

Grad student drills for data

Story and Photo
By Deb Pederson

The morning sun was just starting to warm the dirt road between the cornfield and the Blue River about five miles northwest of Beatrice. Sunlight bounced off the tower of the drill rig. Clear sky and dry — perfect weather for drilling wells.

Water wells, that is. UNL geology graduate student Ali Tabidian is doing a groundwater study of the area, 75 square miles in all, for the Blue River Compact Commission as his doctoral dissertation project.

The commission granted the UNL geology department almost \$50,000 to conduct the study, currently going into its third and final year, UNL geology professor Darryll Pederson said.

The purpose of the study is to find out how a buried paleovalley aquifer, or ancient river system, interacts with the Blue River, Tabidian said. The aquifer

moves from west to east, directly under the Blue River which flows northwest to southeast, he said.

A compact was ratified by Congress in the early 1970s between Kansas and Nebraska requiring a minimum amount of water flow in the Blue River across the state line, he said. Since water for irrigation is pumped from the aquifer and the aquifer interacts with the Blue River, the commission is concerned that the irrigation use is effecting the water flow in the river, he said.

"The feeling is that the aquifer is the source of base flow into the river and so sustains the river," Pederson said. "We're trying to quantify the effects of irrigation on the aquifer and river."

He said the study was unusual because of its type, detail and large scope and because a model wasn't used first.

"Not too many studies have been done on the relation between aquifers and rivers, especially on this scale," Pederson said. "This study is exploring

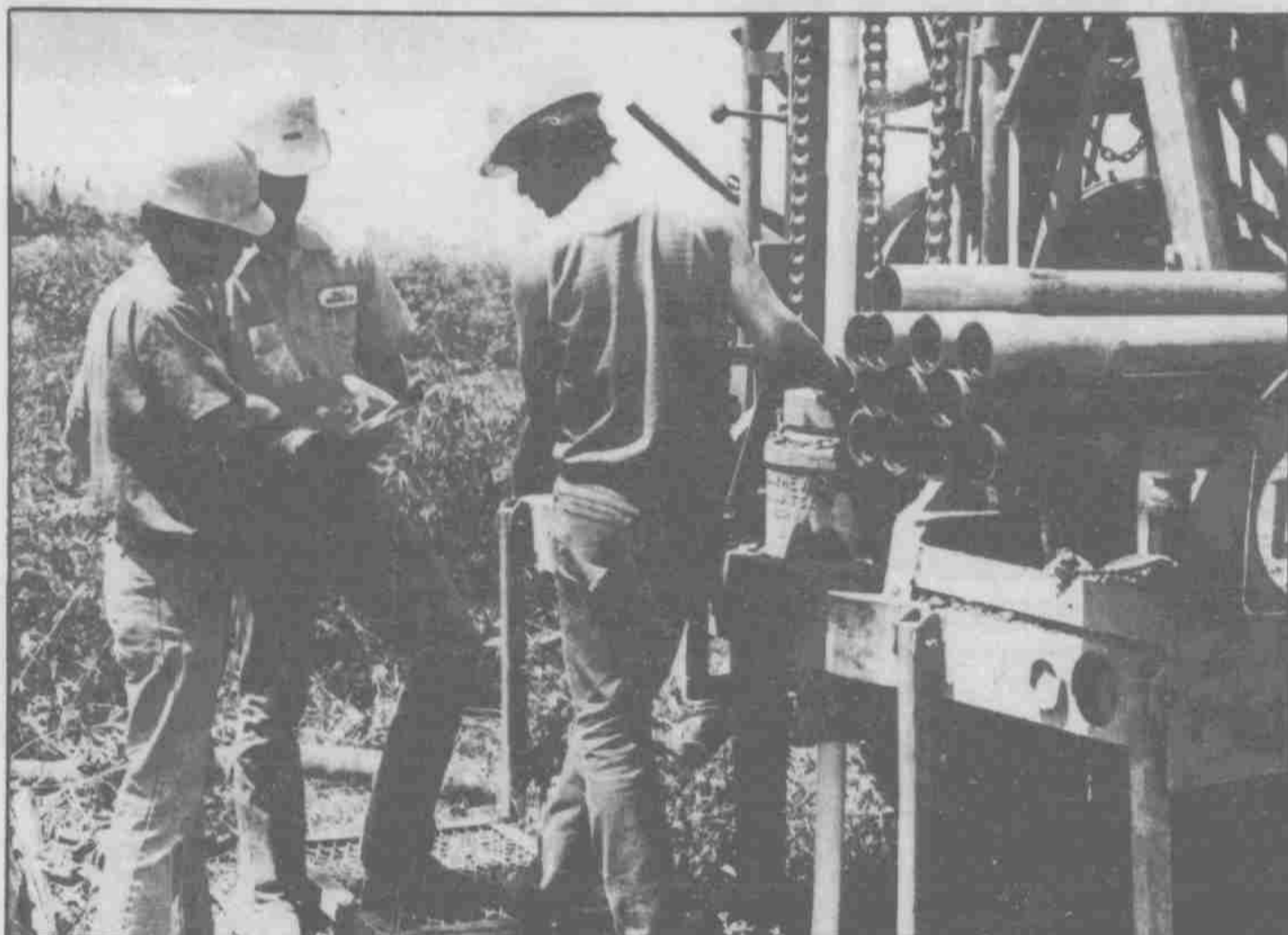
new areas of geology.

"Most studies develop a model first and then go out into the field," he said. "But then you don't get a good handle on the geology of the area. This way, without the model first, we have a good handle on the geology of the area."

The study consists of recording the water levels at existing wells and drilling new wells in areas where information is lacking to gather data on the geology and water levels, Tabidian said. By comparing the water levels at different points periodically and understanding the geology, the groundwater movement can be determined along with its interaction with the river, he said.

The compact requires periodic study of the river and aquifer, Tabidian said. The first study was done by the United States Geological Survey, he said.

Pederson said geology is studied in stages and follow-up studies would be done on the river and aquifer.



Geology professor Darryll Pederson and Joe and David Holly study data taken from the newly-dug well.

Shorts

The Ruth Staples Child Development Lab will offer child care during the home football games in its "Cornhusker Wait Room." The service will open one hour before kickoff and close one hour after the game ends. The rate is \$10 per child/per game. To make a reservation call 472-1675.

The Affirmative Action/EEO/Handicapped Services Office has moved to 103 Teachers College. The phone number is 472-3417.

The Institute of International Stu-

dies is now located in the International Affairs Center, 1237 R Street, across from the College of Business Administration.

There will be a farewell reception for O. Wendell Holmes, associate professor of agricultural economics on July 17, from 9-11 a.m., in 216 Filley Hall.

There will be a retirement reception for Lorene Haldeman, secretary to NU corporation secretary on July 19, from 2-4 p.m. in Varner Hall (former Regents Hall).

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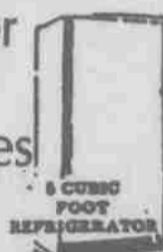
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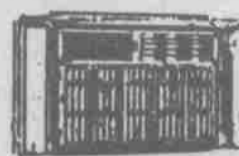
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