

2023 Torchbearer Celebration

By Hannah Wroblewski

Congratulations to our 2023 Torchbearer Honorees!

Thank you for your dedicated service to our community!

Former State Senator Kate Bolz
Former State Senator Adam Morfeld
Former State Senator Patty Pansing Brooks
Former Lancaster County Public Defender
Joe Nigro
Former Lincoln City Councilmember
Tammy Ward
Former Lincoln Airport Authority Board Member
Zachary Mora James
Former Lower Platte South NRD Director
Karen Amen
Former Lower Platte South NRD Director
Vern Barrett
Former Lower Platte South NRD Director
Milt Schmidt
Former Lower Platte South NRD Director
Dan Steinkruger

Thank you to everyone who joined us on September 21st as we hosted our 2023 Torchbearer Celebration and celebrated some of our phenomenal outgoing elected officials.

Throughout their tenure, these exceptional leaders have exemplified the true essence of public service, championing various initiatives that have positively impacted countless lives. As they pass the torch to the next generation, we wish to recognize their invaluable contributions and express our heartfelt gratitude.

Thank you to our sponsors and monthly donors for your support of LCDP's continued efforts to elect Democrats! Let's build up our party for 2024.

Save the dates for our upcoming LCDP Events:

Halloween Trunk or Treat on October 29th,
3:30-5:30pm at Lincoln Labor Temple

Holiday Party on December 19th



We Will Win This Election And Make the Republicans Like It!

By Dennis Crawford



Breaking: A poll from Reuters/Ipsos released last week shows President Biden leading Donald Trump by 5 pts, 44% to 39%.

If you follow the “liberal” mainstream media, it’s been the summer of discontent for President Joe Biden and the Democrats. He’s too old, he’s trailing Trump in the polls and everything in the country is awful. If you believe the mainstream media, you probably don’t want to get out of bed in the morning.

The media always like to emphasize polls that aren’t favorable to the president. In all fairness, they should cover the good ones for Biden with just as much enthusiasm. However, that wouldn’t fit their narrative of doom and gloom. As always, don’t put too much stock into any single poll. This race is going to be close, and we are well positioned to win.

The most recent bright shiny object for the vapid mainstream press is a howler of a *Washington Post* poll that shows Trump with a 10-point lead. The *Washington Post* even admitted that their own poll was wrong. “Ignore the *Washington Post* — ABC poll. It’s a ridiculous outlier (Trump up 10 over Biden — laughable). My question: How could you even publish a poll so absurd on its face? Will be a lingering embarrassment for you.” Larry Sabato.

These click bait media polls fourteen months before an election reflect what’s been called a feedback loop of ignorance. “The news media’s poor coverage of key issues leaves the public with uninformed opinions that they share with pollsters. Then news outlets trumpet the polls with those

uninformed opinions because that’s easier than covering the key issues.” Mark Jacob.

The media tells the American people that everything sucks and then they take polls from the same public that they misled with disinformation. A recent Federal Reserve survey indicates that 73% of the American people believe that their own financial situation is good okay or good but only 18% of Americans believe the economy is doing well. The American people are voting with their pocketbook; consumer spending remains strong, and travel is at an all-time high.

The press has simply failed in its duty to accurately inform the American people about the status of the country and simply isn’t up to the task of defending democracy. It’s up to us to save democracy and freedom — nobody is going to do it for us.

There were two good polls for Joe Biden recently that are being ignored by the mainstream media. (No surprise.) Biden leads Trump 44 percent to 39 percent in a new Reuters poll. Will the mainstream media obsess on it? Biden leads Trump by 12 points in New Hampshire. Biden beat Trump by 7 points in New Hampshire in 2020 and Clinton beat him by one point in New Hampshire in 2016.

This follows on the heels of a long Democratic winning streak in special elections. The Democrats have been over-performing by 11 points since the Supreme Court’s abortion decision last year. This trend is seldom mentioned by the press.

Recently, we had two big Democratic victories to celebrate. In New Hampshire, our candidate won a special election for legislature by a whopping 12 points in a district carried by Trump in 2016 and 2020! In Pennsylvania, Democrats maintained control of the legislature in a blowout special election win.

