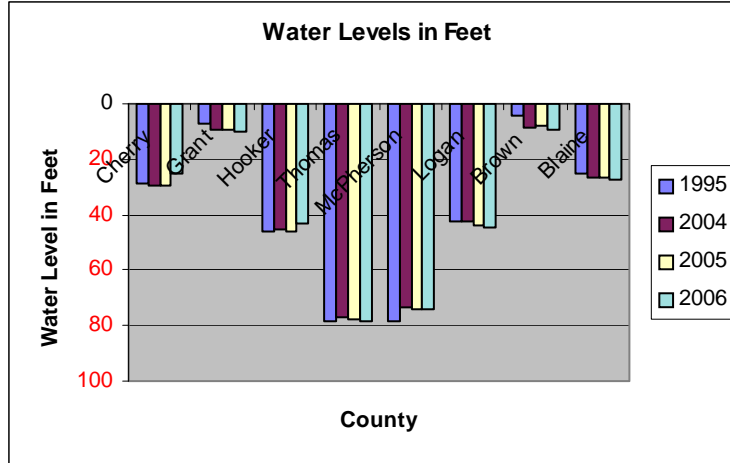




Upper Loup Scoop

District Water Level History



The number 0 indicates ground level. As you look at the graph you may notice that the number of feet to reach water has not changed more than 3 feet in average over the past 10 years, with a notable exception in Brown County.

Our groundwater is a precious resource and the past several years of drought, among other factors, have been hard on our

stores of water however, not as severe as what other districts in the state have observed. The above map indicates the activ-

ity of the static water levels since 1995. The District does have some static levels recorded for several of the counties dating back to the 1970's.

Ninety-nine wells were being measured annually in the fall. The District now measures biannually, spring and fall, using a 100 different irrigation well sites.

When it comes to our water supply the District's goals are to monitor, maintain and improve the quality and quantity of surface and ground water. Work has begun to help ensure we meet these goals. Read the article pertaining to the groundwater management plan in this issue.

Chemigation permits due June 1

Farmers planning to chemigate during the 2007 growing season must renew chemigation permits by June 1 to meet state deadline requirement.

To legally chemigate (apply chemicals through an irrigation distribution system) in Nebraska, an operator must be certified to apply chemicals and obtain a chemigation permit from their local NRD.

Chemigation renewal permits cost \$10 and must be submitted to the Upper Loup NRD. An irrigation system that has not been renewed prior to the June 1 deadline cannot apply chemicals through the system until a new permit is obtained. New chemigation permits cost \$30 and the

applicant cannot use the system until it passes a mandatory inspection. To pass inspection the mainline check valve must not have any sort of leak when there is water in the system. This prevents a chemical solution from seeping back down the well and into the groundwater.

Also, applicants must list a certified applicator on their application form. In order to be certified, a person must complete a chemigation safety course and pass an exam every four years.

Renewal applications for chemigation permits should be in the mail. If needing to obtain a new chemi-

gation permit or if you have any questions contact our office either by phone or by stopping by the Thedford office or any of our Satellite offices.



Upper Loup NRD Staff

Anna Baum	General Manager
Jack Brummet	Resources Technician
Kyle Yrkoski	Resources Technician
Angie Jensen	Administrative Secretary
Cleo Jacobs	Thedford Field Office

Upper Loup Board of Directors

- Subdistrict 1 Ginger Fouse & Eric Storer
- Subdistrict 2 Steve Boyer & Judy Ridenour
- Subdistrict 3 Gary Schaeffer & Wayne Eatinger
- Subdistrict 4 Byron Cox & Gordon Simonson
- Subdistrict 5 Louis Jacobson & Travis Hansen
- At Large: Wynn Wiens

Groundwater Management Plan

The Upper Loup has several long-term goals and one of the most important ones being to extend the aquifer life as long as possible. The District wants to be consistent with beneficial uses of groundwater and the highest efficiency of use possible and to protect groundwater quality and quantity from further degradation.

In an attempt to stem the loss of ground water and to ensure the above goals are met the Upper Loup NRD has been working on updates to its Ground Water Management Plan. The process of developing rules and regulations to the District's groundwater management plan began in January. We are unsure how long it will be before any rules will be in place. No revisions have been made to the plan since 1994. In recent years there have

been a number of changes to state statutes that the NRD will have to consider when updating the plan. The district has collected a significant amount of groundwater data the past several years and is currently involved in a groundwater modeling study that will aid in the formation of many of the rules. Keep in mind the implementation of any regulations is not to be considered a negative. The purpose of these rules and regulations are to help facilitate the proper management of groundwater for quality, quantity and integrated management.

