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Water Current

Blizzard Doesn't Hamper "Nebraska Water 2000" Conference

by Steve Ress

A late winter storm that dumped more than a foot of snow on parts of central and south-east Nebraska didn't dampen enthusiasm for last month's 27th annual Nebraska Water Conference in Kearney.

More than 200 registered for the conference, held March 9-11 at Kearney's Regency Inn. Drifting snow and ice-packed roads from a week-end storm preceding the conference did keep many from arriving until the morning of March 10, however.

Keynote speaker Dan Beard of the Audubon Society was unable to make travel connections to Kearney, as were about 25 other conference participants.

"The same thing happened when we held the conference in Kearney in 1991 and in both cases the conferences were very successful and very well attended," said conference co-chair Bob Kuzelka, assistant to the director of the University of Nebraska's Water Center/



Karren Kerr of the League of Women Voters (center) moderates a gubernatorial candidate forum on water issues at last month's 27th annual Nebraska Water Conference in Kearney. The well-attended forum received much regional press coverage and closed the annual conference (photo: Steve Ress).

Environmental Programs.

This year's conference was the first of three exploring the central theme of "Nebraska Water 2000." This year the importance of information on the state's water future was addressed, while 1999 and 2000 conferences will continue with "Planning for the future" and "Management for the future."

University of Nebraska at Kearney Chancellor Gladys Styles Johnston opened the conference, followed by the debut showing of the video "Nebraska Rivers: Richness in Diversity" produced by Audubon Nebraska with assistance from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and funding from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VII.

Tuesday and Wednesday conference sessions were

(Continued on page 5)

INSIDE

3 OF BOREHOLES, BUNYIPS AND BOXING DAY

4 WATER STEWARDS AWARDS

4 SUMMER WATER TOUR

8 ANNUAL READER SURVEY

NIWR Meetings in Washington D.C.; Research Discussed; Summer Water Tour

from the DIRECTOR



Bob G. Volk

The National Institutes for Water Resources (NIWR) just completed their annual meeting in Washington D.C. Approximately 45 states were represented, of the 54 institutes that come under the NIWR umbrella. Dr. Bob Hirsch, Chief Hydrologist, Water Resources Division USGS, set a very positive tone for the meeting when he discussed the increased cooperative efforts with the Institutes in future years.

To begin that effort the USGS is starting a national competitive grants program for the Institutes focusing on funding research that has regional and national implications. Research such as the "Hypoxia," or dead zone problem, in the Gulf of Mexico.

It is postulated that nitrates from spring runoff from farms in the midwest may be partly to blame for this growing problem.

Representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Agriculture explained programs dealing with water and competitive grant funds that may be of interest to the states. We bring in individuals from the Committee on Appropriations, the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, and the Committee on Environment and Public Works to update them on NIWR programs.

Institute Directors also take ad-

vantage of their time in Washington to visit their congressional representatives to bring them up-to-date on activities in each of their states. With implementation of The Clean Water Action Plan and potential for passage of a Safe Drinking Water Act by the next congress, there was much to discuss.

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On another note, the Water Center will be joining the Kearney Chamber of Commerce in sponsoring a summer water tour. With all the interest and concern over the Republican River, we are planning a tour into Kansas and eastern Colorado that will examine the Republican and Arkansas River basins. More information on the tour is included in this issue of the *Water Current*.

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We also would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes and respond to our annual reader survey, which is found on the back page of this issue. These surveys help us upgrade and redirect the *Water Current*, which hopefully results in a more complete and useable newsletter for you. Your comments and suggestions are taken into account.

Water Current

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Of Boreholes, Bunyips and Boxing Day

By Robert D. Kuzelka

For three weeks in December 1997 I conducted workshops, met with professionals and went on field trips in Australia. I was there to exchange ideas about community-based groundwater protection and education programs in North America and Australia.

A major purpose of the visit was to discuss Groundwater Guardian, a program for which I serve as a consultant to The Groundwater Foundation. It is a community-based program that supports, recognizes and connects communities in North America that are involved in protecting their groundwater resource.

