13.1 million from the sale of hydroelectric power $4.8 million from irrigation delivery services, and $1.58 million from lake lot lease fees.

Additional revenues from grants related to E65 siphon project and a potential irrigation automation project were also included in the budget.

Anticipated standards operations and maintenance expenditures for the district in the 20026 totaled nearly $22 million.

A number of large capital expenditures were included in the budget as well.

Those included $15 million toward the E65 siphon project and $3 million for the initial phase of a lateral automation project.

Among the other larger projects that ate budgeted include provisions for a concrete bridge replacement for $3 million, $800thousand for continued Kingsley Dam refacing engineering and studies and $450 Thousand for FERC.

Prior to finalizing the budget, the board took action on approving the irrigation water rates for the 2026 season.

The board voted to increase the rates by 2.5% for the 2026 season.

The rate for a base allotment of 9 inches per acre will be $44.96, which is $1.10 increase from the previous year.

The board approved increase is 0.8% below the regional rate of inflation of 3.3% a reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics over the past year.

The of $1

56 per care/inch above the base allotment was also approved.

Rates for non-incremental price program 12-inch contracts is set at $49.66 per acre and $59.07 for 18-inch contracts.

Also during the board meeting:

- The board included in the budget approval for a 3.3% CPI increase to the District wages scale starting In 2026
- Directors gave staff authorization to conduct necessary replat and lease updates to the extension of Lots 11-25 in the Northeast Cove Area at Johnson Lake and to sell leasehold interest at a rate of $2.00 per square foot.
- Directors approved a construction work cord in advance of a potential land purchase from the city of north Platte for area near the CNPPID Supply Canal Diversion Dam which will aid the District in its operations.
- Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy's elevation is 3227 feet. Or 47% of maximum volume. Current inflows are around 1,150 cubic feet (cfs) and outflows are around 500cfs to meet the FERC diversion requirements. Thulin said outflows increased since the committee meeting as Nebraska Public Power District began tasking water into its system again after being down for maintenance.
- Thulin also said water elevations at all district lakes will be lowered to heir normal winger operations levels.

Winter lifeline for Whoopers

New Texas sanctuary aims to protect endangered cranes

Dorany Pineda and Jon Locher, Associated Press

Kearny Hub 12/31/2025

WOLFBERRY WHOOPING CRANE SANCTUARY, TEXAS- Carter Crouch has been fascinated by the whooping crane's conservation story for as long as he can remember. The white bird, named for its "Whooping " call, is one of the rarest in North America and was among the first to be protected by the Endangered Species Act.

It's a story tat began decades ago when they were on the brink of extinction. Today, more than 550 whooping cranes migrate from Canada to Texas in the winter. It's the last self-sustaining wild flock in the world.

A new sanctuary aims to futher protect them. The International Fund and the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program recently announced the acquisition of more than 3,300 acres of vital winter habitat for the Whooping crane. Only 16 of birds existed in Texas in the early 1940s, but thanks to decades of conservation work, they've rebounded. Still, more work remains as the birds face threats from urban development, climate change, infrastructure for planet-warming oil, gas and coal and more.

Crouch, director of Gulf Coast programs for the International Crane Foundation. Said the crane's story is complicated with many successes and some setbacks but all in all, conservationists have come a long way. "We have a long way to go still, so there's a lot of story to be written, and I'm super excited to be a small part of that."

Standing at about 5 feet tall. The whooping crane is the tallest bird in North America with wingspan of up to 7.5 feet wide, so they need large landscapes to live in. They're snowy white as adults with black wing tips and a red forehead. It's one of 15 crane species in the world across Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America – 10 of which are threatened with extinction.

The last wild and self-sustaining flock of whooping cranes breeds and nests in and around Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park before beginning their 45-day 2500-mile southern migration each winter to forage and roost in and near Texas' Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The birds, which can live more than 20 years in the wild, mate for life and spend much of their lives raising families .

Cranes around the world face numerous challenges. Poaching and poisons threaten some species, and the wetlands and grasslands the need to survive are disappearing. Since the 1970s, 35% of the world's wetlands have been lost because of human activities, according to the United Nations. The Fish and Wildlife Service estimates the U.S. alone has lost at least 80% of its grasslands.

Climate change is worsening the threats . Sea level rise can wipe out the low-lying coastal wetlands in Texas, and loss of permafrost due to warming is among their habitat threats in Canada. Changing rain patterns mean there's less wetland availability in the Great Plains and other regions.

"Generally, it's just a really long-lived bird, so they're pretty sensitive to some of these threats that we're throwing at them," Crouch said.

On a recent morning, after a thick fog cleared Crouch and a team to scientists roared a boat aptly called Crane Seeker down a channel along the Gulf of Mexico to look for whooping cranes.

