

Conversations Conferences



on Nebraska
Environment
and Sustainability

Water: Questions to Explore

Questions to Trigger Exploration and Learning

- What are Nebraska's natural water resources? What is the rate of consumption beyond sustainable usage of our water resources?
- What are the primary issues (economic, health, sustaining supply for future use, etc.) related to water quantity and quality in the state of NE?

Questions to Trigger Ideas for Change, New Action

- What actions can I take that will demonstrate my commitment to more responsible water resource consumption in Nebraska?
- What are practices I can initiate where I work, and in my community, that could lead to more responsible water use practices? What recommendations for action can we formulate today, to be shared with whom, when, and how best that could influence:
 - Water use practices among everyday citizens of Nebraska?
 - City, state and federal policies that impact material consumption practices?

Background Reference Questions

- What educational opportunities can we encourage/initiate that would serve to inform everyday citizens, including children and youth, as well as professional service providers to respect the value and limitations of NE water resources as well as sustainable water use practices?
- Why do agricultural uses of water have higher priority than human and urban uses?
- How, in the future, will Nebraska respond to climate change and concurrently protect its unique and abundant water resources?
- Omaha and Lincoln have begun competition for limited metro-regional water resources. Do we have adequate predictive tools for both demand and supply resources?
- Does the state have adequate regulation/public policies to protect against over appropriation of limited water resources on a district-by-district basis?
- Some politicians have expressed interest in the abandonment of Nebraska's Natural Resource Districts (NRD). Are the NRDs valuable entities to help conserve/sustain water resources?
- Should land uses be constrained by scarce or poor water resources? If so, how can more reliable assessment and predictive tools be made available to planners and decision makers?
- Does Nebraska have adequate public policy protections to keep industrial and/or commercial interests from over appropriating the limited water resources? (For instance, why has the ethanol industry not been held accountable for excessive commercial extraction of water to produce and process a source of energy?)
- Water disputes at the borders of the state have increased in recent years. How, in the face of new predictions of droughts, floods, and global warming and related demands from both agricultural and urban uses, can Nebraska protect its unique water resource?

continued

- Both Omaha and Lincoln are projected to experience long-term potable water shortages. What steps can be taken to move citizen thinking/action toward “grey water” systems of second uses for water, or major rain water collection systems to offset sewage and landscaping uses of fresh ground water?