The invitation for the trip came from Peter Dillon, Manager of the Centre for Groundwater Studies in Adelaide, South Australia. Major funding came from the Australian Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) Development Fund at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

My first workshop was in Sydney at the 16th Australian Groundwater School. Here I learned that wells are "boreholes" and confined hog feeding operations are "piggeries" and that problems associated with both are internationally universal. Other major workshops were in Adelaide and Mt. Gambier, South Australia and Perth, West Australia.

During field trips, I heard of the "bunyip," a mythical Aboriginal creature that lives in and forcefully encourages the protection of water. It is indicative of the increased involvement in groundwater protection by all Australian citizens, especially the youth. The bunyip's presence was observed on my field trips throughout the country.

Contacts made during the trip resulted in two Australian youths becoming delegates to the recent

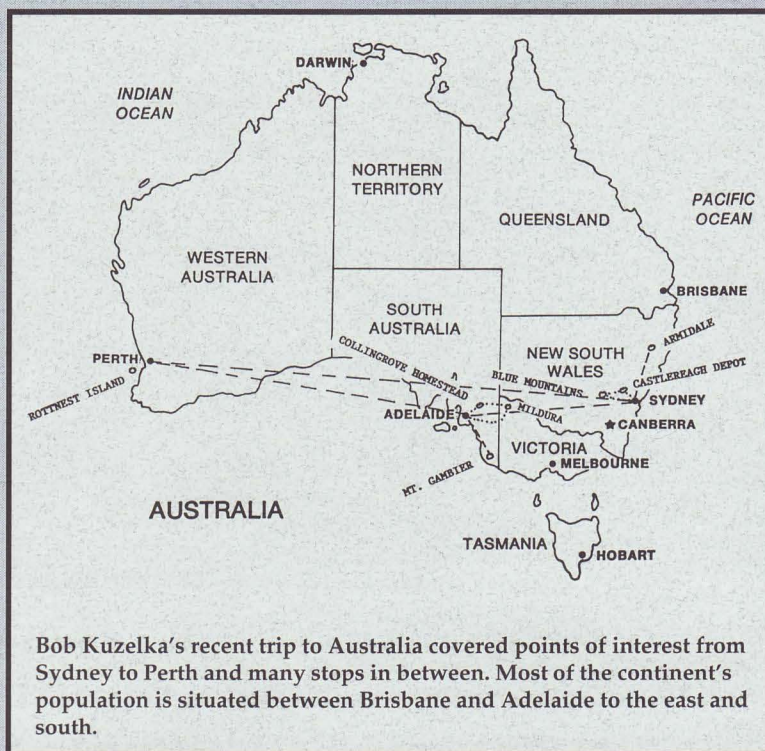
International Children's Groundwater Summit in Grand Island.

Community-based groundwater protection programs depend equally on groundwater protection and community development. In Australia, groundwater protection is important, but perhaps to a different degree than in North America. Less of the Australian population depends upon groundwater as a drinking water source and its protection is of greater concern at the community level. In North America, it is a major concern at all levels, including state and federal.

Community development in Australia does

appear to be significantly present in the two major groundwater protection areas of land-use management and citizen involvement, however. Australia has a long tradition of town and country planning and groundwater protection has effectively been introduced into this tradition in such places as Perth and Mt. Gambier.

Citizen involvement is a growing force in Australia and is being harnessed to promote the protection of



groundwater. Programs such as Waterwatch, Landcare, Ribbons of Blue, Keep Australia Beautiful and those of the Australian Water and Wastewater Association include protection components involving citizens.

The last days of my trip were spent renewing friendships that I formed in 1967 when I was a Fulbright Scholar in the University of Sydney Department of Town and Country Planning. The trip home began after celebrating that unique Anglo-inspired holiday of "Boxing Day" which is the day after Christmas.

