

NEWS RELEASE

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

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Natural Resources Districts Initiating Voluntary Integrated Management Plans

Five Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) have initiated a voluntary water planning process with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (Department). Most recently, the Lower Elkhorn NRD, joined the Lower Platte South NRD, the Lower Platte North NRD, the Papio-Missouri River NRD, and the Lower Niobrara NRD by initiating the integrated management planning process with the Department of Natural Resources. This planning process, which results in the joint adoption of Integrated Management Plans (IMPs), is required in areas of the State that have been designated as fully or overappropriated by the Department. IMPs have been developed in those areas through joint efforts between the Department and the ten NRDs that have such designations.

Recent changes in State statutes provide a process for the development of IMPs before a designation of fully appropriated by the Department. IMPs are the blueprint for a proactive approach to managing hydrologically connected surface and groundwater as a single resource. These joint plans between the Department and the local NRDs will serve to bring together state and local water managers in collaboration with various stakeholders. This joint approach allows the Department and NRDs to fully collaborate on efforts aimed at ensuring the short and long-term sustainability of our water resources. Department Director, Brian Dunnigan, stated, "*We are very pleased that thus far, five NRDs have initiated this voluntary planning process. These types of proactive approaches have potential to provide greater future opportunities for water users and water managers.*"

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