



NEWS RELEASE

North Dakota State Water Commission

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State Water Commission to Conduct Airborne Electromagnetic Survey over parts of Cass and Richland Counties

The North Dakota State Water Commission is planning to conduct an aerial electromagnetic survey (AEM) of aquifers in parts of Cass and Richland counties. The survey is scheduled to begin the week of November 6 and involves a helicopter towing a large hoop-shaped antenna about 100 feet above the ground that sends and receives electromagnetic signals to characterize geology beneath the land surface.

The helicopter will be manned by experienced pilots who are specially trained for low-level flying with this equipment and all operations will be conducted within Federal Aviation Administration regulations. The results of the survey will provide a high-resolution map of the buried glacial deposits, that contain major groundwater supplies in the area.

“The AEM method is a game-changer in groundwater investigations. It’s quicker, cheaper, better, and safer than conventional methods for buried aquifer characterization,” said Jon Patch, Director of Water Appropriations for the State Water Commission (SWC). “Massive amounts of data collection can be done in a matter of days that with conventional methods (test drilling) would take years. Recently the SWC used this technology in central North Dakota on the Spiritwood Aquifer near Jamestown with amazing results.”

The flight survey will be within an approximate 8-mile wide block extending from Gardner in the north to the Wahpeton area in the south and should take about three to four weeks to complete. “We want the public and residents living near the area to be informed about the survey. We hope to wrap up field data collection before the end of November, weather permitting,” said Patch.

Please follow the link for a map, flight video, and more information: <http://swc.nd.gov/AEM/>