(Editor's Note: Kuzelka is assistant to the director of the NU Water Center/Environmental Programs and associate professor in the School of Natural Resource Sciences).

Water Stewards Receive Annual Awards at Water Conference in Kearney

by Steve Ress

Environmental stewardship was recognized at last month's 27th annual Nebraska Water Conference in Kearney.

The Nebraska Water Conference Council presented its annual Pioneer Award to producer and citizen negotiator Terry Woollen of Alma. Its annual Progress Award went to the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. The Groundwater Foundation's annual Maurice Kremer Groundwater Achievement Award went to University of Nebraska-Lincoln Professor Emeritus Dr. Leslie Sheffield.

Woollen was selected to receive the Pioneer Award based on his voluntary service to Nebraska as a citizen negotiator. The board of directors member of the Lower Republican Natural Resource District has served on the Citizen Advisory Committee for Low Level Waste and was recently appointed by Governor E. Benjamin Nelson as one of three members on the Nebraska team trying to negotiate a settlement with Kansas over the Republican River Compact. He is the only citizen representative involved in those negotiations.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department was selected to receive the Progress Award for their proactive programs in helping to protect the groundwater in Lancaster County.

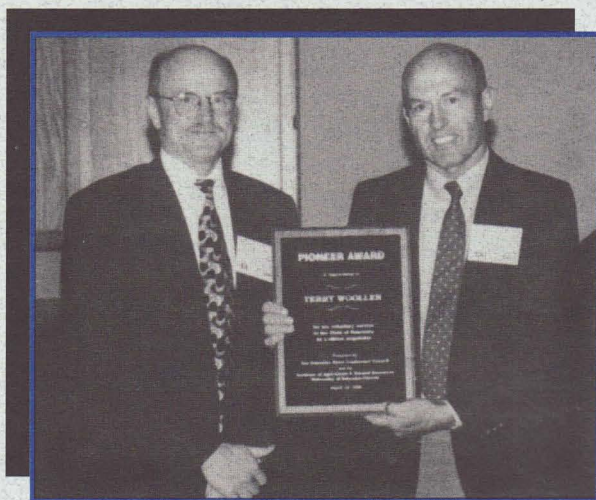
Sheffield was chosen to receive the Maurice Kremer Groundwater Achievement Award for making life-long contributions to conserving and protecting the state's groundwater.

"Les (Sheffield) made enormous contributions to the development of

center pivot irrigation technology and was dedicated to the value of water and resources education," said Don Kraus, chairman of the Nebraska Water Conference Council.

The Maurice Kremer award is presented annually to individuals who help create a beneficial legacy of groundwater-related service in Nebraska.

The awards were presented at the conference banquet on March 11.



Terry Woollen of Alma accepts the Progress Award from Nebraska Water Conference Council Chair Don Kraus (left) (photo: Steve Ress).

Summer Water Tour to Visit Arkansas and Republican River Basins in August

The 1998 Summer Water Tour will visit the Arkansas and Republican River Basins in Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas this August.

"Back to the Future - Arkansas-Republican Rivers," is being sponsored by the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, Nebraska Public Power District, Nebraska Water Conference Council

and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Water Center/Environmental Programs.

The tour will be August 11-13 and will start in Kearney.

Though all tour details have yet to be arranged, an in-depth look at the results of the Arkansas Rivers dispute between Colorado and Kansas will take center stage on the tour, along with a look at current issues

between Kansas and Nebraska on the Republican River.

Tour participants will include state legislators, water professionals and agricultural producers.

For more information on the tour, contact the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, Water Tour, P.O. Box 607, Kearney, NE 68848 or phone (800)652-9435.

Blizzard Doesn't Hamper "Nebraska Water 2000" Conference (Continued from page 1)

divided into four sessions: *Physical Information, Biological Information, Human Response and Information Uses at the Basin Level.*

Session one began with an overview on sources, hydrology and geomorphology by Gary Parker, St. Anthony Falls Research Laboratory, University of Minnesota.

