

# Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts

## Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning



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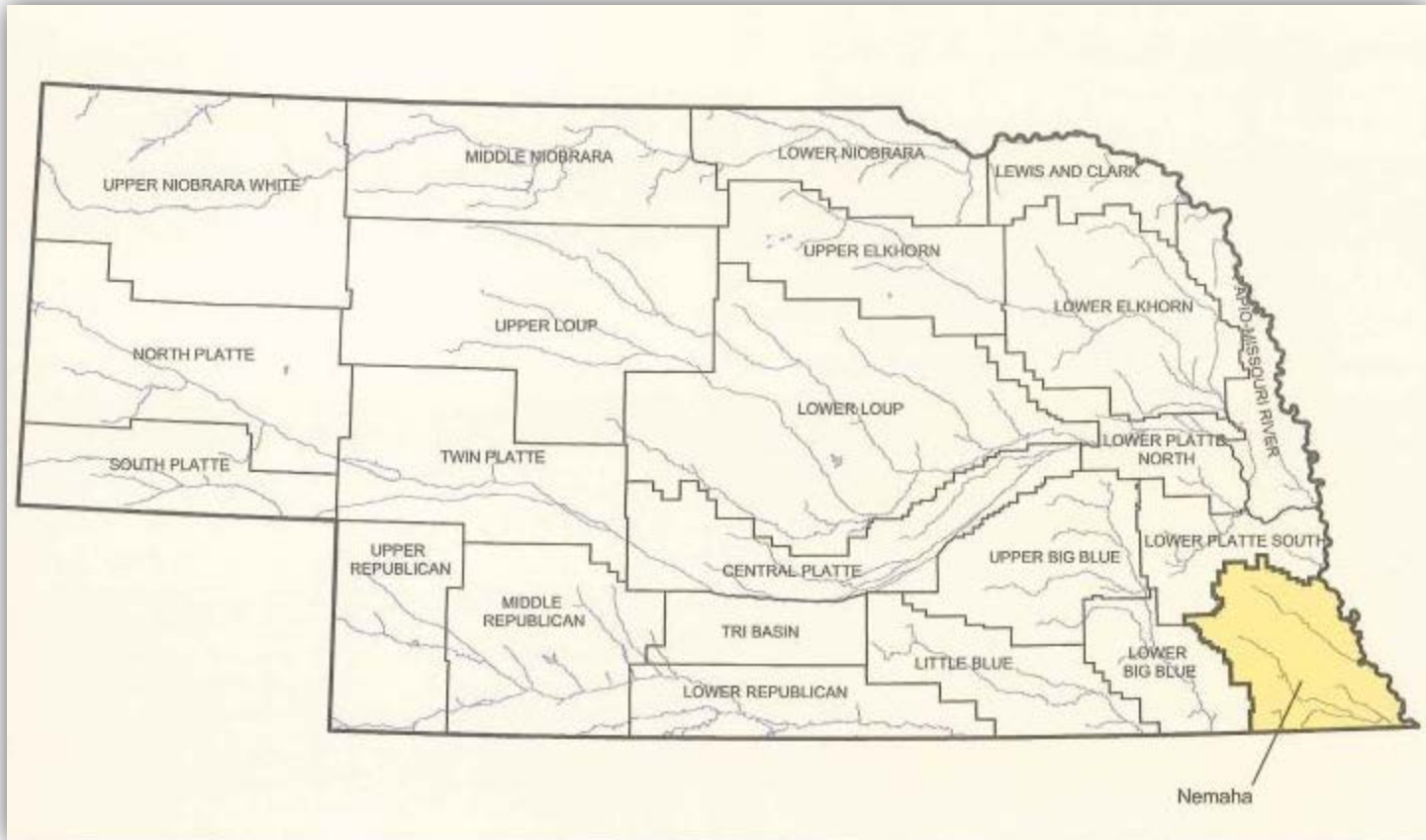
Nemaha Natural Resources District

Tecumseh, Nebraska

# What is a Natural Resources District?



To best manage the State's Natural Resources, Nebraska has been divided into 23 NRDs



