



## NPNRD Reminders...

### Next Board Meeting July 12

Regular NPNRD board meetings are open to the public and held the second Thursday of each month at the NPNRD conference room, 100547 Airport Road, Scottsbluff. Our next meeting is July 12 at 7:00 p.m. An agenda is posted on our website homepage, [www.npnrd.org](http://www.npnrd.org)

### Landowners reminded of flow meter requirements

Landowners in Scotts Bluff, Banner, Morrill, Garden and southern Sioux Counties are reminded that the North Platte Natural Resources District requires the installation and use of flow meters on all groundwater uses located in the overappropriated areas of the district. Deadline for installation is May 1, 2008.

Landowners are urged to visit with their dealer early to avoid any rush or last minute complications. **Landowners approved for cost-share assistance have nine months from the date of approval by the NRD to get their meters installed.**

A list of flow meter brands approved for the installation, use or replacement on regulated wells within the District is kept continuously on file at the district office. Only brands named on this list will be considered conforming flow meters and allowed to receive cost-share assistance.

These brands are: McCrometer, SeaMetrics, Geysler, and Master Meter.

During its June 14 regular meeting, the board of directors voted to remove Sparling from the list due to inaccuracies of flow rates.

**Landowners are reminded that the District's rules require that flow meters be permanently installed at the well. Exceptions may be considered and approved to accommodate existing well and pipe configurations.**

The complete Policy Statement for the Installation and Use of Flow Meters is available at the NPNRD office and area NRCS offices.

The list and the full rules and regulations for the Installation and Use of Flow Meters is also available at the District's website at <http://www.npnrd.org/documents/Chapter4-FlowMeterRules.pdf> or call the NPNRD office at (308) 632-2749 for more information.

## District calls for allocations

At their regular meeting June 14, 2007, the North Platte Natural Resources District board of directors voted to set a base limit of 18 inches starting in 2009 on wells in the overappropriated area. The board said it is time to begin using allocations as a way to preserve the district's groundwater resource and comply with the state's water law.

The 7 to 2 decision was spurred by the ongoing drought and increasing use of wells to supplement the limited surface water supplies.

Board chairman John Maser of Minatare and director Jim Hass of Bridgeport agreed with the need for groundwater regulations, but indicated that they would be more comfortable with setting an allocation once the district had read and compiled the pumping data from flow meters on wells in the overappropriated area. The deadline for installation and use of flow meters on all groundwater uses in the overappropriated area is May 1, 2008.

Members of the district's water resources subcommittee have focused extensively on groundwater issues for the past ten months. Current groundwater level data indicates declining water levels in the Dutch Flats area north of Mitchell and Morrill and other areas in the overappropriated area (see map and article on page 3).

*"We've got shortages in the district. We've got to start doing something about it now."*

*NPNRD director  
Dave Deines*

Subcommittee members Gary Darnall, Jerry Dillman, Dave Deines and Pete Lapaseotes, Jr., along with NRD staff, urged the need to start pushing forward with tighter groundwater regulations.

"If we don't start something for ourselves, someone else is going to do it for us," said Deines. "We've got shortages in the district. We've got to start doing some-

*See ALLOCATIONS, page 4*

## Pits must now be registered as wells

With the passage of LB 701 on May 2, 2007 comes the requirement that all pits that intercept the ground water and which are used for purposes of irrigation must be registered with the Department of Natural Resources as a ground water well. The new law requires registration of existing irrigation pits within 180 days after May 2, 2007.

Ground water pits that must be registered as ground water wells include any excavation made for any purpose if ground water flows into the excavation under natural pressure and a pump or other device is placed in the excavation for the purpose of withdrawing water from the excavation for irrigation. For such excavations, construction means placing a pump or other device into the excavation.

*See REGISTER PITS, page 4*



### Water Camp

*A line of campers try their hands at setting siphon tubes during the High Plains Science Adventures Camp held June 18-22 in Scottsbluff. This was the first year of the camp, which focused on water science related to the High Plains and the North Platte Valley. Daily sessions included the groundwater aquifer, the hydrological cycle, water quality testing, macro-invertebrates, watersheds and riparian areas, wildlife, the history of the North Platte River and of course, water fun and games. The North Platte NRD provided scholarships to several students to attend the camp.*

## Certification of groundwater uses needs to be completed

Have you certified your groundwater uses? The deadlines for certification in Garden, Morrill, Sioux and Banner Counties are now past. Certification for these counties should be completed as soon as possible. The certification deadline for Scotts Bluff County is Jan. 1, 2008.