As the plan is updated the NRD will look for opportunities to obtain public input on the plan. State statutes require that the NRD hold public hearings to obtain testimony on proposed changes. Revision

must be approved by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

ULNRD has an Ultra-Sonic Flow Meter which is a non-invasive (installed outside pipe wall) method to measure water flow in an irrigation system. This service is provided free to district producers.

Upper Loup NRD sponsors first Hunter Safety Class



Thanks to wonderful volunteers like Louis Stithem of Broken Bow several young men and women were able to attend and complete a Hunter Safety class held at the Upper Loup NRD the second weekend of February.

Firearm Hunter Education is a program ensuring that safe, respectful and respon-

sible hunters participate in the sport of hunting in Nebraska. Proof of completion of this course is required for everyone born on or after January 1, 1977, who hunts any species of game, game animal or game bird in Nebraska using a firearm or crossbow. No one under age 12 is required to carry proof of completion while hunting, but everyone 12 or older, born on

or after January 1, 1977 must have proof of completion on their person while hunting.

While hunter safety is a primary concern, hunter ethics, wildlife management, survival and other topics were important parts of this course as well. Students were taught to a set of standards established by the International Hunter Education Association and had to pass a written test prior to being issued a Hunter Safety Certificate of Training card.

Participants from this training ranged in age from 10-16 years of age and came from several communities such as Thedford, Mullen, Valentine, Dunning and Brownlee. Three individuals, including our own new Resources Technician, Kyle Yrkoski, became certified instructors for the hunter safety class as well.

The Upper Loup hopes to fill a recent void in our area in regards to meeting the training needs of Nebraska hunting enthusiasts by offering training on an annual basis here at the office in Thedford.

Lets get Acquainted: meet the ULNRD directors from the 1st & 2nd Sub-Districts

The Upper Loup Board is made up of 11 Directors, two elected from each of the five subdistricts that make up the NRD, and one At-Large. You can find a map of the subdistricts on the back page of this newsletter.

The Board is responsible for establishing District policies, programs, rules and regulations and adopting the necessary budget in order to fulfill the responsibilities of the District as authorized and required by law. The Board is also responsible for overseeing management to insure that the policies, programs, regulations and budget are carried out as intended and approving District expenditures. The day-to-day management is the General Manager's responsibility. In general, the Board sets policy and the staff carries it out.

The Board holds regularly scheduled monthly meetings on the second Thursday of every month at the NRD office in Thedford.

Subdistrict 1 consists of Grant County and part of the southwest corner of Cherry County. Ginger Fouse and Eric Storer are the subdistrict's directors. Ginger and her husband Steve have four adult children and three grandchildren. They have been involved with ranching in both Grant and Cherry counties seasonally for thirty years. Ginger has been a Director since

January of 2005. Her hobbies include quilting, needlework, nature, photography and water colors.

Eric and his wife Tanya have three children Braden 14, Hailey 11 and Emmet 9. They live and ranch in the Whitman area. Eric enjoys traveling with his family and fishing. Eric became an ULNRD Board member in February of 2003 and holds the Board Secretary position.

Subdistrict 2 is represented by Judy Ridenour, Treasurer and NARD Delegate, and Dr. Steve Boyer, ULNRD Safety Chair. Judy and her husband Leonard raised six children together. Judy is one of the senior Directors and has been with the ULNRD since May of 1990. Her interests center around family and community. She enjoys quilting and belongs to several quilting groups.

Dr. Boyer and his wife Dr. Margaret have two daughters, Claire 18 and Lauren 15. Dr. Boyer grew up in the Sandhills on a ranch south of Seneca. His interests include agriculture and the environment and enjoys public service and Medicare. Dr. Boyer has been a Director since January of 1995 and is the Upper Loup's Safety Chairman.

District tree planting crews will begin machine planting the first part of April. For those producers with tree plans you will be contacted soon by our resource technician. Please have your area free of debris, livestock removed, rodents exterminated and side fencing in place with ends left open.

