

Groundwater Management: QUALITY

Aquifer Quality Well Abandonment Cost-Share Assistance Program (AQWACAP)

The Aquifer Quality Well Abandonment Cost-share Assistance Program (AQWACAP) provides cost-share assistance to encourage landowners to properly seal abandoned wells. AQWACAP serves as a companion program to the Abandoned Well Verification Program (described below). Together, these programs identify abandoned wells and ensure that they are correctly sealed.

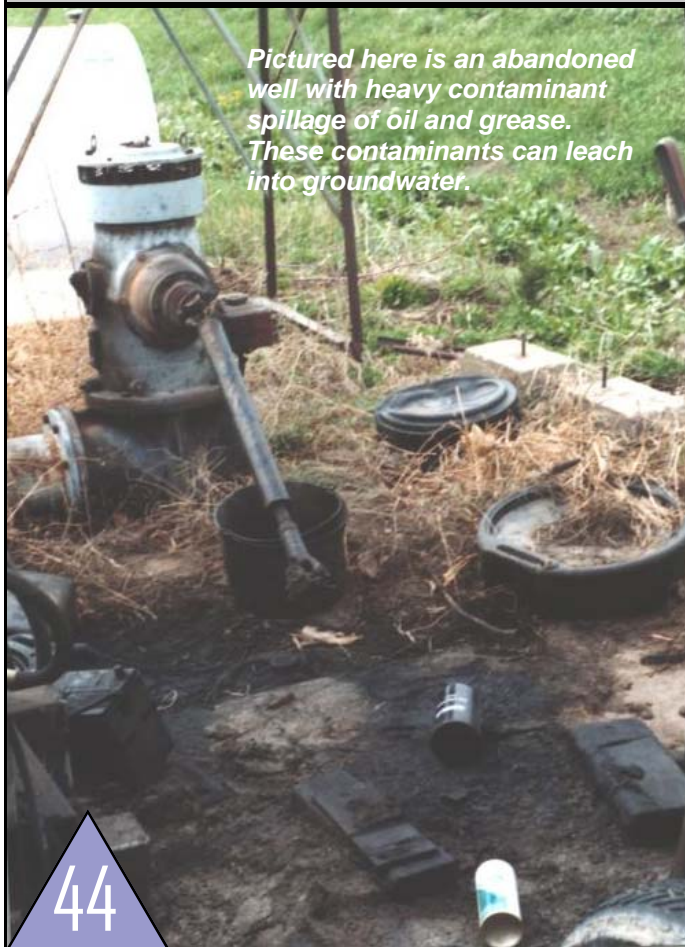
Legally reported wells need not be identified through the Abandoned Well Verification Program to be eligible for cost-share assistance.

Under the Aquifer Quality Well Abandonment Cost-share Assistance Program in fiscal year 2008, 91 wells were properly abandoned at a cost to the District of \$36,647.68.



A properly sealed well with cap (York County).

Abandoned Well Verification Program



Pictured here is an abandoned well with heavy contaminant spillage of oil and grease. These contaminants can leach into groundwater.

State law and Upper Big Blue NRD groundwater regulations require any abandoned well be properly and legally abandoned.

To be legally abandoned, a well must be permanently sealed (decommissioned) in accordance with Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services regulations. Notification of decommissioning must be made to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the NRD.

Incorrectly abandoned wells pose public safety risks and present the potential for groundwater contamination.

In 1989, the District began a program to determine the status of wells that have been reported as abandoned or not registered with the District. A public education program was launched to inform people of the hazards of incorrectly abandoned wells and the importance of notification. In addition, a field survey was made to identify improperly abandoned wells and to take action to correct the situation.



A wayward donkey fell into an abandoned well that was not properly sealed.

Legally reported wells need not be identified through the Abandoned Well Verification Program to be eligible for cost-share assistance. Under the AQWACAP program in fiscal year 2008, 91 wells were properly abandoned at a cost to the District of \$36,647.68.

