

North Platte Natural Resources District Irrigation Newsletter

Issue 13

Ground Water Irrigation Well Sample Cost Share Program Extension

Producers still have time to take advantage of the North Platte Natural Resources District's Irrigation Well Water Sample Cost-Share Program. The NPNRD has extended the program through the remainder of the 2026 Water Year, giving landowners and operators until September 30, 2026, to submit irrigation well water samples through the District at a reduced cost.

Through the program, landowners and operators can submit irrigation well water samples to the NPNRD office for \$10 per sample, with cost-share assistance available for each eligible sample.

Water samples must be collected either directly from the irrigation well or from the final point of distribution. Samples taken from the final point of distribution must include the required georeferenced location, along with the registration numbers for each well supplying that distribution point.

To receive cost-share assistance, samples must be submitted to the NPNRD office by September 30, 2026. Producers who choose to submit samples directly to a laboratory instead of through the NPNRD must ensure their water sample results are provided to the District by December 31, 2026, to satisfy reporting requirements.

100547 Airport Road
P.O. Box 280
Scottsbluff, NE 69363-0280
(308) 632-2749
www.npnrd.org

Application
Ground Water Sample Cost-Share

I (we), the undersigned, do hereby request cost-share assistance to help defray the cost of the well or final distribution point described herein below. It is understood that the cost-share assistance will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

1. Before receiving any cost-share funds, it will be necessary for the applicant to meet the requirements of the program:

a. Only one sample can be submitted for each well or distribution point.

b. Samples must be either taken from the well or from the final point of distribution. Samples taken from the final point of distribution must include the required georeferenced location, along with the registration numbers for each well supplying that distribution point.

c. All sample results must be shared with the NPNRD.

2. The North Platte NRD will only accept water samples for cost-share assistance if the applicant agrees to provide the results to the NPNRD.

3. Funds will be paid on a first-come, first-served basis. If funds are not available, the applicant will receive cost-share funds, not both.

4. Landowner's/Operator's cost will be \$10 per sample.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Landowner Name: _____ Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Operator Name: _____ Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____



Welcome to Issue #13 of the Irrigation Newsletter! This newsletter is intended to inform **groundwater and surface water irrigators** within the District. The information included in this newsletter is made possible with the help of the University of Nebraska Extension and USDA-NRCS.

Visit or Contact Us

100547 Airport Road

Scottsbluff, NE

308-632-2749

www.npnrd.org



Surface Water Registration

The North Platte NRD is currently mailing surface water registration paperwork to landowners who irrigate with surface water only. If you receive a packet, please review the materials carefully and follow the instructions to complete your registration and return the signed forms.

This registration process is part of the NRD's effort to improve nitrate management and maintain accurate, up-to-date records. Beginning January 1, 2025, all surface water irrigated acres must be registered and approved by the NRD under updated rules and regulations. This registration will not impact your existing water rights or any agreements with your Surface Water District.

Registering your acres ensures they are associated with annual nitrogen sample data in the NRD's database, supporting better groundwater protection and resource planning.

As of July 2026, registration materials have been distributed by mail to:

- Alliance Irrigation District
- Beerline Canal Company
- Blue Creek Irrigation District
- Bridgeport Irrigation District
- Brown's Creek Irrigation District
- Castle Rock Irrigation District
- Central Irrigation District
- Chimney Rock Irrigation District
- Courthouse Rock
- Empire Canal Company
- Enterprise Irrigation District
- Farmers Irrigation District
- Gering Irrigation District
- Gering-Ft Laramie Irrigation District
- Hooper Irrigation District
- Lisco Irrigation District
- Midland-Overland Canal Company
- Minatare Mutual Canal and Irrigation Company
- Mitchell Irrigation District
- Nine Mile Irrigation District
- Northport Irrigation District
- Paisley Irrigation District
- Pathfinder Irrigation District
- Short Line Irrigation District
- Steamboat Irrigation District
- Union Irrigation District
- Winters Creek Canal Company

If you receive registration paperwork, please review the materials carefully, complete the required forms, and return the signed documents to the North Platte NRD as soon as possible. Promptly returning your paperwork will help ensure your irrigated acres are properly registered and included in the NRD's records. Additionally, if you have not received a packet, have misplaced your paperwork, need an additional copy of the forms, or have surface water that is not in a district listed above, please contact the North Platte NRD, and staff will be happy to assist you.