“Hang on,” you might be saying. “Only 2,800 people voted in this election.” (New Hampshire House districts are really tiny.) “Does that really mean anything?” On its own, no — any single special election can be influenced by any number of factors, including candidate quality or parochial issues. But Democrats have been posting special election over performances of that magnitude all year long, in all kinds of districts. And on average, they have won by margins 11 points higher than the weighted relative partisanship of their districts.

That’s more than just an impressive streak — it’s a potential sign of a Democratic wave election in 2024. In each of the past three election cycles, a party’s average overperformance in all special elections in a given cycle has been a close match for the eventual House popular vote in the eventual general election — albeit a couple of points better for Democrats.” ABC News on September 20, 2024.

“You can keep talking about polls 14 months out, but this is what I’ve been looking at all year,” tweeted Obama 2012 campaign manager Jim Messina of the trend in special elections.

This goes to show that these national media polls don’t mean much. They fail to pick up the high level of Democratic motivation on election day. The most accurate polls are elections.

Simon Rosenberg did a good job of analyzing the Democratic victories in special elections and the flawed polling from the press. Rosenberg was the person who debunked the phony red wave narrative in 2022. “In a recent post I talked about something I’ve been calling asymmetrical engagement. It’s the idea that right now, due to Republicans having a robust primary and Democrats not that our two coalitions are not paying equal attention to the Presidential election, and polls are coming back a bit more Republican than is the actual state of things. A confirmation of this theory is the new CNN poll of New Hampshire, a state where voters are paying attention and engaged, which has Biden ahead of Trump 52–40. Biden won NH by 7 pts in 2020. So, in this large sample poll of a state where ads are flying, Biden is outperforming 2020 by 5 points, similar to our over performance in special elections across the US this year.”

The media polls will change once Biden and the Democrats rollout \$1 billion in advertising and voter turnout operations next year. Voters will be reminded that Biden has been a good president. 13.5 million jobs have been created since he has been president. Unemployment has been below 4 percent for 19 months. In 2023, wages are growing faster than inflation. The economy is now better than it was during Reagan’s morning in America in 1984.



All the GOP has to offer the American people is chaos and dysfunction. The GOP is going to shut down the government again. They did it in 1995–96, 2013 and 2018–19. The House GOP will justifiably be blamed for the shutdown since the lunatics are in charge of the asylum and they are reneging on the Biden-McCarthy budget deal.

Mitch McConnell, Karl Rove and Matt Gaetz are blaming the GOP. It’s so bad that even the mainstream media is blaming the GOP. Every elected Republican is responsible for the chaos. They put these crazies into power. The House GOP is hoping that a shutdown will cause a recession and Biden will be blamed. So unpatriotic.

Why would anybody want to go back to the dark days of 2020 when you could barely leave the house or even find toilet paper? People were afraid. Trump held daily briefings in which he shamelessly lied, recommended quack cures, and blamed everyone else. No one really knew what was going on. Millions of Americans lost their jobs and thousands were dying every day. We can’t go back.

It’s America or the MAGA Republicans in 2024. Choose wisely.

Our Stories



WHY I AM A DEMOCRAT: COMMUNITY

By Tammy Hanson

I grew up in a union family in Wisconsin. My dad was a truck driver and a Teamsters' shop steward at work.

When I moved to Nebraska to start my teaching career I joined the union. Through my 34 years of teaching with Lincoln Public Schools, I went into leadership at the local, district, and state level. Like my dad, I wanted to defend teachers against bad management practices. It was important to become involved in the school board and legislative contact teams because that was where decisions were made for our schools and communities.

There is a false equivalency between Democrats and Republicans. People will say both parties are alike. We are not *ALL* alike! As a Democrat, I believe that community is the foundation of our country. Community is about lifting everybody up – the poor, disabled, LGBTQ+ community, the hungry children, people with mental health issues, people coming out of prison... Republicans are about defending the rich and powerful and what they can get out of the system.

I want to be a member of a party who will defend our democracy. A party where women decide what to do with their own bodies, passes common sense gun legislation so kids won't be afraid to go to school, and believes in science – that climate control is important to my grandchildren's future! Putting my time, money, and energy into building a better Lincoln and a stronger America is a priority.

WE are the party to take action for the good of the people!

Building Momentum for 2024

What makes a political party?

