

UPPER ELKHORN The Oracle

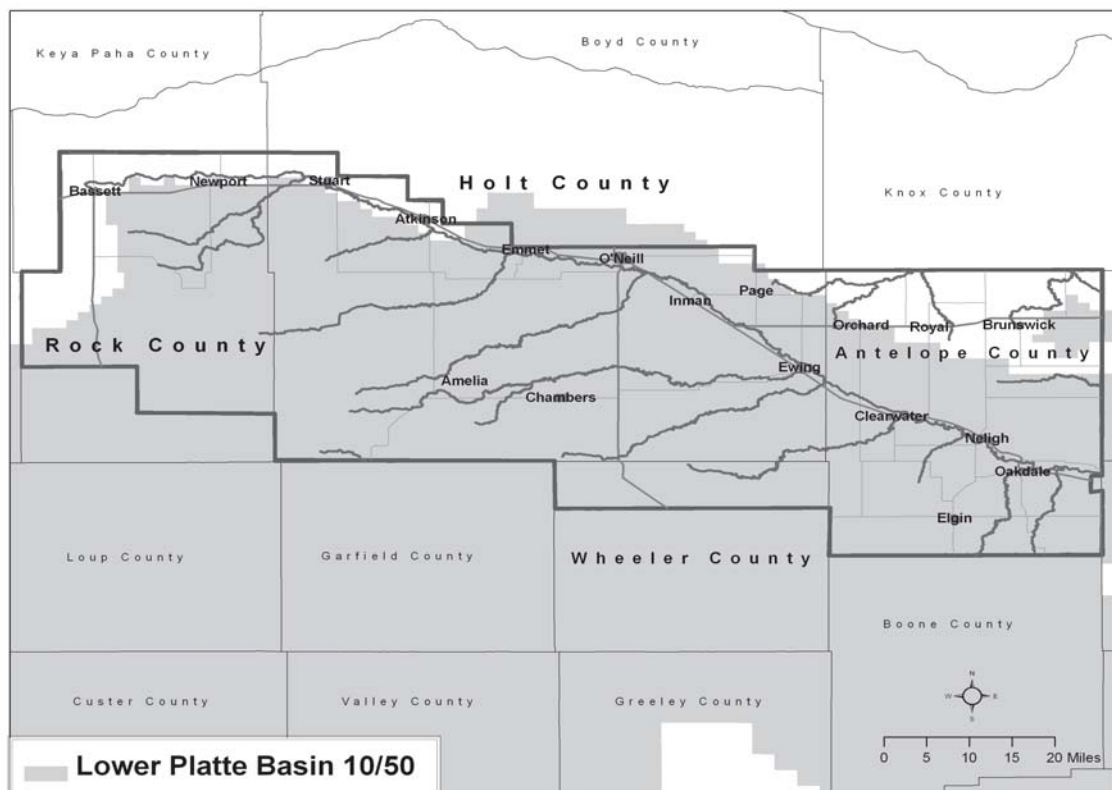
"Making Wise Decisions Concerning Our Natural Resources"
<http://www.uenrd.org>

Initial Expansion of Irrigated Acres Approved by UENRD

In April of 2009, the Nebraska State Legislature passed LB 483 limiting the expansion of new irrigated acres within the Lower Platte River Basin which includes the Upper Elkhorn NRD. As a result of the new legislation the UENRD adopted Rules and Regulations pertaining to LB 483, July 27, 2009, which would allow for the expansion of an average of 2500 acres per year for the next 4 years with a maximum of 10,000 new irrigated acres. During the month of October the UENRD accepted applications for the expansion of new irrigated acres. The Upper Elkhorn NRD Board of Directors met November 9, 2009 to review the October applications for the new irrigated acres and approved the expansion of 2476 acres. Over 3100 acres of applications were received and ranked based on the UENRD criteria with the highest ranking applications receiving approval. Applications not ranking high enough will be carried over into the January 2010 sign-up.