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Upper Big Blue NRD
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**Table AQWA-1. Upper Big Blue NRD—WELL DECOMMISSIONING COST-SHARE PROGRAM SUMMARY
AQWACAP Fiscal Years 1992-2008**

Fiscal Year	Total No. of Wells Decommissioned	Total Cost	Total Cost-Share	Average Cost-Share per Well	Percentage of Cost-Share	Water Well Decommissioning Fund	Water Quality Funds	NRD Funds
FY92	33	\$10,368.66	\$6,513.94	\$197.39	62.8%	0	0	\$6,513.94
FY93	40	\$15,660.89	\$9,448.49	\$236.21	60.3%	0	0	\$9,448.49
FY94	72	\$26,493.89	\$15,998.42	\$222.20	60.4%	0	0	\$15,998.42
FY95	68	\$26,843.02	\$14,548.00	\$213.94	54.2%	0	0	\$14,548.00
FY96	62	\$24,699.13	\$15,628.26	\$252.07	63.3%	0	0	\$15,628.26
FY97	83	\$36,670.42	\$22,646.26	\$272.85	61.8%	\$6,590.56	0	\$16,055.70
FY98	74	\$34,945.08	\$21,030.28	\$284.19	60.2%	\$8,187.30	\$5,137.19	\$7,705.79
FY99	92	\$46,651.23	\$28,540.87	\$310.23	61.2%	\$10,309.09	\$7,292.71	\$10,939.07
FY00	100	\$46,898.46	\$29,335.36	\$293.35	62.6%	\$11,959.48	\$6,950.35	\$10,425.53
FY01	81	\$37,348.38	\$22,422.61	\$276.82	60.0%	\$17,005.95	\$2,166.66	\$3,250.00
FY02	124	\$78,070.61	\$40,289.75	\$324.92	51.6%	\$22,345.69	\$7,177.62	\$10,766.44
FY03	100	\$59,287.57	\$31,864.47	\$318.64	53.7%	\$16,838.39	\$6,010.43	\$9,015.65
FY04	104	\$58,287.57	\$31,908.71	\$306.81	54.7%	\$18,041.24	\$5,546.99	\$8,320.48
FY05	137	\$87,026.08	\$44,922.51	\$327.90	51.6%	\$16,054.89	\$11,547.05	\$17,320.57
FY06	108	\$72,679.92	\$34,464.98	\$319.12	47.4%	\$16,193.85	\$7,308.45	\$10,962.68
FY07	91	\$63,709.03	\$34,042.19	\$374.09	53.4%	\$12,503.58	\$8,615.44	\$12,923.17
FY08	91	\$71,251.23	\$36,647.68	\$402.72	51.4%	\$10,520.96	\$10,450.69	\$15,676.03
TOTAL	1,460	\$796,891.17	\$440,252.78	\$301.54	55.2%	\$166,550.98	\$78,203.60	\$195,498.20

**Aquifer Quality Well Abandonment Cost-Share Assistance Program (AQWACAP):
COST-SHARE PROGRAM SUMMARY
FY'92-'08
Table AQWA-1.**

