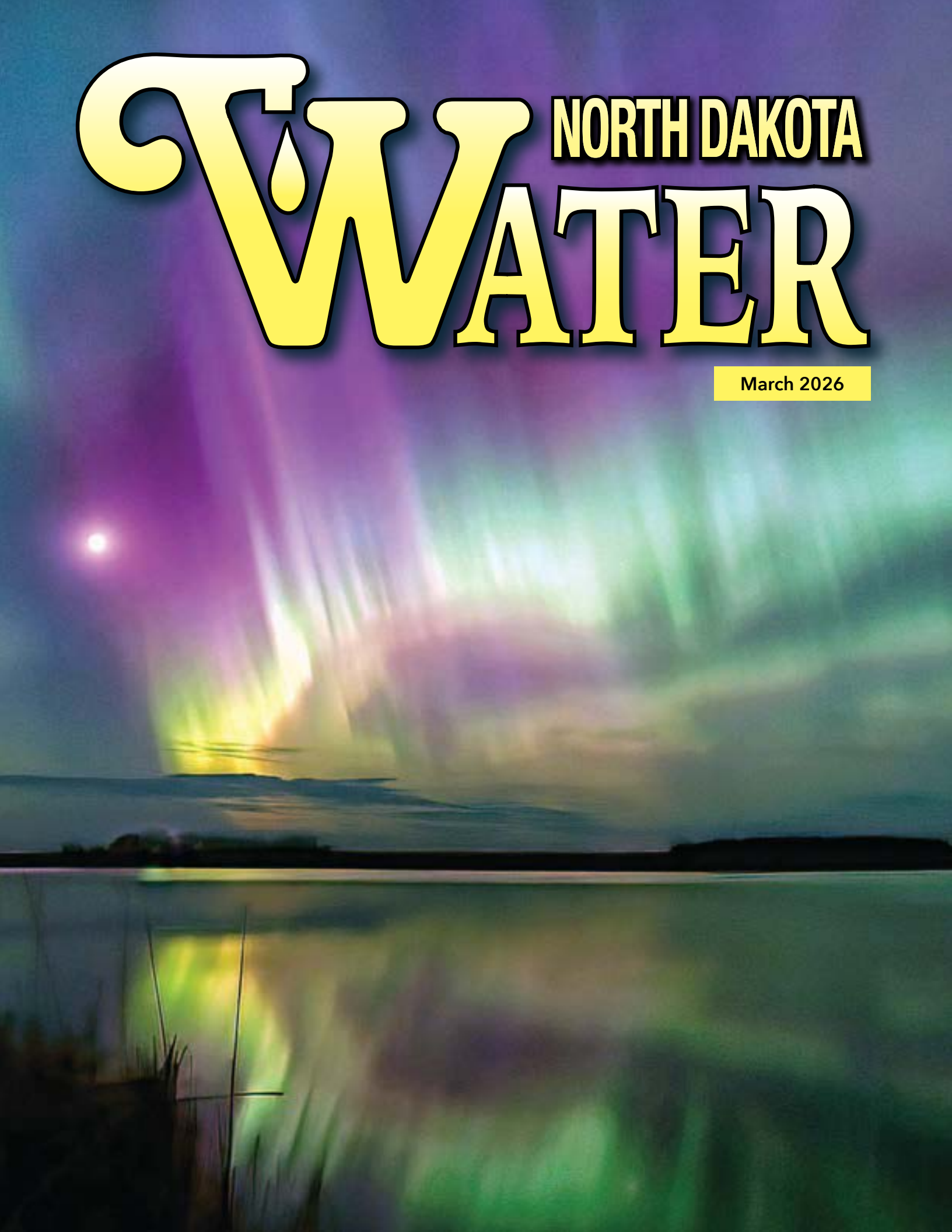

NORTH DAKOTA WATER

March 2026

LOVE TRIANGLES (SORT OF)

Dani Quissell
Executive Director
North Dakota Water
Education Foundation

Love triangles are messy. Fortunately, I've never been in one myself—but I've spent the past few months watching one unfold right in my own home. It began in early November, when an adolescent cat appeared on our doorstep. I suggested she would make an excellent shop cat, but Bentley (15) had other ideas. According to him, we absolutely needed another indoor pet—this despite already sharing the house with two dogs and one cat.

He also declared that the newcomer should be named Christopher Columbus. Why? I still have no explanation. When I pointed out that the cat appeared to be female, he compromised: Christina Columbus. CC for short.

CC settled in quickly. She was clearly used to other cats, knew her way around a litter box, and immediately began trying to befriend our resident feline, Coco. Unfortunately, Coco has been the undisputed Queen of the Quissell household for many years, and she had no interest in welcoming a younger, more energetic contender into her domain.

While CC was trying to woo the uninterested Coco, our seven-year-old Labrador, Buddy, fell hopelessly in love. Buddy has a soft spot for anything small—babies, lambs, six-pound cats who do not love him back. He approached CC with the earnest enthusiasm only a Lab can muster… and was promptly met with the business end of her claws. After a few bloody swipes to his nose, Buddy learned to adore her from a safe distance.

Every few days, he works up the courage to try again. And every time, he receives the same pointed rejection. To add insult to injury, CC has also claimed Buddy's favorite spot—curled up with Shaun in the big chair—as her own. Poor Buddy can only watch, heartbroken, usually from my lap. Poor Buddy.

This is where the love triangle falters. In the traditional version, Coco would be pining after Buddy, who would be oblivious. Instead, Coco is entirely uninterested, and Buddy is perfectly fine with that. Nothing about this dynamic forms a proper geometric shape.

And yes—for concerned readers—Marvin is still very much with us. Marvin and CC maintain a refreshingly uncomplicated relationship. CC would happily remove Marvin's tail if given the opportunity; Marvin believes CC would make a convenient, bite-sized snack. There is no emotional nuance here whatsoever.

So yes, things are lively in the Quissell household these days. We have one lovestruck dog, one imperious queen, one bold young interloper, and one canine chaos agent who would rather chomp first and ask questions never.

It's not quite a love triangle, but it certainly keeps life interesting.

CC and Buddy

NORTH DAKOTA WATER

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The purpose of the North Dakota Water Education Foundation is to develop and implement water information and education programs to increase awareness, understanding and knowledge about water resource issues in North Dakota. The Foundation publishes the North Dakota Water *magazine, sponsors summer water tours, and supports the Water Education Today (WET) for teachers and students.* North Dakota Water *is supported by several private, federal, state and local organizations and agencies.*

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On the Cover

"Northern Lights" by Katherine Plessner, Verona. This photo was an Honorable Mention in the 2025 North Dakota Waterways Photo Contest, sponsored by the North Dakota Water Education Foundation.

North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association 2026 Partnerships

North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA) would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated Association Partners and devote this article to recognizing them! Their generous support allows us to fulfill our mission to educate, promote, support, and lead North Dakota's water industry in providing quality service to their customers.

With five sponsorship levels – Legendary, Water Champion, Industry Leader, Visionary and H2O Hero – you can partner with NDRWSA to ensure clean, reliable water reaches every corner of our state. As an Association Partner, your company receives unique advertising, sponsorship, and virtual opportunities. Contact us at 701-258-9249 to learn more.

New Horizons in Rural Living
NORTH DAKOTA Rural Water SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

LEGENDARY PARTNERS

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AE2S is a 100% employee-owned water engineering and consulting firm dedicated to client success. It partners with rural and regional water systems, municipalities, utilities, and industries to solve complex drinking water, wastewater, and water resources challenges with practical, resilient solutions. Its teams blend technical depth with "above and beyond" client service, helping clients secure funding, navigate regulations, and deliver reliable infrastructure that protects public health, supports growth, and enhances the communities it serves.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.AE2S.com.

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Apex Engineering Group provides consulting services for complex water, transportation, municipal, and facility projects. Each project completed for a community becomes a comprehensive engineered facility. And, while each one is important, all projects tie together to function efficiently and prolong the life of infrastructure systems. Apex staff have a passion for providing engineering solutions and believe it's only the best solution if it's also the best experience. Great experiences happen by listening, trusting, and working together. Apex has offices in Fargo, Bismarck, and Dickinson in North Dakota, as well as Detroit Lakes, St. Cloud, and Minnetonka in Minnesota.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.apexenggroup.com.

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Bartlett & West is an engineering firm offering deep industry knowledge and creative problem-solving skills to help plan, design, and build projects, all while they connect businesses and communities through innovative technology solutions. Since 1951, Bartlett & West has served water, wastewater, survey, GIS, right-of-way and other engineering, architecture, and construction needs throughout the Midwest. In fact, it grew out of working on the first rural water systems in Kansas, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Bartlett & West is proud to continue that legacy through 75 years of working with clients to lead communities to a better tomorrow.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.bartlettwest.com.

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Since 1980, Carstensen has built a reputation as a company that offers quality construction and innovative thinking. Customers become repeat customers because they have experienced its expertise, responsiveness, and attention to detail. Over the years, Carstensen has expanded its services from underground utilities and general contracting to materials, oil, gas, saltwater infrastructure construction, and site preparation.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.carstensencontracting.com.