The NRD staff will assist landowners in completing their certification forms. Landowners can begin the process by calling the district office to set an appointment. Information required to complete certification include aerial photographs or maps of irrigated tracts of land, registration numbers of wells historically used to irrigate each

tract, sources of irrigation water other than groundwater, USDA-FSA records and FSA Form 578 for Program Year 2004.

Certification of ground water uses includes irrigation, public water supplies, industrial and other uses including golf courses and ground water sources for recreation areas. Domestic and range livestock wells are exempt from certification. The Certification rules and regulations cover all areas of the district excluding the Pumpkin Creek Basin, which has its own set of rules and regulations for ground water use.

As of Oct. 12, 2006, the North Platte Natural Resources

District requires the certification of all ground water uses within the district in order to quantify the use of groundwater in the district and the fully-appropriated area of the Platte River Basin.

The complete text of rules for Certification of Ground Water Uses is posted on the district's website, [www.npnrd.org](http://www.npnrd.org) or can be viewed at the district office. For more information and to make an appointment, please call 632-2749 or stop by the district office at 100547 Airport Road in Scottsbluff.

## Are Your Wells Registered Correctly?

Improperly registered water wells can cause problems. They can disqualify the well owner from certification of irrigated acres and from cost-share programs. By statute, improperly registered wells are also illegal wells.

Written notice must be provided to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for any change of ownership, correction of registration information, modifications of a registered well, and for abandonment of all wells. Forms for reporting all the above updates are available at [http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/docs/well\\_forms.html](http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/docs/well_forms.html)

State Statute says "water well registration and pump installation information must be updated by the water well owner when the original information provided is determined to be inaccurate or incomplete or if the water well is modified in any substantial way making the original information inaccurate in its description of the water well." Failure to properly register a water well is a Class

IV misdemeanor.

Benefits of having properly registered wells include spacing protection from other wells, public record access, research and hydrogeological data, and available information for administrative decisions. Natural resources districts (NRDs) use the ground water well registration information in their decision-making process concerning the need for ground water management areas when declines and shortages of ground water occur in their area.

You can easily check if your well registrations are up to date. Go to the DNRs website at <http://dnrdata.dnr.ne.gov/wellssql/> and provide the required information to check your wells. If there are any discrepancies in the information, simply contact the DNR in writing to make the updates at Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 94676, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4676. Fax: 402-471-2900.

## Chemigation permits must be current

The deadline for renewal of chemigation permits issued in 2006 was June 1, 2007. Any renewal forms submitted after the June 1 deadline will not be valid and landowners will have to re-apply for chemigation permits. **It is illegal to chemigate without the proper permit.**

The Nebraska Chemigation Act requires any person who intends to apply chemicals through an irrigation system to first obtain a permit from their natural resources district. This law defines a chemical as any fertilizer, herbicide or pesticide that is mixed with irrigation water. The person who applies the chemicals must be a certified Chemigation applicator. Certification is granted by the Department of Environmental Quality after the applicant attends an educational course sponsored by the UN-L

Cooperative Extension Service.

New chemigation permits can be applied for at any time. The fee for new permits is \$30 and emergency permits are \$100. Prior to permit approval, the NRD must inspect the required chemigation safety equipment on chemigation systems, receive permit applications and fees, and issue chemigation site permits. The issued permits are then good for one year.

For more information call the NPNRD office at (308) 632-2749 or stop by the office at 100547 Airport Road in Scottsbluff between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays. Additional information about chemigation permits and a chemigation permit application are also available on the NPNRD website at [www.npnrd.org](http://www.npnrd.org).

## 2007 Conservation Poster Contest winners

This year's NRD Conservation Poster Contest themed "Protecting Western Water," generated entries from 36 area youth.

The North Platte NRD awarded first, second and third place winners in each age category with certificates and cash awards and also gave several Honorable Mention awards.

Kdg – 1st, Braeden Struempfer; 2<sup>nd</sup> Taylor Gier; 3<sup>rd</sup> Jerry Tarin and Honorable Mention Tyler Green, all of

Morrill Elementary.

1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades – 1<sup>st</sup> Courtney Knisley; 2<sup>nd</sup> McKenna Dahlgren; 3<sup>rd</sup> Aryeh Scott and Honorable Mention Emily Singleton, all of Banner County Elementary.

5-6<sup>th</sup> Grades – 1<sup>st</sup>, Alexis Egger; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Billy Barron; 3<sup>rd</sup> Felicity Huggler and Honorable Mention Devon Williamson all of Minatare.

Photos of the winners can be viewed at [www.npnrd.org/education](http://www.npnrd.org/education).

