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**Middle Republican Natural Resources District**

*Information and  
Education*

# MEMO

TO: Middle Republican NRD Partners  
FROM: Roger Lawson, I/E Coordinator  
SUBJECT: Middle Republican NRD Long Range Implementation Plan  
DATE: November 14, 2013

Enclosed is the Middle Republican NRD's 2013 Long Range Implementation Plan.

This comprehensive report reflects the policies, goals, and objectives of our district which focus primarily on the responsibilities assigned to the district by the legislature.

This Long Range Implementation Plan includes objectives and programming for the current fiscal year and the next five fiscal years based on the master plan responsibilities, goals, and objectives.

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NOV 18 2013

DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

# Middle Republican Natural Resources District

## Long Range Implementation Plan 2013



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DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

The Middle Republican Natural Resources District is responsible for the protection of the natural resources within its boundaries and assists landowners in planning, funding, and applying conservation practices.

**Middle Republican NRD**

**220 Center Avenue, PO Box 81**

**Curtis, NE 69025**

**(308) 367-4281**

**<http://www.mnrnd.org>**

**CONTENTS**

**Preface ..... i**

**Contents ..... i**

**Figures & Tables ..... ii**

**Distribution List ..... iii**

**Statement of Adoption ..... iv**

**Introduction ..... 1**

**Purposes ..... 1**

**Authorities for Planning ..... 2**

**Description of the District ..... 7**

**Governing Board ..... 11**

**District Documents ..... 12**

**Planned Activities ..... 16**

**Ground Water Management ..... 16**

**Ground Water Programs ..... 19**

**Ground Water Special Initiatives &**

**Grant-funded Projects ..... 20**

**Chemigation Inspection & Permit Program .. 20**

**Tree Planting ..... 22**

**Land Treatment & Irrigation Management ... 22**

**Equipment & Supply Services ..... 22**

**Flood Control ..... 22**

**Cost-Sharing Assistance Programs ..... 24**

**Recreational Facilities ..... 25**

**Road Structures ..... 25**

**WILD Nebraska ..... 26**

**Other Programs ..... 26**

**NRCS Support ..... 27**

**Staff ..... 27**

**Information & Education ..... 29**

**Assessment of Current Needs ..... 32**

**Personnel ..... 33**

**Funding ..... 34**

**Projected Needs ..... 35**

**Personnel ..... 36**

**Integrated Management ..... 36**

**Watershed Operations & Maintenance ..... 36**

**Funding ..... 37**

**Appendix ..... 38**

P R E F A C E

FIGURES & TABLES

FIGURES

**Figure 1: Middle Republican NRD Map . . . . . 7**  
**Figure 2: Drought Monitor, September 2008 . . . . . 8**  
**Figure 3: Drought Monitor, September 2009 . . . . . 8**  
**Figure 4: Drought Monitor, September 2010. . . . . 8**  
**Figure 5: Drought Monitor, September 2011. . . . . 8**  
**Figure 6: Drought Monitor, September 2012 . . . . . 8**  
**Figure 7: Drought Monitor, September 2013. . . . . 8**  
**Figure 8: Cumulative Well Measurements . . . . . 16**  
**Figure 9: Ground Water Quality Mngt Area . . . . . 17**  
**Figure 10: Ground Water Monitoring Points . . . . . 17**

TABLES

**Table 1: Responsibilities & Responses . . . . . 5-6**  
**Table 2: Commodity Prices . . . . . 9**  
**Table 3: Population and Population Density. . . . . 10**  
**Table 4: Average Farmland Values (2012) . . . . . 10**  
**Table 5: State Wide Crop Yields . . . . . 10**  
**Table 6: Interlocal Agreements . . . . . 14**  
**Table 7: Retired Acres Acquisition. . . . . 21**  
**Table 8: Annual Planned Use of Personnel. . . . . 33**  
**Table 9: Combined Funds Budget . . . . . 34**  
**Table 10: Water Quality Fund Use 2012-13 . . . . . 34**  
**Table 11: Five Year Staff Projection. . . . . 36**  
**Table 12: Projected Requirements & Revenues. . 37**

P R E F A C E

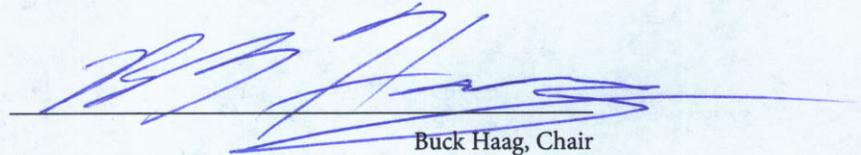
**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

<b>Middle Republican NRD Directors .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>NRCS Field Offices .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>NRCS State Office .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Cooperative Extension Offices .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Nebraska Association of Resources Districts ....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Nebraska Department of Natural Resources .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Game and Parks Commission State Office .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Game and Parks Commission - North Platte .....</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>Extra Copies for General Use .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total Distribution .....</b>	<b>60</b>

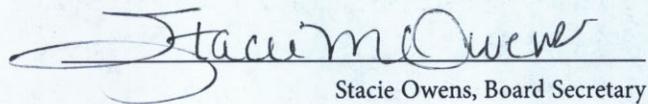
P R E F A C E

**Statement of Adoption**

This Long Range Implementation Plan was adopted by the Middle Republican Natural Resources District Board of Directors at their regular meeting held on November 12, 2013 at Curtis, Nebraska.



Buck Haag, Chair



Stacie Owens, Board Secretary

This 2013 Long Range Implementation Plan has been prepared to outline and explain the Middle Republican Natural Resources District's programs and projects, activities for FY 2013-14, and activities planned for the next five fiscal years. A signed copy of this document is kept on file at the Middle Republican Natural Resources District office at 220 Center Ave., Curtis, Nebraska.

Recorded minutes of all district meetings are on file at the Middle Republican Natural Resources District office at 220 Center Ave., Curtis, Nebraska.

The regular meeting date for the Middle Republican Natural Resources District is the second Tuesday of each month.

Questions about handicap access or provisions for persons with disabilities should be directed to:

Manager  
Middle Republican NRD  
P.O. Box 81  
Curtis, NE 69025  
(308) 367-4281  
office@mrnr.org  
www.mrnr.org

# INTRODUCTION

## Purposes

**The Long Range Implementation Plan** serves to implement many of the goals and objectives found in the Middle Republican NRD Master Plan, Groundwater Management Plan and Integrated Management Plan. These plans identify the responsibilities, policies, goals and objectives of the district based on the authorities assigned to the district by the legislature in section 2-3229.

The general purpose of this Long Range Implementation Plan is to plan programs and activities for the management, utilization, and development of land and water resources within the Middle Republican Natural Resources District over the next five years, and inform others of the district's intentions. This will allow for better coordination with other entities and agencies.

Statutory purposes of the Long Range Implementation Plan for natural resources districts are:

- to summarize planned district activities,
- to list financial, manpower, and land rights needs for the current year,
- to project these same needs for the next five years.

Additional purposes of the Long Range Implementation Plan are:

- to guide decisions for district actions,
- to inform the public of district plans,
- to guide annual budget preparations.

**The Middle Republican Natural Resources District is responsible for the protection of the natural resources within its boundaries and assists landowners in planning, funding, and applying conservation practices.**

## INTRODUCTION

### Authorities for Planning

In 1978, the Nebraska Unicameral passed LB 783 (Revised Statutes of Nebraska, 1943, sections 2-3201 through 2-3261) which changed the formal planning process of Natural Resources Districts. LB 783 eliminated the comprehensive "One and Six Year Plan" and established requirements for three types of planning. It outlines planning of resources development, management, utilization and conservation as one of the purposes of natural resources districts.

Natural Resources Districts were assigned broad authorities and responsibilities under section 2-3229 of the Natural Resources District law, which states, "The purposes of natural resources districts shall be to develop and execute, through the exercise of powers and authorities contained in this act, plans, facilities, works and programs relating to: erosion prevention and control; prevention of damages from flood water and sediment; flood prevention and control; soil conservation;

**"Never look back unless you are planning to go that way."**

**~ Henry David Thoreau ~**

water supply for any beneficial use; development, management, utilization, and conservation of ground water; conservation of ground water and surface water; pollution control; solid waste disposal and sanitary drainage; drainage improvement and channel rectification; development and management of fish and wildlife habitat; development and management of recreational and park facilities; forestry and range management.