H20 HERO:

Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Rural Water Financing Agency
Utility Logic
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Hawkins has been serving customers for more than 80 years. It carries water treatment chemicals and equipment and provides local service. Every site is different, and it provides custom water treatment programs tailored to each client's facility. Its local drivers are professionally trained to help the client optimize their current system. Hawkins local service includes mini bulk delivery, technical support, and equipment installations. It carries a very wide selection of water treatment chemicals and products that are reliable, high quality, and cost effective. This includes a complete range of chemical formulas specifically designed for water treatment applications in municipal drinking water treatment and municipal wastewater treatment.

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FLEXIBLE Pipe Tools & Equipment has maintained satisfied customers for more than 65 years. It is a dealer of new and used sewer cleaning and video inspection equipment, as well as hydro excavators and valve exercisers. It services all brands of equipment and does it on-site whenever possible. This allows for the least amount of customer downtime. FLEXIBLE Pipe Tools & Equipment represents Sewer Equipment Company of America, Aries Industries, Pacific Tek, Advanced Pump, ENZ Nozzles, Cobra and Piranha Hose, Southland Tool, and American Sewer Parts. It serves Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.flexiblepipetoolco.com.

Moore Engineering, Inc.

Moore Engineering, Inc., an employee-owned firm, has been enhancing lives and strengthening communities for more than 65 years. As a full-service civil engineering and consulting company, Moore offers expertise in municipal engineering, water resources, land surveying, GIS, transportation, and environmental services.

From designing water and wastewater treatment systems to managing stormwater and transportation projects, Moore Engineering delivers tailored solutions for cities and communities. Its municipal engineering services include water distribution, stormwater management, pumping facilities, and transportation systems, such as pavement design, highway capacity analysis, and pedestrian-friendly corridors.

In water resources, Moore specializes in retention dams, dikes, levees, and advanced watershed modeling using hydrologic and hydraulic analysis. Its comprehensive land surveying services cover everything from legal surveys and platting to GPS-enabled site development.

As an employee-owned company, Moore Engineering takes pride in building partnerships that prioritize innovation, reliability, and community-focused solutions.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.mooreengineeringinc.com.

INDUSTRY LEADER

Midwest Pump Works

Midwest Pump Works, formerly Minnesota Pump Works, supports water and wastewater utilities across North Dakota and the surrounding region. As part of the United Flow Technologies family, the company provides pump products and professional services with a strong focus on responsiveness, workmanship, and long-term partnerships built on trust.

Midwest Pump Works serves as a manufacturers' representative for Sulzer, Environment One, Duperon and Vogelsang supporting municipal applications ranging from lift stations to wastewater treatment systems. With more than 50 full-time professionals operating from six fully equipped service shops and supported by a fleet of service trucks and mobile crane trucks, Midwest Pump Works is equipped to support projects of varying scope and complexity. In addition to field service and system support, its projects team works closely with utilities and engineers after bid day to assist with coordination, equipment selection, and project execution. It also offers educational opportunities, including training and informational sessions, to help operators and staff better understand and maintain their systems. Midwest Pump Works looks forward to continuing its work with communities across North Dakota, providing consistent support backed by experience and reliable service.

Learn more by visiting their website: Midwestpumpworks.com.

Electric Pump

For almost 50 years, Electric Pump has been a trusted partner for professionals in the industrial, municipal, environmental, and OEM fluid handling markets. Known for its expertise, prompt support, and one of the largest inventories of pumps and parts in the Midwest, Electric Pump delivers reliable solutions tailored to clients' needs.

Its extensive product offerings include pumps, mixers, chemical feed equipment, biological treatment solutions, and electric controls designed to operate and monitor a wide range of processes. Its experienced team works closely with clients to design systems that effectively address specific challenges, leveraging deep knowledge of how its products integrate seamlessly into operations.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.electricpump.com.

HDR

HDR is a 100% employee-owned professional services firm. Founded over a century ago to bring electricity to a changing world, it is now a global company specializing in engineering, architecture, environmental, and construction services. Consistently ranked among *Engineering News-Record's* Top 10 Water Design firms, HDR approaches project work from an integrated perspective. Using natural and infrastructure components, it works smart to achieve a client project's environmental, economic, and social objectives. Working from our local offices in Bismarck and Fargo, HDR partners with clients across North Dakota to address infrastructure needs.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.hdrinc.com.

TEAM LAB

TEAM LAB has been a recognized leader in municipal chemical sales in the Midwest since 1977. TEAM LAB specializes in solving everyday wastewater problems with innovative solutions. Its products enable wastewater systems to operate at maximum efficiency from collection to treatment. TEAM LAB offers grease elimination programs, sludge reduction programs, nitrification programs, aquatic plant management/algae programs, weed killers, foaming root destroyer and many other products for a client's system. Areas served include Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, and Kansas.

Learn more by visiting their website: www.teamlab.net.

Working with Water: The Red River Retention Authority

A BASIN-WIDE APPROACH TO REDUCING FLOOD RISK WHILE PROTECTING AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

By Brian Fuder, Executive Director
Red River Retention Authority

For residents of eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota, water is both a blessing and a challenge. The Red River Valley's rich soils and flat terrain support one of North America's most productive agricultural regions, yet those same characteristics make the area highly susceptible to flooding. When snowmelt and spring rains arrive, water spreads slowly across the landscape before making its northward journey to Lake Winnipeg.

Over the years, communities across the basin have learned that managing this water requires cooperation that extends far beyond city limits, county lines, or even state borders. The Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) was created to strengthen that cooperation — providing a basin-wide framework to reduce flood risk while supporting agriculture, infrastructure, and economic stability.

BUILT ON DECADES OF COOPERATION

The RRRA builds on a long history of regional collaboration. Major floods in 1997, 2009, and 2011 underscored the need for coordinated solutions across the basin.

In Minnesota, the Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) has coordinated planning and construction of flood damage reduction projects among watershed districts for decades. Numerous upstream storage projects developed through this partnership have demonstrated how strategically holding water upstream can reduce downstream flood peaks.

In North Dakota, the Red River Joint Water Resource District (RRJWRD) has provided a similar coordinating role for county water resource districts. Through joint planning, project sponsorship, and collaboration with state and federal partners, the RRJWRD has advanced major flood mitigation efforts throughout the state's portion of the basin.

Together with counties, drainage authorities, municipalities, and landowners, these organizations established the cooperative foundation on which the RRRA now operates.

A BASIN-WIDE PERSPECTIVE

Water does not recognize political boundaries. Actions taken upstream can influence flood conditions many miles downstream. The RRRA's core mission is to address flooding from this system-wide perspective.

The Authority promotes distributed upstream retention — temporarily storing runoff during peak events and releasing it gradually once river levels decline. By flattening flood crests, retention projects can reduce risks for downstream communities while allowing upstream lands to return to normal use afterward.

This approach complements existing measures such as levees, diversions, and channel improvements. Rather than relying on a single solution, the basin increasingly relies on a combination of strategies working together.

WHO PARTICIPATES?

The RRRA is a multi-jurisdictional organization composed of local governments and water management entities across both Minnesota and North Dakota portions of the basin. Its governing board includes representatives from member counties, watershed districts, and water resource districts, ensuring both upstream and downstream interests are represented.

Technical advisors and partner agencies provide additional expertise, allowing decisions to be grounded in sound science and practical experience. Importantly, the Authority coordinates efforts rather than replacing local control — projects continue to be locally sponsored while benefiting from basin-level planning.

PROJECTS AND PROGRESS

Retention projects vary widely depending on local geography and needs. Some involve modifying existing infrastructure, while others propose new storage sites designed to hold runoff temporarily during major events.

The Maple River system in North Dakota provides one example of how multiple projects can work together to produce cumulative benefits. Similar opportunities exist throughout the basin, where coordinated retention can reduce flood stages without creating unacceptable upstream impacts.

Many projects also consider secondary benefits – such as water quality improvements, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities — demonstrating that flood mitigation investments can serve multiple purposes.

GUIDED BY SCIENCE

Planning retention projects requires extensive technical analysis. Hydrologic modeling helps predict how water moves across the basin under different conditions. Engineering studies ensure structural safety and operational effectiveness. Economic evaluations compare project costs with expected reductions in flood damages.

Research conducted by universities, federal agencies, and regional organizations has consistently shown that distributed retention, when implemented at sufficient scale, can significantly reduce peak flows in the Red River system.

Monitoring networks — including stream gauges and precipitation data — provide essential information for both long-term planning and real-time flood forecasting.

WHY IT MATTERS

Flooding in the Red River Valley affects more than local communities. The region plays a vital role in national agricultural production, transportation corridors, and rural economies. Flood disruptions can delay planting, damage infrastructure, and impose costly recovery efforts.

By reducing flood severity, retention projects help stabilize agricultural operations, protect public investments, and reduce the need for emergency response and rebuilding.

LOOKING AHEAD

The RRRA represents a long-term commitment to proactive flood mitigation through cooperation and shared responsibility. While no single project can eliminate flooding entirely, coordinated retention offers a practical way to reduce risk while preserving the productivity and character of the basin.

