

UPPER ELKHORN The Oracle

"Making Wise Decisions Concerning Our Natural Resources"
<http://www.uenrd.org>

Upper Elkhorn NRD Continues to Address Water Issues Within the District

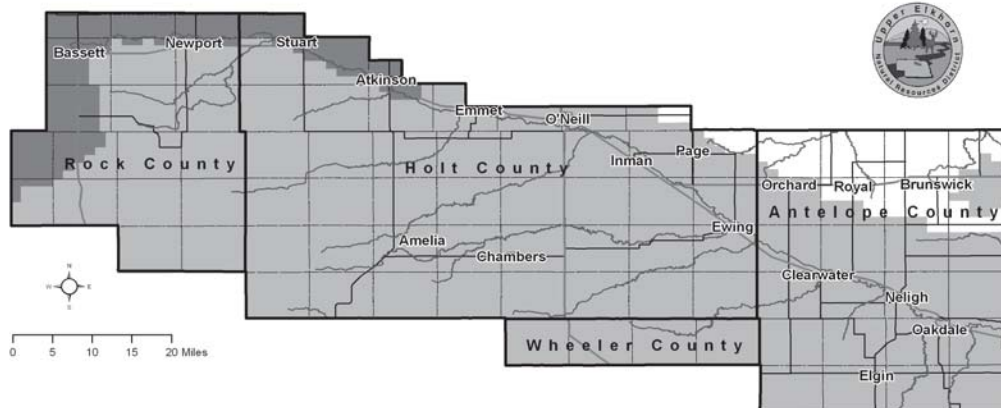
Acre Certification to begin in 2010-2011

Draft rules and regulations are being prepared and will hopefully be available late this summer to early fall. Public hearings will be held for the general public to comment on them prior to their adoption.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD will begin Irrigated Acre Certification in early 2011. Landowners within the Lower Niobrara River Basin fully appropriated area will be the first to certify their acres due to the fully appropriated designation in 2007 by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Final acre certification will be based off of County Assessor and/or FSA records. Landowners will be contacted through the mail with letters and information regarding the irrigated acres they have listed with the county assessor. Within the draft rules and regulations, the Upper Elkhorn NRD is considering accepting historically irrigated acres within the Lower Niobrara River Basin fully appropriated area. These will be acres that have been irrigated at least once within the Lower Niobrara River Basin fully appropriated designation during the calendar years of 2003 through October 16, 2007 and the Lower Platte River Basin designation between the calendar years of 2004 and December 16, 2008 with

proper documentation that they were irrigated. Historically irrigated acres currently enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program or other federal, state or local conservation program must also be certified if there is any possibility of future irrigation. Acres that were not historically irrigated prior to the Lower Niobrara River Basin designation in 2003 but have proper documentation may receive 95% certification for the total amount of irrigated acres should the landowner decide to reactivate a field for irrigation purposes. Any irrigated acres that are not certified during the specified dates would not be allowed to have groundwater applied to them for any purpose.

Upper Elkhorn NRD
Moratorium and Stay Designations
as of April 6, 2009 (Signing of L.B. 483)



- Niobrara River Basin 10/50 (October 16, 2007)
- Lower Platte Basin 10/50 (December 16, 2008)
- Not Fully Appropriated

Upper Elkhorn NRD Areas
Niobrara Designation: 233 square miles
Lower Platte Designation: 2,803 square miles
Not Designated: 249 square miles
Total District: 3,052 square miles

Next Sign Up for the Expansion of New Irrigated Acres January 1, 2011

In April of 2009, Nebraska Lawmakers passed legislative bill 483 to limit the number of new groundwater and surface water irrigated acres annually for the next four years. This meant no new expansion of groundwater irrigated acres over the next four years within the hydrologically connected area of the Lower Platte River Basin. This affected 2,803 square miles or approximately 92% of the Upper Elkhorn NRD. In response to the new legislation the UENRD adopted LB 483 Rules and Regulations to responsibly develop new groundwater irrigated acres within the District. The LB 483 Rules and Regulations were adopted by the UENRD

Board of Directors on July 27, 2007.

