

irrigator, in some instances, will have a well and will also have ground water irrigation. In western Nebraska, because of the surface irrigation, when we talk about the interrelationship between ground and surface water, many times it has a different context maybe than it does in other parts of the state. We're very, I think, very, very aware of what, in my district, the four surface irrigation districts and how they contribute, not only to ground water, but to downstream users, instream flows, and how that all is an interrelationship. There's a point in western Nebraska, by the little town of Morrill, where the North Platte River is completely shut off and it's diverted into three different areas, it's completely dammed off, it's dry at that point. And then if you go down just a few miles downstream, it picks up again, and that's because of what we call return flows. I don't know how many of you people know this, but at one point in the North Platte River it's completely dammed off. But they all...it all comes back and returns because of what we call return flows that's due to surface irrigation. It's very important, so important in western Nebraska that we understand the relationship between ground and surface water, instream flows, surface users, and all of those components that we are trying to put together a study and a model that just shows how that works. It's important for us to show the interrelationship and how that system is used over and over and over again for farming, for domestic use, wildlife habitat, that we're spending lots of money to be able to show that. There's...also a large part is conservation and what we should be doing to conserve water and the distribution of water, and how that will affect the instream flows, the reusable system that we have, because in many instances conservation will impact that system whereby you won't see a wetlands. In our area the wetlands are created by surface irrigation. A creek called Nine Mile was created by surface irrigation, Tub Springs, Winters Creek, all those small creeks would completely disappear if you didn't have surface irrigation in that area. If you'll look right below, down in Banner County, you'll see a little yellow spot on a little creek, called Pumpkin Creek. Pumpkin Creek no longer has any water in it. And there was a gentleman who testified in western Nebraska, at the public hearing, who used to be a ground water surface...I mean, used to be a surface irrigator out of Pumpkin Creek, and the creek is gone, and the creek is gone because of ground water irrigators around him. And he's saying to the committee, will this bill help me? And if you recall, Senator Bromm and Senator Beutler, you were there, and Senator