Second Expansion of New Irrigated Acres Sign-up Underway for the Upper Elkhorn NRD

January 4, 2010 was the beginning of the second sign up for the expansion of approximately 2500 new irrigated acres within the Lower Platte River Basin of the Upper Elkhorn NRD. Landowners interested in applying for this expansion of irrigated acres will need to apply during the month of January at the Upper Elkhorn NRD office in O'Neill. Sign-up will occur during the month of January during NRD business hours which are Monday through Friday, 8-5 except over the noon hour. The Upper Elkhorn NRD will be closed on January 1 and January 18, 2010. Applications for the expansion of new irrigated acres must be made by the landowner or power of attorney. Information that will be needed at the time of sign-up will include a HEL determination form from your local NRCS office, an aerial photo labeled with the area to be expanded and the amount of acres and proof of any conservation measures present on the quarter of expansion. Conservation practices may include: terracing or watershed preservation being used or planned for use; existing CCRP, SAFE, Corners for Wildlife, NSWCP or similar programs. Cooperators wishing to include conservation programs on their application will be responsible for contacting their FSA or NRCS office and providing proof of the conservation practices at the time of sign-up. Please contact the office if you have any questions or need further clarification. A copy of the criteria ranking form is available along with the Upper Elkhorn NRD LB 483 Rules and Regulations on the districts website at www.uenrd.org.



Natural
Resources
District

Fall 2009

**Order
Trees from
Now Until
March 1 To
Reserve
Your
Favorite
Species**

**Phase 2
Reports
Due Feb-
ruary 1,
2009**

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



Protecting Lives - Protecting Property - Protecting the Future

Northeast Nebraska Regional Envirothon is scheduled for March 3, 2010.

Elections Scheduled for NRD Board of Directors

Current Board Members

Subdistrict 1 James Keller - Newport

Subdistrict 2 Curtis Gotschall - Atkinson

Subdistrict 3 Dale Wiles - O'Neill

Subdistrict 4 Jerry Childers - Chambers

Subdistrict 5 Tim Knuth - Brunswick

Subdistrict 6 Jeff Krebs - Neligh

Subdistrict 7 Janet Koinzan - Elgin

At-Large Chris Dierks - Ewing

Filing deadline for incumbants is February 15, 2010 and March 1 for non-incumbants.

UENRD Offers Scholarships to Graduating High School Seniors

Each year, the Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District offers three \$500 scholarships to graduating High School Seniors from the District. These scholarships are available for students who are planning to further their education in a field related to natural resources or agriculture. Seniors who are interested should contact the Upper Elkhorn NRD or visit the website at www.uenrd.org/education.html for further information, eligibility requirements and applications. The deadline for all scholarship applications is April 4, 2008.

Local Students Place First in the UENRD and NARD Poster Contest

The Upper Elkhorn NRD would like to congratulate Alexa Spangler and Lindee Wentworth from the Emmet Attendance Center and Evan Laible from St. Joseph's School in Atkinson for being awarded first place honors in the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts State Poster Contest.

Each year the NRD invites Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade students throughout the District to participate in the poster contest giving them an opportunity to showcase their artistic talents regarding our soil, water and other natural resources. This year students were asked to incorporate the "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil" theme into their posters, which were judged in mid November. This years winners are as follows:

Kindergarten - First Grade Category

First Place: Alexa Spangler, EAC

Second Grade - Third Grade

First Place: Lindee Wentworth, EAC

Second Place: Martin Wentworth, EAC

Fourth Grade - Sixth Grade Category

First Place: Kyle Linders, St. Joseph's

Second Place: Christa Wentworth, EAC

Third Place: Amanda Pischel, EAC

Seventh Grade - Ninth Grade Category

First Place: Evan Laible, St. Joseph's

Second Place: Ryan Linders, St. Joseph's

Third Place: Sawyer Williams, St. Joseph's

All first place posters were then forwarded on to the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts State Poster Contest where they competed against student posters from all across Nebraska. The Upper Elkhorn NRD received word November 25 that Alexa, Lindee and Evan won their divisions at the State contest and their posters will now be sent on to the National Contest sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts and its Auxillary. All winning district posters may be viewed on the Upper Elkhorn NRD website at <http://www.uenrd.org>. The Upper Elkhorn NRD Directors and Staff would like to thank everyone who participated in this years Poster Contest

NOW THROUGH FEB. 1, TIME TO ENROLL IN CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

LINCOLN, Dec. 11, 2009 - The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has set February 1 as the cutoff to rank applications from farmers and ranchers wishing to receive cost-share funds for the installation of soil, water, grazing, or wildlife practices, according to NRCS.