It was followed by presentations on Nebraska situations by NU associate professor Rollin Hotchkiss and USGS hydrologist Virginia McGuire.

In session two, Mike Gutzmer of the Nebraska Public Power District and Steve Schainost of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission discussed specific and unique Nebraska ecosystems after a topic overview from Jim Omernik of the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory, U.S. EPA, Corvallis, OR.

Session three dealt with human response to the information issue, beginning with a legal overview by Norm Thorson of the NU College of Law. Presentations on political, economic and social situations followed with attorneys Rod Confer of Lincoln and Jim Doyle of Lexington.

Tuesday night's awards banquet saw the Nebraska Water Conference Council's annual Pioneer Award

presented to Alma producer and citizen negotiator Terry Woollen. The annual Progress Award went to the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. UNL professor emeritus Leslie Sheffield was awarded The Maurice Kremer Groundwater Achievement Award by The Groundwater Foundation.

Session four, on Wednesday, March 11, examined "Information uses at the basin level" focusing on the Niobrara, Central Platte and Arkansas and Republican River Basins (each major river basin in Nebraska will be examined during the course of the conference series).

Governor Ben Nelson opened the final day of the conference with a breakfast address, while a forum on water issues for gubernatorial candidates concluded the conference. The forum, arranged and moderated by the Nebraska League of Women Voters, attracted Republican candidates Barry Richards and Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns and Democrats Jim McFarland and Robb Nimic.

Conference programs are still available by contacting the UNL Water Center/Environmental Programs at (402)472-3305 or e-mailing sress@unlinfo.unl.edu

AWWA Research Foundation RFPs

The American Water Works Association Research Foundation (AWWARF) is announcing the selection of new research projects approved for funding in 1998.

AWWARF is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the science of water and has managed research projects worth over \$100 million since 1986. The foundation sponsors practical, applied research for the drinking water community.

Requests for proposals (RFPs) for 1998 solicited projects are available on the AWWARF web site at www.awwarf.com. Proposals submitted in response to RFPs must be postmarked by May 4 for all perchlorate projects and projects with budgets up to \$250,000 in AWWARF funds.

Proposals seeking \$250,000 or more in AWWARF funds must be postmarked by July 15. All project proposals must include 25 percent of the total project budget as in-kind or cash contribution.

In-kind contributions can be in the form of labor, laboratory services, or other support and may come from utilities, consulting firms and universities. Contract awards for all projects will be determined by an AWWARF project advisory committee appointed for each project.

Proposal evaluations will be based on responsiveness to the RFP, scientific and technical merit and qualifications of the researchers.

Interested parties may obtain RFPs from: AWWARF RFP Desk, 6666 W. Quincy Ave., Denver, CO 80235 or call (303)347-6117 or (303)347-6211 (be sure to indicate RFP number). RFPs can also be requested and sent through email via internet to dhughston@awwarf.com or gpreston@awwarf.com. AWWARF's internet homepage is at <http://www.awwarf.com>.

"Interrelationship of Water, Native Grasslands and Wetlands"

*The 1998 University of Nebraska
Water Resources Seminar*

*Weekly public lectures from Jan. 14 through April 29
(except March 11 and 25)*

*Wednesdays at 3 p.m., Rm 116, L.W. Chase Hall,
UNL East Campus, Lincoln*

*For a schedule of seminar topics
and speakers, phone: (402)472-3305*

*Also available on VCR tapes for
UNL Continuing Education credit, phone:
1-800-755-7765*



Water News Briefs

Wetlands ID Now Available

A definitive field resource about Florida's wetland plants is now available from the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

"Florida Wetland Plants: An Identification Manual" is comprehensive enough for scientists, but written so the amateur plant enthusiast can enjoy it.

"Florida Wetland Plants" contains more than 800 color photographs, more than 1,000 entries and 608 total pages.

"Florida Wetland Plants" covers almost all of the vascular plant species and representative species found in Florida and represents a collaborative effort of many of Florida's foremost botanical authorities.