Upper Loup NRD has 3 satellite office locations. A Resources Technician will be available to answer questions, provide information, provide water testing and various cost-share applications to all residents of the district. The schedule is:

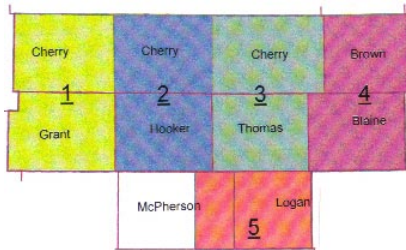
Stapleton Ext. office: 9-3 CST First Tuesday of each month
Mullen Ext. Office: 9-3 MT Second Tuesday of each month
Beginning in June at Hyannis Court House: 10-2 MT Third Tuesday of each month.

You may see the ULNRD Resource Technicians out and about throughout the district. They have started to measure wells for spring groundwater readings. These readings are used to determine the districts static water levels. These readings will be compared to previous years to help determine the amount of recharge in our area.

The Great Plains Drill is available for rent. Please contact the office for information. 308-645-2250

Trees from Bessey Nursery are available for handplants as long as the inventory remains (usually thru first week in May). Call or stop by the ULNRD office to order.

Have deer been bothering your trees, shrubs, flowers? How about those rabbits? The ULNRD carries a product that can help, Plantskydd®. Plantskydd is a 100% natural, cost-effective and environmentally safe animal repellent. It works by emitting an odor that animals associate with predator activity, repelling the animal before it nibbles on plants. Plantskydd is effective under severe snow/rainfall conditions: up to 6 months over winter, 3-4 months in summer. As an added benefit, Plantskydd Deer Repellent acts as a foliar feed fertilizer for many types of plants.



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Theftord, Ne 69166
Permit. No. 11

UPPER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

P.O. Box 212
 East Hwy 2
 Theftord, NE 69166

Phone: 308-645-2250
 Fax: 308-645-2308
 E-mail: ulnrd@nebnet.net
 Visit us on the web at: www.upperloupnrd.org

Calendar of Events

April

- 12 ULNRD Board Meeting, Theftord
- 22 Earth Day
- 25 Youth Field Day—Gudmundson
- 27 Arbor Day

May

- 8 Children's Groundwater Festival-GI
- 10 ULNRD Board Meeting, Theftord
- 28 ULNRD Office Closed—Holiday

June

- 14 ULNRD Board Meeting, Theftord
- 18-19 NARD Basin Tour

TO: POSTAL CUSTOMER

Hand Plant orders scheduled to be in first part of April. Customers will be contacted upon arrival.

Water User Survey distributed throughout District

The Upper Loup NRD mailed a water use survey to all individuals in the district in March. We hope that everyone who received one fills it out and returns it to our office by the April 2nd deadline. Your opinion in regards to groundwater used for irrigation does matter whether or not you are directly involved with irrigation.

There is no question that only a small number of irrigation wells, 649 registered with DNR, currently exist in our NRD district. However, when the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) performs an annual review to determine appropriation status they look at all the wells throughout a "Basin" not just an NRD District. The Upper Loup NRD is one of two NRD's that make up the Loup Basin.

When a basin becomes fully appropriated or over appropriated there are several possible outcomes. A moratorium on the drilling of new irrigation wells may be put into

place as well as water allocations. Perhaps right now you are thinking, "big deal, I'm not a farmer, cutting irrigation doesn't affect me". Are you sure? What might happen to our already shrinking communities if the livelihood of our neighbors is diminished? What may happen to our local businesses? What may happen to our schools? Will it not affect our county property evaluations thus affecting our tax dollars? I am just asking.

Water is the "issue of the decade" for Nebraska. Water is what makes life, farming, livestock, industry and even our communities possible. Yes it is true nowhere in America is there a freshwater sea as large as the aquifer under Nebraska, so why then is water an issue? The reason is because there have been notable declines in water tables and stream flows across various parts of the state. Irrigation has taken the brunt of the blame for depletions but there are other

factors that affect water shortages such as evaporation from reservoirs, reduced runoff due to terracing and other necessary conservation measures, vegetation and the drought.

Data within the last several years has proven that the High Plains Aquifer is being withdrawn at incredible rates. The rates of draw-down and recharge of the aquifer vary from one locale to another. As a result, not all counties within a state or all states are confronted by the same degree of crisis. This difference translates into varying degrees of concern about the depletion of the Aquifer. The Sandhills are fortunate in that we do have the most favorable recharge, but we cannot become complacent. We need to find a way to manage the water so as to keep land in production and protect communities while also sustaining the water.

The survey distributed is to be considered a tool in determining the **needs** of all District residents in regards to irrigation. This survey is just one of the ways in which the District is being proactive in its groundwater conservation efforts.