People.

Our Stories.

Our Community.

Building community means connecting with people and to do that we want to share your stories.

It's people like Tammy and you who have built this party.

Share your story of why you joined the party, what inspired you to get involved in politics, why participating in democracy is important to you.

Please submit stories to our Communications Director at comms@nelancasterdems.org



Progressive Pages: What We're Reading on the Blue Bookshelf

Fair Play: How Sports Shape the Gender Debates

Author: Katie Barnes

A richly reported and provocative look at the history of women's sports and the controversy surrounding trans athletes by a leading LGBTQ+ sports journalist.

God Land: A Story of Faith, Loss, and Renewal in Middle America

Author: Lyz Lenz

Journalist Lenz blends memoir and reporting in this slim but powerful debut on the faith and politics of Middle America.

We Should All be Feminists

Author: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Drawing extensively on her own experiences and her deep understanding of the often masked realities of sexual politics, here is one remarkable author's exploration of what it means to be a woman now—and an of-the-moment rallying cry for why we should all be feminists.

Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability

Author: Robert McRuer

McRuer draws on queer and disability studies in "Crip Theory" to present a more nuanced view of LGBTQ people with disabilities and examine how certain bodies are deemed normal versus abject by society.

Banned Books

Banned books challenge societal boundaries and confront biases that led to their censorship. By reading them, we champion free speech and intellectual freedom, celebrating literature's power to enlighten and provoke thought.

The Year of Union Strength

By John Markey

The year of union strength continues. After being on strike for 146 days, the Writer's Guild of America won some important changes in their contract which include residual payments from streaming services and guidelines for the use of AI, or artificial intelligence. These changes are imperative in our world of changing technology. Streaming has become a popular way for people to consume the work of writers and actors, and until now, there was no mechanism to share streaming profits with the very people who created the content. AI threatens the livelihood of writers and actors as it can learn to copy the style of these artists and produce similar work without any payment to the original artist. While the screen actors are still on strike, they have recently re-engaged in negotiations. Hopefully they can get these valuable protections too.

Strikes come with a price and hurt the people they are intended to help, but sometimes they are the only way working people can gain necessary protections as well as fair wages and benefits. Just as I finish writing this, 75,000 employees of Kaiser Permanente, a large insurer and health care provider, went on a three-day strike over low wages and understaffing. This is the largest healthcare strike in U.S. history. Registered nurses and doctors will continue to work through the strike along with temporary employees. While a find a strike in the healthcare industry concerning, it tells me how poor the relationship with management must be.

It was great to see President Biden join the United Auto Workers on the picket line. He is the first sitting president to do so. After making big concessions to the U.S. auto industry as it struggled to stay in business during the Republican recession of 2008, the members of the UAW are determined to win them back as the Big Three are making record profits. Not only do they seek significant wage increases, they want to end the two-tiered wage system and reinstate cost of living protection as well as gaining protection as the industry shifts to electric vehicles.

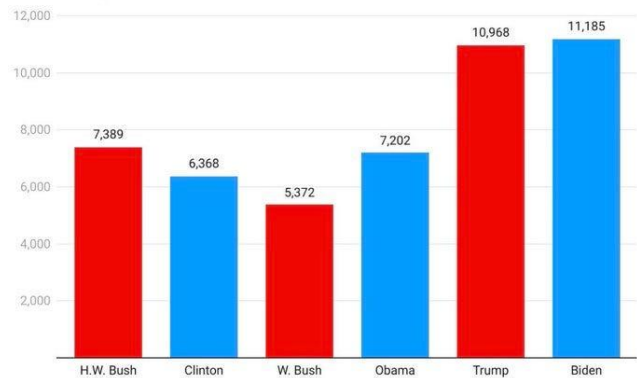
As the wealth of this country continues to concentrate to the top, as the richest in America today have surpassed the wealth accumulated by the robber barons, it's heartening to see working people stand together to fight for, and win, respect, security and a fair share of the profits they generate for their employers.

Rebutting MAGA Republican Zombie Lies On Gas Prices

By Dennis Crawford

Domestic oil production by president

Average annual domestic crude oil production during each president's term, in thousands of barrels per day.