Cost is \$35 per copy and the publication can be ordered from University of Florida/IFAS Publications, P.O. Box 110011, Gainesville, Florida 32611 (If ordering within Florida, add appropriate sales tax and \$4 shipping and handling).

Payment may be by Master Card or Visa or a check or purchase order to University of Florida Publications. Phone orders go to 1-800-226-1764.

How to Boost Your Golf Course Values

A new poster available from the Terrene Institute gives 20 easy rules for making one of the world's most popular sports one of its most environmentally friendly, as well.

You can play the nine-hole course on "Golf and the Environment: What Partners!" to learn how you can turn your golf course into a model for ecosystem management that will increase its value to your community.

Developers can track an environmentally friendly course from design through construction to long-term maintenance on this poster - as golfers experience what ecosystem management can mean for their favorite course.

The Terrene Institute worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Water Division to develop the poster, that is available for \$5 plus \$3.50 shipping by contacting Michelle Pena at (703)548-5473 or terrinst@aol.com or www.terrene.org

EPA Restoration Website

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds now has a website for public and private organizations interested in river corridors and wetlands restoration.

Users can visit river corridors and wetlands restorations and receive and add information concerning projects, programs or organizations.

For more information on the site, or EPA's River Corridors and Wetlands Restoration Partners, contact John Pai, U.S. EPA, 401 M St., SW, Washington, DC 20460. Phone (202)260-8076 or email pai.john@epamail.epa.gov.

Community Outreach Kits

New community outreach tools are available from The League of Women Voters Education Fund.

"Tools for Drinking Water Protection Community Outreach Kit" contains a videotape, a booklet on public outreach options and a book on groundwater education. It also describes the new LWV WaterWEB, an Internet directory of people across the nation working on local water issues.

To access WaterWEB, go to

www.lwv.org/drinkingwater. For a copy of the outreach packet, send \$29 (includes shipping and handling) to The League of Women Voters, Publications Sales Department, 1730 M St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-4508. For more information, contact Bonnie Burgess at (202)429-1965 or email bonnieb@lwv.org.

Nebraska Range Shortcourse

The Nebraska Range Shortcourse is coming to Chadron State College June 14-19.

The week-long course is designed to provide individuals with a background in range management, natural resources or agriculture the opportunity to increase their knowledge in the field of range management. It will provide underlying principles of range management for efficient, sustainable use of range for livestock and as a natural resource.

The course is limited to the first 45 applicants who have registered for the class before May 15. The course may be taken for college credit or for non-credit. Credit is for up to two hours of Independent Study in Agronomy 496F/896F. Credit arrangements may also be made through Chadron State College.

Course participants may obtain housing at the Chadron State dormitories and meals at the Student Center.

The course is being sponsored by the University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chadron State College and Society for Range Management Nebraska Section.

For information and a registration brochure, contact Dr. Lowell Moser, Department of Agronomy, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, P.O. Box 830915, Lincoln, NE 68583-0915, phone (402)472-1558 or email agro043@unlvm.unl.edu.

APRIL

15: Water Resources Seminar, "Sand Hills Wetland Coalition," Gene Mack or Nebraska Game and Parks Commission wetlands research, Gerry Steinauer, Rm 116, L.W. Chase Hall, UNL East Campus, (402)472-3305.

15-17: "Team Wetlands-101 Ways To Win For Wetlands." Knowledge and tools for community-based wetlands conservation, Arlington, VA. Contact the Terrene Institute at (703)548-5473 or email terrinst@aol.com.

19-22: "Disinfection '98," conference on disinfection issues such as cooling water discharges and effluents, Baltimore, MD. Contact the Water Environment Federation at (703)684-2400.

22: Water Resources Seminar, "Electromagnetic Remote Sensing of the Wetlands," Ezekiel Bahar, Rm 116, L.W. Chase Hall, UNL East Campus (402)472-3305.