The responsibilities of a natural resources district are broad and complex. Careful and effective planning results in definite goals and a clear plan of action. Goals, courses of action, and objectives are set forth in the Middle Republican Natural Resources District's Master Plan and this Long Range Implementation Plan. These plans are authorized under sections 2-3276 and 2-3277 of the Natural Resources District law (chapter 2, article 32).

#### **Section 2-3276. Master Plan**

Districts; Master Plan; Prepare and Adopt; Contents; Review; Filed. By August 1, 1979, each natural resources district shall prepare and adopt a master plan to include but not be limited to a statement of goals and objectives for each of the purposes stated in section 2-3229. The Master Plan shall be reviewed and updated as often as deemed necessary by the district, but in no event less often than once each 10 years. A copy of the Master Plan as adopted and all revisions and updates thereto shall be filed with the Department of Natural Resources. The District's Master Plan was revised in 2012.

**SECTION 2-3277. LONG RANGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Districts; Long Range Implementation Plan; Prepare and Adopt; Contents; Reviewed; Filed; With Whom; Commission; Develop Guidelines. Each district shall also prepare and adopt a Long Range Implementation Plan which shall summarize planned district activities and include projections of financial, manpower, and land right needs of the district for at least the next five years and the specific needs assessment upon which the current budget is based. Such Long Range Implementation Plan shall be reviewed and updated annually. A copy of the Long Range Implementation Plan and all revisions and updates thereto as adopted, shall be filed with the Department of Natural Resources, the Governor's Policy Research Office, and the Game and Parks Commission on or before October 1 of each year. The Department of Natural Resources shall develop and make available to the districts suggested guidelines regarding the format and general content of such Long Range Implementation Plan.

**"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."**

**~ Aldo Leopold ~**

**Section 46-709. Ground Water Management Plan**

Each district shall maintain a ground water management plan based upon the best available information and shall submit amendments to such plan to the Director of Natural Resources for review and approval.

The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the identification to the extent possible of:

Ground water supplies within the district including transmissivity, saturated thickness maps, and other ground water reservoir information, if available; Local recharge characteristics and rates from any sources, if available; Average annual precipitation and the variations within the district; Crop water needs within the district; Current ground water data-collection programs; Past, present, and potential ground water use within the district; Ground water quality concerns within the district; Proposed water conservation and supply augmentation programs for the district; The availability of supplemental water supplies, including the opportunity for ground water recharge; The opportunity to integrate and coordinate the use of water from different sources of supply; Ground water management objectives, including a proposed ground water reservoir life goal for the district. For management plans adopted or revised after July 19, 1996, the ground water management objectives may include any proposed integrated management objectives for hydrologically connected ground water and surface water supplies but a management plan does not have to be revised prior to the adoption or implementation of an integrated management plan pursuant to section 46-718 or 46-719; Existing subirrigation uses within the district; the relative economic value of different uses

## INTRODUCTION

of ground water proposed or existing within the district; and The geographic and stratigraphic boundaries of any proposed management area.

If the expenses incurred by a district preparing or amending a ground water management plan exceed twenty-five percent of the district's current budget, the district may make application to the Nebraska Resources Development Fund for assistance.

### **Section 46-715. Integrated Management Plan**

Whenever the Department of Natural Resources has designated a river basin, sub-basin, or reach as overappropriated or has made a final determination that a river basin, subbasin, or reach is fully appropriated, the natural resources districts encompassing such river basin, subbasin, or reach and the department shall jointly develop an integrated management plan for such river basin, subbasin, or reach. The plan shall be completed, adopted, and take effect within three years after such designation or final determination unless the department and the natural resources districts jointly agree to an extension of not more than two additional years.



A ground level rainbow shows up in the fine spray of a pivot.

**Table 1: Legislative Responsibilities and MRNRD Responses**

Area	Goal	Objectives
A. Erosion Prevention and Control	Reduce soil erosion to acceptable limits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administer the Nebraska Erosion and Sediment Acceptable limits</li> <li>2. Approve conservation plans for private lands</li> <li>3. Administer cost-share assistance programs</li> <li>4. Assist with the implementation of best management practices</li> </ol>
B. Floodwater and Sediment Management	Reduce flood and sediment damage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sponsor Dry Creek Pilot Project (PL-566)</li> <li>2. Sponsor Dry Creek South Project (PL-566)</li> <li>3. Sponsor Upper Medicine Creek Project (PL-566)</li> <li>4. Sponsor Lower Medicine Creek Project (PL-566)</li> <li>5. Sponsor Blackwood Creek Project (PL-566)</li> <li>6. Sponsor McCook Flood Control Project (NRDF)</li> </ol>
C. Flood Prevention and Control	Construct flood control structures only when feasible and cost share comparison is favorable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine feasibility of flood control projects for areas where perpetual flood damage occurs</li> <li>2. Assess public interest in projects</li> <li>3. Make applications for federal or state flood control assistance</li> <li>4. Cooperate with Nebraska NRCS to rehabilitate structures with design deficiencies.</li> </ol>
D. Soil Conservation	Conserve and protect soil resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage landowners to apply best management practices</li> <li>2. Review and approve local soil and water conservation plans</li> <li>3. Assist landowners in the implementation of best management practices</li> <li>4. Provide farmers and ranchers cost share assistance for soil conservation practices</li> </ol>
E. Development, Management, Utilization and Conservation of Ground and Surface Water	Ground and surface water will be managed in a beneficial and efficient manner to provide for future needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measure static water levels of the ground water reservoir annually.</li> <li>2. Take water quality samples annually</li> <li>3. Cooperate with state and federal agencies in maintaining ground water quality and quantity databases</li> <li>4. Implement and maintain ground water management areas as needed to address water quality and quantity concerns</li> <li>5. Implement an Integrated Management plan for hydrologically connected ground and surface water</li> </ol>

INTRODUCTION

**Table 1: Legislative Responsibilities and MRNRD Responses (con't)**

Area	Goal	Objectives
F. Pollution Control	Maintain or improve the present quality of air and water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out the permit and inspection requirements of the Nebraska Chemigation Act</li> <li>2. Report point source contamination to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Control</li> <li>3. Provide technical and cost share assistance for landowners to implement best management practices to reduce potential pollution</li> <li>4. Promote eco-fallow and conservation tillage systems on cropland</li> </ol>
G. Drainage Improvement and Channel Rectification	Assist with development of drainage or channel improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete a thorough environmental impact study when contemplating major drainage improvements or rectification work</li> </ol>
H. Development and Management of Fish and Wildlife Habitat	Preserve, develop and manage fish and wildlife habitat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooperate with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in implementing the WILD Nebraska Program</li> <li>2. Consider incorporating fish and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement in district projects where feasible</li> <li>3. Cooperate with private groups or organizations and individuals to improve fish and wildlife habitat</li> </ol>
I. Development and Management of Recreational and Park Facilities	Assist communities with development of recreational and park facilities for public use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide financial and advisory assistance to communities that are developing outdoor recreation facilities for the public</li> </ol>
J. Forestry and Range Management	Develop, improve and maintain rangelands and woodlands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide trees and a tree planting service</li> <li>2. Administer forestry cost share assistance programs</li> <li>3. Promote planned grazing systems and proper range management practices for livestock grazing operations</li> </ol>
K. Solid Waste Disposal and Sanitary Drainage	Assist local and county governments with the administration of solid waste and sanitary drainage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Furnish soils, water and other geologic information to counties, cities and towns when requested</li> <li>2. Comply with rules and regulations for solid waste and sanitary drainage in district operations and programs</li> </ol>

**Description of the District**

Located in south-western Nebraska, the Middle Republican Natural Resources District consists of all of Hayes, Hitchcock, and Red Willow Counties, most of Frontier County, and the southern one-fourth of Lincoln County (Figure 1).

The district is bounded by the Kansas state line on the south and is 72 miles wide (from east to west) and 63 miles long (from north to south). The city of McCook is the largest municipality.

**Total Land Area**

3,805 square miles or 2,435,200 acres

**Elevation**

2,500 to 3,100 ft. above sea level

**Precipitation**

Average annual precipitation ranges from 19 inches in the west to 22 inches in the east. Nearly three fourths of the precipitation falls from April to September with frequent variations between seasons. Drought conditions are not uncommon. Southwest Nebraska is currently in a two drought that began in March of 2012 (see Figures 2-7).

**Climate**

The climate is one of limited precipitation, low humidity, frequent wind shifts, and frequent sharp temperature changes. The Rocky Mountains to the west have a major effect on the district's climate.

