

PROTECTING LIVES BY PROVIDING WATER QUALITY INFORMATION

The Upper Republican NRD helps to protect groundwater quality by providing a drinking water well sampling program. The NRD provides water well test kits to individuals in the District. Individuals can fill up the water bottles from their home water source and return them to the NRD. The NRD then sends off the water for analysis to a local soil and water lab. Water samples can be analyzed for many contaminants, ensuring the water their family is using is of good quality and safe to drink.

There is a household suitability test that will analyze the following parameters in your water sample: pH, Electrical Conductivity, Total Dissolved Solids, Carbonate, Bicarbonate, Alkalinity, Calcium, Magnesium, Potassium, Sodium, Nitrate, Sulfur, Chloride, Iron, Manganese, Total Hardness, Total Coliform bacteria and E. Coli Bacteria. Other parameters such as lead and fluoride can be tested as well.

The URNRD has been collecting water samples from approximately 60 domestic rural sampling sites since 1980. These sites are used to determine where more groundwater samples should be collected in the summer.

In 1998 and 1999 the NRD worked with USGS to complete a tremendous groundwater sampling project. In a matter of a few very hectic weeks in the summer of 1998 over 500 groundwater samples were collected in the District. 400 irrigation wells were sampled, 100 domestic rural wells were sampled and some of the same wells were sampled once again in the summer of 1999. Because of that successful project, the URNRD has baseline data of the nitrate levels in the irrigation and domestic wells in the district.

In cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, the NRDs are developing a Statewide Groundwater Monitoring Network. We are working together to sample over 1,400 irrigation wells for groundwater nitrate level trends throughout Nebraska. We are now sampling a set of the irrigation wells that were sampled in 1998 and 1999. This should help to track the nitrate levels in some of the same wells that were sampled ten years ago.

Partnering with other agencies, the NRD strives to provide sound, reliable information to the citizens of Chase, Dundy and Perkins Counties in Southwest Nebraska.

IRRIGATION RETIREMENT PROGRAM

The Upper Republican NRD now offers a District Irrigation Retirement Program. Landowners may enroll irrigated acres in the District's retirement program. No monetary compensation shall be paid for enrollment, however per the District's policy, the acres would not be assessed the occupation tax by the District. The Program guidelines are listed below and enrollment requires all landowners to complete and sign a form provided by the district.

Guidelines and Stipulations of this program include:

1. Eligible acres are any certified acres not enrolled in another irrigation retirement program.
2. Acres shall be enrolled until the landowner files notice with the district that the acres are to be removed from

the program.

3. Enrolled acres cannot be irrigated during the period of enrollment.
4. Enrolled acres will not receive an allocation while enrolled.
5. Enrolled acres cannot be included in a pooling contract.
6. Carryforward shall be frozen during the period of enrollment.
7. Enrollment must occur no later than May 1 of each calendar year.

Please stop in the NRD office in Imperial to pick up a Retirement Program enrollment form.

NEBRASKA'S NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICTS, LOCAL VOICES ACROSS THE STATE

Nebraska, the good life. Nebraska is different from one end of the state to another, different from north to south. Nebraska is the only state with a unicameral form of government. Nebraska is the only state with Natural Resources Districts. There is a purpose for the NRDs.

Can the local NRDs make the tough choices? Clearly the Upper Republican can and has made tough choices since its inception in 1972.

In the late 1970s water users from the area were con-

cerned about groundwater declines resulting from irrigation development. Their concerns and effort played a large part in the formation of the NRDs by the legislature and the original groundwater management and protection act. The Upper Republican NRD aggressively employed the available authorities in the original groundwater management and protection act. Since those early times, the District has continued to lobby for additional necessary tools to deal with the water issues facing the District.