Invasive Weed Control Program

The North Platte NRD is pleased to announce a potential funding opportunity for landowners battling two State Listed Noxious Weeds. Funding is available to help treat and eliminate Salt Cedar and Phragmites on land located within ½ mile of either side of the North Platte River within the District. The cost share is 75% of actual cost up to a \$5,000 max, per landowner. All applications must be approved by the NRD prior to any work being done. The money is first come, first served until funds run out. The funds are made available through the Nebraska Forest Service, with the North Platte NRD handling applications.



Water Year Timeline

The water year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. Throughout this period, producers are responsible for meeting sampling and reporting requirements to remain in compliance with district regulations.

All required water and soil samples must be collected within the current water year. Collecting samples during the designated reporting period ensures that the data accurately reflects conditions for that year's requirements.

If an individual does not irrigate during the water year, a District Acknowledgement Form must be submitted by September 30, the final day of the water year. This form notifies the district that no irrigation occurred during the reporting period.

After the water year concludes, water and soil sample results must be submitted to the North Platte NRD by December 31. A licensed laboratory must complete all sample analyses to ensure the results meet reporting standards.

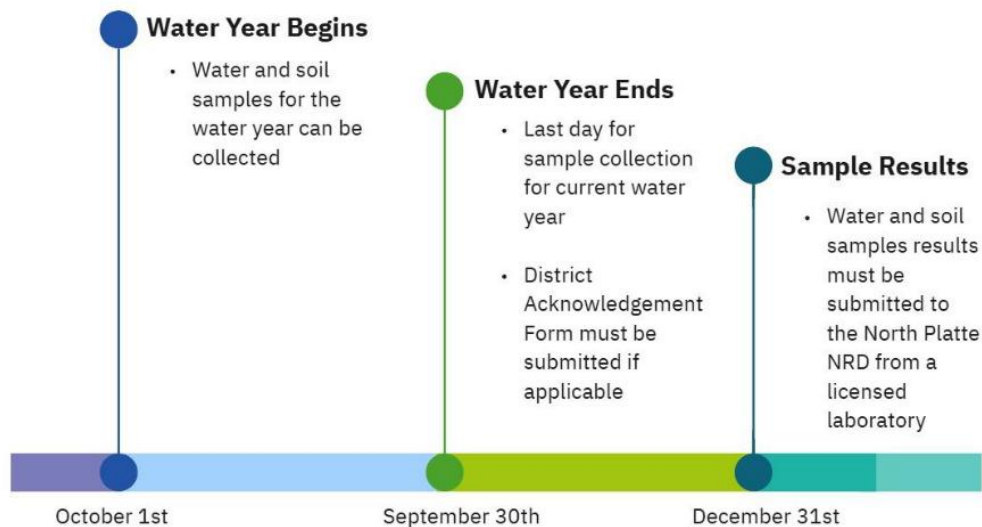
Important Deadlines for the Current Water Year

For the current water year, any required water or soil samples must be collected by September 30, 2026. Laboratory results from those samples must be submitted to the North Platte NRD by December 31, 2026.

Looking Ahead

A new water year begins on October 1, 2026. Producers who are required to collect samples for the new water year may do so anytime between October 1, 2026, and September 30, 2027. If no irrigation occurs during that water year, a District Acknowledgement Form must be submitted by September 30, 2027.