28-30: The Source Water Protection International 98 Conference, DoubleTree Hotel, Campbell Centre, Dallas, TX. Contact the National Water Research Institute, Source Water Protection International 98, 10500 Ellis Ave., P.O. Box 20865, Fountain Valley, CA 92728-0865 or email NWRI-1@worldnet.att.net.

28-May 1: National Pollution Prevention Roundtable, 1998 Spring Conference, Hyatt Regency, Cincinnati, OH. Contact Michele Russo at (202)466-3908 or (202)466-P2P2.

MAY

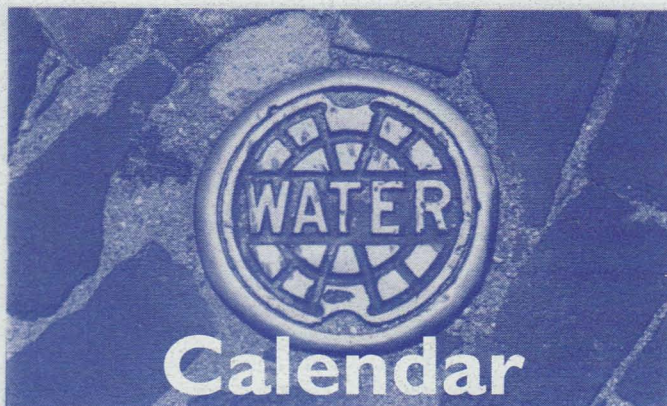
3-6: National Conference on Environmental Decision Making, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Direct inquiries to UT Conferences, Attn: NCEDR Conference, P.O. Box 2648, 600 Henley St., Suite 212, Knoxville, TN 37901-2648 or call (423) 974-0280 or email Conferences@gateway.ce.utk.edu.

3-6: Watershed Management: Moving From Theory to Implementation, Denver, CO. Contact Nancy Blatt or Dave Trouba at the Water Environment Federation at (703)684-2400.

5-6: Minnesota Water '98 - Protecting Minnesota's Water Supplies, Holiday Inn Metrodome, Minneapolis, MN. For information, contact Maria Juergens at (612)624-9282 or e-mail juerg001@tc.umn.edu.

6-8: 21st Annual EPA Conference on Analysis of Pollutants in the Environment, Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel, Norfolk, VA. Contact the Water Environment Federation at 1(800)666-0206 or email confinfo@wef.org.

17-20: First National Extension Natural Resources Conference, Ruttgers Bay Lake Lodge, Deerwood, MN. Targeted to cooperative extension service personnel and educators. Contact Tracey Benson at (612)624-3708 or (800)367-5363 or e-mail tbenson@extension.umn.edu.



17-22: Flood Mitigation Technology: Times Are Changing, Milwaukee, WI. Sponsored by the Association of State Floodplain Managers, Contact Leslie A. Bond, P.O. Box 427, High Rolls, NM 88325. Phone (505)682-1359 or email bond@wazoo.com

17-22: Third Annual Short Course on Constructed Wetlands for Water Quality Improvement. Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA. Addressing wastewater, stormwater and other non-point sources. Register by March 31 by contacting Barbara Smith at (707)826-3619 or email smithb@laurel.humboldt.edu

26-30: Specialty Conference on Rangeland Management and Water Resources, Reno, NV. Sponsored by the American Water Resources Association and the Society for Range Management. Contact AWRA, 950 Herndon Parkway, Suite 300, Herndon, VA 20170-5531. Phone (703)904-1225.

JUNE

5-9: Balancing Resource Issues: Land, Water, People, San Diego, CA. Annual conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, IA 50021-9764. Phone (515)289-2331 or email swcs@swcs.org

8-11: The Ninth Global Warming International Conference and Expo. Advanced registration due by January 25, 1998. Registration deadline March 1, 1998. Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Conference FAX hotline is +1 630-910-1561. Exhibitors welcome.

10-13: The Groundwater Foundation's Groundwater University, Jeffrey Lodge, Brady. For junior and senior high students. For more information, call 1-800-858-4844 or (in Lincoln) 434-2740.

