

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts  
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972



ELKHORN RIVER BASIN

Elkhorn River Basin Facts:

- Population: 106,806
- Total Acres: 4,479,980
- Irrigated Acres: 1,083,725
- Registered Wells: 20,639
- Active Irrigation Wells: 10,891
- Monitoring Wells: 147

The Elkhorn River Basin has conservation tree seedlings available each spring. Contact your local NRD for more information.

Protecting Lives

Protecting Property

Protecting the Future

**Bazile Groundwater Management Area Proposed**

The Upper Elkhorn, Lower Elkhorn, Lewis and Clark and Lower Niobrara NRDs held a public meeting on March 27 to review the Bazile Groundwater Management Area (BGMA) draft plan. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting to learn more about the plan which addresses the high nitrate issue within the watershed. Groundwater Management Plans have been implemented in each of the cooperating NRDs but improvements have not been observed as quickly as desired. Each of the NRDs has declared the entire district a Phase I groundwater management area which would include the BGMA. Phase II areas in the BGMA are located in the Lower Elkhorn NRD, Upper Elkhorn NRD and Phase III areas in the Lewis and Clark NRD. Within each of the NRD's Groundwater Management Plans

the requirements increase as the phase increases and higher phases tend to include more regulations. Long term and short term project goals and objectives have been developed by an advisory council with assistance from a group of technical advisors. The water quality goals and objectives are based on being able to

meet the drinking water maximum contaminant level of 10 mg/l for nitrate and achieving a reduction in the NRDs groundwater management phase triggers. The NRDs and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality will continue to work on the plan until it is approved and implemented.



## Helicopter to make low-level flights over the Clarkson-Howells Area

The Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District (LENRD) is sponsoring a study of the groundwater in the Clarkson-Howells area. LENRD Water Resources Manager, Rick Wozniak, said, "Clarkson's municipal water system was dangerously close to running out of water during the drought last year, and the LENRD received several reports of people having trouble with their wells." Very little geologic information exists for this area, so the LENRD Board of Directors decided to use a new technology to learn more about the area's groundwater. Wozniak added, "The Elkhorn River basin continues to be a difficult system to completely understand. The recent drought conditions in the LENRD have shown that the area around Clarkson has severe water supply problems that cannot be understood without more data."



The LENRD hired Exploration Resources International LLC., (XRI) of Vicksburg, Mississippi to oversee the helicopter flights, data collection, and data processing. XRI will produce a detailed three-dimensional map of the geology of the area, which will include the location and size of groundwater aquifers.

An array of instruments that resembles a large spider web will hang below the helicopter. These instruments can "see" hundreds of feet underground, providing the information XRI needs to develop maps of what lies underground. For more information, contact Katie Cameron, Project Coordinator, 402-476-2729 or the LENRD office at 402-371-7313.

## New Groundwater Irrigation Development for 2014 Canceled

The Upper Elkhorn NRD Board of Directors have voted to cancel the October 2013 Expansion of New Groundwater Irrigated Acres Sign-up. By a vote of 9-4, the UENRD Board has canceled new groundwater irrigated acre expansion planned for the 2014 growing season. This was not an easy decision. Due to the decline in groundwater levels across the district; a lack of recharge; and, the looming drought conditions, some felt giving the water table a chance to recharge would be in the best interest of our water resources.

The Board of Directors have voted, by a count of 10-3, to continue the Transfer of Groundwater Irrigated acres. Anyone wishing to transfer acres can sign up from November 1 through March 1. The criteria for the transfer of acres will remain the same as last year. Acres to be transferred must be certified with the UENRD, be within the same hydrological unit code and be transferred from a higher stream depletion factor to a lower stream depletion factor. All the information for this process can be found on the UENRD website at [www.uenrd.org](http://www.uenrd.org).



## Your Elkhorn River Basin NRDs

We Care about what you think!  
Stop in or give us a call. We are here to work with YOU!

Lower Elkhorn NRD  
601 E Benjamin Ave  
Norfolk, NE 68701  
(402) 371-7313  
[www.lenrd.org](http://www.lenrd.org)

Upper Elkhorn NRD  
301 N Harrison Street  
O'Neill, NE 68763  
(402) 336-3867  
[www.uenrd.org](http://www.uenrd.org)

The Upper and Lower Elkhorn NRDs along with several other NRDs and state agencies are working together on various projects to further understand the water resources of Nebraska. The ELM model is designed to study the relationship between ground and surface water as well as aquifer recharge. The ENWRA project will study the geophysical characteristics of the aquifers underlying eastern Nebraska.

Created by the Nebraska Legislature in 1969 with the passage of LB 1357, Nebraska's NRDs began operating on July 1, 1972. NRDs were formed using Nebraska's 13 major river basins to offer local solutions to local problems. Locally elected officials establish District policies to address the needs of our specific area. This unique form of local government assures that the concerns of the Elkhorn River Basin are addressed by the people being affected. Locally led conservation for your future.

The NRDs inform Nebraska's young people by supplying information, education and other outreach efforts. It is vital that future generations understand the importance of securing Nebraska's Natural Resources.