

Resolution: 21-03

Resolution on Northeastern Montana Buried valley MACD resolution

Submitted by Richland CD, 2021

WHEREAS, buried valley aquifers in northeastern Montana are critical sources of groundwater for irrigation development; and this development has increased agricultural production in Richland County; and concerns over the frequency of droughts increases the interest in irrigation development; and

WHEREAS, groundwater monitoring is critical to determining trends; identifying impacts of groundwater development to other surface water and groundwater resources; and to determining impacts of increased development on these resources; and

WHEREAS, long-term groundwater monitoring has proven to be an essential tool for aquifer management. Recent shorter-term monitoring from the West Crane aquifer in Richland County is showing promise to provide information to expand irrigation development, but needs long term data to adequately drive groundwater modeling and other water management tools; to assist DNRC Water Resources in identifying the legal availability of water and research development of managed aquifer recharge areas.

WHEREAS, groundwater quality monitoring activities benefit water users by defining areas where the aquifer water is usable for irrigation versus marginal or unusable water quality. It is important to understand the water quality limits to irrigation development to prevent producers the expense associate with attempting to develop unusable parts of these aquifers; and

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Montana Association of Conservation Districts aggressively pursues additional funding to support Richland County Conservation District fund existing groundwater monitoring and additional funding for the expansion of groundwater monitoring of these buried valley aquifers.