**Surface Water**

Major rivers are the Republican and the Frenchman. Other tributaries are Medicine, Blackwood, Red Willow, Stinking Water, Muddy, Driftwood, and Beaver Creeks. Flood control and irrigation supply dams are located at Swanson Reservoir west of Trenton on the Republican River, Red Willow Lake north of McCook on the Red Willow Creek, and Harry Strunk Lake north of Cambridge on the Medicine Creek. Another dam is at Enders Lake on the Frenchman River west of the district boundary. These dams supply surface water for irrigation to 44,000 acres of crops located in the Middle Republican NRD and another 29,000 acres in the Lower Republican NRD. Safety issues related to a crack in Red Willow Dam required that the lake be drained in the winter of 2009-2010. Construction to repair the dam began in the winter of 2011 and is nearing completion this fall.

**Ground Water**

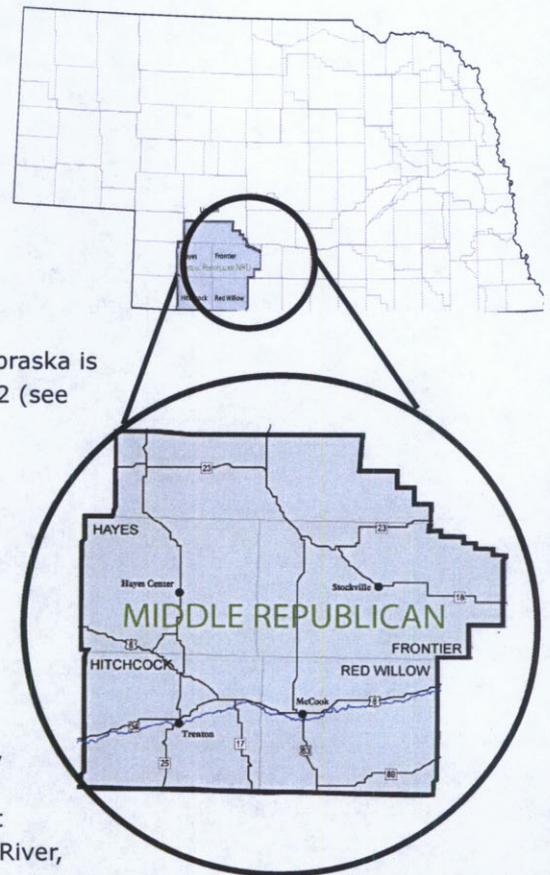
Adequate supplies of ground water exist in most areas except south of the Republican River. The base of the underlying sand and gravel layers that contain the water bearing material rest on impervious layers of Niobrara Chalk, Pierre Shale or formations from the White River Group. As of May 2012, 3,561 active irrigation wells were registered with only 3282 of those wells authorized to provide water to certified acres.

**Soil Types**

Soils range from sandy in the north and west to silt in the south and east.

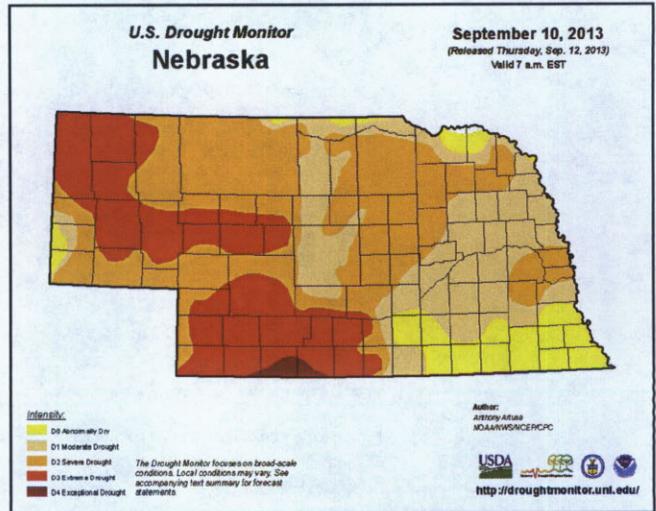
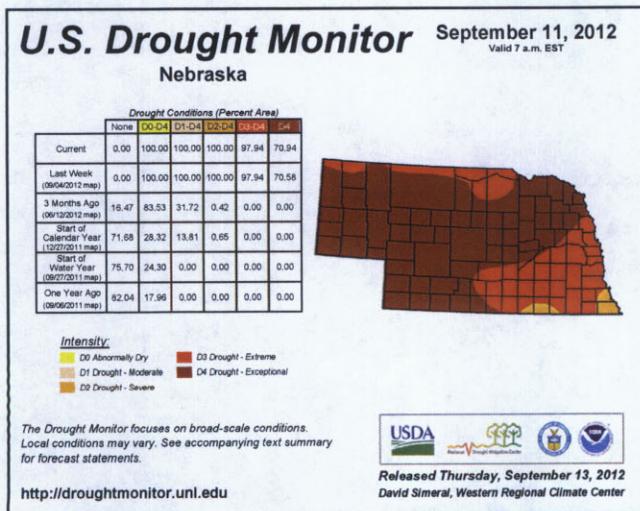
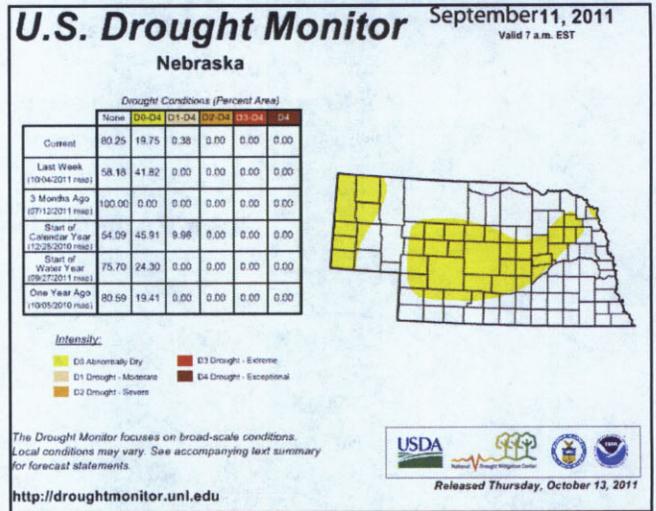
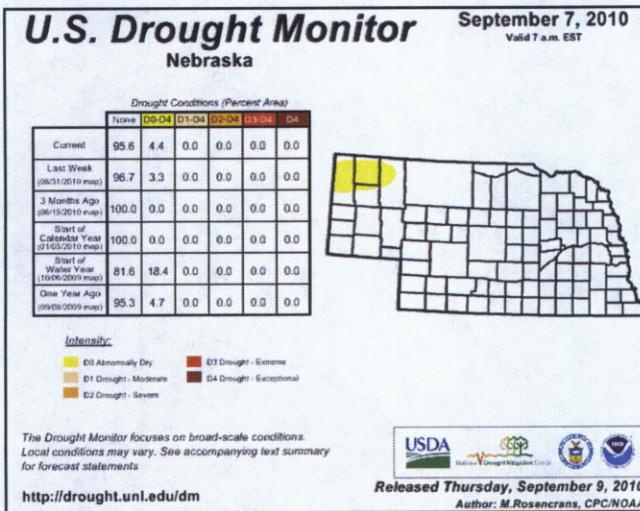
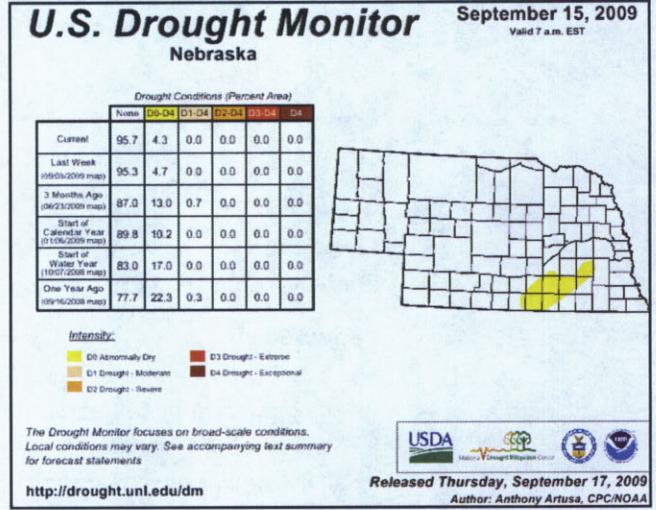
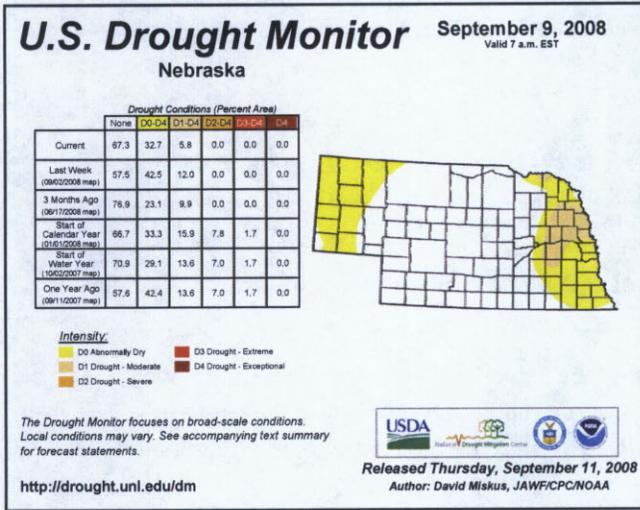
**Land Use**