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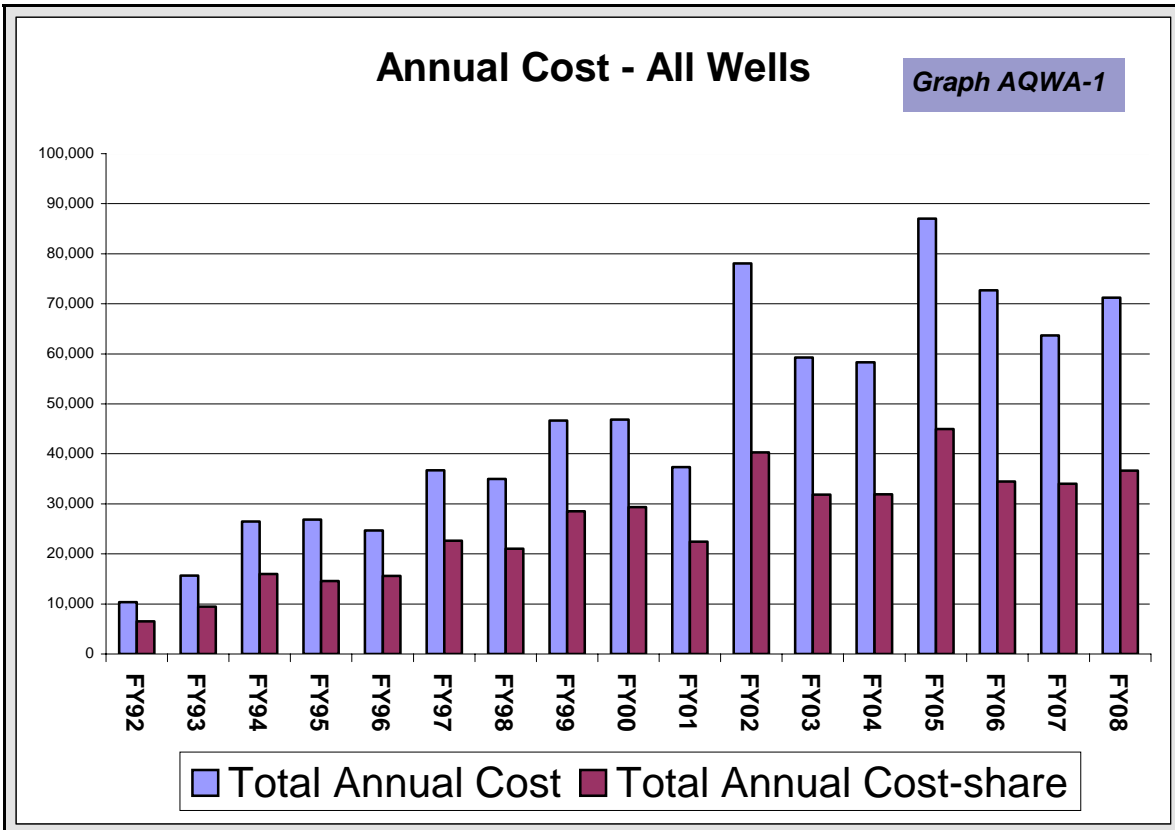
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Abandonment of Well Types: Total Annual Cost vs. Total Annual Cost-Share: Fiscal Years 1992-2008

The following graph (AQWA-1) shows a comparative cost analysis between Total Annual Cost and Total Annual Cost-Share for abandoning wells through the AQWACAP Program during the fiscal years 1992-2008.





GROUND WATER QUALITY PROGRAMS

Abandoned Well Verification Program:

State law and Upper Big Blue NRD Ground Water Management Area regulations require that any well that is abandoned must be properly decommissioned. Proper decommissioning means that a well that will no longer be used must be permanently sealed in a manner defined by state regulations. An unsealed, abandoned well is a potential source of contamination to groundwater. Contaminants from the surface such as fertilizer animal wastes or agricultural chemicals can travel through the unsealed well to the aquifer. Notification of decommissioning must be made to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the NRD. Incorrectly decommissioning wells pose a potential groundwater quality and public safety risk.

In 1989, the District began a program to determine the status of wells that have been reported as abandoned or that are not registered with the District. A public education program has been implemented to inform people of the hazards of incorrectly abandoning wells and the importance of notification. In addition, a field survey is being made to identify improperly abandoned wells and encouraging well owners to correct the situation.

Aquifer Quality Well Abandonment Cost-Share Assistance Program (AQWACAP):

This program provides cost-share for proper decommissioning of abandoned wells. Wells must be decommissioned according Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services System regulations governing water well abandonment standards. All decommissioning activities must be conducted by a licensed water well contractor.

The cost-share rate is 60% of the actual labor and materials.

The maximum cost-share rates for the proper plugging of wells of various casing diameters are as follows:

All wells (except hand dug)	\$500
Hand dug wells	\$700

All below ground pipe and any above ground pipe, tower or apparatus that may impede the plugging activity must be removed. Any cost incurred for this removal is not eligible for cost-share.

The District may require that a district representative be present during the actual plugging process. (This will be done on a random basis.)

The cost-share application must be approved by the Upper Big Blue NRD before work may begin. If an emergency replacement of a well is required, after the fact cost-share is available for the old well. Emergency replacement includes an irrigation well needed for a growing crop or a domestic, livestock or commercial well when no other water source is available. An application for after the fact cost-share must be received within 30 days after plugging the well.

A copy of the water well contractors itemized billing statement showing quantities of materials used in decommissioning the well must be provided to the Upper Big Blue NRD.

All cost-share payments must be approval by the Upper Big Blue NRD Board of Directors prior to payment.