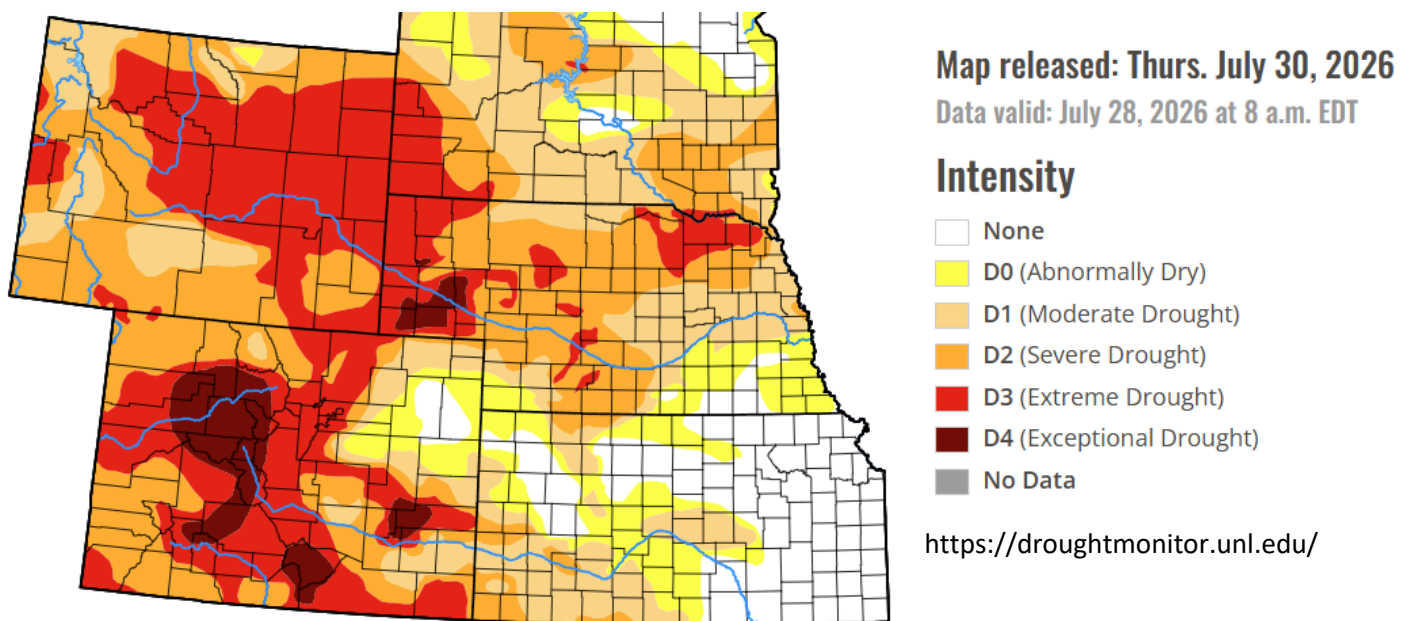
Sampling Timeline



Drought Update

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor shows some encouraging improvement across portions of the North Platte NRD, but drought remains a significant concern. Scotts Bluff County has improved out of Exceptional Drought (D4), with the entire county now classified as Extreme Drought (D3). Portions of Morrill and Garden Counties have also improved into Severe Drought (D2) following recent rainfall. However, much of Banner, Morrill, and Garden Counties remain in Extreme (D3) or Exceptional Drought (D4), while most of southern Sioux County continues to experience Extreme Drought (D3).

Although recent rains have improved soil moisture and benefited crops in many areas, drought recovery takes time. Lasting improvements to groundwater, stream flows, and reservoir storage require sustained precipitation over an extended period. While the recent changes on the Drought Monitor are encouraging, continued rainfall this fall and a strong winter snowpack will be important for improving long-term water conditions across the North Platte NRD.