Land use ranges from ranching in the north and west to farming in the south and east. According to the Republican River Basin Water Balance Study, nearly 62% of



Above: Figure 1: Middle Republican NRD Map

Figures 2-7: U.S. Drought Monitor, 2008-2013



## INTRODUCTION

the land consists of grazed pasture and rangeland, while 34% is considered cropland. The remaining 4% are in urban areas, trees, water, roads and farmsteads (see Table 4). The average size of a tract is 418 acres, with an average price of \$1750/acre.

### **Crops**

The major crops under irrigation are corn, soybeans and alfalfa. Dryland crops are small grains, primarily wheat, corn and alfalfa (see Tables 2 and 5).

### **Livestock**

Beef cattle are the most common livestock with hog production on the rise.

### **Population**

The 2010 census reported 19,724 people (see Table 3). There are no major changes anticipated in population in the near future. Population numbers have seen major declines in the district in the previous 50 years. The average age of residents exceeds the national average.

### **Economy**

Most occupations are related to or are dependant on agriculture. There is some light industrial development in and around McCook such as Valmont Industries and an ethanol plant in nearby Trenton. Hitchcock and Red Willow Counties are state leaders in crude oil production.

**Table 2: Spot Prices for Market Prices for June 2013**

<u>Crop &amp; Pasture<sup>1</sup></u>	
Wheat No. 1, H.W., Bu.....	.678
Corn, yellow, Bu.....	.571
Oats, No. 2, Heavy, Bu.....	.392
Grain Sorghum No. 2, cwt.....	.904
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Ton.....	160.00
Beans (Dry Edible), Cwt.....	.39.5
Potatoes, Cwt.....	.24.20
Soybeans, Bu.....	.12.82
Sugar Beets, Ton <sup>2</sup> .....	.....
Sunflower (All), Cwt.....	.61.70
<u>Livestock &amp; Products<sup>2</sup></u>	
Hogs, Cwt.....	.55.70
Beef Cattle, Cwt.....	.121.0
Calves, Cwt.....	.162.0
Sheep, Cwt.....	.0
Lambs, Cwt.....	.0
Wool, Lb.....	.3.14

<sup>1</sup> Information provided by University of Nebraska Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Cornhusker Economics July 4, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> USDA agricultural prices shown, September 2012 National Agricultural Statistics Service.

INTRODUCTION

**Table 3: Population & Population Density**

County	Census 2010 Pop	Land Area	Pop per Sq. Mile
Frontier*	2,294	.934	2.46
Hayes	967	.720	1.34
Hitchcock	2,908	.720	4.04
Lincoln*	2,500	.711	3.52
Red Willow	11,055	.720	15.35
TOTAL	19,724	3,505	5.25

\*NRD portion of the county

\* Population figures adjusted using 2010 U.S. Census

**Table 4: Average Farmland Values For Southwest Nebraska (Feb, 2013)<sup>2,3</sup>**

Type of Land & Grade	Value Per Acre	% Change from 2012
Dryland Cropland (No Irrigation Potential)	1530	22.0
Dryland Cropland (Irrigation Potential)	1655	30.0
Grazing Land (Tillable)	665	33.0
Grazing Land (Nontillable)	570	20.0
Hayland	1160	25.0
Gravity Irrigated Cropland	3850	34.0
Center Pivot Irrigated Cropland	5200	36.0
All Land Average	1750	31.0

**Table 5: State Wide Crop Yields. (2012)<sup>4</sup>**

Wheat, All (-BU/ACRE)	41
Corn, All (-BU/ACRE)	142
Oats (-BU/ACRE)	57
Grain Sorghum, All (-BU/ACRE)	59
Alfalfa Hay (-TON/ACRE)	2.95
Beans, Dry Edible (-TON/ACRE)	2.4
Sugar Beets (-TON/ACRE)	29.8
Soybeans (-BU/ACRE)	41.5
Sunflowers (-CWT/ACRE)	7.4
Native Hay (-TON/ACRE)	1.8

<sup>2</sup> Information provided by the University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension Publication "Report No. 193: Nebraska Farm Real Estate Market Developments 2012-2013"

<sup>3</sup> Reflects average for the Southwest Region of Nebraska, which includes Keith, Lincoln, Perkins, Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Frontier, Hitchcock, and Red Willow Counties.

<sup>4</sup> Information provided by the United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service Publication, *Crop Production 2012 Summary (January 2013)*.

**Governing Board**

**MIDDLE REPUBLICAN  
NRD BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS**

**Buck Haag**  
**Chairman**  
Bartley

**Rick McConville**  
**Vice-Chairman**  
Indianola  
(308) 364-2641

**John Pallc**  
**Treasurer**  
McCook  
(308) 340-0540

**Joseph Anderjaska**  
**NARD Rep.**  
Hayes Center  
(308) 286-3254

**Steve Cappel**  
Culbertson  
(308) 345-3877

**Kevin Fornoff**  
Hayes Center  
(308) 286-3680

**Bill Hoyt**  
McCook  
(308) 345-2599

**Benji Loomis**  
Maywood  
(308) 362-4961

**Brad Randel**  
Indianola  
(308) 364-2871

**Blaine Stinson**  
Palisade  
(308) 285-03420

**James Uerling**  
Indianola  
(308) 364-2658

When the Middle Republican Natural Resources District began operations on July 1, 1972 as a political subdivision of the state, it accepted all assets, liabilities, and obligations of the former special purpose districts of which it replaced. This consolidation included all or most of Frontier, Palisade, Red Willow and Hitchcock County Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and the Upper and Lower Medicine Creek, Blackwood Creek, Dry Creek Pilot, and Dry Creek South Watershed Conservancy Districts. A small part of the Lincoln County Soil and Water Conservation District was also merged. The Perry Drainage District merged into the Middle Republican NRD on March 30, 1976.

**Board of Directors**

The board consists of eleven members who are elected at large. Directors serve four year terms, with half of the Board seats up for election every two years. Six seats are up for election in 2014. The board of directors is responsible for adopting all policies, projects, and programs of the natural resources district. Current board members are listed to the left.

The board holds its monthly meetings the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM with the location usually at the Curtis Memorial Community Center. December, January and February meetings are held at 1:30 PM. Each meeting is open to the general public.

**Committees**

The district operates with a number of standing and special subcommittees composed of 3-5 directors. The executive committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer. Other committees include the Groundwater Committee, and the Personnel and Operations Committee. Proposals for Board action are taken before these subcommittees for examination. The subcommittee makes a recommendation to the Board. The Board votes to adopt, amend or reject the proposal.

At the discretion of the Board, special subcommittees and citizen advisory subcommittees may also be formed to assist the Board in dealing with specific projects or activities. Members are appointed and represent a group of people or businesses with particular interests in the project or activity.

**Staff**

The headquarters staff is responsible to the board of directors and carries out day-to-day operations of the district. Field office secretaries are provided by the district to the four Natural Resources Conservation Service field offices located within the boundaries of the Middle Republican NRD. Other technical, maintenance, and operational employees will be hired primarily for seasonal work on a part-time basis. Current staff are listed on page 28.

# INTRODUCTION

## District Documents

Natural Resources Districts are required to develop other plans in addition to this Long Range Implementation Plan. The district also cooperates on plans with other units of Government. These plans, rules and regulations adopted by the district, interlocal agreements, and policy documents are described below for further reference.

