

## **GWMP Attendees & Discussion Summary - September 10<sup>th</sup>**

### ***ATTENDEES***

Mike Archer, NGPC	Chris Hobza, USGS
David Stander, Ag producer	Breanda Desmore, USGS
Corbin Harms, Lincoln Water	Tracey Whyman, City of Waverly
Steven Hentzen, Lincoln Water	Jeff Shafer, NPPD
Gary Hellerich, Director	George Wesselhoft, Planning Department
Brad Harris, (works for) Layne Christensen a well drilling company	Jordon Bang, LRWD #1
Gary Persen, Seward/York EMA	Madeline Johnson, DWEE
Kelly Oelke, City of Hickman	Laura Johnson, DWEE
Nick Sanders, Valparaiso Water Operator	Darin Schwaniger, Ag producer
Daniel Snow, UNL	Katie Cameron, ENWRA/UNLCSD

### ***DISCUSSION SUMMARY***

- When discussing what is **currently in the GWMP** regarding water quantity, it was noted that the original triggers were established in the 90s. LPSNRD has not tripped any of the triggers since the last plan was put in place (1995). It was noted that one of the main goals of the SAC is to discuss if the trigger percentages are right, too high, or too low.
- When discussing what is **currently in the GWMP** regarding rules and regulations, it was noted that nitrogen certification is required for Phase 2 and 3 area producers, but asked if there is nitrogen certification for quantity?
  - Nitrogen certification requirements cover all areas of the district, but some areas have more specific requirements than others.
- During the discussion of **current ground water quantity data**, it was again asked if the maps being shared were publicly available.

- Maps will be reviewed and updated and then will be made available to the SAC first.
- During the discussion on **current ground water quality data**, it was noted that clearinghouse data has recently been updated. HDR will grab more recent data to include in the maps.
  - When asked if there was any rhyme or reason to nitrate levels in the district, it was noted that in the Southern part of the district, sandy zones near the surface have higher nitrate levels, and sandier/siltier areas tend to have higher nitrate levels, but there is not always a pattern for higher nitrates.
- **Open discussion**
  - Participants were asked to participate in a Word Cloud activity using Mentimeter to express their ground water quantity concerns.



- The highest concern of the group for water quantity was drought. Other concerns were equal in responses and included sustainability, depletion, industrial, and others.
- Following the Word Cloud activity, participants were asked if they wanted to elaborate on their responses.

- One participant noted they live in the southern end of the district by Hallam, and is concerned about NPPD and other potential large water users in the area and how does that affect irrigators, the village, etc.
    - It was noted that they can't be sure what the management scheme will look like, but it would generally follow water user preference outlined in Nebraska state statute; highest preference of use is domestic, then agriculture, then commercial/industrial.
    - Will be working with NPPD, Monolith, farmers, etc.
    - If new large-scale wells go in, depending on the amount of water they are designed to pump, they do have to go through the NRD permit process and aquifer draw-down studies to get an idea of long-term effects.
    - Requires board action, but the NRD does have the authority to set allocations, if needed.
  - One participant noted that they have concerns about depth of water and the time it takes to replenish that water. Depth of water is currently at 330 feet, and while they've received a fair amount of rainfall, by the time it gets through the clay, it doesn't make much difference in recharge.
  - One participant noted that well construction and maintenance can be a costly impact that people don't think about until it's too late. A few communities had issues because the pump went out, due to the screen being plugged.
- Participants were asked to participate in a Word Cloud activity using Mentimeter to express their ground water quality concerns.

What are some ground water QUALITY concerns in your area?



- The highest concern of the group for water quality was nitrate contaminants. Secondary concerns included arsenic and PFAS contaminants.
- Following the Word Cloud activity, participants were asked if they wanted to elaborate on their responses
  - It was noted that some of the concerns are contaminants from non-point source pollution, some are naturally geologic materials and get released into the water.
  - Monitoring that hasn't been done in the past may become part of the future GWMP – what should the monitoring plan look like?
  - Data shows that nitrate is moving through the vadose zone at different rates, leading to less nitrate loading.
    - Where is it coming from? Most common source is commercial fertilizer. The farther west you go, the more fall fertilizer is being used – is that making a difference? Some NRDs are banning fall fertilizing but it depends on site-specific characteristics.

- Are there a lot of abandoned/former feedlots feeding into it? There is a lot of legacy nitrate from Elmwood and a large legacy nitrate source by the village of Manly.
- A participant asked about next steps and time frame.
  - Looking at the November time frame for the next SAC meeting. Committee meetings will be done in the March/April time frame, and the draft plan would be ready to go out for review in May. Adoption of the plan will not be until closer to the end of next year (2026).