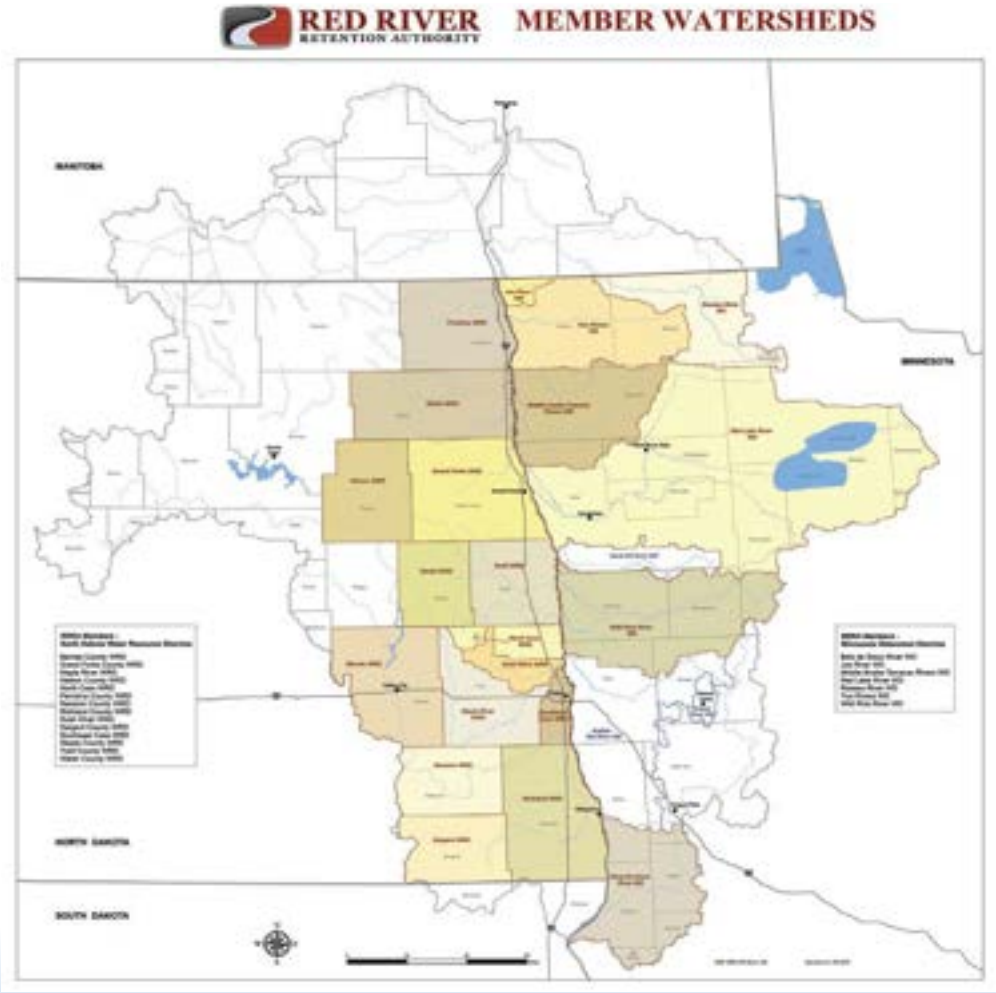
Continued progress will depend on partnerships among local governments, state agencies, federal programs, and landowners — a collaborative approach that has defined the region for generations.

A TRADITION THAT CONTINUES

Perhaps the most defining characteristic of the Red River Basin is its spirit of cooperation. When waters rise, communities come together, sharing resources and working side by side.

The Red River Retention Authority extends that tradition to a basin-wide scale, building on the leadership of organizations like the RRWMB and RRJWRD while preparing the region for future challenges.

Managing water in the Red River Valley has never been simple. But through collaboration, sound science, and practical planning, the basin continues to demonstrate that working together with water — rather than against it — offers the most sustainable path forward.



RRRA at a Glance

- Multi-jurisdictional organization spanning Minnesota and North Dakota
- Coordinates basin-wide flood mitigation efforts
- Focuses on distributed upstream retention
- Builds on work of RRWMB and RRJWRD
- Represents both upstream and downstream interests
- Supports protection of agriculture, infrastructure, and communities

The New Horizon of Irrigation: Mapping the Lifeblood of the Field

By Zach Kabelac, Aperture Earth

In the heart of southeastern North Dakota, irrigation serves as the silent engine of the regional economy. For growers in the Oakes area, the relationship between the sky, the soil, and the aquifer is a daily balancing act. Too much water leads to nutrient leaching and wasted electricity; too little results in yield-limiting crop stress. When dealing with high-value corn during periods of prolonged heat, it can take only a day or two to get behind.

Historically, managing this balance meant relying on a few scattered weather stations or walking the fields with a soil probe. Today, a collaboration between Aperture, North Dakota State University's (NDSU) NSF AgTech Engine, Grand Farm, and local growers is introducing a new "eye in the sky" to monitor North Dakota's fields with unprecedented detail.

SOLVING THE "MISSING MIDDLE"

North Dakota is a national leader in agricultural data. The North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) provides an impressive array of high-accuracy sensors across the state. However, North Dakota is a vast place. A sensor at an NDAWN station provides a perfect "truth" for that specific patch of dirt, but as any farmer knows, soil conditions can change drastically just three miles down the road.

This is the "Missing Middle." The massive gap between physical sensors where irrigators have historically been forced to "fly blind." In the Oakes region, where a sandy ridge can sit just a few hundred yards away from silt, loam, and clay, knowing the moisture level at a single point in the county, let alone a field, isn't enough to manage a 130-acre center pivot.

FROM POINTS TO POLYGONS: THE APERTURE APPROACH

To solve this, Aperture uses a method called "Data Fusion." We don't try to replace ground sensors; instead, we use them to "anchor" satellite imagery.

By utilizing advancements in low-frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) and thermal imaging, we can "see" through clouds and crop canopies to measure moisture in the top layer of the soil for every 100-foot square, or 540 data points per quarter section. For an irrigator, this means data is no longer about the county average; it is about their specific field, their specific topography, and the specific "wet spots" in their low-lying corners.

PRECISION IN PRACTICE: STAYING AHEAD OF THE HEAT

The true value of this technology isn't just in the maps; it's in the decisions it enables. During the 2025 growing season, Oakes irrigator Steve Hansen was faced with a classic August dilemma. While 2025 was abnormally wet, it created a unique challenge for timing: identifying exactly when the profile was finally depleting during windows of high heat.

Based on local weather reports and gut feeling, it appeared the corn had enough moisture to last another week. In corn production, the mantra is "never let the crop have a bad day," especially during grain fill.

Aperture's soil moisture maps, however, showed a different story. The data indicated that the soil was drying out much faster than expected, particularly on a high, sandy ridge running through the center of the field. Trusting the maps, Steve went into the field to double-check. The ground truth confirmed the satellite's warning: the crop was on the verge of stress. By turning the water on a week earlier than planned, he stayed ahead of the heat and avoided a yield-limiting event that would have gone unnoticed until it was too late.

BEYOND THE PIVOT: EFFICIENCY AND COST SAVINGS

For those operating multiple center pivots, the economic benefits are immediate. By integrating these maps with irrigation controllers like Reinke ReinCloud and Valley AgSense, growers can see exactly where their field is holding moisture and where it's draining too quickly. By identifying these zones, growers can:

- **Reduce Pumping Costs:** Save significantly on electricity and diesel.
- **Decrease Wear-and-Tear:** Extend the life of pivot tires, gearboxes, and pumps.

- **Prevent Nutrient Leaching:** Keep expensive fertilizers in the root zone rather than washing them into the groundwater.

VALIDATING THE "TRUTH"

A common question we get from producers is: "How do I know a satellite 400 miles up is right about my dirt?" To answer this, we spent the last year performing a rigorous "Accuracy Analysis" in southeast North Dakota. We compared our maps against dozens of in-ground sensors, national networks, and physical soil cores.

One of our most interesting findings was that the satellite model was often more reliable than the sensors in the ground. In the heavy clay soils of the Red River Valley, in-ground probes can lose contact with the soil as it shrinks and cracks, or they can experience electronic "drift." Because the satellite looks at the entire 100-foot pixel, it averages out these localized errors. Our study showed that Aperture's maps maintained an average accuracy greater than 93% across the NDAWN validation sites and in-field probes—accuracy that is more than sufficient for making day-to-day irrigation calls.

THE ROADMAP: 2026 AND BEYOND

The effort in North Dakota is moving from the research phase to a full-scale operational tool for the 2026 season. Our roadmap is focused on turning "yesterday's data" into "tomorrow's decisions":

- **Root Zone Propagation:** While satellites primarily see the surface, we are developing models that calculate moisture down through the root zone (1–2 meters) based on crop type and soil texture.
- **3-5 Day Forecasting:** We are integrating weather forecasts to show growers what their soil moisture will look like three days from now. This allows a farmer to time a pivot ahead of a predicted heatwave, rather than reacting to it.
- **Semi-Weekly Prescriptions:** By 2027, we aim to provide automated variable-rate irrigation (VRI) prescriptions that plug directly into the pivot, automating the process of water and energy conservation.

A LEGACY OF WATER STEWARDSHIP

North Dakota has always been a state of innovators. From the first irrigation districts to the massive infrastructure of the Garrison Diversion, the state has always understood that water is its most precious commodity.

The work being done today in the Oakes area is the next chapter of that legacy. By combining the "boots on the ground" expertise of local growers like Steve Hansen with advanced technology, we are ensuring that North Dakota's water isn't just used, it's mastered.