District boundaries generally follow river watersheds

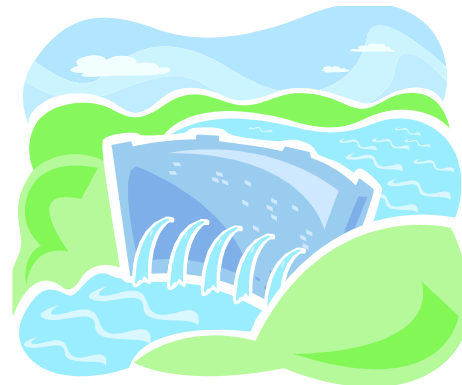
# NRD's 12 Areas of Responsibility

1. Erosion Control
2. Flood Control
3. Flood Prevention
4. Soil Conservation
5. Water Supply for Beneficial Uses
6. Management and Conservation of Surface and Groundwater
7. Pollution Control
8. Solid Waste Disposal
9. Drainage Improvement
10. Fish and Wildlife Habitat
11. Recreation Development and Management
12. Forestry and Range Management



# NRD Facts

- Districts have property taxing authority which provides much of the funding for programs and administration.
- NRDs also obtain funding through grants, bonding and charging for services.
- Natural Resources Districts are governed by elected boards ranging from 5 to 21 members
- Staff size typically ranges from 5 to over 30 depending on the location in the state

