

Upper Loup Scoop

October 2009

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LB 483 and what it means to irrigators



The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources Preliminary Report on December 16, 2008 designated the Lower Platte River Basin, which includes the Elkhorn and Loup River basins, as fully-appropriated. This determination meant no new consumptive uses for ground or surface water. Consumptive uses for the Upper Loup NRD are primarily the expansion of new irrigated acres either by the drilling of a new well or expansion of existing irrigated acres. Other types of consumptive uses would include increases from municipal, industrial, or commercial users.

On April 6, 2009, Governor Heineman signed LB483 which allows limited ground or surface water development if a designation is reversed on a preliminary fully-appropriated area. The preliminary fully-appropriated designation for the Lower Platte River Basin was lifted on April 8, 2009. The groundwater development (use) is limited to 2,500 acres annually or a total of 10,000 acres for years 2009-2012 across the Upper Loup NRD. There is now a new application for increasing irrigated acres which may include a ranking form if the annual limit of 2,500 acres is reached.

A copy of the LB483 rules and regulations as well as the acre increase application form are available upon request by calling our office at 308-645-2250 or can be downloaded from our website at www.upperloupnrd.org.

Board of Directors

Sub district 1
Chris Vinton
Eric Storer

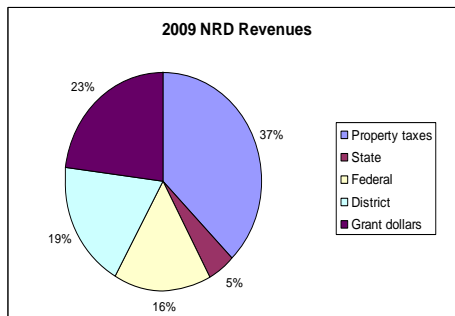
Sub district 2
Steve Boyer
Judy Ridenour

Sub district 3
Gary Schaeffer
Wayne Eatinger

Sub district 4
Byron Cox
Gordon Simonson

Sub district 5
Darwin Frey

At large
Wynn Wiens



On September 10, 2009 the Upper Loup NRD Board of Directors adopted the fiscal year 2009-2010 budget. As you can see from the 2009 NRD revenues chart the ULNRD has strived to respect the concerns of our taxpayers by continuing to find other funding mechanisms to maintain your NRD. NRD's have the ability to levy up to 4 cents per \$100 of property valuation and we are proud to say that with all the past and new programs and services we provide we have been able to maintain a levy rate of 2 cents per \$100 of property valuation since 1990.

Applications for new irrigation acres now available

Application forms for landowners interested in developing new irrigated acres are now available online, at the ULNRD office in Thedford or can be mailed out upon request by calling the office at 308-645-2250. The forms are available now so that each applicant has the appropriate time to complete the form, but landowners are reminded that **applications will be accepted by the NRD December 1-31, and landowners will be notified of their application's outcome by January 31.**

Development of up to 2,500 new acres of groundwater irrigation annually was approved by the Upper Loup Natural Resources District Board of Directors and the Department of Natural Resources.

If applications for new irrigation acres exceed the 2,500 a ranking process will be used to determine the acres that will be approved. The criteria reviewed in the ranking process include the status of groundwater and surface water levels, the concentration of irrigation, the type of acre being developed, the type of irrigation system to be used, and the soil classification.

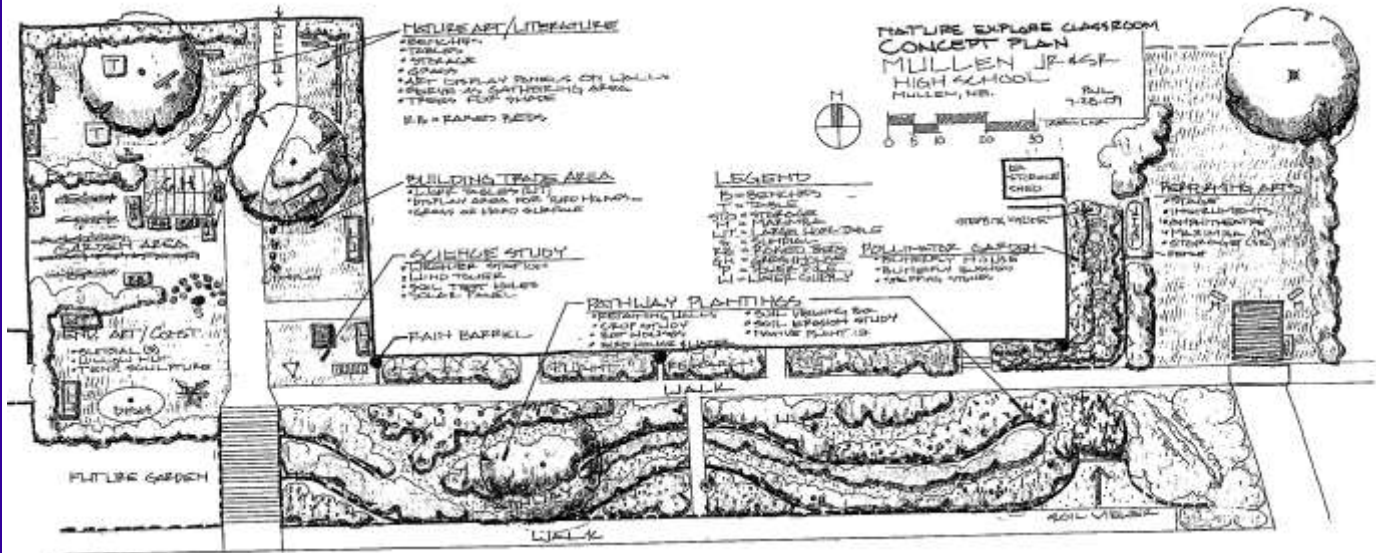
A \$15.00 dollar non-refundable fee will be required with each application. The application form requires information on the landowner and/or their contact person; field description and FSA aerial photo depicting the field; the number of acres of new irrigation requested, and the application fee. For more information contact the Upper Loup NRD office at 308-645-2250 or visit our website at www.upperloupnrd.org.





