Lincoln, NE – April 4, 2019 – Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District announced today that it will receive $48,500 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the “Lower Niobrara Observation Well Network” project. The Trust Board announced funding for the project at its meeting on April 4, 2019 in Lincoln. This is the first year of award with a potential for 2nd and 3rd year funding totaling $61,000 and $50,500 respectively. The project is one of the 117 projects receiving $19,501,444 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year. Of these, 85 were new applications and 32 are carry-over projects.

The Lower Niobrara NRD (LNNRD), located in north central Nebraska, is looking to the Nebraska Environmental Trust for grant funding to drill test holes, record geological data, construct observation wells, and install water-level data loggers to acquire information about aquifer composition, ground water hydrology, ground water quality, and ground water quantity. The observation wells will support a long term ground water monitoring program that will supply data to efficiently and effectively manage the ground water resources of the LNNRD.

Currently, LNNRD has a very limited number of dedicated observation wells in a small area of the District. Expansion of this observation well network will allow for increased understanding of aquifer attributes, ground water flows, year around water level monitoring, and an increased level of accuracy of ground water data.
The target areas have intensive, irrigated cropping systems that overlay areas located along aquifer boundaries, areas previously declared aquifer absent, and areas that have well interference issues between irrigators, livestock producers, and domestic well owners. Also included in the target areas are the Wellhead Protection Areas of the Boyd #2 Rural Water District, the West Knox Rural Water District, and the LNNRD's portion of the Bazile Groundwater Management Area.

The Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992. Using revenue from the Nebraska Lottery, the Trust has provided over $305 million in grants to over 2,200 projects across the state. Anyone – citizens, organizations, communities, farmers and businesses – can apply for funding to protect habitat, improve water quality and establish recycling programs in Nebraska. The Nebraska Environmental Trust works to preserve, protect and restore our natural resources for future generations.