Whether you are a rural water customer, an educator, or a third-generation farmer, these tools are being built to ensure that when we turn on the pivot, the water—and the profit—will be there for generations to come.

Zach Kabelac
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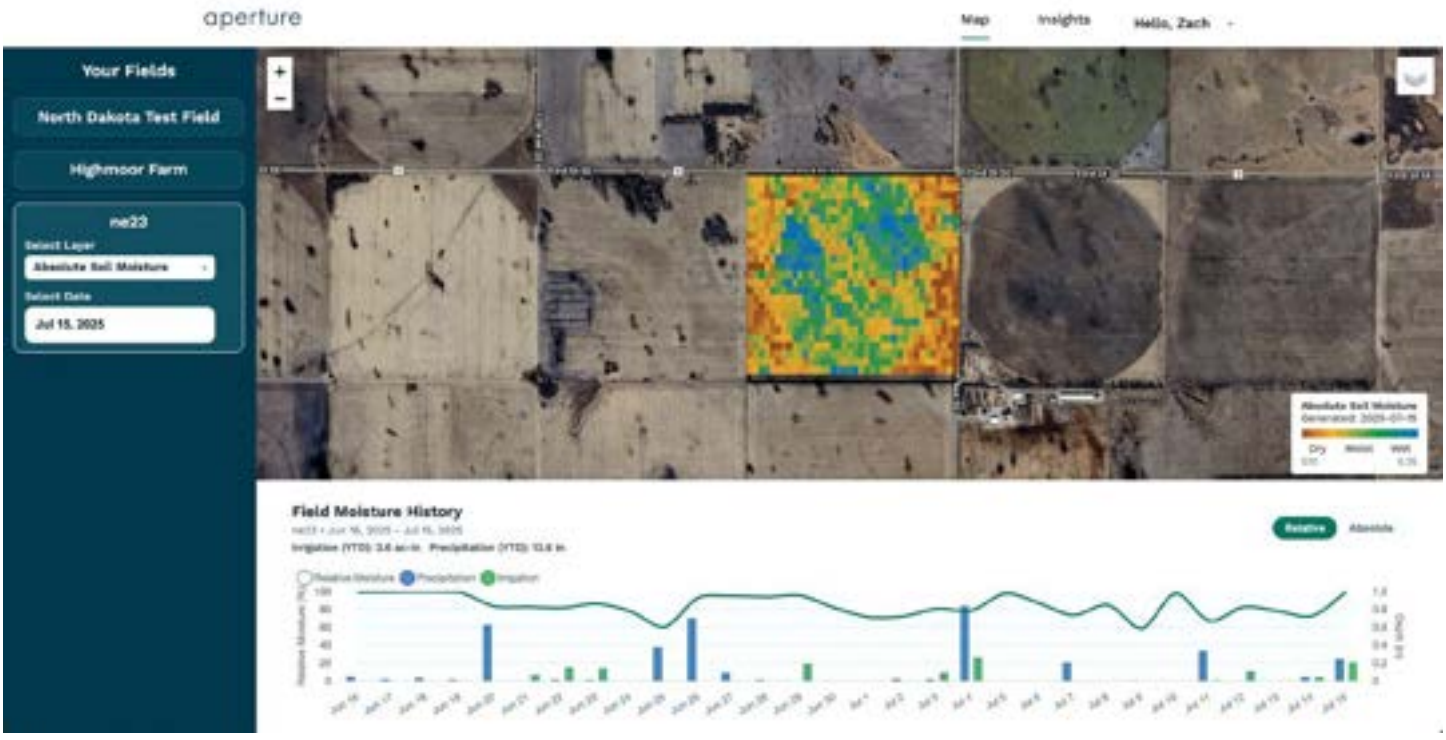
301-448-0090



2026 Dushinske & Jamison Water Resources Scholarship

APPLY FOR THE 2026 Dushinske & Jamison Water Resources Scholarship STARTING January 1, 2026

The North Dakota Water Education Foundation (NDWEF) will begin accepting applications for the 2026 Dushinske & Jamison Water Resources Scholarship on January 1, 2026!

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 15, 2026

This scholarship honors the legacy of Russ Dushinske and Warren Jamison, whose unwavering commitment to water development in North Dakota set the standard for leadership and service. Established by the NDWEF within the North Dakota Community Foundation, the Dushinske & Jamison Water Resources Scholarship Endowment supports the next generation of leaders in water resources.

For more details, visit https://ndwater.org/scholarships/

Scholarship recipients are required to attend the North Dakota Water Convention awards program on December 10, 2026, to present their essays either in person or virtually.

2026

DEADLINE APRIL 15, 2026

DUSHINSKE & JAMISON WATER RESOURCES SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

NORTH DAKOTA WATER

_____
Name of Student *Date of Birth*

_____
Address *City* *State* *Zip*

_____
Student's Telephone *Student's Personal Email (not school-linked)*

_____
Parent(s) Name *Parent(s) Telephone*

_____
Parent(s) Mailing Address *City* *State* *Zip*

_____
Names and relationships of relatives/guardians involved in water management, protection or development and how they are involved in the industry.

EDUCATION

_____
High School *City* *Graduation Year*

_____
Principal's Name *Grade Point Average*

_____
Name of College or University (attending or planning to attend) *Expected Graduation Date*

_____
Mailing Address *City* *State* *Zip*

_____
Intended Major *Intended Minor*

_____
Other Education or Training

ESSAY *(ATTACH)*

In a two-page essay (12-point type, double-spaced), write about YOUR MOST VIVID MEMORY CONCERNING WATER.

Please provide the following information (please type):

1) Honors and awards
2) Non-academic school activities and special interests
3) High resolution photo
3) Career plans after college graduation
4) Reason(s) for applying for this scholarship

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY

North Dakota Water Education Foundation
PO Box 2254
Bismarck, ND 58502
701-223-8332
Fax: 701-223-4645
editor@ndwater.net
https://ndwater.org/scholarships/

I certify that the above information and data are correct and I consent disclosure of public information. I understand that the essay I wrote for the purpose of this scholarship competition may be used and distributed by the North Dakota Water Education Foundation without further approval from me.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Facts in the Missouri River Basin Debate

KEN ROYSE
Program Manager, Missouri River Joint Water Board

An opinion piece recently published in a national agriculture publication discussed the danger of out-of-basin water transfers across continental divides – arguing that such transfers harm the ability of water users of other Missouri River basin states to access and use such water. The article was structured as a conflict between the upper basin states and the lower basin states. But the article was clearly aimed at North Dakota, and it was meant to present a position for limiting Missouri River water use in North Dakota.

As is often said, everyone can have their own opinion, but we all need to have the same facts. The facts are as follows:

- All the states of the basin contribute water into the system. The upper basin states of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota consistently contribute half or over half of the total flow. No upper basin state, either individually or collectively, is taking any amount of water that does any harm to the other states' ability to also use such water. North Dakota only uses less than one-half of one percent of the flow of the river and currently has plans for only another one-half of one percent. This is an amount so minimal that it would be hard to distinguish its absence by the time the river reaches St. Louis, M.O.
- All the states in the Missouri River basin benefit from the federal government's construction of the six dams that control flows on the river through the Pick Sloan Act. However, the construction of those dams came at a cost – a cost shouldered solely by states in the upper basin. Construction of the dams resulted in a loss of 1.7 million acres of land in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. These upper basin states made these large land sacrifices, and resultant economic sacrifices, so that the entire basin could benefit.
- North Dakota, for a trade of our lost land, was promised irrigation development of more than 1.2 million acres along with power benefits. Today, 80 years after such promises, the federal commitment for irrigation development has dropped to approximately 70,000 acres. A similar promise, also not fulfilled, was made to Montana and South Dakota.