---

### General

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Master Plan .....   | This plan contains the board of director's general policy statement, district goals and objectives, and areas of responsibility. First adopted in 1979, this plan was revised and adopted again in 1989, 1999 and 2012. |
| Annual Report ..... | The Annual Report is a summary of district activities for the calendar year and is included as a supplement to the District's February newsletter.  |

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### Flood Control

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Upper & Lower Medicine Creek Watershed Work Plans | These plans outline work plans for constructing nine floodwater retarding structures and implementing land treatment practices. Developed in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service under PL566, this project is located in Lincoln and Frontier Counties. The three remaining structures 440, 220 and 270 will not be completed. In June of 2004 the board took action to close this watershed project . |
| Blackwood Creek Watershed Work Plan               | This is a plan of work for constructing 13 floodwater-retarding structures and implementing land treatment practices. This was developed in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service under PL566 and is located in Hayes, Hitchcock, and Red Willow Counties. The remaining structures P1 and 31-A will not be completed. In June of 2004 the board took action to close this watershed project.            |
| Kelly Creek Flood Control Project Plan            | This contains a plan of work for constructing two floodwater-retarding structures and a discharge channel within the City of McCook. The west dam and channel are in operation, but the east dam has never been built.  |

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### Groundwater Management

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Groundwater Management Plan..... | This plan contains an inventory of existing data on ground water resources, goals for ground water quality and quantity, triggers for regulatory actions, describes ground water monitoring and programs, and provides guidance for ground water management for the next few years. The former Department of Water Resources (now DNR) approved it on January 4, 1994. This plan is currently being revised to comply with the Integrated Management Plan approved in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources. |
| Local Action Plan - GWQMA.....   | Local Action Plan Ground Water Quality Management Area for Red Willow and Hitchcock Counties. Approved on June 17, 1992 by the Director of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, this plan contains the plan of action in a 450 square mile area, to prevent the average level of nitrate/nitrogen in the ground water from reaching 10 milligrams per liter.   |
| Integrated Management Plan ..... | Effective January 1, 2005 and revised in August of 2010 with an effective date of November 1, 2010, the Integrated Management Plan contains goals and objectives that meet the purpose of "sustaining a balance between water uses and water supplies so that the economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the Republican River Basin can be achieved and maintained for both the near term and the long term".  |

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**Erosion Control**

Program to Reduce Erosion and Sediment Damages

This is a plan developed in compliance with the Nebraska Erosion and Sediment Act. Approved by the former Natural Resources Commission in 1987, the rules and regulations were updated and approved in June 2011.

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**Rules & Regulations**

Enforcement of the Ground Water  
Management and Protection Act . . . .

Revised in July of 2012, these rules and regulations were adopted in order to administer and enforce the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act, and effectuate the policy of the state to conserve ground water resources.

Ground Water Management Area. . . .

First adopted in 1998 and with annual revisions, the latest revision includes rules and regulations related to the Republican River Compact Settlement. The current Rules, last revised in January 2008, contain rules for allocation and transfer, certification of acres, moratorium on wells and new uses, and includes the concepts of the Integrated Management Plan jointly approved by the NRD and the Department of Natural Resources. The most recent rules and regulations were approved by the board of directors in the March of 2012 and set an allocation for the 2013-2017 crop years.

Chemigation . . . . .

The Middle Republican NRD will carry out an inspection and permit program in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality in order to implement and administer the Nebraska Chemigation. The MRNRD conducts district-wide random and periodic chemigation system inspections to insure compliance with the Nebraska Chemigation Act rules and regulations.

## INTRODUCTION

### Agreements Under the Interlocal Cooperation Act of Joint Agency Public Agency Act

State Statute Section 13-513 requires any governing body which is a party to an agreement pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act or the Joint Public Agency Act to provide information to the Auditor of Public Accounts regarding such agreements. The information is to be filed with the Auditor of Public Accounts on or before December 31 of each year. (See Table 6 below)

**Table 6: Interlocal Agreements**

Parties to Agreement	Description
23 Natural Resources Districts	An agreement to form the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts in December of 1974. This was amended to provide for a pension plan in February of 1976.
Upper Republican NRD, Middle Republican NRD, Lower Republican NRD and Tri-basin NRD, Frenchman Cambridge Irrigation District, Frenchman Valley Irrigation District, Nebraska Bostwick Irrigation District, Pioneer District and Hitchcock & Red Willow Irrigation District	An agreement to form the Nebraska Republican River Management Districts Association.
23 Natural Resources Districts Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD)	An agreement with the NARD to provide for accident and health insurance plans in July of 1995.
USDA/NRCS	An agreement with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide for an Irrigation Water Management Specialist. Approved in October.
Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR)	An agreement with the NDNR to provide for cost-share reimbursement funds from the Water Well Decommissioning Fund.
Nebraska Association of Resource Districts (NARD)	An agreement with the NARD to act as an agent for the acquisition, distribution and payment of seedling trees.
Nebraska Department of Agriculture	Agreement to administer payments for the Nebraska Buffer Strip Program.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	An agreement with the University of Nebraska Board of Regents to provide for the operation and maintenance of the McCook and Curtis automated weather stations. Approved June 1986.
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NG&PC)	An agreement with NGPC to provide a program for the establishment or enhancement of wildlife habitat. Approved May 2010.
USDA-NRCS	An agreement with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (No.68-6526-8-541) to provide for an Integrated Water Management Technician.
Nebraska Association of Resource Districts (NARD)	An agreement with the NARD to administer funds to allow the NRD to provide temporary seasonal employees to assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service with farm bill activities.
Twin Platte NRD, Upper Republican NRD, Middle Republican NRD, Lower Republican NRD	An agreement with the members to form the Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement Project (NCORPE) to augment stream flow in the Platte and Republican Rivers.

### Policy Statements

- General Policy Statement - Revised May 2011
- Personnel Policy Statement - Revised May 2011
- Bylaws - Revised May 2011

**PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

**Groundwater Management ..... 16**

**Groundwater Programs..... 19**

**Groundwater Special Initiatives &**

**Grant funded Projects..... 20**

**Chemigation Inspection & Permit Program..... 20**

**Tree Planting..... 22**

**Land Treatment & Irrigation Management..... 22**

**Equipment & Supply Services ..... 22**

**Flood Control ..... 22**

**Cost-Sharing Assistance Programs..... 24**

**Recreational Facilities ..... 25**

**Road Structures ..... 25**

**WILD Nebraska ..... 26**

**Other Programs ..... 26**

**NRCS Support ..... 27**

**Staff ..... 27**

**Information & Education..... 29**

**Ground Water Management**

**The Ground Water Reservoir Life Goal** as identified in the Ground Water Management Plan, was approved by the director of the former Department of Water Resources in January 1994. The Ground Water Management Plan serves as a guide for ground water management in the Middle Republican Natural Resources District.

Areas of ground water decline exist within the Middle Republican Natural Resources District and at this time, observation well readings have indicated an incline in ground water levels in the last four years. Declines of over 10 feet have shown up in areas of northwest Hayes County and southwest Lincoln County. An area from near Moorefield southeast to Orafino in Frontier County continues to show declines of over 10 feet. Declines have slowed in 2007 and 2008 with many areas showing a slight rise in static water levels.

The irrigation development rate was increasing prior to the implementation of the temporary suspension on well drilling in June of 2002. Nitrate/nitrogen ground water contamination has been identified and a ground water quality management area in Red Willow and Hitchcock Counties has been established to address this concern (see Figure 9). Some brine pollution resulting from oil drilling has been found in small, localized areas.

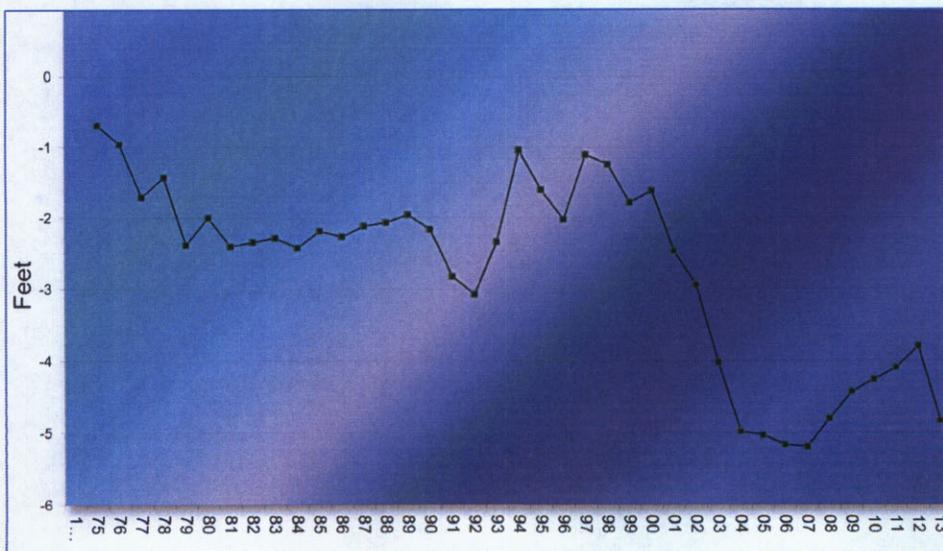
While the potential exists for future problems with ground water contamination and ground water level declines, the prohibition of new wells and new acres will slow any declines. Changes in farming practices and awareness of contamination potential have limited quality concerns.

