

Water Well Decommissioning Fund

An abandoned well, not properly decommissioned, can be a direct route for numerous types of pollutants into the state's precious groundwater supplies. About 90 percent of Nebraskans receive their domestic water from groundwater aquifers beneath the land surface.

It has been estimated that there may be as many as 150,000 abandoned domestic and irrigation wells within Nebraska's borders.

Some of these wells have been abandoned for many years, and the existence and location of many are unknown to even the landowner. When these wells are not properly decommissioned they have the potential to become not only a direct source for groundwater contamination, but also can be a safety hazard for humans and animals alike. The Water Well Decommissioning Fund is administered by DNR at the State level and through the NRDs at the local level. Additional information on the Water Well Decommissioning Fund can be found at:

<http://www.dnr.ne.gov/rdfund/waterwell2.html>



Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund

The Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund, established in 1977, provides state financial assistance

to Nebraska landowners for installation of approved soil and water conservation measures that improve water quality, conserve water, and help control erosion and sedimentation. The



Fund is administered at the State level by DNR and is coordinated by the NRDs at the local level with technical assistance provided by the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service. Among the eligible practices for cost-share assistance are: terraces, terrace outlets (grassed or mechanical), irrigation reuse pits, grade stabilization structures, dams, diversions, grassed waterways, control basins, pasture and range seeding, planned grazing systems, irrigation water management and windbreaks and windbreak renovations. Additional information on the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund can be found at:

<http://www.dnr.ne.gov/rdfund/soilwatr2.html>

Interrelated Water Management Plan Program

The Interrelated Water Management Plan Program (IWMPP) was created in 2006 with the passage of LB 1226 Section 20. This grant program is intended to facilitate the duties of NRDs arising under the Nebraska Groundwater Management and Protection Act, and to help offset costs incurred in performing those duties. This program fund is administered by the NRC and DNR upon recommendations of the NRC. Funds appropriated from the program are allocated by the NRC to NRDs based on guidelines adopted by the NRC. Amounts requested and approved must be supported by a minimum local revenue match comprising 20 percent of the total project cost. DNR is responsible for evaluating requests for project funding submitted annually by NRDs based on guidelines and limitations established by the NRC. Applications are on file and available on request from the DNR. Additional information on the IWMPP can be found at:

http://www.dnr.ne.gov/rdfund/IMP_ProgramFunds.html



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Six State Funds that help

**Conserve,
Protect
and
Enhance...**

**Nebraska's
natural resources**

The **Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** administers six state funds used to help conserve, protect and enhance Nebraska's natural resources. A brief description of those six funds and the electronic address where additional information can be found follows.

Nebraska Resources Development Fund

The Nebraska Resources Development Fund Act of 1974 created this fund to assist with the development and wise use of Nebraska's water and land resources.



Project: Walnut Creek Lake, Papio Site 21
Location: Sarpy County
Sponsor: Papio-Missouri River NRD

The Nebraska Resources Development Fund can be used to provide grants and/or loans to political subdivisions of the state or an agency of the state, or it can be used by DNR to acquire an interest in a project in the name of the state. The Act created a conjunctive administrative system with certain responsibilities delegated to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), and other responsibilities delegated to a statutorily created "Advisory Board." On February 15, 1985, the Director of Natural Resources assumed the responsibilities and duties of the Advisory Board in accordance with the provisions of L.B. 1106. Over 70 projects across Nebraska have received funding through this fund as of 2009. Additional information on the Nebraska Resources Development Fund and individual projects can be found at:

<http://www.dnr.ne.gov/rdfund/ResourceDevelopmentFund.html>

Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund

Established by the Legislature in 1963, the purpose of the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund is to assist local sponsors with the acquisition of land rights for flood control projects. Local sponsors use the Fund to acquire easements or fee title to tracts that are needed to implement a project. If acquired in fee title, a tract **must be disposed of within 10 years after it is purchased**. Each tract is first offered at appraised value to local subdivisions of government and selected state agencies for public use. If none decide to purchase it, the tract is sold at public auction.



Project: Timber Point
Location: Butler County
Sponsor: Lower Platte NRD

To date over 20 tracts have been retained by local subdivisions of government or a state agency for public use. Most of the tracts are associated with PL 566 Watershed projects that have been planned and designed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. However, three are associated with levee work along the Missouri River, seven with a channel improvement project, and one, Walnut Creek, with a Nebraska Resources Development Fund project. The type and extent of recreation facility development varies at each site. A few tracts have been developed quite extensively. The tracts exemplify the range of public use facilities that have been developed following acquisition through the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund. Additional information on the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund can be found at:

<http://www.dnr.ne.gov/rdfund/smwatshd2.html>

Natural Resources Water Quality Fund

The Natural Resources Water Quality Fund (NRWQF) was created in 2001 to provide state funds to natural resources districts (NRDs) for their water quality programs. The Fund receives money from the receipt of portions of certain fees levied by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture for pesticide registration and applicator licenses. These sources yield about \$1M per year. The distribution of funds occurs in August and February. By statute, these funds can only be used by NRDs and only for water quality programs. However, use of the fund for a wide variety of water quality related measures, both for surface water and groundwater, is permitted. **NRDs are required to provide a \$3 match for each \$2 of state funds received.** The DNR rules and regulations govern administration of the NRWQF. The rules establish a formula for distribution of the dollars to NRDs. At least 50 percent of the funds available are distributed on the basis of proportionate fertilizer sales in each NRD. Twenty percent is distributed equally among all participating districts, and another 20 percent is distributed on the basis of whether a district has a groundwater quality management area or clean water lakes designated area. Finally, up to 10 percent of the funds available can be withheld by the NRC to be distributed to NRDs for special projects through an application process. Thus far, the Department has chosen not to withhold any funds for such projects. If a district does not spend all of the funds distributed to it or does not qualify or properly match all of the funds, those funds must be returned to the Department and redeposited in the fund. Additional information on the NRWQF can be found at:



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<http://www.dnr.ne.gov/rdfund/waterquality.html>