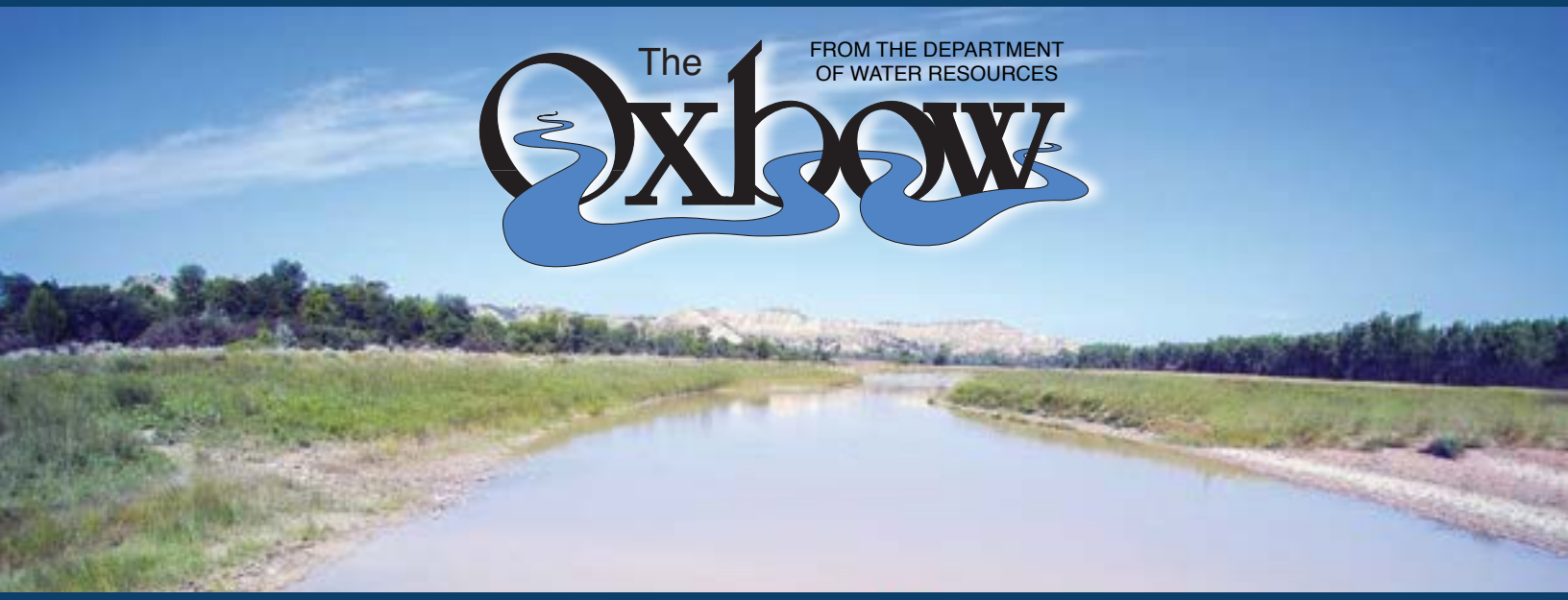
- Benefits of the Pick Sloan Act included promises of flood control, water for domestic, municipal, and industrial use, irrigation development, power supply, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancements, and navigation support. All benefits noted, except for navigation, are enjoyed by all the states. But only the downstream states enjoy the navigation benefit.
- The tremendous benefit of hydropower is completely provided by dams located in the upper basin. However, much of that benefit is not used by either the upper or lower basin states, with export of that power delivered to states not in the basin.
- Let's be clear on the issue of the navigation benefit. It is enjoyed primarily and almost solely by the State of Missouri, but it is not the priority of the Pick Sloan Act. In fact, the Pick Sloan Act clearly states that navigation shall '*not conflict with any beneficial consumptive use, present or future, in (other) States (of the Basin).*' To any skeptical reader, please Google the 1944 Flood Control Act, Section 1.b.

In North Dakota, to make maximum use and benefit of the river system, we must transport Missouri River water across our state and across a continental Divide, as is being done in other basins of our country. This transfer of water creates only a phantom problem for the State of Missouri. They contend that any water taken out of the river system, no matter how small or minute, no matter the purpose, and no matter the need, effectively threatens their own water usage from the river. That is false.

In fact, only a few years ago a much-needed North Dakota water project was attacked on that premise. That project planned to use 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) of Missouri River water, out of an average river flow measured at more than 20,000 cfs at Bismarck, N.D., and measured at more than 90,000 cfs at St Louis, M.O. That project was promptly challenged by the State of Missouri through the National Environmental Policy Act process. Missouri contended that North Dakota's taking of .03% of the total flow out of the river would be a damaging depletion of the river. That lawsuit was rightfully and promptly dismissed by the courts. The amounts of water used by any upper basin states, both individually and collectively, is not unreasonable, nor do current plans for additional water needs put any unreasonable restrictions on water use on the lower basin states.

In a larger sense, it makes no difference the extent, degree, or amount any state, inclusive of all our basin states, withdraw from the river system for their own self determined needs. What is important is mutual recognition and respect amongst all our basin neighbors for all of us to have a fair use of this important resource. We in the upper basin don't come to the lower basin and tell any of them how much water to use, how to use it, or where to use it. We say, yes, put it to the highest and best use so long as such use does not interfere with the prior rights of the other users in the basin, and, importantly, recognizes the sacrifices made by the upper basin states so we all can pursue the benefits of the Pick Sloan Act.

The challenge we all have, upper basin and lower basin, is to be diligently aware of efforts to export the river system water to the west, out of the states that make up our basin. The states that contribute water to the system, and particularly the states that made the large land sacrifices for the Pick Sloan Act, should, without questions or challenge, have reasonable use of the river within their respective states. We should recognize that the real threat to our basin are those efforts to take large amounts of water out of the basin states. That should be our common shared concern. Let's not be distracted or divided by any efforts which may interfere with fair usage of this great river resource that we all share.



IMPROVING HOW WE WORK

INSIDE DWR'S PROCESS EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE (PET)

The Process Efficiency Task Force (PET) was created with a simple idea in mind: if we want to continue improving how we serve North Dakotans, we must be willing to look inward and evaluate how our own processes work. PET was inspired by the State's Task Force on Government Efficiency and Governor Armstrong's call to "get back to basics," which encouraged agencies to examine internal operations for efficiency and accountability. At DWR, that translated into a focused effort to strengthen our systems, support our staff, and build better processes for the future.

In October, the Department launched PET as a department-wide effort to review internal permitting processes and standard operating procedures. The goal was not to change what the Department does, but to improve how it does it by increasing consistency, timeliness, and efficiency.

Rather than targeting a single program, DWR chose to focus its efforts on permitting. Permitting is one of the Department's core responsibilities and one of its most complex functions, and it is often where efficiency, clarity, and consistency matter most. As such, PET brought together 12 permitting teams for review sessions. Each team evaluated its workflows from start to finish, looking for delays, duplication, and opportunities for clearer guidance and better tools.

PET sessions followed three guiding principles: review existing processes, identify bottlenecks, and focus on

improvements that create lasting value. The sessions created space for honest conversations about what works and where change could make everyday work more effective.

What emerged was not just a list of fixes, but a clearer understanding of how each program faces its own unique challenges. At the same time, the process created an opportunity for teams to learn from one another. By sharing approaches, ideas, and lessons learned across divisions, PET is helping the Department apply successful practices in new areas and strengthen processes more consistently across the Department.

By the end of the review sessions, more than 50 potential efficiencies and future initiatives had been identified.

Some were small and practical, such as clarifying forms or streamlining review steps. Others pointed toward broader opportunities involving technology, training, and coordination between programs. Together, they formed a roadmap for continued improvement.

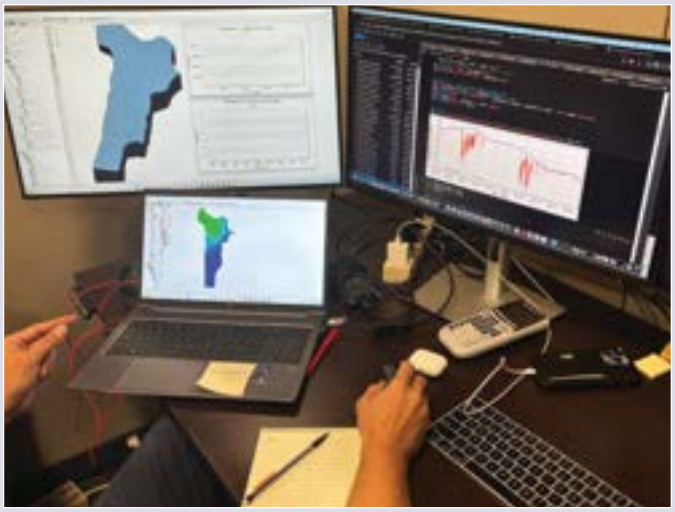
One of the strongest themes was balancing thorough regulatory review with efficiency. Teams identified opportunities to clarify internal handoffs and adjust the complexity of the review chain so permits move more predictably and can be issued more quickly, without compromising regulatory rigor. Others saw value in standardized checklists for applicants and internal reviewers so requirements are clear at submittal, reducing situations where applications are returned for information that could have been requested earlier. The goal is not to cut corners, but to make each step clearer, more consistent, and more deliberate.

Transparency also emerged as an area needing stronger and more consistent policy support. In some cases, this means developing or updating internal policies so decisions are

grounded in clear, repeatable standards. In others, it may involve proposing changes to North Dakota law to better reflect how permitting is carried out in practice. As those foundations are strengthened, application instructions, forms, and website content can be aligned accordingly.

Pre-application information was another major focus. Teams discussed better coordinating projects that require multiple permits so the overall application process is smoother and more intuitive. Leveraging technology to support a more unified permitting experience is a priority coming out of PET.

Beyond process and policy improvements, PET also highlighted opportunities to better use technology to



improve accessibility, efficiency, and integration. This includes strengthening ADA compliance, expanding the use of telemetry data to support more timely decision-making, and exploring better integration of mapping into the application process.

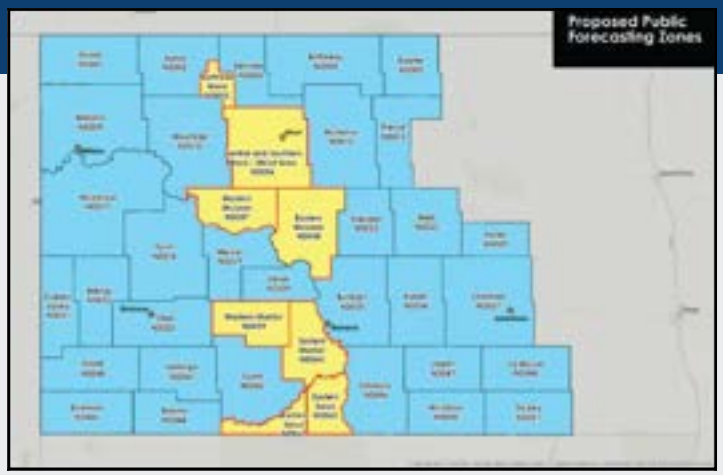
Together, these improvements move PET from concept to action by strengthening forms, front-end information, coordination, and consistency across permitting. It directly supports increased efficiency, predictability, and transparency in reviews.