For the purposes of this chart, I considered H.W. Bush's term to be from 1989-1992, Clinton's to be from 1993-2000, W. Bush's is from 2001-2008, Obama's is from 2009-2016, Trump's is from 2017-2020, and Biden's is 2021-present. Chart: Milan Singh for Slow Boring • Source: US Energy Information Administration • Created with Datawrapper

Average domestic oil production under Biden is now higher than under Trump or any past president.

In the last few months, gas prices have been rising again with no end in sight. The cause for this spike was a decision on July 3 by Russia and Saudi Arabia to reduce oil production.

In response, the Republicans have blamed Joe Biden for higher gas prices. The likes of Don Bacon and Mike Flood are repeatedly spreading disinformation on this issue on their social media accounts.

What is the truth? In this piece I will rebut, and fact check MAGA four common Republican zombie lies about gas prices.

1. The President of the U.S. controls gas prices.

During the summer of 2008, gas prices spiked to \$4.11 per gallon, which would be a whopping \$5.86 per gallon today. The Republicans sang a very different tune about the cause of higher gas prices since there was a Republican president.

George W. Bush said on April 29, 2008, that there was no "magic wand" to reduce the record high fuel prices. "I firmly believe that, you know, if there was a magic wand to wave, I'd be waving it, of course," he said during a news conference.

At about the same time, Fox "News" said that "No President has the power to increase or to lower gas prices." In 2008, Fox conceded that expanding domestic oil drilling would not significantly reduce prices and that the only way to reduce our vulnerability to gas price spikes was to use less oil.

Bush and Fox “News” were right in 2008. However, the GOP has now done a 180 on gas prices since Biden is a Democrat. One of the great things about the internet era is that you can easily research previous positions taken by the Republicans. Their propaganda relies heavily upon bad memories. My job is to refresh memories.

2. Senator Tim Scott (R-SC): Biden “has shut down energy production in America.”

Scott should be ashamed of himself. His statement here is simply a flat out lie. And the mainstream press considers Scott to be one of the more moderate GOP presidential candidates.

The reality is that domestic U.S. oil production is currently at an all-time high. “U.S. oil production is forecast to average an all-time high of 12.8 million barrels a day this year and keep growing to 13.1 million in 2024, the federal Energy Information Administration said in its latest forecast. That’s up from the most recent trough of 5 million barrels a day in 2008, and probably enough to help the U.S. to keep its title as the number one global crude oil producer.” *Politico* on August 28, 2023.

3. The U.S. was energy independent under Trump and is no longer energy independent.

The U.S. has remained energy independent during the Biden years. I have the receipts.

“The U.S. produced more petroleum than it consumed in 2020, and the numbers were essentially in balance in 2021, according to the Energy Information Administration.” *Axios* on Feb 19, 2022

“In conclusion, 2022 marked the highest level of US energy independence since before 1950. This milestone was achieved through a combination of factors, including the shale boom which led to a steady decline in net energy imports, rather than being solely attributed to any specific presidential administration.” *Forbes* on May 2, 2023

4. Biden is preventing the oil companies from drilling more.

One of the many phony GOP talking points is that somehow the Biden Administration is preventing the oil companies from drilling even more oil. The reality is that the oil companies are mainly using their massive profits for stock buybacks and dividends, rather than investing in more production. The oil companies have no incentive to drill more because they prefer a tight market where they can manipulate the prices.

“U.S. oil producers overall are increasing their budgets for new energy projects this year, but the

expenditures will be dwarfed by the amounts paid to shareholders. Chevron said it would triple its spending on share repurchases to \$75 billion over five years at current guidance. Other oil companies are expected to follow suit.” *Reuters* on January 27, 2023.

“Companies clearly have everything they need — record profits and thousands of approved permits — to increase production. The only thing getting in the way is their own decision to keep plowing windfall profits into the pockets of executives and shareholders instead of using them to boost supply.” White House spokesperson Abdullah Hasan said in a statement earlier this year.

5. The Truth.

Like I said earlier in the piece, Russia and Saudi Arabia decided to reduce oil production on July 3, 2023. Subsequently on September 5, Saudi Arabia and Russia, in coordinated statements, announced that they would extend their cuts in oil supplies through the rest of 2023.

