

Meeting Notes for the
TRI-BASIN NRD REPUBLICAN RIVER IMP ANNUAL
MEETING July 21, 2015, 1:00 PM CDT
Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
1723 N. Burlington St., Holdrege, Nebraska

1. Introductions

- a. The meeting was called to order by John Thorburn, TBNRD General Manager

Attendees:

John Thorburn, TBNRD

Tammy Fahrenbruch, TBNRD

Amy Zoller, NDNR

Jesse Bradley, NDNR

Melissa Mosier, NDNR

2. Review Agenda & Meeting Purpose

- a. **Agenda Review:** There were no changes made to the agenda.
- b. **Meeting Purpose:** The purpose of the meeting is for the annual review of integrated management planning activities, to exchange and review reports, and to consider any actions that may be necessary.

3. Monitoring & Management Actions

- a. **NDNR Report** (Bradley)

- **Permitted Activities:** Two permits were issued for surface water and four permits for dam safety. There were no groundwater transfer permits, no reported use for natural flow diversion, and no associated offsets. Evaporation off small reservoirs was estimated at 181 acre-feet.
- **Streamgage Data:** Streamgage data are available in the report and NDNR will send the data to TBNRD electronically. Bradley also reminded everyone that there is now real-time and historical data available on the NDNR website (<http://data.dnr.nebraska.gov/RealTime>)
- **Assessment of Streamflow Depletions:** Bradley reviewed Figure 1 showing streamflow depletions and mound accretions using the “Old” RRCA accounting procedures; and Figure 2 showing changes to streamflow depletions and mound accretions using the “New” RRCA accounting procedures. The trendline for streamflow depletions appears to be moving in a generally positive direction, but the rate of depletions increasing has reduced. The mound accretion trendline is based on more “noisy” data and will have to be monitored in the future. Bradley reminded those present that all of the data are subject to change as they have not been finalized.

b. **TBNRD Report** (Thorburn)

- **Overall Certified Irrigated Acres:** Thorburn noted there has been a slow increase of certified irrigated acres over the past couple of years. The TBNRD board has increased the requirements for making corrections to certified irrigated acres.
- **Transfers of Irrigated Acres:** Thorburn described the limitations that are in place for landowners wanting to transfer certified acres. In 2014, TBNRD approved 14 certified irrigated acre transfers in the Republican River Basin.
- **Well permits:** One new well permit and three supplemental well permits were issued in the last year. As noted in TBNRD's report, the only circumstance in which a variance is issued for a new well permit is for a transfer of certified irrigated acres to land that had not previously had a well.
- **Variations:** Thorburn explained that variations could be due to corrections by county assessors or to landowners asking TBNRD to add certification to acres with an existing history of irrigation use. TBNRD added a new condition for landowners last year: the land must have been irrigated 3 of the last 5 years.
- **Municipal Water Use Data:** Data for 2014 on municipal and industrial water use is included in TBNRD's report.
- **Flowmeter Data:** Flowmeters are required on all wells in the Republican River Basin that irrigate more than 15 acres. Data are included in Appendix B of TBNRD's report.
- **Retired Acres and Other Activities:** TBNRD worked with CNPPID and NDNR to divert approximately 15,000 acre-feet of water into Elwood and the E-65 canal. TBNRD and NDNR will consider past and more recent analyses to determine appropriate crediting between the Republican and Platte River basins for these types of projects. Retired acres through the EQIP and CREP programs and acres involved in conservation tillage will start to expire in 2019.
- **Groundwater Levels:** A map of the observation wells in the Republican River Basin portion of TBNRD is included in the report.

c. **Discussion and Evaluation of Data and Studies:**

- Appendix B of TBNRD's report contains a chart depicting the apparent indirect correlation between precipitation during the growing season and irrigation pumping.
- Thorburn stated he would like to partner with NDNR to put streamgages on Spring Creek in the Blue River Basin and Sand Creek in the Republican River Basin. Bradley stated that a transducer could be placed in the streambed. The transducers last about five years, are low cost, and

give a rough rating curve. Thorburn agreed that would be adequate for their purposes.

- Continuing work on the meter database for more efficient data transfer is a high priority for both TBNRD and NDNR.
- TBNRD and NDNR will look at past analyses on crediting water from Elwood and E-65 between the Platte and Republican River basins.

- d. **Information and Education:** More work needs to be done to inform the public about TBNRD's Republican River Basin IMP. NDNR will participate in TBNRD's 2016 Water Conference to help with outreach to the public.

4. **Review of Modeling Analysis**

- See discussion under item 3.a. on new charts developed in regard to streamflow depletions and mound accretions in the Republican River Basin portion of TBNRD.

5. **Republican River Basin-Wide Activities**

- a. A stronger effort will be made to inform the public about basin-wide planning in the Republican River Basin. This can be topic at the 2016 Water Conference.

6. **Other IMP Topics**

- a. **Reporting Requirements:** Bradley asked for a time-frame on filing for a potential new project. Thorburn believed fall would be a good time for this.

7. **Public Comment Period**

- a. No public comments.

8. **Meeting Summary**

a. **Action Items**

- NDNR will follow-up with Marc Groff of the Flatwater Group on the meter database.
- NDNR will check into transducers for the Spring and Sand Creek gaging sites.
- NDNR will review the modeling analysis for E-65 Canal and Elwood.
- NDNR will participate in TBNRD's 2016 Water Conference to enhance education and outreach.

b. **Schedule Next Annual Meeting**

- The meeting will be scheduled for the same timeframe next year, July 19th, 2016, at 1:00 p.m.