They anchored the boat, pointed their spotting scope , and patiently observed the birds for nearly an hour, diligently jotting down every minute what they were doing. Flying, Wading in shallow water. Eating crabs or wolfberries.

The federally endangered aplomado falcon and the threatened black rail also call this region home.

The new sanctuary southwest of Houston is made up of two properties for just over $8.4 million thanks to grants, fundraising and hundreds of donations. One property , named the Wolfberry Whooping Crane Sancturay, will be owned and managed by the International Crant

Foundation, and the other by The Conservation Fund until the Costal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program buys it off and ultimately owns it.

The name is inspired by the Carolina wolfberry, a shrub that produces a mall, red berry whooping cranes love to eat. It's found here in the coastal habitats of Texas, along with the blue crabs, mollusks and fish they also eat.

Conservationists have a lot of work to do on the sanctuary. Much of the prairie has been taken over by shrubs, so they'll be using prescribed burns and other means to restore the grasslands.

With the public's help, they'll also plant smooth cordgrass to improve the marshes and protect shoreline from erosion which will also serve as storm buffers for nearby residents. Volunteers will also assist with the annual Christmas bird counts. And once the sanctuary is up and running , they hope to add guided tours and other educational events

These protected lands near Texas ' Aransas National Wildlife Refuge are the only place in the U.S. where people can really see whooping cranes, said Julie Shackelfor, Texas director for the Conservation Fund. It's a destination for birders worldwide, with visitors boosting the economics of nearby communities like Rockport and Port Aransas.

In the winters, a "couple hundred people every day go out jut to see the whooping cranes" with their young, said Shackelford, a fellow bird enthusiast. She described helping to protect the land for future generations as "super gratifying".

Mike Forsberg knows these birds intimately. As a conservation photographer, he's spent countless hours over the years taking photos of the birds North America's cranes, even publishing books about them. He has a podcast about whooping cranes, too, and just finished shooting a documentary. The calls himself a proud member of the growing "crania community."

"The heart of keeping anything on Earth… has to with making it personal to your and cranes are just a great doorway in." said Forsberg, a faculty member at the University of Nebraska.

His 2024 book, "Inro Whoppinglands: A Photographer's Journey with Whooping cranes" posed the question of whether these birds can survive a 21st century world.

"Of course they can" he said. "They're resilient. But its up to us. And these habitats that area being protected now by the (International) Crane Foundation and by folks who just manage their lands with a certain ethos…that's critical."

Axing of UNL's atmospheric sciences department could harm ag in state

Anila Yoganathan, Flatwater Press

Kearney Hub 1/12/2026

Weathering a new storm

This story is made possible through a partnership between Flatwater Free Press and Grist, a nonprofit environmental media organization.

In his 15 years of farming full time, Quentin Connealy has weathered his share of storms – literally.

The first major flood it in 2011. Three more came in 2019. The waters rose again in 2024 and ruined about 20 % of his crops.

This past summer, he dealt with at least three hail and wind events that damaged his corn and soybeans.

To Connealy, whose family as been farming for 131 years, the weather has grown more extreme, posing a greater threat to his family's farmland, which extends across thousands of acres in Burt County about an hour north of Omaha. He tries to plan as much as possible and relies on multiline information sources to do so.

"The weather's so unpredictable, we need as many resources around as possible … I think the more resources we have the better off our data gets, whether it be upcoming weather or even just past weather patterns," Connealy said.

But one of the resources which producers research of state and national interest is going away.

On Dec. 5. The University of Nebraska Board of Regents voted to eliminate the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and three of other programs at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The move means that the university systems flagship campus will no longer be able to produce homegrown meteorologist and geologists – professions that monitor for severe weather and study groundwater, both of which are critical in a state where agriculture remains the economic backbone. The cuts have raised alarm both in and out of the soon-to- be shuttered department.

"The (department) … is a nationally recognized program," wrote nine professors from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in a letter of support. "Particularly for a state in the center of 'Tornado Alley' there Is a need for trained meteorologists and climatologists which contribute to Nebraska residents' safety.

More nationally, the need geologists to secure domestic sources of critical minerals is a stated national security concern. Closing the program disrupts a crucial pipeline of qualified professionals for all of those fields."

While acknowledging the pain inflicted by the cuts, regents and university leadership said action was needed. ULN, the largest of the University of Nebraska System's for campuses, faced a $21 million structural budget deficit. Eliminating the Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department, estimated to save $1. Million, was part of a larger effort to erase the deficit.

"My family, we've got 26 degrees from this institution, so to say this this decision comes lightly is as far from the truth as it can be," Regent Tim Clare said at the Dec. 5 meeting. "We're

confronting a serious budget challenge that threatened the long-term stability of our university system."

But proponents of the Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department say its elimination will go long-term harm to Nebraska.