Despite that reality, the Republicans have refused to condemn or otherwise criticize these countries for raising gas prices. The Republicans are lying to the public because they believe they can get away with it since our mainstream press continues to fail the American people. The mainstream media’s coverage of economic issues is simply inexcusable.

The MAGA Republicans also won’t criticize Russia and Saudi Arabia due to the Trump family’s extensive business connections to those countries. In 2014, Eric Trump said, “Well, we don’t rely on American banks. We have all the funding we need out of Russia.” Six years earlier in 2008, Donald Trump, Jr. boasted that, “In terms of high-end product influx into the U.S., Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets.”

Donald Trump and his family also have significant investments in Saudi Arabia. Shortly after Trump left office, Jared Kushner grabbed a \$2 billion investment from a fund headed up by Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman. This lucrative deal is a corrupt pay for play scheme to reward Kushner’s actions in the White House and is a down payment for future favors if Trump wins the 2024 election.

In a recent civil deposition in the fraud case filed against him, Trump argued that he could fix any value he saw fit to any property in question, for the reason that he could always “find a buyer from Saudi Arabia” to accept his price.

And that’s not all. On November 20, 2022, Saudi Arabian real estate developer Dar Al Arkan made a deal with Donald Trump’s company to use the

Trump brand for its \$4 billion project that includes a hotel, villas, and a golf course.

It is increasingly obvious that Russia and Saudi Arabia are raising gas prices in an effort to sabotage Joe Biden and elect Donald Trump. They have billions of reasons to support Trump. The reality is that Trump is a compromised man, and our enemies want him back in the White House. They know that Trump would destabilize the U.S. and blow up our alliances with our allies in the free world.

It's America or Trump in 2024. Choose wisely.

'Toxic algae' fouling Nebraska lakes, raising water quality concerns

By Nancy Gaarder

From *The Flatwater Free Press*. Reprinted with permission.

Nebraska jumped to the forefront of monitoring for outbreaks after two dogs died in 2004. But political and economic hurdles continue to slow efforts to prevent toxic blooms.

Bosley was a giant of a dog – a cross between a mastiff and a Rottweiler.

But he had a playful spirit, so it wasn't unusual that on a spring day in 2004 he'd dash headlong into the sandpit lake near the Kappas family home, gulping water and chasing fish.

The only remarkable detail of the otherwise routine trip to Buccaneer Bay, recalled owner Tom Kappas, was the bright green color of the water.

Algae, he and his wife figured.

Within an hour, Bosley was dead.

And within days, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had a scientist on an airplane, headed to Nebraska to investigate Bosley's death and that of another dog.

The scientist looked at the "green yuck" in the Cass County lake, Kappas recalled, and said, "Oh that's not supposed to be here."

Toxic cyanobacteria. One of [nature's most powerful poisons](#).

Commonly referred to as toxic algae or blue-green algae, the soupy mess was actually a "bloom" of aquatic bacteria.

Normally benign, cyanobacteria are common across the planet.

But under the right conditions – as was the case in Buccaneer Bay that summer and dozens of Nebraska lakes since – cyanobacteria can release potentially lethal poisons. It is a growing concern in water bodies worldwide.

Toxic cyanobacteria can sicken and kill animals and in rare cases be fatal to people. It can make drinking water more costly to purify and the

safety of eating the fish uncertain. Exposure can come from contact with the water or breathing airborne particles.

The 2004 incidents in Nebraska, along with similar ones in Iowa, Vermont and New York, were so jarring that the scientific community launched a new era of expanded testing and research in the United States, said Jennifer Graham, the research hydrologist who represents the U.S. Geological Survey on a federal task force focused on the issue.

Now 20 years later, scientists have some answers.

They know that agricultural, urban and residential runoff is feeding the problem. They worry that human-caused climate change is supercharging it. But they have too few years of data to answer a basic question: Are outbreaks becoming more frequent?

"That's really the question scientists are asking now: Is the increase real, or do we just have a heightened awareness of the problem?" Graham said.

For some Nebraskans, especially those on the more intensely farmed eastern side of the state, the answer seems obvious: their lakes are changing and not for the better.

Neil Harrison, a 71-year-old lifelong Nebraska fisherman, no longer takes his dogs to lakes in the Norfolk area, and fishes there far less often.

