



LEWIS & CLARK

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting our Future

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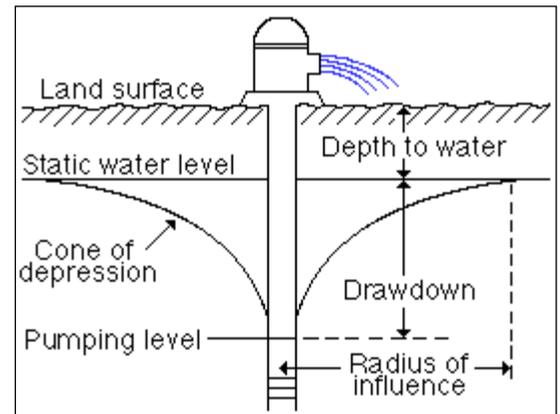
June 19, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Spring 2020 Well Measuring Results

The static water levels of 33 irrigation wells located throughout the Lewis and Clark Natural Resources District (LCNRD) are measured in the spring and fall each year. Groundwater levels measured this spring indicate that the levels have decreased on an overall comparison by .10 feet from the spring 2019 however just over half of the wells (17) showed a decrease in water levels with by an average of 1.7 feet compared to spring 2019 and just below half (16) of the wells showed an average increase of 1.3 feet when compared to 2019. One of the measured wells was 0.54 feet lower than in the spring of 2018.

Average groundwater levels of the wells observed by the Lewis and Clark NRD have been steadily increasing since the drought of 2012 with all but three levels reaching or by-passing pre-drought conditions. On average water levels have increased 1.9 feet from 2012, three wells remain lower than 2012 by an average of 2.2 feet. There has been an increase in the number of acres irrigated since the drought and it is positive to see an overall increase in water levels. However, potential impacts to aquifer systems by irrigation demand still exist. In accordance with studies by the State Department of Natural Resources, the Lewis and Clark NRD was not be declared “Fully Appropriated” for 2019. If a designation of “Fully Appropriated” was declared construction of new irrigation wells would be limited.

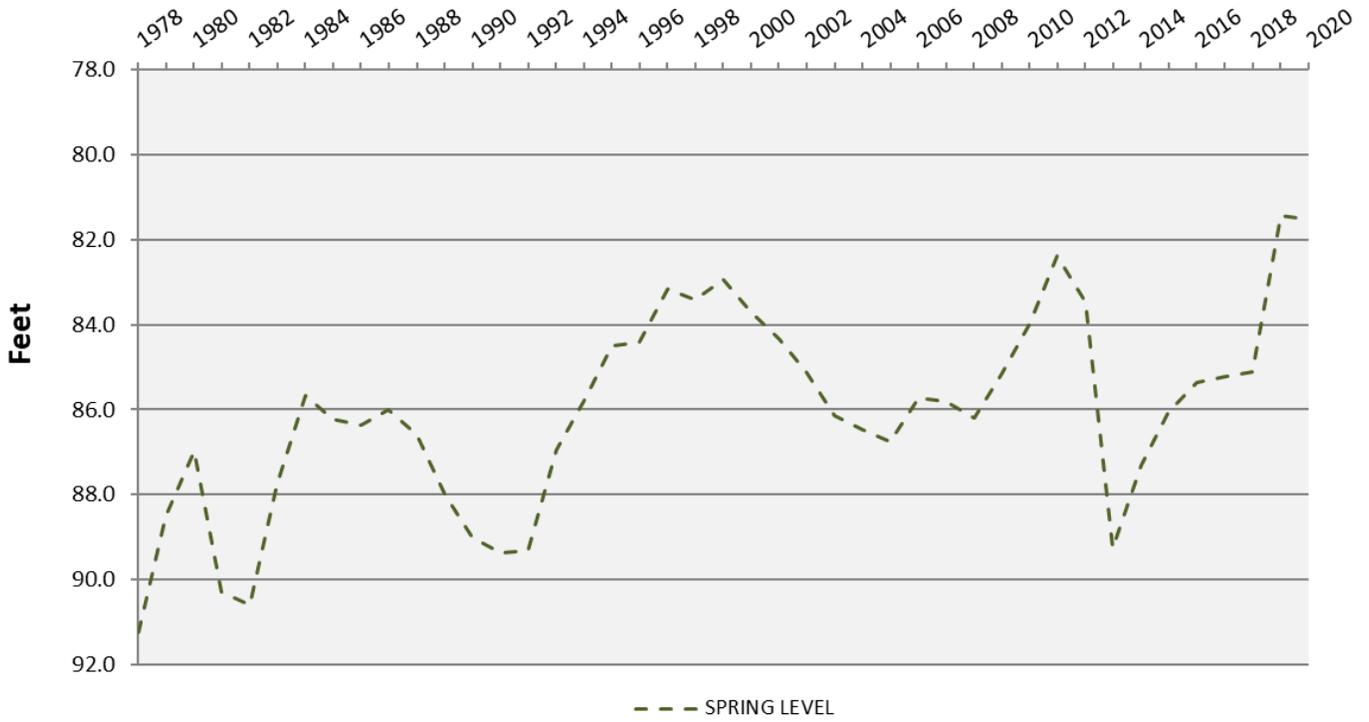


In recent years there has been development for irrigation in the much deeper buried Dakota Formation aquifer. The majority of this development has occurred north of Hartington from Crofton to Martinsburg. The NRD initiated spring and fall static water level measurements of 4 wells in this area in 2014 to better monitor the aquifer’s response to irrigation pumping. To date a decline of 2.2 feet below the initial spring average reading from 2014 has been observed.

Groundwater levels of irrigation wells are monitored and recorded by the LCNRD in order to monitor potential fluctuations in water levels. A downward trend observed over a period of 5 years would be considered cause for concern. Groundwater levels do not currently indicate a serious threat to the supply. Rainfall has been abundant over the past couple years and the pressures on groundwater have been lessened. If timely rains continue and the need for irrigation is balanced the potential for continued groundwater recharge is likely. However it is important to employ wise irrigation practices at all times to maximize crop yield and ensure desirable groundwater levels.

Lewis & Clark NRD Average Static Water Levels (District Wide)

Year



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