



SWC Approves Changes to Drought Disaster Livestock Watering Program

By Patrick Fridgen

On July 20, the Water Commission convened for a special conference call where it approved an additional \$200,000 for the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Project Assistance Program (Livestock Program) – making \$400,000 in total available to drought stricken ranchers across the state. The Commission had previously approved \$200,000 on June 28, but because of the severity of the drought, and because of the tremendous need among ranchers for emergency water supplies, the original \$200,000 was quickly spoken for.

In addition to doubling the amount of funding available, the Water Commission also approved several other changes to the Livestock Program to loosen certain restrictions, making more ranchers

eligible for increased cost-share. In two of the biggest changes, the Water Commission will now provide cost-share on up to three projects per producer, and the entire state is covered under the Livestock Program. In previous years, only counties in southwest and southcentral North Dakota were eligible for assistance, but with Gov. Hoeven's July 12 statewide drought disaster declaration, any rancher in any of North Dakota's 53 counties is eligible for water supply assistance through the Livestock Program.

With regard to project and producer eligibility for Livestock Program cost-share assistance:

- Eligible water supply projects include: construction of new wells; construction of dugouts or stock dams that are spring-fed or have a high water table; the development

of springs, pipelines, and extensions from rural water system connections; pumps; generators; electrical/solar hookups; and rental equipment for work completed by the producer.

- The applicant must have been denied Farm Service Agency (FSA) cost-share assistance. The county FSA office will provide a letter of denial to the producer.

- The Commission will fund the program to the extent funding is available. Priority for funding will be based on the earliest date of application.

- Cost-share assistance may only be used for water supply projects that will provide a long-term and immediate solution to a drought-related water supply shortage.

- All wells drilled with funds provided through this program must be drilled by a North Dakota certified water well contractor.

- The applicant may receive up to 50 percent, but no more than \$3,500 of the eligible costs of the project. Each producer is eligible for cost-share on up to three projects.

Additional information is available on the Water Commission's website at <http://swc.nd.gov>, or inquiries can be directed to the Commission by calling (701)-328-4989.



COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

At its June 28 meeting in Bismarck, the North Dakota State Water Commission (Commission) heard updates on several ongoing water projects and programs, and took action on several others. In action items, the Commission:

- Approved a 50 percent cost-share request from the City of Wahpeton for an additional \$1,340,559 toward the city's flood control project. The Commission has now approved a total of \$3.5 million for Wahpeton's flood control project, which is the amount that was originally included in Senate Bill 2188, back in 1999.

- Approved a cost-share request in the amount of \$34,756 for a Hay Township rural flood control project in Cavalier County.

- Approved a cost-share request in

the amount of \$59,386 from the Traill County Water Resource District for a rural flood control project on Drain 23-40.

- Approved two cost-share requests of \$81,594 and \$230,000 from the Walsh County Water Resource District for the construction of two rural flood control projects.

- Approved a \$35,000 cost-share request from the Maple River Water Resource District to pursue the development of an Upper Maple River Watershed Floodwater Retention Site Study Phase III.

The First James and Sheyenne Rivers Institute Held July 9-13

For the first time ever, the James and Sheyenne rivers were made the focus of Project WET's summer institute. The 2006 Discover Today's James and Sheyenne Rivers institute was based out of Valley City State University, and was held July 9-13. Here is a look at some of the activities and participants that helped to make the 2006 institute a tremendous success.



James and Sheyenne Rivers Institute participants and facilitators.



Institute participants learn about the complex task of managing different water users in a river through a Project WET activity.



Learning about the management of Baldhill Dam from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Valley City.



Participants completing their data analysis following measurements of stream flow and discharge on a stream near Valley City.



Pam Hintz, Project WET facilitator and science teacher, explains the hydrologic cycle.

Tile Drainage Gaining Popularity in State in Recent Years

By Michael Noone

In North Dakota, where large portions of our state have been in a wet cycle for over a decade, agricultural land has been frequently inundated with standing water, either from snowmelt, or from frequent storms. Standing water on land delays planting, and can kill crops that have been planted.

Unfortunately, areas throughout North Dakota that have been wet are also areas with clay-rich soils that have poor water infiltration, leading to standing water for prolonged periods of time. It is understandable that farmers want to get standing water off of their land as soon as possible to improve their chances of higher yields in the fall.