These rules and regulations would allow for the expansion of 2500 new irrigated acres each year through 2012 for a total of 10,000 acres over the next four years. Applications were ranked by several criteria including stream depletion factor, area nitrate contamination, static water level, location of a new well, whether or not the land is highly erodible, nitrogen management certification and conservation practices.

The first signup occurred in October 2009 with 54 applications for 3,154 new irrigated acres being requested.

continued on back

Natural
Resources
District

Spring 2010

Are Your Wells Regis- tered???

As of September 9, 1993, all wells drilled in the State of Nebraska are required to be registered with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). To find out if your wells are registered you may follow the Registered Well Locator link on the UENRD website (www.uenrd.org) or contact your local NRD office.

Since the passage of LB 962 it is also important to make sure your wells are registered under the proper name and that any irrigated acres are registered. Both the DNR and NRD will be monitoring wells more closely to ensure compliance with Nebraska State Law. Unregistered wells could possibly be subjected to a cease and desist order, immediate decommissioning without availability for cost-share, or an increased cost for required registration through the DNR.

Written notice must be provided to the DNR for change of ownership, correction of registration information, modifications of a registered well, and for abandonment of all wells.

For further information regarding the reasons to register a well, go to the DNR website at <http://www.dnr.state.ne.us/> or if you have any further water well related questions, contact the DNR (402-471-2363) or Upper Elkhorn NRD.

Meet the UENRD Candidates

Subdistrict 1 - No Filings -
This position will be filled by appointment following the election

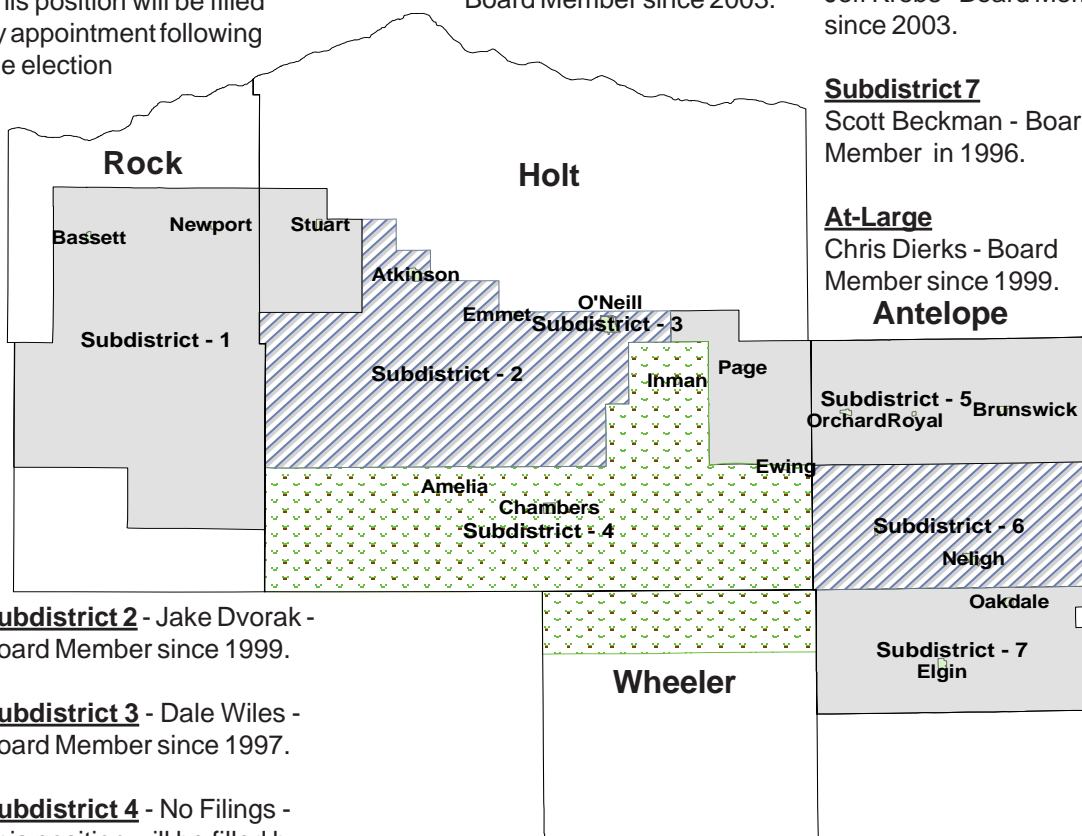
Subdistrict 5 - Tim Knuth -
Board Member since 2003.