**Make your Well Registrations Current**

Go to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website to check if your well registration is correct  
(The link is on our homepage [www.npnrd.org](http://www.npnrd.org))

Check:  
Current landowner  
Current Address  
Proper legal location  
Current Status (active, inactive, irrigation, livestock, etc.)

**Handy Reference**  
Use the DNR's Ground Water Users Guide  
<http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/docs/GWguide.html>

## New staff members join NPNRD office

**David Christian** took the position of Assistant Manager on June 26. David is a Gering resident and worked previously at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center. David will assist manager Ron Cacek with planning, application and maintenance of district projects and supervise field operations.

**Jeff Sprock** is the District's GIS (Global Information Systems) coordinator. He works with the administrative, water, tree, and information and education programs and produces the district's maps from collected data.

**Colleen Steele**, the new hydrogeologist, is a native of the Ainsworth area. She prepares reports from ground water quality and quantity data, presents compiled data to public groups, and assists with educational programs.

**Julie Gogoi** joined us in April as the COHYST ground water modeler. She is working with a technical team to interpret the data on hydrologically connected waters. She came to us from Washington state.

**Georgette Jordening** has started her duties as water resources technician. She assists with periodic sampling of existing monitoring wells for water quality analysis as well as biannual measurements of depth to groundwater.

# Spring levels show declines in Dutch Flats, PCB areas

Results from the compilation data from selected groundwater wells throughout the North Platte Natural Resources District indicate level declines in the Dutch Flats area north of Mitchell and Morrill and in the Pumpkin Creek Basin of Banner County.

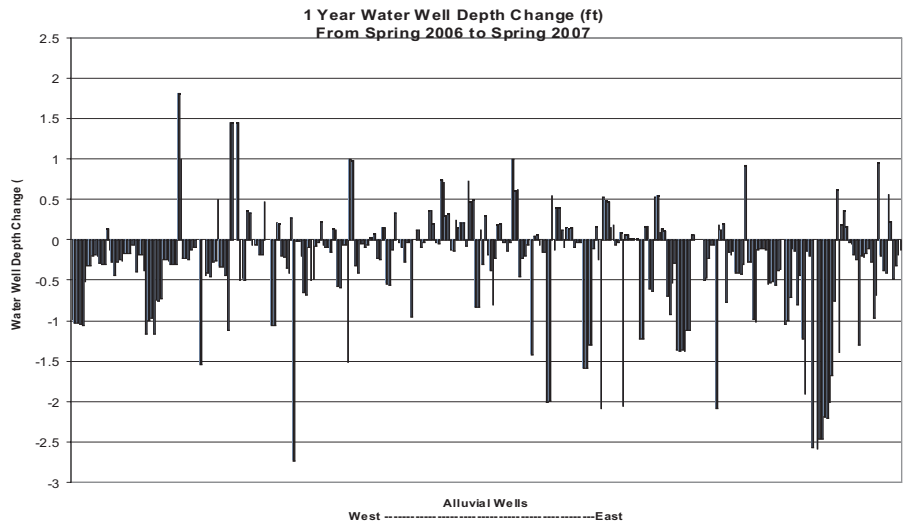
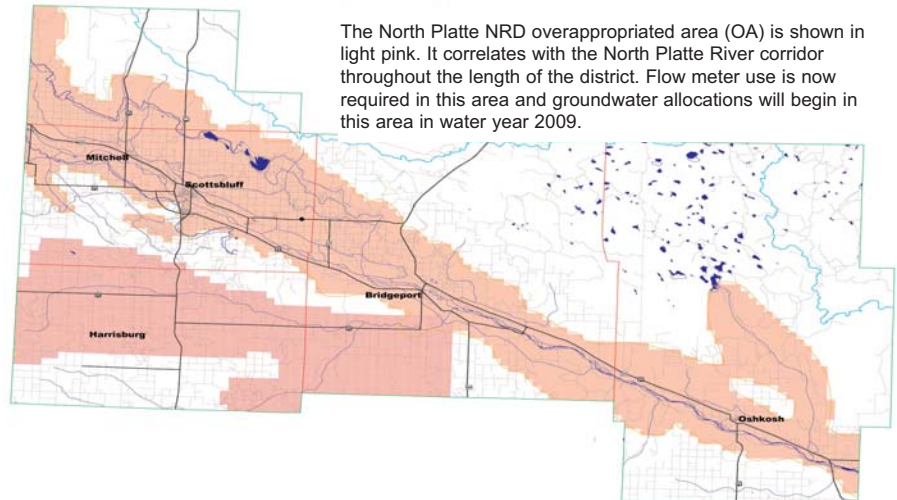
North Platte NRD staff hydrogeologist Colleen Steele reported that data was reviewed on approximately 340 monitoring wells (stream channel alluvium wells) located throughout the district. These selected wells were identified as being the most influential on stream flow channels within the district.