"When I was younger, none of this was going on," he said. "It's obvious that something's changed."

Case in point: Willow Creek Lake, located northwest of Norfolk. For years it has been one of the state's most affected lakes. Since 2005, some summers have seen 10-14 weeks of unhealthy levels – based on current health standards.

So far this year alerts have been issued for seven weeks.

"We can't fish in our own neighborhood," Harrison said.

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Determining whether outbreaks are on the rise is no small question, given the potential harm if waterways become routinely fouled by toxic cyanobacteria, said Jessica Corman, an associate professor and head of the aquatic ecology lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

“On the one hand, we don’t know enough to make strong statements about what is going to happen,” Corman said. “But on the other, we worry that once we do know enough, it will be too late. So the question is, ‘What do you do?’”

Despite the political and economic hurdles, she said, the problem is easier to prevent than it is to clean up.

Toxic cyanobacteria thrive on warm, nutrient-rich water, [especially the type of nutrients](#) – phosphorus and nitrogen – that find their way from farm fields and urbanized areas into waterways.

Global warming may be playing a role, scientists say, not just through rising temperatures, but through heavier rains that amplify runoff, erosion and flooding.

“There are a lot of things we do know,” Corman said. “We know how to modify flooding, we know how to modify how much fertilizer we put on our lawns and fields. ... It’s just whether we have the political, social or economic will to do it.”

In addition to the two dog deaths in 2004, toxic cyanobacteria made dozens of Nebraskans sick that summer at Pawnee Lake. According to a [report by state regulators and University of Nebraska researchers](#), swimmers and skiers reported skin rashes, blisters, vomiting, headaches and diarrhea after a weekend at the lake.

With toxic outbreaks occurring routinely in Nebraska lakes, the state continues to receive reports of suspected, though unconfirmed, illnesses.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center typically receives between four and 15 calls a year from people who suspect they’ve been affected by “toxic algae,” according to spokeswoman Angie Pasho. The symptoms generally are upset stomach, diarrhea, flu-like illness, skin rashes and mouth blisters, she said. The center also receives calls about pets that have become sick.

The extent to which toxic cyanobacteria are making people ill is unknown because there is no mandatory reporting.

Allan Urlis of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services said the agency has initiated plans to better investigate potential illnesses. He encouraged people and medical providers to report suspected cases.

According to a recent federal study in which 16 states volunteered data, the CDC found that 117 people reported health effects from toxic cyanobacteria in 2021. Forty-eight dogs became ill and 18 died, according to the CDC. (Nebraska was not among the states providing data.)

Most Nebraska water bodies, including private lakes such as Buccaneer Bay and popular public reservoirs such as Omaha’s Zorinsky Lake, aren’t routinely tested.

In lakes that are tested, sampling may miss a problem. Blooms can move, appear and disappear quickly, or occur in one part of the lake but not another.

The state advises people to learn the signs of an outbreak.

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Back in 2004, Nebraska's then Department of Environmental Quality acted quickly. Within two weeks, the state started testing lakes across Nebraska, issuing alerts when it detected harmful levels.

Even today, Nebraska's monitoring efforts remain ahead of a number of states. Some states don't proactively test, while others proactively test far fewer lakes.

Together with federal and local partners, NDEE tests about 50 public recreational lakes every week from May through September. (The state has more than 450 public lakes and ponds.) Over the years, it has tested more than 70 lakes and, at one point or another, at least 44 have tested above the level that is considered unhealthy. Water samples are tested for microcystin, the toxin released by cyanobacteria.

The outbreaks don't appear to follow a pattern; some lakes that tested high years ago have improved, while others have recently developed harmful levels. About a dozen appear to be chronically impacted, including Iron Horse Trail, Kirkman's Cove, Pawnee, Rockford, Swan Creek 5A and Willow Creek.

Renovations can help, as was the case years ago at Carter Lake in Omaha and at Fremont State Recreation Area, according to NDEE. But because lake ecologies vary, there's no one-size-fits-all solution.

Instead, legislative action tackling ag and urban runoff is critical to reducing outbreaks, experts say.

Most of Nebraska's affected lakes are in agricultural areas. And for now, voluntary measures, largely funded through taxpayer-subsidized incentives, are the main tool for reducing ag runoff.

And that can prove a long slog.