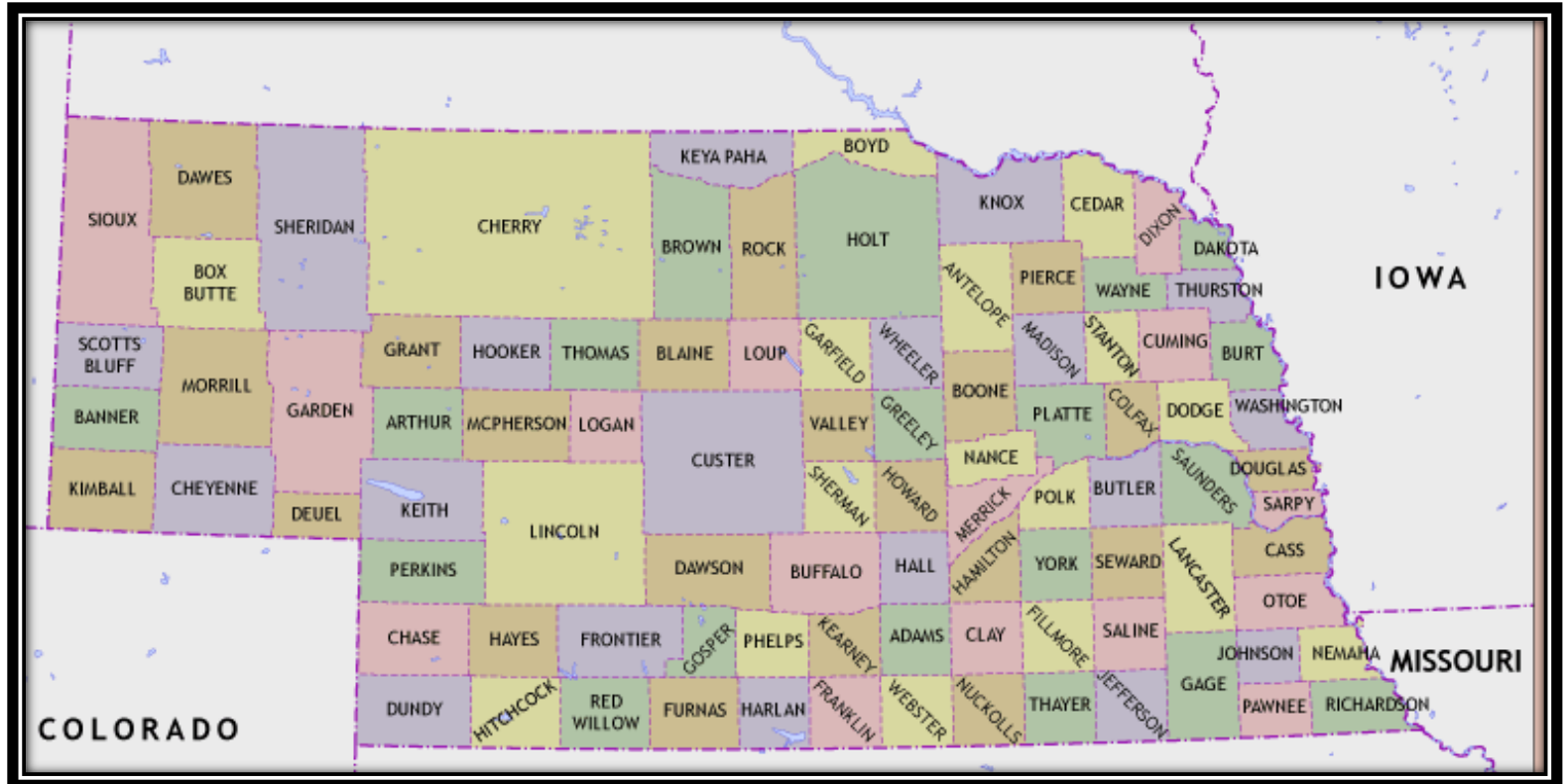


# Hazard Mitigation Planning in Nebraska

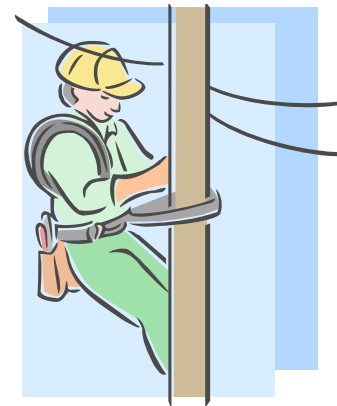
- Hazard Mitigation planning in Nebraska is the responsibility of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
- In the mid 2000s NEMA began encouraging counties and cities to develop FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plans
- Although some counties and larger communities developed plans, efforts to go through the process was slower than expected.
- NEMA started to recognized that challenges that Nebraska faced to get every county's and city's plan completed



- Nebraska consists of 93 counties and has a total population of around 1.8 million.
- Around 50% of the state's population lives in 3 counties (Douglas, Sarpy and Lancaster) and many counties have less than 2,000 residents



- NEMA recognized that having each county prepare their own hazard mitigation plan was not feasible and looked for alternatives to consolidate the effort allowing multiple counties to work together to develop a single plan.
- Nebraska's NRDs were identified as an entity that was already in place that could facilitate the plans and greatly reduce the total number of local plans required to meet FEMA requirements
- NEMA began to solicit NRDs asking them to consider developing multi county plans.





# Why NRDs?

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- Multi-county governmental entity
- Some of the NRD Responsibilities are similar to the goals of the hazard mitigation program
- NRDs have working relationships with counties and cities within their jurisdiction.
- Have the staff necessary to administer the planning process.
- Have working relationships with the consulting firms that help develop the plans

# Options used by NRDs to Complete Plans

- Most acted as the Lead Agency to develop the Plan
- Some combined with neighboring NRDs to develop a larger regional plan
- Some worked individually with counties or cities to develop a plan

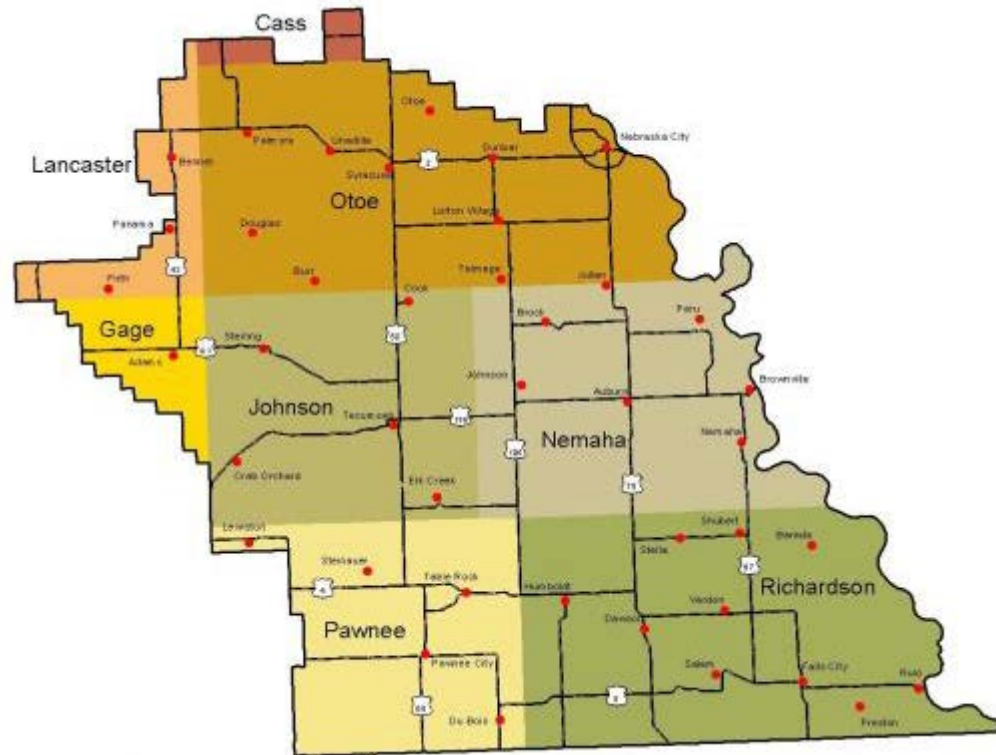


- To date 14 NRDs have been the lead agency for developing a plan
- 5 other NRDs have shared in the development of a plan
- Several NRDs have started the process of updating their original plan