Spring to spring analysis of these wells showed that groundwater levels in the Dutch Flats area of Sioux County (Township 24N, Range 57 and 58W) and an area in Pumpkin Creek Basin (Township 19N, Range 52 and 53W) had declined the most in the district. For the one-year change, 72 percent of the 340 wells showed a negative change in levels (of between .01 to 2.72 feet); 24 percent showed an increase in water levels and four percent remained unchanged.

For the five-year analysis of wells district-wide, from spring of 2003 to spring of 2007, approximately 75 percent of the wells showed a decline of a foot or less; 23 percent gained in levels and two percent were unchanged. Most of the wells showing declines were located in the Dutch Flats and Pumpkin Creek areas.

Steele also pointed out a concern that a cluster of monitoring wells in the Dutch Flats area north of Morrill read as dry during the spring 2007 readings. She explained that the data could not indicate the dates that the wells went dry, only that some monitoring wells in that area were indicating dry as of the current readings.

The NPNRD continues working on the compilation and analysis of water level data collected from water wells throughout the district. The NPNRD network of water wells used for water level monitoring is comprised of both irrigation wells owned by producers within the district, as well as monitoring wells installed by the NPNRD over the last 10+ years for the purpose of collecting water data. As part of the NPNRD semi-annual testing schedule, water level data was collected for spring and fall of 2006 and 2007 for about 670 water wells. A comparison of water levels in these wells over a one-year period from spring of 2006 to spring of 2007 shows a decline in water level for about 70% of water



The above bar graph represents 338 monitoring wells in river alluvium where groundwater levels were recorded for the past year. The well depth change (ft.) correlates with the above map to show the approximate location of the wells in the district from the west (near the Dutch Flats/Morrill/Mitchell area east to the Garden County line.

wells measured.

A 10-year comparison of water levels between spring of 1997 and spring of 2007 in about 170 wells monitored for the period shows water levels declining in about 90 percent of the monitored wells. The most severely declined levels in the 10-year comparison were found on water wells spread throughout all five counties of the district. All five counties were also represented in the remaining 10 percent of wells showing higher water levels in 2007 compared to 1997.

The bar graph (above) shows water level change over

a one-year period from spring 2006 to spring 2007 for about 340 alluvial wells seated in river deposits within the district. Seventy percent of these wells show a decline in water levels for the period.

The NPNRD continues an aggressive schedule of collection and analysis of water level data for use in identifying patterns and trends in water well levels, and in understanding factors impacting water levels. A more frequent monitoring schedule is in place for areas of greatest concern such as the Dutch Flats area and Pumpkin Creek Basin.

## Resources

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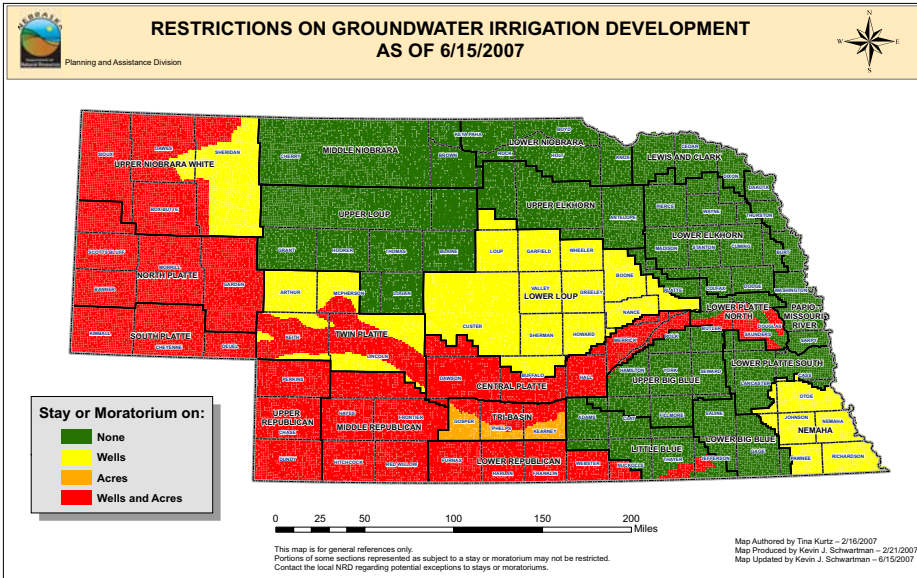
John Maser