At Norfolk's Willow Creek, [local, state and federal researchers](#) concluded about 10 years ago that upstream runoff was the likely source of pollutants feeding the bacteria. The majority of the watershed that feeds Willow Creek is agricultural.

The Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District pushed toward a solution, but grant funding only became available in the last couple of years, said Curt Becker, projects manager. That money allowed the NRD to assign a staff member to work with

farmers and fund practices that lessen nutrient runoff.

"We've had some luck and we're hoping to build on that," Becker said. "Building those relationships is probably the key to getting the practices implemented. This is probably a long-term solution – it's not something that is going to happen overnight."

Farmers welcome the financial help provided by incentives but generally oppose mandates.

"I don't think the hammer works as well as the carrot," said State Sen. Tom Brandt of Plymouth, a farmer who serves on the Natural Resources Committee. Farming is expensive, he said, so the financial help is needed, and mandates would be difficult to enforce.

"Many farmers are great stewards of the land," Brandt said. "When they take care of the land, the land takes care of them."

Some in the farming community believe more needs to be done.

Fifth-generation farmer Graham Christensen in northeast Nebraska said legislative safeguards are needed to protect public health and hold industrial agriculture operations to higher standards.

Those safeguards need to be accompanied by resources – information and incentives – that enable farmers to adopt proven solutions, he said.

"In places like Nebraska, the first step is acknowledging you have a problem, and our government hasn't even gotten to that yet," he said.

Anthony Schutz, a professor of agricultural law at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said that while the issue is politically difficult, there are actions Nebraska could take.

Iowa, for example, has real-time, in-stream monitoring. Minnesota requires grassy strips along streams to protect them from runoff.

Lincoln resident and boater David Peters is among those who want Nebraska lawmakers to get tougher on runoff.

Millions of tax dollars have been invested in building reservoirs across Nebraska, he points out, and it's become increasingly difficult to enjoy them.

"We need to ... demand that our leaders at the state and local level put the quality of life interests of 2 million Nebraskans above the property rights of a handful of landowners."

Nebraska is lucky when it comes to drinking water. Most of the state draws its drinking water from aquifers, which so far have proven immune to toxic cyanobacteria.

Only 60 miles east of the state's border, the town of Maryville, Missouri, has proposed spending

millions of dollars on a new water treatment plant because toxic cyanobacteria has contaminated the reservoir it relies on.

It's not all about ag.

Problems at sandpit lakes are most often related to lakeshore conditions – homeowners who use fertilizer on lawns, outdated septic tanks or an abundance of waterfowl waste, according to the state.

That's not news to Kappas. Outbreaks have become an annual occurrence at Buccaneer Bay, he said. Kappas said he has tried in vain to persuade his neighbors to forgo their sandy beaches and green lawns.

"Nobody listens to me – they must think I'm some kind of a quack," he said. "Everyone wants to have a green yard. Well, OK fine, then you are going to suffer the consequences."



Lancaster County Party Vice-Chair Matt Hansen, and a future Lancaster County Democrat



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I would also like to volunteer: _____ Prepare Mailings _____ Phone Banking _____ GOTV
I prefer to get my newsletter (please check one): _____ via e-mail or _____ via US mail.

Please also consider a donation to the Lancaster County Democratic Party.
Your donation helps support party activities including Get Out The Vote efforts,
candidate support services, political forums and the *Lancaster County Democrat*.

_____ **Sustaining Donor (Monthly Donation – credit card authorization)**

I hereby authorize the Lancaster County Democratic Party to charge the credit card below \$_____ each month.
Signature _____

_____ **One-time Donation (credit card authorization)**

I hereby authorize the Lancaster County Democratic Party to charge the credit card below for a one-time donation of \$_____.
Signature _____

_____ **Electronic Donation via ActBlue**

I am sending a separate electronic donation via the County Party's ActBlue account:
<https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/lancaster-county--ne--democrats-1>

_____ **Check or Money Order Enclosed, payable to Lancaster County Democratic Party**

Make check or money order payable to Lancaster County Democratic Party or charge to:

_____ VISA _____ MasterCard # _____ Exp. Date _____

Please return this form to the Lancaster County Democratic Party, PO Box 83213, Lincoln NE 68501-3213.