



Upper Loup Scoop

July 2009

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Fully-Appropriated Designation Reversal Impacts ULNRD

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. LB483 allows the affected Natural Resources Districts 120 days to develop rules and regulations for the expansion of new ground water consumptive uses.

The Upper Loup NRD is moving forward to allow expansion of these new ground water uses as proposed in the "Rules & Regulations". The ground water development (use) being proposed would be limited to 2,500 acres annually or a total of 10,000 acres for years 2009-2012 across the Upper Loup NRD. There will be a protocol and a ranking system for the expansion of these annual acres. Currently, the Upper Loup NRD is not accepting applications for expansion of new acres. The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources will also be developing criteria that allows development from surface water.

The Upper Loup NRD will hold a public hearing on July 9, 2009 at 7:00PM, in the NRD office located in Thedford prior to its regular board meeting on the proposed rules and regulations. A complete copy of the proposed rules and regulations are available upon request by mail, in person at the District office, or on the District's website at www.upperloupnrd.org. The Upper Loup NRD address is 39252 Highway 2, Thedford NE 69166 or telephone number is 308-645-2250.



Arbor and Earth Day Celebrated

The Upper Loup NRD celebrated Arbor and Earth Days by providing 3rd-6th grade students with tree seedlings and the 1st-2nd grade students received reusable shopping bags with the Upper Loup NRD logo. General Manager Anna Baum and Extension Agent Sue Pearman visited all of the grade

schools within the ULNRD. Approximately 300 students from Hyannis, Ashby, Mullen, Thedford, Peaceful Plains, Goosecreek, Halsey, Brownlee, and Stapleton joined in several activities which included tree identification, Arbor Day quiz, making pinecone bird feeders and playing a game of Earth Day Bingo.



5 Participants Complete Boater Safety

Thanks to Scott Eveland, Boating Safety Officer for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, 5 participants completed the boater safety course held on May 21 at the Upper Loup NRD office. The Nebraska Boating Safety course is required of all power boat operators under the age of 18, which includes operators of personal watercraft and all other motorboats. The minimum age to operate a boat in Nebraska is 14. The six-hour class covers everything from equipment requirements to safe boat operation and accident prevention, and is a great course for both new and experienced boaters. Boat

owners who complete the class may qualify for insurance discounts. Parents are encouraged to attend with their children and boaters of all ages are welcome. For more information on boater safety contact Boating Safety Officer Eveland at (308) 289-0017 or scott.eveland@ngpc.ne.gov. For information on additional classes in Nebraska visit www.outdoornebraska.org/boating.





Elkhorn-Loup Modeling Study (ELM)

The Upper Loup, in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey, Lower Loup, Upper Elkhorn, Lower Elkhorn, Middle Niobrara, Lower Niobrara, Lewis and Clark, and Lower Platte North Natural Resources Districts, continue work on the Elkhorn-Loup Modeling Study. The study area is approximately 30,800 square miles, and extends north to the Niobrara River and south to the Platte River. The ELM project will provide comprehensive information and a working model of surface and groundwater in the Elkhorn and Loup River Basins. The results will provide data on the impacts of additional irrigation development, self imposed moratoriums, and other management options. It will also be used to provide more detailed data for use in the Department of Natural Resources annual evaluations of the two river basins. In April an aquifer test was done in Greely, the next one scheduled is in October by Plumcreek. Additional information on the ELM is available on the USGS website at <http://ne.water.usgs.gov/projects/elm.html>

Water Quality Grant

The Upper Loup NRD is starting its 2nd year of a 2 year Water Quality Management Grant with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). The main component of this grant is water quality testing. There are several tests to help determine the health and safety of drinking water. Two of the most common tests performed are for bacteria and nitrates. Coliform bacteria test indicate the presence of microorganisms in the water that are potentially harmful to human health. Nitrate is also a common contaminant found mainly in groundwater. High nitrate concentration can be particularly dangerous to babies under six months since nitrate interferes with the ability of blood to carry oxygen.

The NRD is focusing on testing registered domestic and irrigation wells for nitrates and upon request, bacteria. Last year's focus was on the western portion of the District with a total of 134 domestic wells and 37 irrigation wells being tested. The results of the nitrate testing showed an average of 2.1 ppm for the domestic wells and an average of 3.1 ppm for irrigation. The eastern portion of the District will be the focus in 2009. Testing has begun and currently 31 domestic wells and 1 irrigation well have been checked, thus far, showing an average of 3.0 ppm. The Environmental Protection Agency has listed a safe level to be in the range of 0-10 ppm. For more information you can visit the Department Environmental Quality website <http://www.deq.state.ne.us/>

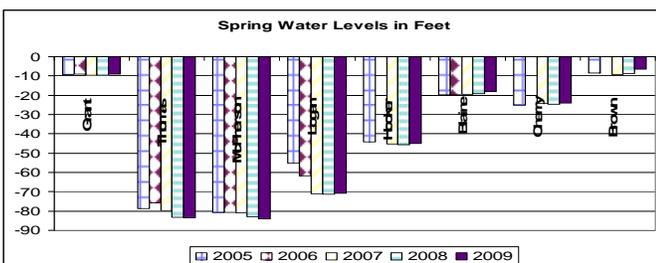
Testing is free of charge and you will be notified of the results. If you would like this service please contact ULNRD office by calling 308-645-2250 or email: ulnrd@upperloupnr.org. To register a domestic well, contact the Department of Natural Resources at www.dnr.state.ne.us



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 has been approved for its 2nd year of funding. In 2008, three wells had been drilled, one in each of the following counties: Logan, Thomas and McPherson. Data recorders have been placed in each of these wells, as well as, an additional monitor in an existing well in the highly irrigated county of Logan. These monitoring wells monitor water temperature, pressure and water levels. For the current year additional monitoring wells are being planned; one in Grant, one in Hooker, and two in Cherry Counties. USGS is also planning an educational outreach in September with the 9th grade science classes of the District's high schools.