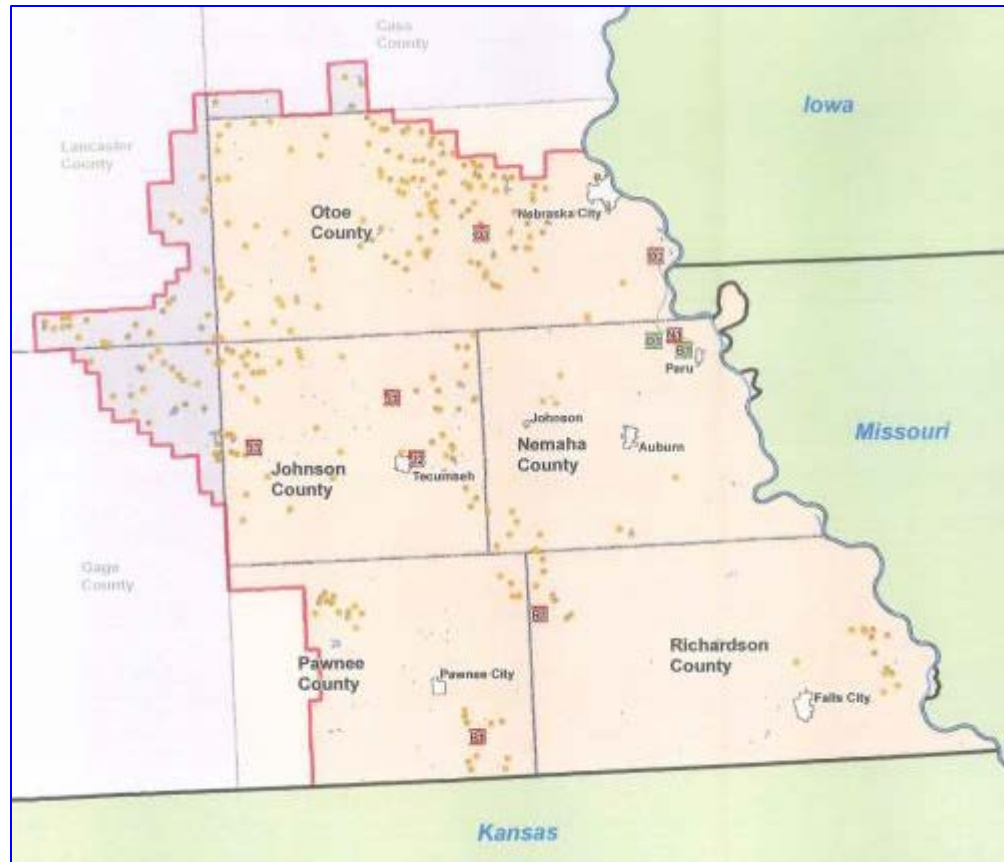


# The Nemaha NRD Story

- In 2008 the Nemaha NRD secured a planning grant through NEMA that covered 75% of the cost to complete the plan.
- Grants were made available through FEMA and the state allotment is based on the amount of disaster aid received

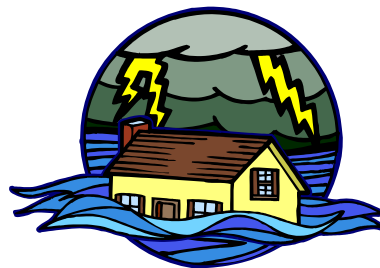


The Nemaha NRD entered into an agreement with 5 counties to develop a hazard mitigation plan



Areas in the Nemaha NRD outside the 5 counties were included in neighboring NRD plans

- The 25% local contribution was split between the NRD and 5 participating counties
- The counties and NRD each contributed from \$3,000 to \$7,000 based on population
- The NRD hired an private consultant experienced with FEMA planning to assist with the development of the plan
- The consultant did almost everything with the exception of setting up public meetings and some data collection.
- The consultants experience was critical when dealing with FEMA to get the final plan approved.