PET is part of the Department's 2025–26 interim work, and its focus is now shifting from review to implementation. Many initiatives are already being prioritized, and others will follow. Updates will be shared as progress is made and milestones are reached.

At its core, PET reflects a commitment to stronger systems. It shows that improving efficiency is not about cutting corners, but about creating clearer, more consistent, and more practical processes. By applying statewide efficiency principles at the agency level, DWR has built a thoughtful, staff-driven approach to improvement that strengthens how the Department carries out its mission every day.

THE
ATMOSPHERIC RESERVOIR
Examining the Atmosphere and Atmospheric Resource Management

NEW FORECAST ZONES FOR NORTH DAKOTA



By Mark D. Schneider

On March 3, the National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast Office in Bismarck began issuing weather forecast products and warnings for four additional zones in the central part of our state. The previous zones included the entire counties of McLean, Morton, Sioux, and Ward, which span large areas from west to east or north to south, making conditions oftentimes too general if weather conditions are only affecting one part of the county. Now when a weather forecast is issued for one of these counties, forecasters have the ability to specifically mention Western or Eastern McLean, Western or Eastern Morton, Western or Eastern Sioux, or Northwest or Central and Southern Ward County.

When consulting Chauncy Schultz from the NWS Forecast Office Bismarck about the new zone changes, he had this explanation: "The new forecast zones were created based on meteorologists' experience with past high-impact weather events. This is the first time changes have been made to forecast zones in North Dakota since 1999, when Walsh County was reconfigured into two different forecast zones. These changes will allow us to better-specify which parts of these large counties are truly impacted by high-impact weather through more precise watches, warnings, and advisories. For example, the City of Mandan will no longer need to be included in a Blizzard Warning when a storm only affects western Morton County. This provides better information to all the residents in the area and will reduce instances where Mandan is in a warning (because of what's happening in western parts of Morton County) while Bismarck is not. Similar examples can be made for the Kenmare and Minot areas in the new Ward County forecast zones and can be found in all of the new zones. We believe this will lead to improved watches, warnings, and advisories in all of the new forecast zones."

Over the years there have been significant improvements to the accuracy of weather forecasts. The new forecast zone changes will be noticeable, at least on a local level, when weather warnings are issued for the four affected counties. If you have a programmable weather radio or device that recognizes specific Universal Geographic Codes (UGC), be sure to make the code changes listed in the table below so that you are receiving all the new information for your area(s).

WFO BIS's Affected Public Weather Forecast Zones

Current Zone Name/ Current UGZ (Z)	New Public/Fire Zone Name / New UGC
NDZ011: Ward	NDZ055: Northwest Ward
	NDZ056: Central and Southern Ward/Minot Area
NDZ021: McLean	NDZ057: Western McLean
	NDZ058: Eastern McLean
NDZ034: Morton	NDZ059: Western Morton
	NDZ060: Eastern Morton
NDZ045: Sioux	NDZ061: Western Sioux
	NDZ062: Eastern Sioux

North Dakota Department of Water Resources | Data & Atmospheric Resources | 1200 Memorial Highway, Bismarck, ND 58504
(701) 328-2788 | dwr.nd.gov

ND Weather Modification Association | PO Box 2599 | Bismarck, ND 58502 | (701) 223-4232

2026 North Dakota Waterways PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The 2026 North Dakota Waterways Photo Contest will be begin accepting entries **January 1, 2026**

Be creative! If you "Discover our Cover," you win!

| Deadline for submitting photos is May 15, 2026 |

More information at www.ndwater.org/photo-contest-winners/

Winter, Summer, Spring or Fall . . . WE WANT TO SEE THEM ALL!

We're looking for those hidden away people and places to help us showcase North Dakota's water treasures. Take a picture suitable for the magazine's front cover. It could be taken in your backyard, at the neighborhood playground, by the creek, behind the farm house, or near your favorite fishing hole - in any season.

Photography Contest Rules:
Entries will be judged on suitability for publication on the front cover, appropriate representation of North Dakota's water, and photographic creativity and quality. Photographs must have been taken in North Dakota and water must appear in some form (i.e., snow, rain, ice, lake, river, etc.) in the photograph. Digital photos preferred and must be at least 300 DPI at 9 x 12 inches, vertical orientation. Photographs not meeting these specifications will be disqualified. There are no categories.

E-mail digital photos to editor@ndwater.net.

Send entries to: 2026 Waterways Photo Contest, c/o *North Dakota Water* magazine, P.O. Box 2254, Bismarck, ND 58502.

Entries must be received by May 15, 2026.
One overall winner, runners-up, and honorable mention winners will be chosen at the judge's discretion. The decisions of the judge are final. There is no entry fee and no limit on the number of photographs you may enter. ***Only the winners will be notified.*** There will be no acknowledgement of receipt of entries. Results will be published in the July issue of North Dakota Water. Prizes: Winners will receive cash prizes.
Any winners' photos may appear on a future front cover of the magazine.

2026 North Dakota Waterways Photo Contest Entry Form

Attach this form to each entry. Copies of the entry form are acceptable.

Photographer's name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Photograph title _____

Where was the photo taken? _____

WINNER AGREEMENT:
If I'm selected a winner of this contest, I hereby grant permission to the North Dakota Water Education Foundation to use my photograph(s) in future issues of *North Dakota Water* and for any publicity associated with future photo contests or the North Dakota Water Education Foundation.

☐ Check here to allow us to add your photo submissions to the North Dakota Water Education Foundation's photo library for possible future use.

_____

Signature Date

THE SPIGOT
from the NORTH DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

MEET North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association's Newest Team Members

By Sienna Houle

MEET KEVIN COREY

Circuit Rider East

Kevin Corey joined North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA) in July as a Circuit Rider for eastern North Dakota. He has been in water distribution and water treatment since 2013. In his free time, Kevin enjoys spending time with his fiancée and friends, camping, and playing cribbage. He also volunteers for his local fire department and ambulance. Kevin is excited to be part of the NDRWSA team.

The Circuit Rider program provides a team of drinking water professionals to provide training and technical assistance to water utility managers, boards and operations specialists. As the NDRWSA Circuit Rider for the eastern half of the state, Kevin provides hands-on training and technical assistance to small, rural water systems on an everyday basis. The on-site training is designed for participants to take ownership in learning how to resolve their current and future problems. Some of the assistance opportunities include identifying and evaluating affordable solutions to water and wastewater problems in rural areas, enhancing compliance with federal regulations, and improving treatment processes with efforts to protect the environment and public health.

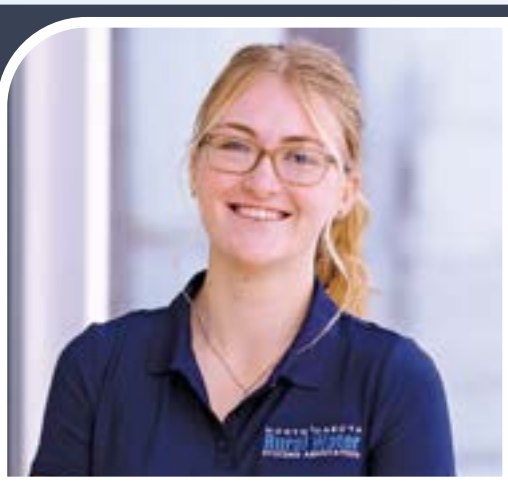
"I'm excited to meet people who work in different communities and assist them with their water needs."

MEET SIENNA HOULE

Source Water Specialist

Sienna joined NDRWSA in November as the Source Water Specialist. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in Geohydrology and a minor in GIS from Bemidji State University. She is passionate about hydrology and is excited to contribute to the meaningful work being done by ND Rural Water.

The Source Water Protection program is designed to protect the quality of drinking water in rural areas while building local responsibility and more sustainable communities. As the Source Water Specialist, Sienna can work with small water municipalities, governments, and other groups to develop and implement strategies to protect drinking water sources. As a voluntary program, Sienna can recommend actions to reduce or eliminate contamination threats to water quality and public health, provide contingency planning and public outreach education. Efforts in source water protection can reduce point and non-point source pollution, resulting in protecting public health and welfare of communities, as well as saving consumer's money.



"I'm looking forward to helping protect drinking water sources for systems across the state and to educating them about water in their community."

Sustaining Rural Water Systems: A Community Commitment

By Rachel Takala, Project/Funding Specialist

Across North Dakota, many residents rely on small rural water and wastewater systems. These systems are the backbone of our communities, yet they face mounting challenges: population decline, limited technical expertise, aging infrastructure, and stricter regulatory requirements for safe drinking water. Sustainability is no longer just a goal—it is a necessity.