A practice that has gained popularity in North Dakota in recent years is called tile drainage. Perforated polyethylene tubing is buried in a field, generally at a depth of three to six feet. The pipe takes in surrounding ground water that is saturating the soils, and transports it away from the field. From there, the water is discharged into a waterbody such as a large wetland or lake, ditch, or into a natural watercourse.

Tile drainage can help a landowner farm land that might otherwise be lost to flooding for that season. It is called "tile" drainage because up until the 1970s, most drainpipes were made from short, cylindrical sections of concrete or clay called "tile."

The positive aspect of using tile drainage in agriculture is that it allows for timely fieldwork and crop growth on soils that would otherwise be marginal for agriculture. The downside of this practice is the potential for increased flooding

downstream, negative effects on water quality due to sedimentation, and leaching of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides in the waterbodies into which the drain tile discharges.

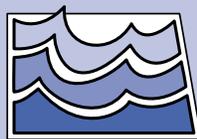
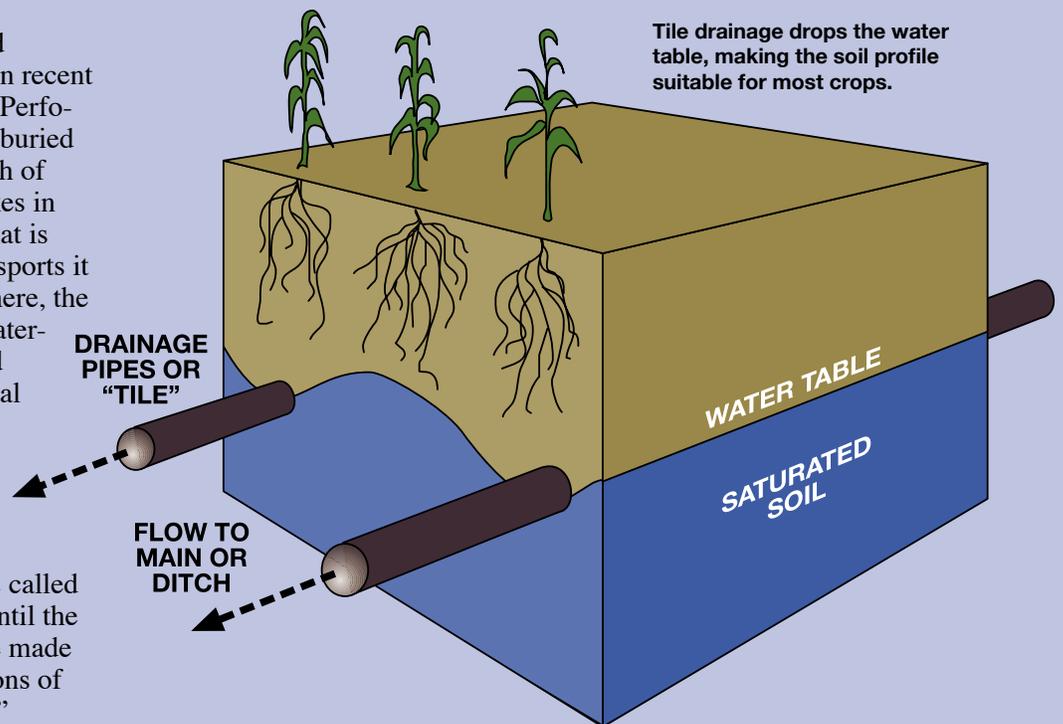
Draining, filling, or pumping of an area that has a watershed, or contributing area of more than 80 acres requires a permit from North Dakota's Office of the State Engineer. However, there has been a significant amount of confusion in our state about whether drain tiling also requires a permit from the State Engineer.

In fact, installing drain tile does require a permit from the State Engineer, when the contributing watershed is more than 80 acres. It is

important to understand and account for the fact that the contributing area may be larger than the perimeter of the drain tile. In areas of the state where projects have been deemed to be of statewide significance, such as the Devils Lake basin, tile drainage systems are also subject to those orders.

For questions regarding drain tile permits, contact John Paczkowski, North Dakota State Water Commission at (701) 328-3446, or by e-mail at [jpaczowski@nd.gov](mailto:jpaczkowski@nd.gov).

For more information on drain tile, contact Gary R. Sands with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at (621) 625-4756, or by e-mail at grsands@umn.edu.



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