14-17: "NETC98, Connect with the Future," St. Louis, MO. Where extension educators can learn to put technology to work. For information phone Dave Klostermann, University of Missouri-St. Louis (314)516-5958 or email dave_klostermann@ccmail.umsu.edu.

14-19: Nebraska Range Shortcourse, Chadron State College, Chadron. Contact Dr. Lowell Moser, Department of Agronomy, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, P.O. Box 830915, Lincoln, NE 68583-0915, phone (402)472-1558 or email agro043@unlvm.unl.edu.

17-19: "Legends and Lessons In The Pine Ridge," 1998 Nebraska Environment Education Association (NEEA) conference, Fort Robinson State Park. For information, contact Syd Hime at (402)476-2729 or email hime@nrcdec.nrc.state.ne.us

28-July 1: Advances in Urban Wet Weather Pollution Reduction, Cleveland, OH. Examining issues related to urban wet weather pollution in communities. Contact Nancy Blatt or Dave Trouba at the Water Environment Federation at (703)684-2400.

JULY

7-10: Treatment Innovation for the Next Century: Innovation 2000. A joint conference of the Water Environment Federation, the European Water Pollution Control Association and the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, with support of Anglian Water. Conference focuses on innovation in wastewater treatment and water cycle management. Contact Nancy Blatt or Dave Trouba at the Water Environment Federation at (703)684-2400.

1998 NIWR Executive Summary Available Free from NU

Copies of the 1998 Executive Summary for the National Institutes for Water Resources (NIWR) are now available at no cost.

The summary is an annual review of funding, research, programs and educational endeavors of the 54 Water Resources Research Institutes that comprise NIWR. Institutes are located in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Copies of the 12-page executive summary can be had by writing Steven W. Ress, Water Center/Environmental Programs, 103 Natural Resources Hall, P.O. Box 830844, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0844, phoning (402)472-3305 or e-mailing sress@unlinfo.unl.edu.

For more information on NIWR, visit their web site at <http://wrri.nmsu.edu/niwr>.

Tell Us What You Want to See in Upcoming Issues of the Water Current:

What interests you, or what doesn't interest you in the *Water Current*? What can we do to change the publication to make it better suit your needs?

In an attempt to find answers to these and other questions, we are conducting our annual readership survey.

Return the survey and we will send you a Water Center/Environmental Programs pencil and refrigerator magnet and enter your name in a drawing for one of three "Blue Thumb" drinking water bottles (suitable for cycling, hiking and other outdoor activities).

In order to be eligible for the drawings, you must return your completed survey no later than **Friday, May 29**. Mail them to the address below, or FAX them to (402)472-3574. UNL campus subscribers may return their surveys via campus mail to: 103 NRH, EC 0844.

Please mail or FAX the entire page (so that we have your name for the water bottle drawings).

And thank you in advance for helping to make the *Water Current* a more useable publication.

1. What is the most useful feature of the *Water Current* to you?

2. What is the least useful feature of the *Water Current* to you?

3. Please rank in order of importance the usefulness of the following general areas of the newsletter (1 being the most important, to 8 being the least important to you):
☐ Announcements about publications, videos, electronic information, etc.
☐ Calendar
☐ Faculty features
☐ Previews of upcoming events
☐ Director's Notes (Page #2)
☐ Feature articles on water and environmental research
☐ Water News Briefs
4. What are some topics you would like to see covered in future issues of the newsletter?

5. Do you read each issue of the *Water Current* you receive?
☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Do you circulate your copy of the *Water Current* to anyone else?
☐ Yes (if so, how many others read it ☐)
☐ No
7. Should the *Water Current* be published more often ☐ less often ☐ Remain at six issues per year ☐
8. Should the *Water Current* print more pages ☐ print fewer pages ☐ maintain the present 8-10 pages ☐
9. Your occupation? _____
10. Your primary interest in subscribing to and reading the *Water Current*?

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