Management of ground water within the Middle Republican Natural Resources District boundaries continues to be an on-going process. The district reevaluates its ground water programs each year and makes adjustments accordingly. Many changes have occurred as a result of the Republican River Lawsuit Settlement. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, at the district's request, took a water quality survey in Hayes, Frontier, and Lincoln Counties in 1995. Based on the results of the survey no additions were made to the existing Ground Water Quality Management Area.

**The ground water life goal of this plan is to sustain a balance between water uses and water supplies so that the economic viability, social and environmental health, safety and welfare of the river basin can be achieved and maintained for both the near term and the long term.**

**-Ground Water Reservoir Life Goal**

**Figure 8: Cumulative Well Measurements from 1974 to 2013**

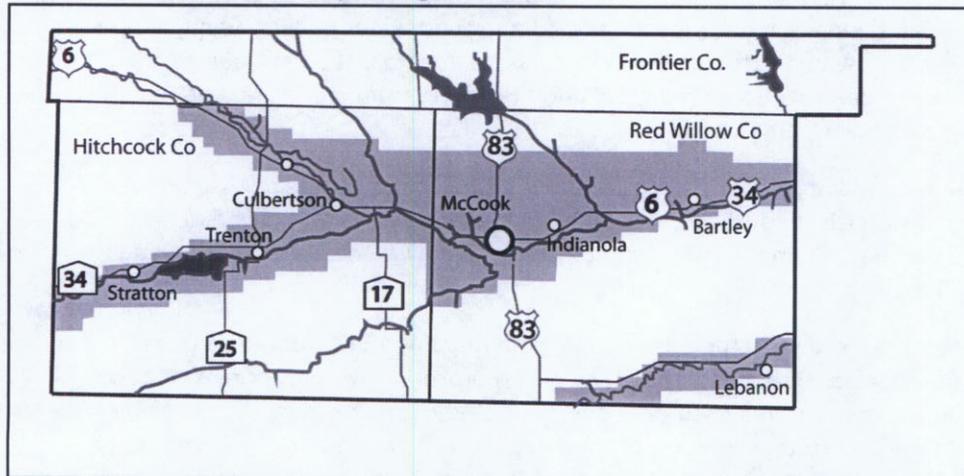


## PLANNED ACTIVITIES

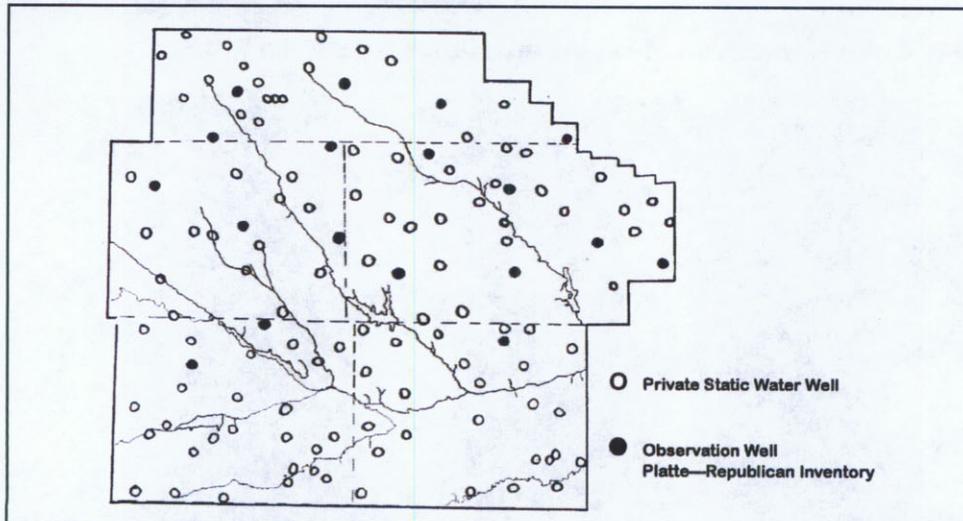
The rules and regulations for the Ground Water Management Area and the associated Integrated Management Plan will be the controlling factor for ground water management into the future.

The following pages summarize the on-going programs relating to ground water quantity and quality. Refer to the appropriate plan or its rules and regulations for more details on planned future actions or triggers to implement regulatory actions.

**Figure 9: Ground Water Quality Management Area**



**Figure 10: Ground Water Monitoring Points**





"Too many people, 'biodiversity' is almost synonymous with the word 'nature,' and 'nature' brings to mind steamy forests and the big creatures that dwell there. Fair enough. But biodiversity is much more than that, for it encompasses not only the diversity of species, but also the diversity within species."

~ Cary Fowler ~

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Ground Water Programs

Ground Water Monitoring. . . . . This program consists of the following components:

- Continue static water level measurements in observation wells across the district each spring and fall. Presently 130 observation wells are measured each year, most of which are privately owned (see Figures 8 & 10).
- Collect 40 water samples each year for water quality analysis. Results of these tests will be used for irrigation and domestic purposes.
- Continue to take monthly static water levels from six observation wells.
- Continue the present water quality monitoring done in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey for the Ground Water Quality Management Area in Red Willow and Hitchcock Counties. The system consists of six nested well sites and 75 individual collection points. Expand the program to include 30 additional wells in Lincoln, Hayes, and Frontier Counties, specifically testing for nitrate/nitrogen contamination.
- Conduct random collections of water samples for water quality analysis in areas where contamination problems are suspected and further information is required.
- Clean Water Act grant funds were used to purchase a 7'x 14' trailer, generator, air compressor, multi-probe sampling system, Bennet sample pump and hose with reel to allow the District to expand the existing monitoring program by 33 wells and to conduct follow up testing for wells that return above normal results.

Surface Water Monitoring . . . . . Collection of samples can be agreed to with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality.

Point Source Pollution . . . . . Operational in 1993, this practice documents any incidence of known point source pollution and requires reporting to the appropriate state agency.

Ground Water Quality Management Area Requests . . . . . In accordance with the Ground Water Management Plan, a land area of 36 square miles in size showing a significant level of contamination will be a trigger for more corrective action.

Ground Water Quality Management Area . . . . . This program controls the activities in the Red Willow and Hitchcock Counties Ground Water Quality Management Area, which addresses nitrate/nitrogen contamination. This plan was initiated in 1993 and will continue to be in operation for the foreseeable future.

Meter Maintenance Program . . . . . The adoption of the Ground Water Management Area in 1998 included rules that required the installation of flow meters on all regulated wells by the end of 2004. In 2002 the Middle Republican Natural Resources District began a meter maintenance program that provided for the inspection and servicing of meters on a three-year schedule. The district also provides for major repairs of meters. Meters are brought into the district office and landowners are only charged for the parts needed for repair.

Abandoned Wells..... Cost-share assistance to properly close these wells is available.

Nebraska Republican River Management Districts Association.....An interlocal agreement has been entered into between the Middle Republican Natural Resources District, Upper Republican Natural Resources District, Lower Republican Natural Resources District, Tri-Basin Natural Resources District, Frenchman-Cambridge Irrigation District, Frenchman Valley Irrigation District, Hitchcock and Red Willow Irrigation District, Pioneer Irrigation District and Nebraska Bostwick Irrigation District all of which are political subdivisions of the State of Nebraska. This association was formed through authorities stated in the Interlocal Cooperation Act. This association is a separate body from the individual district members of this association. The purpose of the association is to conserve, preserve, and protect the

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

quantity, quality, and availability of water resources within the Republican River Basin. Members will inform and educate the public concerning the beneficial uses of water resources in the Republican River Basin and will represent matters related to the Republican River Compact. The association's members will also provide the authority, resources, services, and facilities as deemed appropriate and necessary to accomplish these purposes. In 2004, advisory members were appointed representing business, recreation, communications, and other interests.