Subdistrict 6
Jeff Krebs - Board Member since 2003.

Subdistrict 7
Scott Beckman - Board Member in 1996.

At-Large
Chris Dierks - Board Member since 1999.

Antelope



Subdistrict 2 - Jake Dvorak -
Board Member since 1999.

Subdistrict 3 - Dale Wiles -
Board Member since 1997.

Subdistrict 4 - No Filings -
This position will be filled by appointment following the election

West Holt High School Attends State Envirothon



2010 West Holt High School Envirothon Team.

The Nebraska Nature and Visitors Center near Alda, was the host site for the 2010 Nebraska Envirothon. The Envirothon is a program for 9th-12th grade students designed to promote awareness about our natural environment. Students compete in a contest that tests their knowledge on a wide variety of subjects relating to natural resources and the environment. Seven Regional Envirothon competitions were held across Nebraska in the early spring. The winning five-member team from each regional competition was invited to represent their region at the Nebraska State Envirothon Competition. Seven additional Wildcard teams are also invited based on their overall scores. West Holt High School qualified for the Nebraska State Envirothon by winning their regional competition back on March 3. The top fourteen high school teams participating in this year's State Envirothon included; West Holt, Norris, Concordia Teams 1 & 2, Ord, Superior Teams 1 & 2, Bellevue East, Ogallala, Boone Central, Burke, Gering and Bellevue West Teams 1 & 2.

During the State Envirothon, each team was tested in seven environmental areas, which included: Aquatics, Forestry; Policy; Range; Soils; Wildlife; and, an Oral presentation involving Biodiversity in a Changing World. The teams competed for top honors at each of the seven stations with the team with the overall high score winning the right to represent Nebraska at the Cannon Envirothon, which will be held in Fresno, California. This year's winner of the Nebraska Envirothon competition was team 1 from Superior High School.

West Holt High School began qualifying for the state Envirothon in 1997 by winning the Northeast Regional Competition. Since then West Holt has qualified 11 out of the last 14 years with their best finish occurring in 2004 when they placed runner-up to Norris High School, the only other school in Nebraska to attend more Envirothon competitions than West Holt.

UENRD Receives Environmental Trust Grant

The Upper Elkhorn NRD has been awarded \$35,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the "Irrigation Water Management Monitoring Program". The Trust Board announced funding for the project at its meeting on April 1, 2010 in Lincoln. This is the third and final year of the award with funding totaling \$105,000. The project is one of the 88 projects receiving \$14,970,328 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year.

The project will use Environmental Trust funds to assist irrigators who currently have wells that are involved with the UENRD's groundwater quality or quantity monitoring programs to install water meters on their irrigation systems. The District plans to administer a cost-share program that will combine NET funds with UENRD funds to install flowmeters

at approved sites during the upcoming year. The result of this allocation of funds will be a direct comparison between the amount of water pumped across the District to the average static water level change from a year to year basis. This project will help to conserve surface and groundwater resources.

Each cooperating irrigator who installs a meter has the potential to reduce pumping and labor cost. Less pumping will result in less consumption of fuels. Therefore, the long term benefits to the aquifer will be measured in both quality and quantity of the groundwater and stable supplies of clean groundwater benefits to the farmer, the environment and the general public. A greater awareness of the volume of water needed to sustain irrigated agriculture will provide planners and decision makers, such as the UENRD Board and

state officials with another piece of information needed to make better policy decisions with regard to groundwater conservation. The project will have a wide and lasting impact on protecting lives, protecting property and protecting Nebraska's future water resources.

The Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992. Using revenue from the Nebraska Lottery, the Trust has provided over \$157 million in grants to 1,231 projects across the state. Anyone - citizens, organizations, communities, farmers and businesses - can apply for funding to protect habitat, improve water quality and establish recycling programs in Nebraska. The Nebraska Environmental Trust works to preserve, protect and restore our natural resources for future generations.