A Collaborative Project of
Arbor Day Foundation and
Dimensions Educational Research Foundation

The FIRST High School Outdoor Nature Explorer Classroom in the Nation to be built in Mullen.



The Mullen High School has been chosen to receive a grant from the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation to develop the first secondary Outdoor Classroom for The Nature Explore Program. This site will serve as a pilot for other secondary institutions in the future. The design and focus of the outdoor space is to provide a complete mix of activities which will allow for interdisciplinary teaching. The new space will be available to not only the high school but also the elementary and other organizations.

The entire Outdoor Classroom area will cover approximately 16,000 sq. ft., with individual areas ranging from 300-4,500 sq. ft. The classroom will be divided into several spaces which are based on the foundation's 10 guiding principles. These areas will include an entry feature, a gathering/nature art and literature space, several gardens, an environmental art and construction section, a building trade zone, a science investigation lab, a pollinator garden, a performing arts stage, and a pathway through plantings. Once each area is designated, Mullen High School will have an opportunity to certify the Classroom and become part of a growing network of schools and organizations. Once certified Mullen will have access to a specially designated Nature Explore Classroom website that offers the latest news and research on children and nature as well as a page dedicated to **Mullen's Outdoor Classroom**.

The Nature Explore Program is a joint effort of Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. The many supporting partners include organizations such as U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, American Society of Landscape Architects, Keep America Beautiful and many others who are committed to re-connecting children with nature. For more information on this program please visit their website at www.dimensionsfoundation.org

It will be necessary to enlist help from the community such as labor, plantings, special skills, monetary donations, etc. to ensure the success of the project. If you would like to help with this project please give the ULNRD office a call at 308-645-2250 or email dvinton@upperloupnrd.org.



Groundwater Monitoring Well Network

The Upper Loup NRD's collaborative project with the Nebraska Environmental Trust, United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the UNL Conservation Survey Division is in its 2nd year of funding. In 2008, three wells had been drilled, one in each of the following counties: Logan, Thomas and McPherson. In 2009, three additional wells were drilled, one in each following counties: Hooker, Grant, and Cherry. Data recorders have been placed in the first three wells and this year's wells will have data recorders placed by the end of this year. There is also an additional monitor in an existing well in the highly irrigated county of Logan.



The ULNRD has gopher bait on hand for purchase by those individuals that have a current pesticide applicators license. The District also has a gopher machine available for rent. If interested please contact the office for information at 308-645-2250.

USGS Education Outreach

The Upper Loup, in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey, and UNL Conservation Survey Division sponsored an educational outreach with the Districts 9th grade science classes at the ULNRD office on September 9th. Schools that participated were Dunning, Hyannis, Mullen, and Thedford.

The day's activities started with an Power Point presentation and a video on sample data and geophysics. Students attended four different stations: **river, land, groundwater monitoring well, and a "truckside chat."** The river station covered different kinds of stream measurements, determining loss or gain of a stream flow, how much water is flowing in the stream, and whether there is interaction between surface water and groundwater. The land station included taking soil core samples with an instrument called a Geoprobe and conducting a geophysics experiment with the core removed from the ground. The groundwater-monitoring station included a presentation about groundwater-monitoring wells, an explanation of uses for data collected, a computer demonstration, and included a static water level measurements **taken by the students.** The "truckside chat" talked about the connection between the ground and air-based work currently done in the area. Maps of the Sandhills and stream cross sections were shown to help visualize the information. During lunch the students tested their knowledge with a quick game of Water Jeopardy. The workshop ended with a survey that indicated it was a fun filled and informative day. Students enjoyed the "hands-on" experience and requested more of it.