Spring Water Levels



The 0 on the graph indicates ground level. The graph shows the results of monitoring of 104 wells throughout the District during the last five years. We are happy to report no notable declines in the static groundwater levels across the District.

Dripal Pursuit. Test your water knowledge:

1. Groundwater is renewed once every how many years?
2. What are smaller streams which flow into a larger stream called?
3. What is the scientific name for the study of ground-water?
4. The Platte River Valley is part of the migratory route of what endangered bird?
5. Who invented the center pivot?
6. About how many gallons of water does it take to produce a hamburger, fries, and a soft drink?
7. How deep is a fathom?

Answers found on page 4



Legislative Updates

The Legislature adjourned three days early this year and will reconvene on January 6, 2010. This year the Legislature approved twenty-one bills relating to natural resources management, vetoed one, held twenty in Committees, held five on General File, and eight were indefinitely postponed. Below is a listing of the natural resources management bills that passed.

LB 54 - Water Accounting Bill.

LB 56 - Livestock Waste Management Act modifications.

LB 98e and LB 98Ae - Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force.

LB 160 - Flood protection.

LB 162 -Contractor registration database.

LB 179e - Change project limit adjustments under the Nebraska Resources Development Fund.

LB 180 -- Change provisions relating to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund.

LB 184 - Riparian water right administration.

LB 209 - Dam construction bill approved.

LB 218 - Change state aid to counties.

LB 246 – Biotechnology assessment and planning.

LB 263 - Provide that state law preempts local laws for seeds and fertilizers.

LB 286e - Lottery proceeds distribution.

LB's 315 & 316 - Budget bills.

LB 361 - Electronic voting board bill.

LB 379e - Extend the scrap tire grant program.

LB 389e – Climate Assessment Response Committee (CARC) appointments.

LB 477 - Lien holder bill passes.

LB 483e -- NRD water management plans passes.

For more information on legislation please visit the Nebraska Legislature website: <http://www.nebraskalegislature.gov>

Get to Know Your NRDs

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts were created in 1972 by the Nebraska Legislature. The Legislature combined 154 special purpose resources, management entities, including county soil and water conservation districts, drainage districts and watershed boards into 23 NRDs. NRDs are local government units with broad responsibilities to protect and enhance our state's natural resources. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries enabling the NRDs to respond best to local needs. Elected boards govern districts. Much of the funding for resources management programs and projects come from property taxes collected in the area served by the district.

What do NRDs do?

- Erosion prevention and control, soil conservation
- Flood prevention and control
- Development, management, utilization, and conservation of groundwater and surface water
- Pollution control, solid waste disposal and drainage
- Development and management of fish and wildlife habitat
- Development and management of recreational and park facilities
- Forestry and range management



The NRD receives NSWCP (Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program) funds which are provided through the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The funding is used to offer cost-share on a variety of conservation practices. Specific services offered by each district vary according to the districts specific needs. Services offered by the ULNRD are:

- Tree & Shrub planting and mulch installation
- Trees for New-Borns
- Well decommissioning
- Soil Testing
- Leafy Spurge cost-share
- Yard enhancement cost-share
- Drip well cost-share
- Groundwater management
- Various soil & water conservation practices
- Water quality testing & monitoring
- Chemigation inspection
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- No till drill & gopher machine rental
- Sponsor Camp Scholarships
- Variety of educational projects

For more information on ULNRD services call or visit our website at www.upperlounprnd.org

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

July

- 3 Holiday—Office Closed
- 9 Public Hearing 7:00 pm—
ULNRD Board meeting—
Thedford

August

- 6 ULNRD Board Meeting—
Thedford

September

- 7 Holiday—Office Closed
- 9 USGS Education Outreach
- 10 ULNRD Board Meeting—
Thedford
- 15-17 Husker Harvest Days
- 27-29 NARD Annual Conference

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.

Dripal Pursuit Answers:

1. 1,400
2. Tributaries or branches
3. Hydrogeology or geohydrology
4. Whooping Crane
5. Frank Zybach
6. 1,500
7. 6 feet

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

TO: POSTAL CUSTOMER

Darwin Frey Joins NRD Board



Darwin "Derb" Frey was appointed to represent sub-district 5 in the Upper Loup Natural Resources District and took his oath of office on March 19, 2009. Derb currently lives in Stapleton with his wife Lewellyn. They have 2 children Steve (Cindy) and Greg (Katrina) and 6 grandchildren. He received an MA in Petroleum Geology at the University of Wyoming. Derb is a native of Stapleton in which he ran the local hardware store, was a Pioneer Seed representative, and worked the family farm. Derb is now semi-retired from the farm which his son Greg now operates and Steve has taken over the hardware store. He now enjoys spending time on his hobbies of hunting, fishing, and golfing.

Pocket Guides



The Upper Loup NRD has available five handy pocket guides that can assist your field referencing. Pockets guides are available at the Upper Loup NRD office in Thedford for a cost of \$6.00 per guide. If you have any questions please stop in the office or call 308-645-2250.

Available pocket guides

- Trees
- Nebraska Birds
- Animal Tracks
- Wilderness Survival
- Edible Wild Plants

In The Works...

- Implementation of LB 483 Rules and Regulations
- Recycling trailers for communities in the District
- Kyle is performing domestic water quality tests and Jack is doing chemigation checks
- Drilling of 4 additional monitoring wells in the District
- New irrigated acre certification application process
- Education outreach with the USGS for 9th grade students
- Outdoor education classrooms for high schools in the district