Steve Chick, NRCS state conservationist, said last year more than \$52 million in federal dollars, not counting the landowner's investment, were committed in conservation programs. Most of these programs are in a continuous sign-up where farmers and ranchers can apply any time.

The programs available include:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). "This is the base conservation program for most people," said Chick. "Irrigation practices, erosion control, grazing practices, animal manure systems are just a sample of the options available," he said. Within EQIP, there are also several special initiatives funds for which people can apply. These initiatives target: forestry, organic agriculture, wildlife habitat legacy areas, the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), targeting five areas in Nebraska for water conservation, and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), which targets the removal of invasive vegetation from fully and over-appropriated river basins in Nebraska.

- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) aims to improve wildlife habitat on private lands;

- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) helps landowners restore wetlands on their property by providing an easement payment or cost-share funds, depending on the option selected.

- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), which rewards producers for past conservation practices and offers enhancements to do additional conservation work, is also under a continuous sign-up. "The ranking cutoff date for this program is not yet determined but will be after Feb. 1, 2010," said Chick.

- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) allows enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland under threat of conversion to other uses, while retaining the right for grazing.

- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), which provides matching funds for development rights to keep to vulnerable range or cropland in agricultural uses.

The important action for farmers and ranchers to remember is February 1 is the cutoff for NRCS to rank applications on hand. Landowners can get help for any of these programs at any NRCS office in their USDA Service Center. For additional information about NRCS conservation programs visit www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.

UENRD Welcomes New Staff



Nick Hoffman (standing) new Water Resources Technician and Tom Riley new Water Resources Manager.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD would like to welcome Tom Riley and Nick Hoffman to the NRD staff. Tom was hired to fill the Water Resources Manager vacancy left when Tylr Naprstek became the new Elkhorn-Loup Model Coordinator; while, Nick was hired to assist with the water resources programs and the certification of acres. Both Tom and Nick have family ties to the area and look forward to the challenges facing the NRD regarding the states water resources and water legislation.

Attention Chemigators!!!

Anyone who permitted a chemigation site in 2009 will receive their 2010 Chemigation Application(s) in the mail!! These forms have been sent to you based on the Chemigation information you submitted to the NRD for the 2009 Chemigation season. Please follow the instructions below to renew your Chemigation sites from last year for the 2010 Chemigation season:

1. Review **ALL** the information (name, address, phone, legal description(s) and certified applicator(s) information) provided on the form for accuracy **AND** update any incorrect information!
2. Fill in **ALL** the remaining information marked with a red asterisk! Note the Fertilizer and Pesticide information is what you put through the system last year (2008)!
3. Sign and date **ALL** the applications!
4. Return **ALL** your 2010 renewal applications with the appropriate fee to the Upper Elkhorn NRD on or before the June 1, 2010 deadline.

Also enclosed will be a blank form (may be copied as needed) for your use in the event you have a new chemigation application. Additional applications are available on the website at www.uenrd.org, the NRD office in O'Neill, the RC&D office in Bassett and the Neligh NRCS office.

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; 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; 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.

Upper Elkhorn NRD Cost Share Programs Hurt by Budget Cuts

Due to the economy, state budget cuts and being conservative with local property taxes, the Upper Elkhorn NRD cost share programs have been reduced. The NRD receives funding from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources through the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation program and the Water Well Decommissioning program as well as local funds to distribute to cooperators wishing to install conservation programs or abandon an old well. As a result of these reductions the Upper Elkhorn NRD no longer offers cost share for Deep Soil Sampling and the funding for the Domestic Water Quality program have already been allocated for this fiscal year. Cooperators wishing to install conservation 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 for these practices is available at a rate of 50%. Landowners wishing to decommission an old well can apply for cost share through the Water Well Decommissioning program and be eligible for 75% cost share up to the maximum limits. Cost share funds are available on a first come first serve basis and are limited. 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.

"Conservation Trees for Nebraska Initiative" Promotes Planting 1 Tree Per Person in Nebraska!!

Irrigation Development Pushes Trees Aside!