The future of small rural water systems depends on community involvement. Here is how you can make a difference:

- Serve and volunteer by joining your city council or local water board.
- Volunteer your time to assist with essential tasks.
- Advocate for funding by supporting efforts to secure grants, loans, and fair rate structures to keep systems financially viable. This could include volunteering your time. Grant and loan applications can be overwhelming and time consuming; not all communities have full-time employees to fulfill these tasks.
- Promote awareness by encouraging neighbors to conserve water and participate in community planning. The more community members who take an active role in your system the better the outcome.
- Prepare for emergencies by proactively planning for outages or contamination events to protect public health. Having a plan in place will reduce confusion and support a timely return to normal operations.

To ensure safe, sustainable, and efficient water services, rural systems must strengthen their capacity in key areas:

- **Technical Assistance:** On-site operator training, remote monitoring, troubleshooting, and standardized operating procedures.
- **Financial Management:** Accurate financial records, audits, rate-setting guidance, and asset management are essential for long-term sustainability.
- **Leadership Development:** Training board members, engaging the community, and creating a strategic plan for future growth.
- **Technology Integration:** Implement SCADA systems for remote monitoring, leak detection, smart metering, and energy-efficient pumps and treatment systems.
- **Best Practices & Compliance:** Regular chlorination and disinfection, routine maintenance, emergency response planning, and adherence to state and federal regulation.

Sustaining small rural water systems requires commitment, collaboration, and continuous learning. Every citizen's involvement matters—whether through leadership, volunteering, or advocacy. Together, we can ensure that our communities thrive, and that safe, reliable water remains a cornerstone of rural life. Contact ND Rural Water Systems Association for more information on our training programs and on-site technical assistance.

NDRWSA On-Site Assistance

Aerial & Sludge Drones
Backflow Testing Training & Repair
Leak Detection/Water Loss Management
Curbstop, Line & Valve Location
Poly-Pigging (Water & Sewer)
Consumer Confidence Report
Rate Analysis & System Planning
Water & Wastewater System Troubleshooting
Lagoon Sludge Testing
Rule & Regulation Updates
Sustainability & Management Planning
Source Water Protection Plan Development
Emergency Response Planning
Risk & Resilience Assessment

Training Programs

Annual EXPO & Conference
Operator Certification Preparation
Leadership Retreat
Technical, Managerial & Financial Training
WaterPro Conference
Apprenticeship Program
Virtual Training
Backflow Certification & Re-certification

Our Water Keeping it Clean

North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

Reducing Water Pollution with the Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program

Meridith Miller, Environmental Scientist
North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

Clean water is essential for drinking, recreation, agriculture, and wildlife. One challenge for protecting water quality in North Dakota is nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution (NPS) is pollution that comes from many sources rather than a single pipe or discharge. It is often runoff or snowmelt carrying manure or fertilizer from croplands or pastures, bacteria from livestock or failing septic systems, or stormwater runoff in developed areas. Since NPS pollution comes from many sources, it is difficult to track and manage.

The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) operates a Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program which works to restore and protect water quality impacted by NPS pollution. The NPS Management Program does not rely on regulation; instead, it works with local partners to provide education, technical assistance, and financial assistance on a voluntary basis to implement effective conservation practices. The program focuses on waterbodies that are impaired or at risk due to NPS pollution and works to reduce pollution before it reaches lakes and rivers.

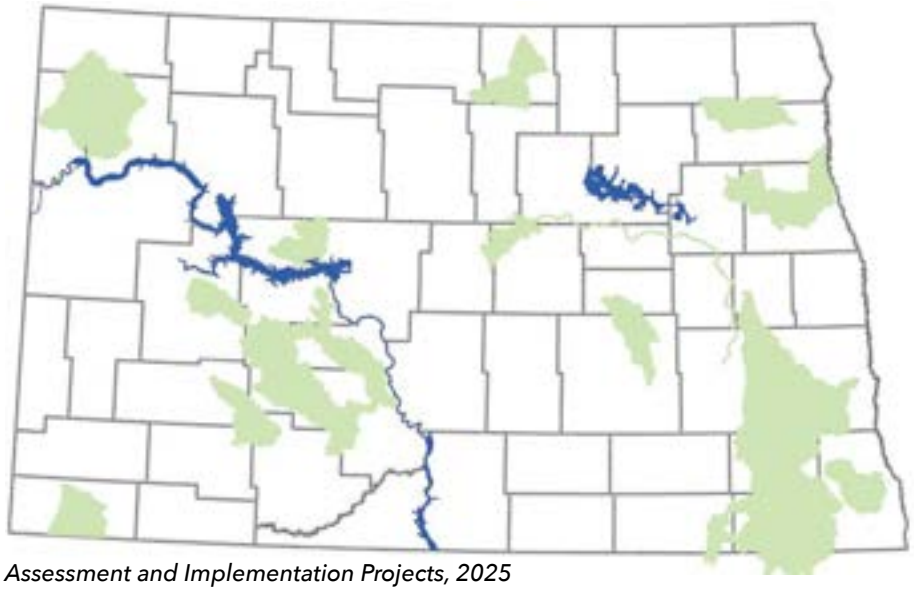
The NPS Management Program recently published a draft of the *2026-2030 NPS Management Plan for public comment and partner input*. This report is expected to be finalized in March 2026 and outlines the program structure, goals, and objectives for the next five years. The goals of the NPS program include:

1. **Increase water quality monitoring** across the state to better understand statewide and local needs related to NPS pollution.
2. **Improve water quality trends** by supporting local watershed projects that reduce NPS pollution.
3. **Increase public awareness of NPS pollution**, including its causes and sources and ways to reduce it.
4. **Support Soil Conservation Districts** and other partners with watershed planning and implementation work that address local water quality priorities.
5. **Support the *North Dakota Nutrient Reduction Strategy for Surface Waters*** with a focus on reducing nitrogen and phosphorus.

How Does The NPS Management Program work?

The NPS Management Program follows the framework set forth in the State NPS Management Plan for how it operates, what NPS issues are a priority, and what types of projects receive funding/support. Projects supported by the NPS Program are awarded through an annual competitive application process. For projects that are approved, the NPS Management Program Coordinator manages the administration of the grant funding received to support the program and projects with external partners, and NDDEQ program support staff assist with the design of sampling and analysis plans (if applicable), project coordination, and report development. At any given time, there are 35 to 45 NPS projects active around the state working to achieve the goals of the NPS Management Program.

Development or Assessment Projects focus on collecting water samples to understand current water quality conditions in a watershed. Monitoring is often prompted by a local water quality concerns, such as Harmful Algal Blooms in a popular lake. Assessment projects may also be used to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLS), which identify how much pollution a waterbody can handle and where the pollution is coming from. If there is



Assessment and Implementation Projects, 2025

strong local interest, development projects often lead to implementation projects. When interest is limited, education and outreach activities may be used to build awareness and encourage future project development.

Watershed Projects are long-term efforts through which project sponsors provide technical and financial support to producers and residents to reduce NPS pollution within a specific watershed. The goal is to restore waterbodies that are impaired because of NPS pollution. Projects may focus on a single solution, such as repairing or replacing failing septic systems, or they may support multiple Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address a variety of potential sources in the watershed. BMPs implemented through these projects are designed with the specific intent to reduce bacteria, sediment or nutrients entering surface waters.

Tell Us Your Water Quality Concerns!

NDDEQ's Watershed Management Program is conducting a survey to help determine our surface water priorities for the next two years.

We want to hear from you!

What lakes and streams do you use?

What issues have you noticed?

Scan the QR code or visit the link to take the brief survey.

https://tinyurl.com/NDDEQWaterSurvey

Support Projects provide specialized tools or services to help other NPS projects succeed. Current examples include engineering design assistance, a web-based tool for identifying high priority areas within a watershed, and a cost-share program for agricultural waste systems.

Information and Education Projects help people of all ages learn about various NPS pollution issues. Projects may be statewide or locally based events, demonstrations or workshops tailored to specific audiences.

How Are Projects Selected?

Waterbodies are prioritized using the 303(d) list in North Dakota's *Integrated Report*, which identifies waters that do not meet state water quality standards. This list helps determine where additional monitoring, planning, or restoration is needed. Waterbodies without recent data are also a priority, especially where there is local interest in starting a project.

Watershed, Support, and Education Projects are funded through an annual competitive application process. Project sponsors create Project Implementation Plans that describe how the project work will support the goals outlined in the NPS Management Program. A Task Force reviews project proposals, listens to presentations from project sponsors, and provides recommendations for projects to be funded.

Learn More

More information about the NPS Management Program, including the Annual Program Report (StoryMap), application guidance and success stories are available on the *NPS Program webpage*.

For questions, contact the NPS Management Program Coordinator, Emilee Novak, at 701-328-5210 or ejnovak@nd.gov.

NORTH Dakota Be Legendary. | Environmental Quality

4201 Normandy Street
Bismarck, N.D. 58503-1324
701-328-5210 | *www.deq.nd.gov*

THE Timmer Chronicles

By Scott Nelson

I lost a dear friend this last year. His name was Tom, Tom the Tom Cat.

Tom came to us many years ago as a little orphaned kitten. My sister happened to be visiting at the time, and she took it on herself to save it. My sister fed it milk several times a day with an eye dropper.

After a while, Tom figured out how to drink on his own, although he would often crawl in the saucer of milk and get sopping wet. As time went on, I started bringing in mice I killed while hauling hay. Given a mouse, this sweet little kitten would turn from Jekyll to Hyde, becoming a vicious tiger, growling and daring anyone to take the mouse from him. If you tried, you were guaranteed to be leaking red stuff from some nasty scratches!