"Outside of cutting agronomy, animal science or plant pathology, I don't think you could have another department at the university that was more important to agriculture, because that's your groundwater, that's your weather," said Eric Hunt, assistant educator of agricultural meteorology at the University of Nebraska Extension. "We just cut something that is vital to the long-term viability of agriculture in the state."

Losing knowledge and expertise

Adam Houston is blunt about the importance of his students' work when they leave UNL, particularly those who become forecasters at the National Weather Service, the federal agency responsible for issuing extreme weather warnings.

"And so I can say yes, the work that we're doing is training these students to go out and save lives," said Houston, a professor at atmospheric science in the soon-to- be eliminated department.

Other Nebraska universities offer courses similar to those in the department, but earth and atmospheric sciences degree program is the only one of its kind in the state, according to regents meeting documents.

While weather forecasts are easily accessible these days, there is human element to that data and forecasts, said Martha Durr, a

faculty member at the Nebraska Indian Community College and former state climatologist.

"There is still a human at the forecasts desk, and they are using their local knowledge and expertise to nudge that forecast model output in a certain way, or to issue a watch and a warning," Durr said

Nebraska is no stranger to extreme weather. The past few years alone have brought flash flooding, drought, outbreaks of tornados and strong thunderstorms. These types of weather events are expected to become more frequent due to climate change-making homegrown local expertise all the more valuable.

"What further sets or (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences) alumni apart is their deep familiarity with Nebraska's regional climate and weather patterns," wrote KLKN-TV Chief Meteorologist Rusty Dawkins in a letter of support for the department. "Their localized knowledge enables them to offer context-sensitive forecasts and risk assessments that out = of -state professionals may miss."

This need for local expertise also translates to other subjects taught by the department, including geology, Hunt said.

Geologists form the department have worked with local natural resources districts, monitoring groundwater-primarily source of drinking water in Nebraska and an essential resource for the state's ag economy.

At a news conference earlier this year, Gov. Pillen referred to water as the state's lifeblood and referred to the Ogallala Aquifer, in North America, as "our pot of gold" the Nebraska Examiner reported.

Asked specifically about the cuts to the Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department, spokesperson Laura Strimple said the governor applauded "university leadership for having the courage to make tough decisions in eliminating bloated and duplicative programs to achieve cost savings. More is still needed."

The department does work on similar topics as other UNL programs, specifically the Institute of Agricultural and Natural Resources. But State Climatologist Deborah Bathke, who has worked in both departments, said the focus in each department varies greatly. "I can say without any doubt that they are not the same thing."

The department's alumni have gone on to server critical roles within the state – The current heads of the Nebraska State Climate Office , the National Drought Mitigation Center, The Conservation and Survey Division and the Nebraska Water Center all graduated for the department, according to department documents.

Others have gone on to work for local natural resources districts, the Air Force, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers , the National Weather Service and Tv stations across the state.

"Weare losing the ability to train the next generation of scientists that want to serve Nebraska the way that we all do and serve the county , the way we do with our scientific expertise," said Bathke, an Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department alum.

Far-reaching research

There are about 17 faculty in the Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Huston said. Their research carries locally, nationally and internationally/

Department chair Cilton Rowe highlighted the faculty's research om carbon sequestration location opportunities underneath the state. This subject is of national importance.

"Those kins of things are important for the economic future of Nebraska," Rowe said.

And the department has received national renown. Professor Sherilyn Fritz was elected to the National Academy of Sciences for her research reconstructing "the history of the environment."

Fritz is also a lead investigator for the Trans-Amazon Drilling Project, an international research project looking at the evolution of the Amazon rainforest over geologic time.

And then there's the climate and weather research. Huston led the TORUS project, where his team chased storms to understand their internal structures through drones, mobile mesonets and radar. Huston's and the department's work in meteorologists is recognized nationally and internationally, Fritz said. Houston even consulted on the movie "Twisters,"

Research from the department also informs work coming out or other parts of UNL, including Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Association Professor Andrea Basche is among the ag institute researchers who have used Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department research in the past.

"Getting rid of this department degrades the state's capacity to predict and adapt to weather extremes that dictate our agriculture success," Basche said.

Some faculty say they have been offered alternate positions at the university. It is unclear how many will take them or stay in Nebraska.

In her role as state climatologist , Bathke was the lead author on the recent 2024 Climate Change Impact Assessment Report. Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department members served as advisors on the report, and one faculty member was a lead author.

There were plans for follow-ups, such as using regional climate modeling with crop modeling to determine specific impacts to agriculture and natural resources in Nebraska. Now, Bathke is unsure if those follow-ups will happen.

“We would have to contract that out to someone who does not have the local expertise of Nebraska,” Bathke said. “Anytime you contract something out, it’s more expensive than if you it in house.”