Bow Hunter Class Scheduled

A crossbow is considered the same as a firearm in Nebraska, and crossbow hunters 12 years of age or older born on or after January 1, 1977 must have proof of completion of firearm Hunter Education on their person while hunting any game, game animal or game bird with a crossbow.

Bow hunter education is a highly successful program ensuring that safe, respectful and responsible hunters participate in the sport of bow hunting in Nebraska. This program is mandated by the Nebraska Legislature, administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and taught by volunteer instructors starting in 1993.

Firearm Hunter Education is a program ensuring that safe, respectful and responsible hunters participate in the sport of hunting in Nebraska. This program is mandated by the Nebraska Legislature, administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and taught by dedicated volunteer instructors. Students are taught to a set of standards, established by the International Hunter Education Association. By meeting these standards the Nebraska Hunter Education program is recognized and honored on the entire North American continent.

The Upper Loup NRD along with certified instructor _____ are planning on sponsoring a bow hunter education class for students 11 years old or older to be tested and certified. The course will be held at the Upper Loup NRD Thedford office. It is scheduled for Saturday October 10 and Sunday October 11, 2009. The sessions will run from 1pm to 6pm CST each day and attendance is required for both sessions to become certified. If you are interested in participating please contact our office at 308-645-2250 before October 7, 2009.

Dripal Pursuit.

Test your water knowledge:

1. Does water refract or reflect light waves?
2. Name the device use to locate items under water.
3. **About what percentage of the earth's surface is water?**
4. How thick does ice have to be to support a human?
5. At what temperature does water freeze?

Answers found on page 4

Upper Loup NRD
39252 Hwy 2
Thedford, NE 69166
Phone: 308-645-2250
Fax: 308-645-2308

We are on the web!
www.upperloupnrd.org

Calendar of Events

October

- 5 Public Hearing LR 128,
LR 181—Valentine
- 6 Public Hearing LR 235—
Ogallala
- 7 Public Hearing LR 128,
LR 181—Kearney
- 8 ULNRD Board Meeting—
Thedford
- 10-11 Hunter Safety Class
- 12 Holiday—Office Closed
- 20 Bessey Nursery Clients Day

November

- 11 Holiday—Office Closed
- 12 ULNRD Board Meeting—
Thedford
- 26-27 Holiday—Office Closed

December

- 11 ULNRD Board Meeting—
Thedford
- 24-25 Holiday—Office Closed
- 31 Deadline for Submitting Acre
Certification Forms

Dripial Pursuit Answers:

1. Refract
2. SONAR
3. 80%
4. 4 inches
5. 32 degrees F or 0 degrees C

Upper Loup Staff

Anna BaumGeneral Manager
Jack Brummet...Resources Technician
Kyle Yrkoski....Resources Technician
Leslie Reiser.....Administrative Secretary
Denise Vinton...Information & Education
Cleo Jacobs... Thedford Field Office Sec.

TO: POSTAL CUSTOMER

ATTN: IRRIGATORS

Water Use Reporting

Water use reporting is essential to the management of this vital resource. Annual reporting of use is important to protect stakeholder interests, adopting actions in times of water emergencies, and providing data for effective farm management. To protect the farmer's and rancher's interests in any litigation related to the state's right to water use in a given basin, existing water uses must be able to be quantified. Knowing water use also allows a wider range of options for dealing with any future drought-related water emergencies.

If you are unsure of the flow rate, the District has an Ultra-Sonic Flow Meter which is a non-invasive method to measure water flow in an irrigation system. This service is provided free to district producers. For more information, contact Jack Brummet at 308-645-2250. If you did not irrigate at all in 2009 please let us know that information as well.

With the several changes in basin appropriation status this past year, it is more important than ever to get a base history of water use by producers across the District.

Verification of Acre Certification

The Upper Loup NRD is sending out our verification of acre certification information. As a reminder the District groundwater rules and regulations state that no groundwater user, landowner or operator may irrigate with groundwater until he or she obtains certification from the District, violators are subject to legal action. (To view these rules in their entirety you can visit our website at www.upperloupnrd.org or call our office for a copy.

Proper certification and groundwater use provides the District with valuable data and documentation of irrigated history in the event that the Loup River Basin is declared fully appropriated by the state. If you find there are some inaccuracies such as too many/not enough acres, incorrect legal, incorrect landowner, or if use has changed to non-irrigated with the county assessor, please contact our office at 308-645-2250 as soon as possible so we can make the necessary changes prior to the December 31 deadline.