The Upper Elkhorn NRD estimates that over 3,000 acres of trees have been removed from pivot corners, shelterbelts and wildlife habitat areas over the last 13 years. In light of these statistics, the Upper Elkhorn NRD would like to encourage all those landowners who removed trees to consider replacing them this upcoming spring. There are several incentive programs to help offset the cost of installing a new windbreak on the federal, state and local level. Federal programs include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP); Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP-limited to appropriate wetland sites); and, Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP). State programs include Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program (NSWCP); individual NRD programs; Nebraska Buffer Strip Incentives Program; and, WILD Nebraska. Private organizations also offering assistance to promote tree planting are Corners for Wildlife, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever chapters.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD will be taking orders from now until March 1st. Trees are available on a first come first serve basis and are available in a variety of species consisting of conifers, broadleaves and shrubs. Hand plant trees should be ordered in bundles of 25 while machine plant orders will be based on the windbreak design. The NRD can also provide technical assistance to cooperators who would like help designing a new windbreak or renovating an old one. The technician will suggest the type of trees best suited for your soil type and design a layout beneficial to your area.

The NRD also offers two practices to help increase the survival rate of new seedlings, drip irrigation and conservation weed mulch. Drip irrigation is a flat hose installed at the time the trees are planted and is used when there is a water source at the site. Conservation weed mulch is installed over the seedlings to help control weeds and retain moisture. Both practices can be very beneficial to young windbreaks and should be considered when placing your order.

Remember, the Upper Elkhorn NRD is also your one-stop shop to order trees and weed mulch. The NRD can plant and install the trees and fabric as we have for the past 30+ years. Trees and mulch purchased from the Upper Elkhorn NRD could be eligible for local or state funds. For further information or to place an order contact your local NRCS office or the Upper Elkhorn NRD at 301 N. Harrison Street, O'Neill or (402) 336-3867.

Available Tree Species

Conifers	Broadleaves	Shrubs	
Eastern Red Cedar	Native Cottonwood	Caragana	Manchurian Apricot
Rocky Mountain Juniper	Swamp White Oak	Golden Current	Chokecherry
Colorado Blue Spruce	Bur Oak	American Plum	Willow
Black Hills Spruce	Black Walnut	Crabapple	Sandcherry
Scotch Pine	Kentucky Coffee	Black Cherry	Elderberry
Jack Pine	Hackberry	Buffaloberry	Redosier Dogwood
Ponderosa Pine	Honeylocust	False Indigo	Harbin Pear
Austrian Pine	Silver Maple	Cotoneaster	Lilac
Southwestern White Pine	Catalpa	Hazelnut	

Flowmeter Cost-share Available to Cooperators in the NRD Water Quality Monitoring Program

The Upper Elkhorn NRD is administering a cost-share program that is combining Nebraska Environmental Trust funds with UENRD funds to install flowmeters at approved sites during the next two years. The project will assist irrigators who currently have wells that are within the Districts groundwater quality or quantity monitoring programs and would be willing to install water meters on their irrigation systems. Priority is given to those who allow the District to measure the biannual static water levels followed by monitoring well sites, irrigation nitrate quantity sampling, deep soil analysis, and finally those irrigation wells that fall in the Phase II area. Once a flowmeter is installed, the NRD will continue to monitor the irrigation amounts on that particular site in order to better understand irrigation usage on all the different types of crops planted. Hopefully, the flowmeters will provide a better understanding on the impacts of precipitation on irrigation and the resulting changes in static water levels each year following the irrigation season. The primary goal of this project will be the conservation of surface and groundwater resources. The project will have a wide and lasting impact. Each cooperating irrigator who installs the meter has the potential to reduce pumping and labor cost. Less pumping will result in lower fuel costs. Therefore, the long term benefits to the aquifer will be measured in both quality and quantity of the groundwater, stable supplies of clean groundwater to benefit 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 and state officials with another piece of information needed to make better policy decisions with regard to groundwater conservation. The Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992 using revenue from the Nebraska Lottery. The Trust has provided over \$150 million in grants across the state and anyone – citizens, organizations, communities, farmers and businesses – can apply for funding to protect habitat, improve water quality and establish recycling programs in Nebraska.