The Nebraska
Environmental Trust

preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations

Cost Share Eligibility Requirements

Any person who fails to comply with any of the Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District's Rules and Regulations shall not be eligible to participate in any programs or receive payments that are administered by the District. Programs requiring compliance include but are not limited to the following: UENRD Groundwater Management Plan - Phase I and Phase II Rules & Regulations; Nitrogen Certification

Program, LB483 Rules and Regulations Chemigation Act; Irrigation Runoff and Erosion and Sediment Control. Cost share programs that may be affected due to lack of compliance include but are not limited to the following: Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program; Upper Elkhorn NRD Conservation Program - Land Treatment Fund; WILD Nebraska/Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program; Nebraska

Buffer Strip Program; Corners for Wildlife; Liquid/NH₃ Application Program; Livestock Manure Analysis Program; Domestic Water Quality Program; Nitrogen Management Program; and, the Water Well Decommissioning Program. Anyone who is already a participant in any of these programs or may be a participant will not receive any payments as long as they fail to comply with any District rules and regulations.

Attention Chemigators We Must Continue to Protect Our Environment

There seems to be some confusion with the updates to the UENRD Chemigation Program. Anyone who permits a chemigation site this year will receive pre-printed renewal forms for the 2011 chemigation season. These forms will contain the landowner information, certified chemigator and legal description. Cooperators receiving these forms will need to make sure the pre-printed information is correct, list any fertilizer or chemicals used the previous year (2010) through the system, sign and return with the proper fee. **Renewal forms sent out are nontransferable. If you**

rent different quarters from year to year, you will need to fill out new forms for the rented quarters with your information; however, this does not mean it would be a new fee. If the quarter was permitted the previous year it would still be a renewal. If you are not sure of the status of a quarter you can contact the NRD office for this information. If you are no longer farming a quarter, you may either return the form with a notation that you are not farming that quarter this year or completely disregard the form in question. **Also, cooperators should not alter the pre-printed forms**

with a different legal description because this will not match the chemigation permit number attached contained on the form. Pre-printed renewal forms may be returned to the NRD office anytime from the time they are received to the June 1 deadline to maintain their renewal status.

Anyone found to be out of compliance in regard to the Chemigation Act may be subject up to \$1,000 civil penalty or Class II misdemeanor and ineligible for UENRD cost share programs.

If you have any questions please contact the NRD at 336-3867.

Groundwater Foundation to Promote Green Sites Find out how you can get involved!

Learn more about the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program, which recognizes the groundwater and environmental stewardship of highly managed green spaces like golf courses through the Groundwater Foundation. The program publicly recognizes sites for their efforts on behalf of water resources and encourages

their sustainable implementation while providing an opportunity for superintendents and managers to educate themselves, staff and site visitors about the resource of groundwater. Designation as a Groundwater Guardian Green Site is based on the completion of an application and at least 70 percent total

applicable points based on current practices related to pesticide and fertilizer use, water use, managing sources of pollution, protecting water quality and environmental stewardship. For more information, contact the Groundwater Foundation at 1-800-858-4844 or visit / www.groundwater.org/gg/greensites.html

Sign Up Underway for NRD Cost Share Programs to Protect Lives and Property

Anyone wishing to participate in an Upper Elkhorn NRD cost share program should contact the Upper Elkhorn NRD office or their local NRCS office. Cost share is available for the installation of the practice itself and will not include any sales tax on the materials or labor. Cost share programs are based on available funding and include:

NSWCP/NRD: The UENRD in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources offers cost share practices to landowners wishing to install conservation practices. Some practices included in the program are: windbreaks; planned grazing systems; irrigation water management; pasture planting and range seeding; grade stabilization; and, windbreak renovation. Cost share is available at a rate of 50%.

Water Well Decommissioning: The UENRD in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources offers cost share funds at a rate of 75% to landowners who wish to properly decommission an abandoned well.

Domestic Water Quality: The UENRD offers cost share to cooperators whose drinking water is contaminated with nitrates over the federal health standard of 10 parts per million. Cost share is available at a rate of 50% or a maximum of \$800.

Anhydrous Ammonia Application: The UENRD offers 50% cost share to landowners for the purchase of a flow control monitor not to exceed \$900; and, \$200 for the purchase of a vertical dam manifold.