That first winter Tom was a house cat. He became a pampered indoor kitten and would spend hours lounging on the couch or playing around the house. In the evenings, he would lay on my lap while I watched TV. One night as he was laying, seemingly asleep, he suddenly sprung off my lap and, in a flash, caught a mouse who had foolishly ventured out from under the refrigerator. We usually get mice in the house during the winter, but that winter Tom was inside with us, mice were an endangered species!

When spring and nice weather came, Tom wanted out! His days as a house cat were over. He would come back in from time to time for a short visit but never stayed. House living was for sissies! He took ownership of the place and would patrol the outbuildings, taking care of any rodents he may find. He also got big and, being a tom cat, wouldn't tolerate any other tom cats on the place. Many times, over the years, I would hear some commotion with much yowling, growling and hissing. I'd catch a glimpse of fur flying, then the retreat of hapless male cat with Tom right behind. Lady cats were welcome and before long, all kittens born on the place were his.

Tom would often venture out away from the home place, hunting the fence lines, fields and haystacks. There were many times during calving season, as I would ride out to check cattle, I'd find Tom patiently staking out a pocket gopher mound. He probably could hear the gopher working underground. When the gopher would push a bunch of dirt to the surface, Tom would be there to receive him. Some of these gophers were quite large and provided Tom with an ample meal. Then there was a time we had some rats move in under our granary. I noticed Tom spent a lot of time in and around that granary. Pretty soon we had no rat problem.

One thing Tom did that I never had seen a tom cat do before – he would walk across the yard with a freshly caught mouse. He'd get the attention of a kitten who would run out to greet him. After some persuasion, Tom would reluctantly allow the kitten to take the mouse from him. Old Tom would never allow an adult cat to do that, but he had a soft spot for kittens.

One time a squirrel somehow found his way down the chimney to the furnace and ended up in our basement. We became aware of him when we heard scurrying around under the floor in the crawl space. How to get rid of him? He couldn't figure out how to get back out on his own and it would be impossible to catch him. After pondering it for a time, I thought about Tom. I went out, got him, and put him in the basement. All was still – the quiet before the storm. Suddenly the battle started. We could hear the chattering and racket as it moved from place to place under the floor. After several minutes, all was quiet again. Tom eventually came out of the basement, looking very satisfied, with a big belly!

Last summer Old Tom was getting thinner and had trouble getting around. I knew the end was near. He was found in one of his favorite napping places. I buried him under our big ash tree. He was well over 20 years old.

See yuh next time, Scott

Honoring Water Advocates

Each year at the Annual Joint North Dakota Water Convention and Irrigation Workshop, the water industry recognizes individuals who have put forth great effort and have dedicated their time and knowledge to North Dakota's water industry.

This year, two individuals from Garrison Diversion received awards at the convention. Duane DeKrey, general manager of Garrison Diversion, was honored with the Commodore Award and Stacey Gussiaas, Garrison Diversion's Administrative Assistant, was honored with a Water Wheel Award.

COMMODORE AWARD
Duane DeKrey

DeKrey received the Commodore Award for his leadership and commitment to water resource development in the state. He now holds the rank of Commodore in the North Dakota Mythical Navy.

Garrison Diversion has benefited from DeKrey's leadership for more than 10 years. As the general manager, he oversees a staff of 31, reports directly to its 28-member board of directors, and balances an annual budget of $200 million. He spent 10 sessions in the North Dakota Legislature, the first as a Senator from District 31 and the remaining nine sessions as a Representative from District 14, serving on the House Natural Resources Committee and the Judiciary Committee. DeKrey previously was the deputy director of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and served more than 35 years with the ND National Guard. He shares his expertise with several other water entities, including the Lake Agassiz Water Authority, North Dakota Water Users Association, North Dakota Water Education Foundation, Upper Missouri Water Association and Groundwater Management Association. DeKrey is also active in the Kiwanis Club, Federated Church board, American Legion and American Veterans Club. He and his wife, Jan, have three grown children.

WATER WHEEL AWARD
Stacey Gussiaas

Gussiaas received the Water Wheel Award for her service and dedication to water supply across North Dakota. She has been a cornerstone of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District since January 1996, serving as Administrative Assistant with unwavering dedication and professionalism. Her detail-oriented approach and exceptional organizational skills ensure that office operations run smoothly.

For more than two decades, Gussiaas has also led the North Dakota Water Education Foundation's scholarship fundraiser, the Top O' the Day Tee-Off scholarship golf scramble, guiding it to success for 21 years. Through her leadership in coordinating workers, outreach, logistics, and sponsorships, she has helped provide meaningful support to the Dushinske & Jamison Water Resources Scholarship students and their futures.

A graduate of Mayville State University with an Associate of Arts degree, Gussiaas applies her education to enhance office processes and event outcomes. She is widely respected for her professional demeanor, her commitment to service, and her ability to build strong relationships with colleagues.

Her contributions in the office reflect her skill and dedication to the mission and people she serves.

"Congratulations on this recognition, Stacey. We are proud to have you as a colleague and friend," says Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion general manager.

Garrison Diversion Board of Directors Held Executive Committee Members Election

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) board has 28 members representing each of the 28 counties within the district. Each county supports Garrison Diversion's operations by issuing a one-mill levy and electing a citizen to serve a four-year term on its board of directors. The board works collectively to fulfill Garrison Diversion's mission to provide a reliable, high quality and affordable water supply to benefit the people of North Dakota.

Each January, the board holds elections for positions on the 10-member Executive Committee, which monitors the financials, federal matters and overall operations of Garrison Diversion. This year, the board elected Kyle Blanchfield, Ramsey County, to his first term and re-elected Larry Kassian, Burleigh County, and Brian Orn, Sargent County, to each serve another term on the Executive Committee.

Each Executive Committee member chairs a committee and is eligible for two, three-year terms.

KYLE BLANCHFIELD
Ramsey County

Kyle Blanchfield has represented Ramsey County since 2021. He will now head the Engineering & Operations Committee and serve on the MR&I Committee. He is passionate about serving North Dakota citizens and utilizing our water resources.

"North Dakota's future is tied to water resources and the ability to effectively manage it. Garrison Diversion has always been the dream to accomplish this goal and can be the entity to accomplish this needed mission," says Blanchfield. "Garrison Diversion has accomplished so much in its history, but the citizens of North Dakota are counting on it to do so much more."

Blanchfield is the owner of Woodland Resort on Devils Lake and is active in multiple community organizations. He lives in Devils Lake with his wife, Karin.

LARRY KASSIAN
Burleigh County

Larry Kassian was elected by Burleigh County constituents to serve on Garrison Diversion's board. After receiving his degree in civil engineering from NDSU, Kassian was employed at Bartlett & West Engineers where he stayed for more than 20 years. A career move led him to become the executive director for the South Central Regional Water District, from which he has since retired. Kassian chairs the MR&I Committee, which focuses on providing water supply grants to North Dakota residents. Kassian resides in Bismarck with his wife, Connie.

BRIAN ORN
Sargent County

Brian Orn has served Sargent County since 2021 and now chairs the Agriculture Committee. He received a degree in agricultural economics from North Dakota State University and has worked in the insurance business his entire career. Orn now owns, and is an agent with, the Bjorn Crop Insurance Agency in Stirum. He lives in Stirum with his wife, Lindy.

Garrison Diversion board members recognize the importance water plays in North Dakota's future. Garrison Diversion is a leader in building North Dakota's water supply infrastructure, managing the water, and focusing on irrigation, recreation, municipal, rural and industrial water supply and the operations and maintenance of Garrison Diversion Unit facilities.

NORTH DAKOTA WATER

2026 CALENDAR

April 6	Southwest Water Authority's Board of Directors Meeting, Operations and Maintenance Center Office, Dickinson
April 8	Red River Joint Water Resource District's Board of Directors Meeting
April 8	Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resource Board Meeting, Devils Lake
April 9	North Dakota State Water Commission Meeting
April 15	Upper Sheyenne River Joint Water Resource Board Meeting, Carrington
April 16	Western Area Water Supply Authority's Board of Directors Meeting, Williston
April 16-17	Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's Board of Directors Meeting, Carrington
April 23	Metro Flood Diversion Authority's Board Meeting
April 27-29	National Water Resources Association's Policy Conference, Royal Sonesta WDC Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.
April 27	North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association's Operator Certification Review Class, Bismarck
May 4	Southwest Water Authority's Board of Directors Meeting, Operations and Maintenance Center Office, Dickinson
May 13	Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resource Board Meeting, Devils Lake
May 18	North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association's Operator Certification Review Class, Dickinson
May 21	Western Area Water Supply Authority's Board of Directors Meeting, Williston
May 21	North Dakota State Water Commission's Pre-Commission Meeting
May 28	Metro Flood Diversion Authority's Board Meeting
June 1	Southwest Water Authority's Board of Directors Meeting, Operations and Maintenance Center Office, Dickinson
June 10	Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resource Board Meeting, Devils Lake

For more information or if you would like a water event listed here, call 701-223-8332 or email *jellingson@ndwater.net*.
Submissions are due the first Monday of each month preceding the next issue.

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