Cost for Trees & Materials	
Handplant Trees - Handling & Tax	\$ 90.20 per 100
Machine Plant Trees - Storage & Tax	\$ 143.43 per 100
Drip Irrigation	\$ 0.15 per foot
Weed Mulch - Installed	\$ 0.60 per foot
Weed Mulch - by the roll	\$ 105.00 for 300 foot roll
Weed Mulch Squares	\$ 2.00 each
Prices Subject to Change	



UENRD Water Resources Report

Precipitation and Evapotranspiration (ET): The 2009 growing season was characterized by below normal average temperatures and variable precipitation. Some parts of the District received precipitation close to normal while others were below the 30-year average. Crop water use is estimated in terms of evapotranspiration (ET). This term describes the movement of water to the atmosphere from surfaces, such as the soil (evaporation), and from vegetation (transpiration). Crop growth is dependent upon water availability and solar inputs, or latent heat. A certain number of 'heat units' are required for the plant to move through the development process to full maturity. Heat units are calculated for each crop as the difference between the daily maximum and minimum temperatures. Plant growth slows if daily temperatures fall outside the minimum or maximum threshold limits. For corn the thresholds are between 86.0 F and 50.0 F. Summation of daily heat units for corn in 2009 suggests that there was insufficient energy to reach full maturity.

The chart below depicts growing-season precipitation totals, percentage of precipitation received compared to the 30-year average, and estimated evapotranspiration of corn from 2005-2009.

Reporting Station	2005			2006			2007			2008			2009		
	Precip. April 1 - Sept. 30	% of Normal Precip.	Estimated Corn ET	Precip. April 1 - Sept. 30	% of Normal Precip.	Estimated Corn ET	Precip. April 1 - Sept. 30	% of Normal Precip.	Estimated Corn ET	Precip. April 1 - Sept. 30	% of Normal Precip.	Estimated Corn ET	Precip. April 1 - Sept. 30	% of Normal Precip.	Estimated Corn ET
Brunswick	23.63	121	25.72	14.12	72	25.01	20.2	103	22.27	18.55	95	24.29	14.85	76	23.98
Elgin	18.22	95	25.21	15.01	79	23.61	22.53	118	21.31	22.9	120	23.86	16.47	86	25.67
Newport	23.19	130	26.69	16.55	93	26.94	15.63	88	24.75	17.6	99	26.83	17.13	96	23.94
O'Neill	27.34	149	25.62	14.49	79	26.15	17.73	97	22.39	17.76	97	25.47	16.35	89	23.39

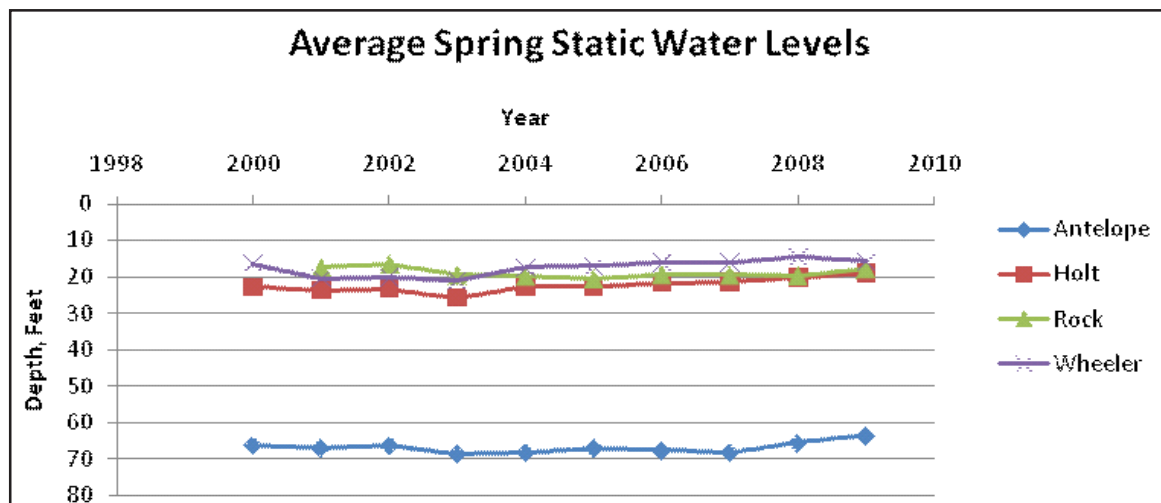
Precipitation and ET in Inches

Static Water Level: The Upper Elkhorn NRD has managed a static water level monitoring program since 1975. Over time, 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 ascertain 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.