Livestock Manure Analysis: The UENRD offers 50% cost share not to exceed \$200 for manure analysis to credit useful materials into the soil.


Nitrogen Management: The UENRD offers 50% cost share not to exceed \$200 to cooperators to encourage producers to manage fertilizer application better by accounting for residual nitrate-nitrogen which already exists in the soil root zone and irrigation water.

Cost share applications are approved by the Upper Elkhorn NRD Board of Directors and available on a first come first serve basis and Do Not include sales tax.

NeRAIN

Volunteers Needed!!!

If you are a weather enthusiast and would like to volunteer for the NeRAIN Program contact the Upper Elkhorn NRD at 402-336-3867! Volunteers will receive a new quality rain gauge, installation and brief training (on internet) to record data. All you need is a computer with internet access and a few minutes each day to report readings from your gauge!






Department of Natural Resources

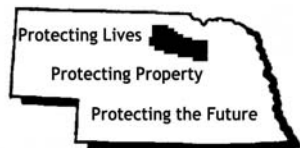


Expansion of New Irrigated Acres continued....

The UENRD Board of Directors approved the expansion of 2,476 new irrigated acres on November 9, 2009. The remaining applications which were not approved were carried over for the next sign up period. The second expansion of new irrigated acres was held during the month of January 2010. There were 31 applications for 994 acres plus 678 acres of carryover from the first sign up for a total request of 1,672 acres of new expansion. These requests were approved by the Board of Directors

February 3, 2010. All new irrigated acres are required to be completed by October 1, 2010.

The legislation driving the expansion of new irrigated acres, the UENRD LB 483 Rules & Regulations and the criteria sheet for sign up are available for review on the Districts website at www.uenrd.org. The next sign up will occur during January of 2011.



**Attention
Cooperators!!
Remember to
bring in your
irrigation water
samples for
your Nitrogen
Management
Certification!!
Water Samples
must be sub-
mitted once
every 4 years!**

Are You Crediting Nitrogen in Your Irrigation Water

In a continuing effort to protect, maintain and improve our groundwater quality, the Upper Elkhorn NRD would like to encourage all irrigators to credit the nitrogen which may be in their irrigation water. This is a simple process which involves having your irrigation water sampled and running the results through the following formula.

Example for an irrigation water sample which tested 10 ppm:

$$\frac{2.72 \times \text{Irrigation Water Sample Results}}{12} = \text{Pounds of nitrogen per 12 inches of irrigation application}$$

$$\frac{2.72 \times 10 \text{ ppm}}{12} = 2.26 \text{ Pounds of nitrogen per 12 inches of irrigation application}$$

Nitrogen Management Certification Requirements

Since the adoption of the Upper Elkhorn NRD Groundwater Management Plan in 1997, the NRD has required anyone re-sponsible for making decisions on any type of application of nitrogen fertilizer be certified in nitrogen management. This would include any person or persons responsible for the purchase of nitrogen fertilizer and applying nitrogen fertilizer on an area greater than one acre and applying more than 50 pounds of actual nitrogen fertilizer per acre

on any crop within the UENRD either commercially or privately. Cooperators must certify once every four years by attending a Nitrogen Certification class and are required to submit a water sample from each irrigation well within their farming operation once during the four year period.

If your nitrogen certification card is up for renewal in 2011 please make sure you have submitted your water samples to meet the NRD requirements.