**District Manager:**

Ron Cacek

**Newsletter Editor:**

Kay Grote



All landowners, existing and new, are reminded that the entire North Platte NRD is under a moratorium on new irrigation wells and new irrigated acres. This district-wide moratorium went into effect in 2002. No new permits for wells with a pumping capacity of more than 50 gallons per minute will be issued through the NRD. New wells for the purpose of additional irrigation will not be allowed. The breakout of land in any part of the district for the purpose of new irrigation development is also prohibited unless an equal amount of irrigated acres are permanently retired elsewhere by the landowner. These retired irrigated acres can be converted to dryland cropping, wildlife habitat, rangeland or left idle. Above is the Department of Natural Resources latest map of restrictions on groundwater irrigation development as of June 15, 2007.

## New weed management association formed

The North Platte Natural Resources Districts has partnered with South Platte NRD and weed superintendents of seven counties to begin the formation of a new Weed Management Association. Final approval of the WMA is pending approval from the seven county boards.

The High Plains WMA, covering the counties of Scotts Bluff, Banner, Kimball, Morrill, Cheyenne, Garden and Deuel Counties, will focus on the eradication and management of invasive species including saltcedar, Russian olive and Canada thistle, as well as musk thistle and white top.

It is the vision of the group to work cooperatively with private landowners, businesses, communities, government and non-profit agencies to seek funding for and promote programs to increase the productivity of the region's watershed and riparian areas, farmland and grazing areas; and to educate the public and landowners about proper weed management.

Weed Superintendents from the seven counties and representatives from the North Platte and South Platte Natural Resources Districts and other agencies met June 11 in Scottsbluff to discuss invasive weed issues in their respective regions. Sheridan County Weed Superintendent Kristi Paul presented the advantages of forming a cooper-

ative weed management association and outlined the procedure for establishing one in the central/southern Panhandle.

"Weed management associations are highly visible, provide the opportunity to share and leverage resources and help promote public awareness and participation in weed and land management," Paul told the group.

Weed superintendents Jeff Schledewitz of Scotts Bluff County; Owen Walker of Morrill County; Bo Reichenberg of Banner County; Terry Raymer of Garden County; Terry Flick of Kimball County; Brian Hieh of Cheyenne County and Justin Shaw of Deuel County all recognized the need to form the partnership and said they would be contacting their county commissioners and other government officials, private landowners, business owners and group in their respective counties to initiate the WMA's kickoff. The North Platte and South Platte NRDs also gave their commitment to work with the county superintendents to pursue the goals of the HPWMA.

During the next couple of weeks, these individuals will be contacting private landowners, and businesses and organizations as potential partners and supporters in their respective areas. Any one with interest in getting involved in the HPWMA is invited to contact their county weed superintendent or their local NRD office.

## ALLOCATIONS:

*Continued from pg 1*

thing about it now."

Subcommittee chairman Gary Darnall, speaking on behalf of the subcommittee, initially recommended to the board to set a base allocation of 18 inches in the overappropriated area for three years, and to revisit the allocation level annually. After much discussion, the motion was amended to strike the time frame and develop rules for setting an initial base allocation of 18 inches in the overappropriated area beginning in water year 2009.

"It will put a stop to the overpumpers out there and it will get us headed in the right direction," said Lapaseotes of the base allocation. "We'll revisit it after we get all our pumping data in."

The NPNRD staff has started drafting rules and regulations for the allocation of groundwater in the overappropriated area. This adoption process will include public education efforts based on current groundwater data and the opportunity for public comment on the proposed allocation rules.

Once the draft rules for allocation have been completed, a public hearing date will be set.

## REGISTER PITS:

*Continued from pg 1*

vation for the purpose of withdrawing water for irrigation.

Owners of ground water pits within the North Platte NRD must contact the district office prior to registration of the pit as a ground water well with the

**LB701 requires registration of existing irrigation pits within 180 days after May 2, 2007.**

Department of Natural Resources. The NRD staff must sign the registration form or submit a Water Well Registration Natural Resources District Approval form to show that such pit and the irrigation from the pit is in accordance with rules and regulations of the NRD.

This certification is required prior to registration of the pit as a ground water well with the Department of Natural Resources.

Reuse pits that receive water off the overlying land and do not intercept the ground water table are not required to be registered as wells. Anyone having questions about whether their pit is subject to registration should contact the District office in Scottsbluff at 632-2749.

**Handy Reference Available From DNR**  
Many landowners still have questions about the requirements for registering wells. A pamphlet entitled "Why Register Wells" is available from the Department of Natural Resources website. This pamphlet is available at our office or a link is on website at <http://www.npnrd.org/groundwater.htm>