This organization continues to serve the interests of the basin and will sponsor information and education programs in the future. In 2012, this organization and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources began a conjunctive use study and surface water model project. Funding from the Bureau of Reclamation's Water Smart grant program will expand this effort into a basin study with the states of Colorado and Kansas.

Ground Water Management Area..... The purposes of the management area are to (1) protect ground water quantity and (2) prevent or resolve conflicts between users of ground water and appropriators of surface water, when ground water and surface water are hydrologically connected, through the implementation of controls to meet the goals and objectives identified in the Integrated Management Plan for the Middle Republican Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. Rules have been developed to implement the revisions to the Integrated Management Plan which became effective November of 2010. The effective date of these Rules and Regulations is March 1, 2013.

Chemigation Inspection & Permit Program The Middle Republican Natural Resources District will continue to administer a chemigation inspection and permit program as directed by the Nebraska Chemigation Act of 1986. Anyone applying fertilizer or chemicals through an irrigation system that has the capability to back flow into the ground water must meet certain requirements according to this act. This requires certification training, the use of proper and approved equipment, and a permit. All chemigation equipment must be inspected before a permit can be issued, which is renewable annually. The district conducts spot inspections each year on current, existing permitted systems to check equipment condition. All systems will be spot checked at least once every three years. Other spot inspections may be made as staff time and circumstances permit.

**Ground Water Special Initiatives & Grant Funded Projects**

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program..... Nearly 13,000 irrigated acres have been enrolled in the federally funded program where irrigated rented rates are paid for 10 to 15 years and acres are planted to grass.

Interrelated Water Management Plan Program—Republican River Augmentation ..... Using the authorities provided to the district to implement river flow enhancement projects, the Middle Republican NRD partnered with the Upper Republican, Lower Republican and Twin Platte NRDs to implement the Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement Project (NCORPE). Bonds were issued in September for the purchase of the property and additional bonds will be issued in 2014 for the construction of a pipeline to provide ground water to Medicine Creek to be used to assist Nebraska in compliance with the Republican River Compact. See appendix 1

NOAA Grant..... The Middle Republican NRD was contacted by Dr. Cody L. Knutson of the National Drought

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska, who asked for non-financial support submitted a proposal to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The project is titled Development of a Drought Decision Support Portal for the Republican River Basin of Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas. The grant seeks to help the districts develop an educational and planning resource for governing entities and citizens in the region. Information on the website includes: historical and current climate, water resources, soil moisture, forecast information, etc., to keep residents and planners informed of changing and evolving long and short-term patterns, which will benefit planners from all levels (individual, community, and NRD) in proposing individual management strategies. A quality monitoring program is an essential base on which to make long and short-term management decisions, especially for those producers and communities in the watershed not totally dependent on irrigation allocations (although forecast information can still give allocation-dependent producers a heads-up to future allocation decisions and long-term climate information can help people make decisions on the types of strategies that may be able to withstand the full range of historical climatic variability in this region).

Acreage Reduction Programs. . . . . The MRNRD continues to administer or initiate programs that provide for the permanent retirement of irrigated acres. Either ground water sources or surface water sources may be eligible for these programs. In 2011 the district purchased the Riverside Irrigation Company. Surface water used by this company is now available to other surface water users or the State of Nebraska in a compact call year.

**Table 7 Retired Acres Acquisitions per Program**

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>NRD DOLLARS</b>	<b>Per/ Average</b>
<sup>1</sup> EQUIPSI-2007	1130.1	\$ 141,262.50	\$ 125.00
<sup>2</sup> ARP-2009	453.3	\$ 344,937.00	\$ 760.95
<sup>3</sup> AWEP1-2009	330.5	\$ 40,651.50	\$ 123.00
AWEP2-2010	830.1	\$ 112,063.50	\$ 135.00
AWEP3-2011	213	\$ 108,050.00	\$ 507.28
ARP-2011	238.1	\$ 391,120.00	\$1,642.67
AWEP4-2012	125.8	\$ 31,450.00	\$ 250.00
RIVERSIDE ARP	564.4	\$1,854,300.00	\$3,285.44
RIVERSIDE AWEP 2011	205.7	\$ 506,345.00	\$2,461.57
ARP-2012	72.5	\$ 123,250.00	\$1,700.00
AWEP 5 2013	66.5	\$ 133,000.00	\$2,000.00
ARP-2013	45.4	\$ 89,200.00	\$1,964.76
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4275.4</b>	<b>\$3,875,629.50</b>	<b>\$ 906.50</b>

<sup>1</sup>NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program  
<sup>2</sup>Acres Retirement Program, set-up and managed by the district.  
<sup>3</sup>NRCS Agricultural Water Enhancement Program.

**Tree Planting**

One of the most popular and visible programs for the Middle Republican Natural Resources District is the tree-planting program. Approximately 40,000 trees are sold or distributed to landowners, schools, and community groups each spring. More than 1.6 million trees have been distributed in the district since 1972. Each year the district also contracts for more than 100,000 feet of plastic mulch to be laid for moisture conservation and weed control. Tree plantings are established for erosion control, windbreaks, wildlife habitat, woodlot or aesthetic purposes.

**Land Treatment & Irrigation Management**

The goal of the land treatment and irrigation management programs is to promote and administer programs that encourage implementation of best management soil and water conservation practices.

This will be done by encouraging practices that divert, collect, and store storm water runoff or irrigation wastewater. This allows controlled water to be used, reused or to seep into the ground water reservoir.

The District will also answer inquiries and complaints regarding improper runoff of irrigation water originating from ground water sources. Solutions will be sought resulting in less ground water use through various land treatment practices.

**Equipment & Supply Services**

**Grass Drills**

The district has several grass drills available for customers to rent. This helps in the establishment of vegetative cover or to plant alfalfa.

**Gopher Bait and Bait Applicators**

Because unwanted gophers are a big problem, the Middle Republican Natural Resources District sells poison bait and has bait applicators available to rent. This bait is considered a restricted use pesticide so purchasers must be certified pesticide applicators and abide by all applicable rules and regulations affecting the purchase and use of this pesticide.

**Miscellaneous Supplies**

Flags and other various supplies are also for sale in the district office to assist landowners in the implementation of best management practices.

**Flood Control**

**Watershed Projects**

Throughout the early years of the District, maintenance and construction of flood control projects was a major priority. With the moratoriums on new surface water permits enacted by the Department of Natural Resources, it is unlikely that the district will build any more structures. While there were sites remaining to be built, the district has closed out the work plan for the Upper and Lower Medicine Creek watershed and the Blackwood Creek watershed. Operation and Maintenance of the existing structures will continue to be a primary function of the District.

**"If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people."**

**~ Confucius ~**

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES

### Project Operation and Maintenance

It is district policy to inspect all watershed and flood control structures annually as well as after a major rainfall. An inspection report will be filed and a schedule completed to carry out the required work. Scheduled work will vary from year to year but \$10,000 is budgeted annually. PL566 projects scheduled to be inspected annually are the Dry Creek Pilot, Dry Creek South, Blackwood Creek, Lower Medicine Creek, and Upper Medicine Creek. Other flood control projects are the McCook Flood Control Project, and Perry Drainage Ditch.

Significant damage was noted on two structures following heavy storm events in 2007 and 2008. Major repairs were needed to site 80A in the Upper Medicine Creek watershed and were completed in 2010. Repairs to site 32A in the Blackwood Creek watershed were completed in Spring of 2011. Cost of these repairs of these two structures was nearly 2.4 million dollars. It was determined that the problem associated with each of these structures was a design deficiency and as a result of that determination, federal funding was used to make those repairs. There are several structures that may have similar design deficiencies. Cooperating with the Nebraska NRCS, these structures have been identified and are awaiting the availability of federal funding for their repair.

**According to Major John Wesley Powell (1834-1902), a watershed is an area "... within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where as humans settled simple logic demanded that they became part of a community."**



Work begins on the repair of flood control structure 80A located north of Maywood in Frontier Co. Below, the original soil is removed.



**Cost Sharing Assistance for Soil & Water Conservation Practices**

The NRD offers financial assistance to landowners who want to implement the following soil and water conservation practices.

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**Nebraska Soil and Water**

**Conservation Program (NSWCP) . . . . .** The Middle Republican Natural Resources District will locally administer the NSWCP. Normally the program pays 50% of the total cost to install soil and water conservation practices while the landowner pays the remaining 50%. Terraces, diversions, grass seeding, reuse pits, planned grazing systems, and improved irrigation systems are all examples of approved NSWCF conservation practices. Funding for this program has been reduced due to budget concerns and shortfalls of the State of Nebraska. Forty to 60 applications are expected to be approved each year for NSWCF cost share assistance. The district is allocated approximately \$87,900 for FY 2013-2014.

