

Water Resources Board Mailing Report May 8th, 2020
By Chuck Wingert, Water Resources Manager

1. No Well Permits Received this Month!

2. Water Sustainability Fund AEM Grant Update

- a. AGF (Aqua Geo Frameworks) received a bid from the Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) vendor that was less than expected which has resulted in an additional 59 flight miles of data to be collected!
- b. AGF & the flight vendor are on schedule and plan to begin collecting flight data around the end of June.

3. Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) Monitoring

- a. Due to the COVID-19 Directed Health Mandate, the Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy (NDEE, previously NDEQ), will not begin beach monitoring & laboratory testing for HAB until Monday May 18th, tentatively. Until then, we will continue our weekly lake monitoring & sampling, collecting physical water parameters (temperature, pH, conductivity & dissolved oxygen) and conducting bacteria analysis (total coliform & E.coli).
- b. Since 2004, the health alert concentration for microcystin (the toxin that is produced from the algae) has been 20 parts per billion (ppb) or greater for recreational waters – beginning this year the health alert concentration has been reduced to 8 ppb so we may see our parks beaches closed more often than in the past.

4. Chemigation Inspections amid COVID-19

- a. I sent out a survey e-mail to all the NRD water staff throughout the State concerning their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) amid COVID-19. All the responses I received were essentially the same, here are the results:
 - i. Maintain minimum 6-foot social distancing between NRD staff person & landowner/tenant.
 - ii. Carry a mask in case the landowner/tenant or NRD staff person does not feel comfortable with social distancing alone.
 - iii. NRD staff person and landowner/tenant not allowed to ride in same vehicle, on same four-wheeler or side by side.
 - iv. Wear latex gloves when handling any commonly touched equipment (check valve, vacuum relief valve, hose, etc.).
 - v. If the landowner/tenant or NRD staff person is feeling unwell, reschedule the inspection.

5. Voluntary Integrated Management Plan (VIMP)

- a. A kickoff Zoom meeting with Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) staff, HDR Engineering, Bob and I was held on April 21st to discuss the process of the VIMP.
- b. The goal of an IMP is to manage hydrologically connected surface water and groundwater quantities to achieve and sustain a balance between water uses and water supplies for the long term.
- c. A stakeholder group consisting of groundwater and surface water irrigators, municipalities and industry users will be sought to identify goals & objectives for the plan and provide feedback.
- d. The next online meeting will be held May 12th, 2020.

6. 300 Point Minimum Well Permit Score Area of Richardson County

- a. Once again, due to the controversy of whether to reduce the minimum approval score for the well permit ranking system and not being able to have a public meeting, no action will be taken at this time.
- b. I have been continuing to review the geology of each registered well and CSD testhole within the 300-point minimum area – hopefully we'll be able to hold a regular open meeting soon.