Average Depth to Water in Feet (Spring)

County	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Antelope	66.22	66.89	66.15	68.62	68.22	66.99	67.62	68.22	65.62	63.54
Holt	22.81	23.65	23.28	25.71	22.68	22.75	21.65	21.45	20.24	18.86
Rock	9.98*	17.4	16.38	19.28	19.77	20.48	19.32	19.47	19.58	17.69
Wheeler	16.3	20.4	20.25	20.96	17.51	17.05	15.96	16.2	14.45	15.85

*Incomplete Data



Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District Board of Directors

Dale Wiles - Chairman	Subdistrict 3 ~ O'Neill	(402) 336-2338
Tim Knuth - Vice Chair	Subdistrict 5 ~ Brunswick	(402) 358-5430
Gregg Felker - Treasurer	Subdistrict 3 ~ O'Neill	(402) 336-2864
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
Curtis Gotschall	Subdistrict 2 ~ Stuart	(402) 925-2504
Reg Green	Subdistrict 5 ~ Creighton	(402) 358-5479
Jim Keller	Subdistrict 1 ~ Newport	(402) 244-5448
Jerry Heithoff	Subdistrict 7 ~ Elgin	(402) 843-2467
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

Dennis Schueth	General Manager e-mail: dschueth@uenrd.org
Don Caouette	Assistant Manager e-mail: caouette@uenrd.org
Tom Riley	Water Resources Manager e-mail: triley@uenrd.org
Kelly Kloppenborg	Water Resources Technician e-mail: kloppenborg@uenrd.org
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Marsha Hart	Administrative Assistant e-mail: mhart@uenrd.org
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

Important Phone Numbers

Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District	(402) 336-3867
O'Neill - Natural Resources Conservation Service	(402) 336-3798
Neligh - Natural Resources Conservation Service	(402) 887-4176
Burwell - Natural Resources Conservation Service	(308) 346-4457
Ainsworth - Nat. Resources Conservation Service	(402) 387-2242
O'Neill - Farm Service Agency	(402) 336-3796
Neligh - Farm Service Agency	(402) 887-4176
Burwell - Farm Service Agency	(308) 346-4399
Ainsworth - Farm Service Agency	(402) 387-2242
Holt County Extension Office	(402) 336-2760
KBR Extension Office	(402) 387-2213
Antelope County Extension Office	(402) 887-5414
National Parks Service	(402) 336-3970
Diggers Hotline of Nebraska	(800) 331-5666
Northeast Nebraska RC&D	(402) 582-4866
North Central Nebraska RC&D	(402) 684-3347
Loup Basin RC&D	(308) 728-3393
Middle Niobrara NRD	(402) 376-3241
Lower Niobrara NRD	(402) 775-2343
Lower Loup NRD	(308) 728-3221
Department of Natural Resources	(402) 471-2363

Phase II Groundwater Quality Management Area Requirement Reports Due February 1

A continuation of Phase I activities will remain in effect unless modified or negated by Phase II requirements.

The District will require the certified operator to accomplish a deep soil sampling analysis (mandatory two foot sample, three foot sample encouraged, if applicable) for nitrate-nitrogen content on each field larger than 40 acres with more than 50 pounds per acre per year of actual nitrogen fertilizer applied. The sample must be collected and analyzed using UENRD approved methods. Approved sampling and analysis techniques will be included as part of the District's educational program. This analysis will give the certified operator knowledge of usable and inaccessible nitrogen in the soil profile.

Certified operators must submit a report to the UENRD by February 1 following each crop year on forms provided by the District for areas larger than 40 acres where more than 50 pounds per acre per year of actual nitrogen fertilizer is applied. The report may consist of, but is not limited to, the following sections: Section I. Nutrient Mgt Section II. Pest Management Section III. Irrigation Management

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.