

June 8, 2018

Helicopter to Make Low-Level Flights over Eastern Nebraska

Eastern Nebraska residents should not be alarmed if they see a low-flying helicopter over areas of the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) in June.

Beginning in mid-June and lasting approximately two weeks, instruments mounted below a helicopter will collect and record geologic measurements to learn more about buried aquifers (glacial sands and gravels, sandstones and other water-bearing materials). The LPSNRD and other members of the Eastern Nebraska Water Resources Assessment (ENWRA), a coalition of six NRDs in the eastern third of Nebraska, have planned the flights with help from the Nebraska Water Sustainability Fund, through the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission. According to Katie Cameron, coordinator of ENWRA, "The flights will improve our understanding of available ground water and its possible connections with surface water in an area of the state made more complex by the presence of glacial deposits."

Aqua Geo Frameworks (AGF), of Mitchell, Nebraska will oversee the flights, process data and produce a final report. The equipment can collect data at a speed of more than 50 miles per hour and explore to a depth of more than 700 feet below the ground surface. The helicopter will fly over parts of Lancaster, Seward, Saunders and Butler counties. Cameron said the flights will be a continuation of ENWRA flights conducted during summer 2016 and will focus with more detail on several communities in the western part of the LPSNRD. Scientific equipment is towed about 100 feet below the helicopter in a 'spider web' array and is designed to map geologic structures beneath the surface of the earth. The helicopter will be manned by experienced pilots specially trained for low-level flying with this equipment. Similar flights have been made across Nebraska since 2007, according to Cameron, as NRDs seek to better understand and manage ground water resources.

Editor: In the public interest and in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations, the LPSNRD/ENWRA group is announcing this low-level airborne project. Your assistance in publicizing this information is appreciated.

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