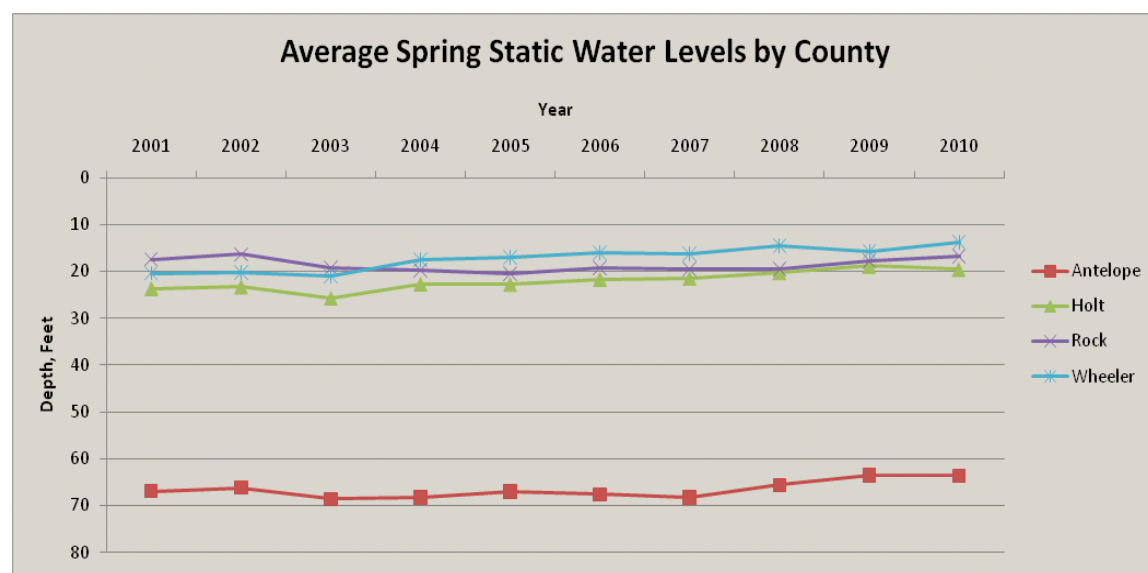
Monitoring Upper Elkhorn NRD Static Water Levels for Future Preservation of Our Resources

The Upper Elkhorn NRD has managed a static water level monitoring program since 1975. Overtime, the program has expanded to include 157 irrigation wells and dedicated monitoring wells across the District. During the spring and fall, the elevation of the water table is measured in non-

pumping wells, or static conditions. The District uses this information to establish changes in groundwater levels over time and determine the status of the aquifer. The water table elevation is influenced by climatic conditions and consumptive uses, e.g. crop and

livestock production, domestic and municipal usage, and manufacturing. The Charts below show average spring static water levels by county for the last ten years. These results will help assist in future management decisions.

Average Depth to Water in Feet (Spring)										
County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Antelope	66.89	66.15	68.62	68.22	66.99	67.62	68.22	65.62	63.54	63.64
Holt	23.65	23.28	25.71	22.68	22.75	21.65	21.45	20.24	18.86	19.56
Rock	17.40	16.38	19.28	19.77	20.48	19.32	19.47	19.58	17.69	16.76
Wheeler	20.4	20.25	20.96	17.51	17.05	15.96	16.2	14.45	15.85	13.8



The Oracle is the official publication of the Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District. It is produced for the purpose of educating the public regarding natural resources issues. Any comments or questions should be sent to Beth Walsh, Upper Elkhorn NRD, 301 N. Harrison Street, O'Neill, NE 68763 or e-mailed to bwalsh@uenrd.org.

Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District Board of Directors

Tim Knuth - Chairman	Subdistrict 5 ~ Brunswick	(402) 358-5430
Gregg Felker - Vice Chair	Subdistrict 3 ~ Brunswick	(402) 336-2864
Dale Wiles - Treasurer	Subdistrict 3 ~ O'Neill	(402) 336-1805
Ted Hughes - NARD Rep	Subdistrict 6 ~ Neligh	(402) 887-4942
Jerry Childers	Subdistrict 4 ~ Chambers	(402) 482-5688
Chris Dierks	At Large ~ Ewing	(402) 485-2618
James Dvorak	Subdistrict 2 ~ Atkinson	(402) 925-5776
Janet Koinzan	Subdistrict 7 ~ Elgin	(402) 843-2410
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Jeff Krebs	Subdistrict 6 ~ Neligh	(402) 887-5215
Mike Russman	Subdistrict 4 ~ Ewing	(402) 485-2638
Roy Stewart	Subdistrict 1 ~ Newport	(402) 244-5360

UENRD Board Meetings are held the 4th Monday of every month.

March through October at 8:00 P.M. and November through February at 2:30 P.M.

UENRD Staff

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Beth Walsh	Information & Education/Chemigation Coordinator e-mail: bwalsh@uenrd.org
Joy Knapp	NRCS Clerk, Neligh
Barbara Shannon	NRCS Clerk, Ainsworth
Mary Zakrzewski	NRCS Clerk, O'Neill