Flow Meter Reads and Maintenance

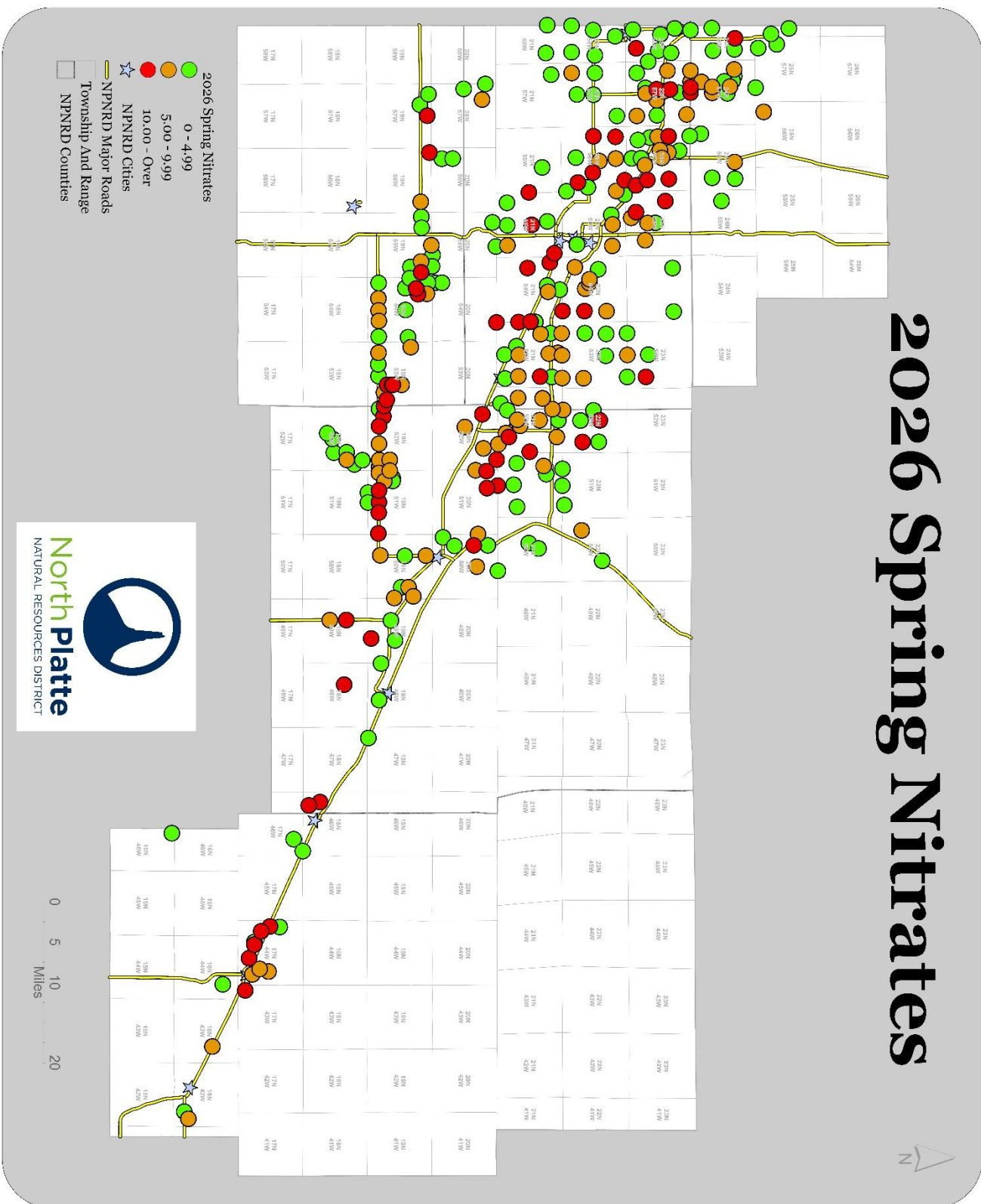
Employees of the North Platte NRD will start the annual flow meter reading process beginning October 1, 2026, and continue through the middle of November. Flow meters that are on the NRD maintenance schedule and due for maintenance will be serviced at the time of reading.

It may be necessary to enter some properties more than once. We will calculate the water pumped for the past water year and report the results as soon as the information is processed.

Winterizing Flowmeters

As we move into September, now is a great time to plan ahead for winterizing your flow meters. The North Platte NRD encourages producers to begin preparing their irrigation equipment before colder weather sets in. Draining water from the pipelines where meters are installed can prevent ice buildup, which can crack or damage meters, leading to costly repairs or replacements. Taking a few simple steps now can save time and money later in the season.

2026 Spring Nitrates



Spring Nitrate Results

The North Platte NRD maintains a network of around 600 monitoring wells. Our water technicians sample these wells twice a year, in the spring and fall. We collect data on multiple parameters, with nitrates being our primary concern. The results of the spring 2026 sampling season are shown above.



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PRESORTED STANDARD
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
NORTH PLATTE NRD
PERMIT NO 280

Board Meetings

The public is welcome to attend all Board meetings and the Committee meetings. The North Platte Natural Resources District conducts its Board Meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 3 pm. Committee meetings are held as needed. The meetings are held at the office located at 100547 Airport Road, Scottsbluff. We welcome your thoughts and opinions on upcoming projects

This is part thirteen of an ongoing series designed to provide education and information to the Landowners and Operators irrigating within the North Platte Natural Resources District boundaries.

Information found in this Newsletter has been reproduced from "Irrigation and Nitrogen Management, User Education/Certification Program" a Nebraska Extension Circular EC2008. If you would like more information, please contact the North Platte Natural Resources District.