# How Did the Planning Process Work?

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- A Planning team consisting of representatives from the NRD and 5 counties was formed
- Public meetings were held in each county
- The consultant collected data on past disasters, potential threats and county/city infrastructure
- The participants identified needs/projects
- The plan document was developed and approved by FEMA

# Outcomes

- Plan was completed and approved by FEMA in spring 2010
- Final cost to complete the plan was \$135,000
- 5 counties participated
- Over 40 other entities including cities, villages, school districts, drainage districts and utility providers also participated
- Only 1 village refused to sign off on the plan



# Benefits of Plan Development

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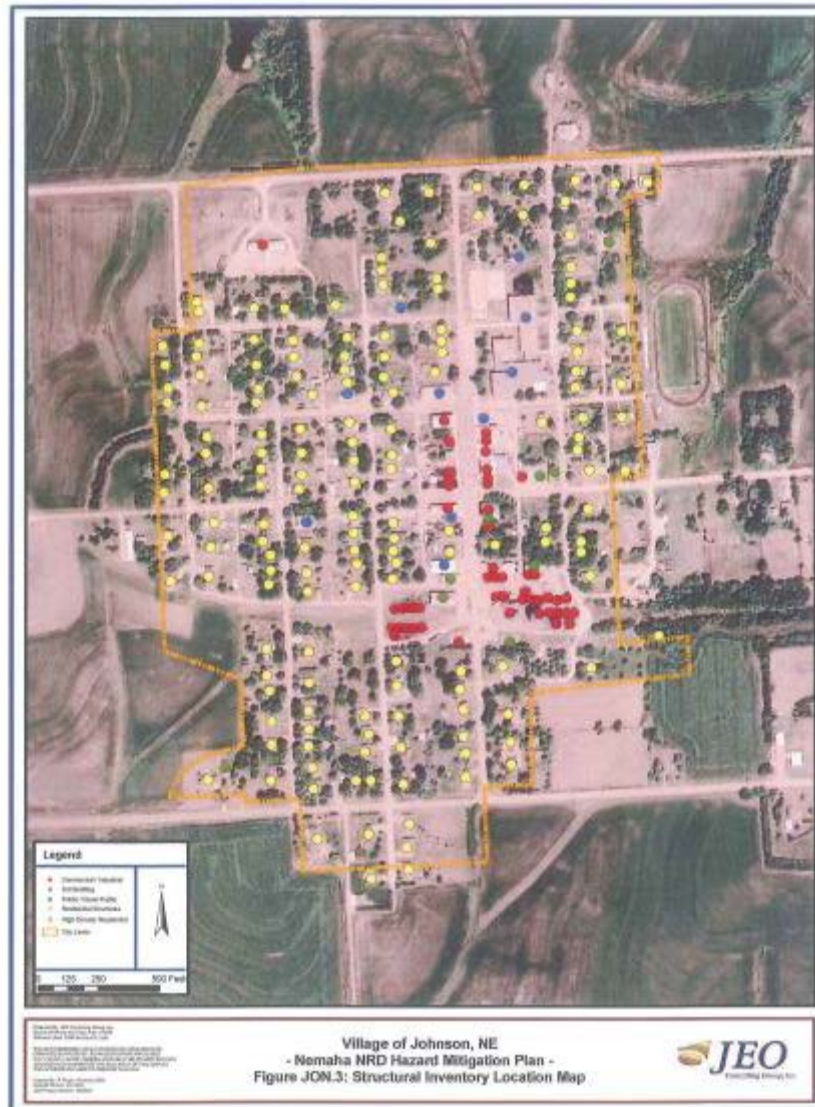
- All the entities that participated in the plan became eligible for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Funds
- It was estimated that the 5 counties saved over \$200,000 by going to the multiple county plan verses individual plans
- Created a good data base for the NRD
- Required some communities to update their infra-structure maps
- Allowed the NRD to work closely with 5 counties and numerous small towns and villages
- Developed a better understanding of what is going on in the local towns and villages

# Products Included in the Plan

- Structural Inventories
- Maps of vulnerable facilities and populations
- Locations of schools and other public buildings
- Utility system inventories/maps
- Flood prone areas
- Location of dams and levees
- History of past disasters
- Potential threats
- Potential projects and remedies



# Community Structural Inventory Map



# Critical Facility Map





# Flood Hazard Map



# Issues

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- Had to determine what to do with counties only partially covered by the NRD
- Convince some of the participating entities that the plan was important
- Had to organize and participate in numerous meetings
- Getting all the participants to take the necessary action and sign documents was time consuming
- FEMA continually changes their plan requirements
- The plan has to be updated every 5 years

# Conclusions

- Positive experience for the NRD
- A good consultant makes the process fairly simple
- Had to push many of the smaller entities along through the process
- Local cost was minimal
- The final product is valuable
- Formed better relationships with counties and communities
- Process is time consuming





Questions?