**Local Soil and Water**

**Conservation Program (LCP) . . . . .** The Middle Republican Natural Resources District has budgeted approximately \$148,000 in LCP funds for FY 2013-14 to supplement the NSWCF. Practice requirements and standards are similar to the requirements established for the state and federal programs. The decommissioning of abandoned wells, water meter installations, terrace enlargements, and tree plantings are accepted practices as part of the LCP. Approximately 100 applications are received each year.

**Water Well Decommissioning Fund . . . . .** This fund provides for reimbursement of some of the districts expenditures related to the proper sealing of abandoned wells. The district provides 60% cost-share for this program.



Soil and water saving terracing shows up well on this field after a soaking rain in western Frontier County.

**Recreation Facilities & Outdoor Classrooms**

The district provides Community Assistance Grants (CAGs) to help sponsor recreation facilities at 20% of the actual cost up to \$3,000. Plans must be approved by the board of directors and will be consistent with good land and water management. Facilities must be open to the public and a long-term maintenance program must be in place. The district reserves the right to request valid documentation of actual work costs or work performed from other agencies before approval is given.

**Road Structures**

The Middle Republican Natural Resources District cooperates with counties or other entities to replace bridges or crossings with "road dams." This is dependant on feasibility and the availability of funds.

The district will not cost share on any road dam that does not meet the safety or design criteria of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Department of Roads, or other responsible state or federal agencies.

**Category I**

This category includes smaller type dams where benefits such as erosion control, sediment retention, ground water recharge, and grade stabilization will be realized. Cost-share assistance is available on Category I structures at 30% of actual construction costs up to \$10,000 on approved sites.

**Category II**

This category includes larger type dams where additional benefits such as flood control and surface water conservation in addition to erosion control, sediment retention, ground water recharge, and grade stabilization would be realized. The district will cost-share on approved structures of this type at 50% of actual construction costs up to \$50,000.

**"Land, then, is not merely soil; it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals."**

**~ Aldo Leopold ~**

**WILD Nebraska Program**

WILD Nebraska is a consolidation of several wildlife habitat programs previously offered by Nebraska Game & Parks either independently or with various partners. WILD Nebraska provides incentives and technical assistance to private landowners to develop and enhance wildlife habitat, complements both Federal and Private Conservation Programs, and meets the needs of cooperators.

The Middle Republican NRD has entered into an agreement under the Interlocal Cooperation Act with the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission for the portion of the WILD Nebraska program that establishes or improves habitat on privately owned land. This replaces the former Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. Aspects of the program include the following:

**Contracts**

Contracts ranging up to 10 years will be made with landowners who want to establish or improve wildlife habitat on their land. A transition payment is made to the landowner based upon the type of habitat involved and habitat improvement material needed. Financial assistance may also be available for materials.

**Funding**

The district will continue to work with the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission on habitat programs. The FY13-14 budget includes \$6000.

**Cooperative Agreements**

Agreements will be entered into with landowners, Pheasants Forever Chapters, Environmental Trust Programs, NE Game & Parks Commission, and others to improve wildlife habitat. All agreements are subject to funding and material availability.



A Northern Prairie Lizard takes in the warmth of the sun and sand while looking for an easy meal.

**Other**

Funding is also received from the Department of Agriculture for the buffer strip program and Pheasants Forever for the Corners for Wildlife Program.

### **NRCS Support**

The Middle Republican Natural Resources District cooperates with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and contributes to their programs by providing:

#### **Field Office Secretarial Assistance**

The Middle Republican Natural Resources District will employ and assign a secretary to the NRCS field offices in Curtis, McCook, Trenton, and Hayes Center. Reimbursement is made each year to the Twin Platte NRD for secretarial assistance for the North Platte Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office. The Middle Republican NRD will determine salaries.

#### **Part-Time Technical Assistance**

The NRCS field offices at Curtis, McCook, Trenton, and Hayes Center will be allocated 450 hours each for seasonal temporary employees to facilitate field layout and other technical work. Reimbursement may be made to the Twin Platte Natural Resources District in North Platte for support of the North Platte NRCS field office, if appropriate. The district determines all salaries.

#### **Irrigation Water Management Specialist**

The Middle Republican Natural Resources District will continue a cooperative agreement with the NRCS to provide an Irrigation Water Management Specialist.

#### **Integrated Management Technician**

In 2008, the District entered into a cooperative agreement with the NRCS to provide a full-time technician for the McCook Field Office.

### **Staff**

A permanent staff is maintained to implement the Middle Republican Natural Resources District's various programs and projects. Other part-time employees are hired during peak workloads on a seasonal basis or as needed.

#### **General Manager**

The general manager is responsible for planning, budgeting, personnel, contracting, funding grants, political liaison, and overall daily operations of the district.

#### **Assistant Manager**

The assistant manager is responsible for the general operations of district programs including ground water management and monitoring, wildlife habitat program, tree planting, conservation cost-share programs, project maintenance, ground water management area coordination, and data storage.

**"To waste, to destroy our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed."**

**— Theodore**

**Staff**

**Current Staff**

**MRNRD OFFICE**

**Dan Smith**  
General Manager

**Robert Merrigan**  
Assistant Manager

**Stacie Owens**  
Office Supervisor

**Sylvia Johnson**  
GW Program  
Assistant

**Mary Tidyman**  
Secretary/  
Receptionist

**Roger Lawson**  
Information &  
Education

**Rich Karre**  
Technical Supervisor

**Tom Hansen**  
Technician

**Spencer Campbell**  
Technician

**NRCS FIELD OFFICE**

**Doris Burke**  
Frontier County

**Kathy Barger**  
Hayes County

**Amanda Shuler**  
Hitchcock County

**Noelle Turner**  
Lincoln County

**Carol Lashley**  
Red Willow County

**Office Supervisor**

The office supervisor serves as Ground Water Programs Supervisor and in coordination with the Assistant Manager shall insure that databases, files and other records of the district relating to ground water and ground water management are maintained to meet district needs.

**Secretary / Receptionist**

The secretary/receptionist serves as office secretary and as the district bookkeeper and is responsible for answering phones and greeting customers, in addition to other duties such as payroll and chemigation administration.

**Ground Water Programs Assistant**

The Ground Water Programs Assistant will work under the direct supervision of the Office Supervisor and will coordinate activities through the Assistant Manager and the Manager. The GWPA shall maintain databases, create reports and transmit data for administration of Ground Water Management Areas, Integrated Management and Compact Accounting. They shall prepare mailings for Management Area and District Programs, aid assistant manager with contracts and easements for ground water program and maintain records for district ground water programs as directed.

**Technical Supervisor**

The technical supervisor will coordinate the tree planting and storage program, the chemigation program, take water samples and well measurements, supervise work crews, operate and maintain equipment, and perform inspections and maintenance of flood control structures in addition to servicing irrigation flow meters.

**Technician**

Along with the primary function of flow meter maintenance, servicing, inspection and reporting of water use, the technician will perform chemigation equipment inspections, maintain district equipment, take water samples and well measurements, assist with the tree program, perform maintenance of flood control structures, and gather field data.

**Information & Education Coordinator**

The information and education coordinator will write and edit the district newsletter, Sprinkles and Splashes, act as the webmaster for the district web site, coordinate educational programs and provide educational materials to district schools and educators, coordinate district scholarship programs, coordinate judging contests and the Mid-Plains Regional Envirothon Contest, coordinate awards programs, and create and distribute all other district publications, plans and reports.

## Information & Education

**The Middle Republican Natural Resources District** has a variety of resources available to educators and community groups in our district. Our lending library includes conservation curricula, natural resource reference books, activity guides, DVDs, videos, games, a ground water flow model, Enviroscape (table top interactive model of a rural community), and other materials that provide informative and factual information to compliment natural resource studies. Topics range from water to wildlife. These curricula activities involve students in interactive, hands-on, small group activities designed to increase problem solving and critical thinking skills and their knowledge of their natural environment.



**Marlys Brenning, a summer camp scholarship recipient, is taking notes during Youth Range Camp. She is a McCook High student.**

The district also makes available presentations, public information meetings, award programs, training programs and many publications that are consistent with its mission. Staff members may be available for group presentations.

### 5th Grade Conservation Craze

Each fall, the NRD hosts a free outdoor education day for area 5th grade students. Schools in the NRD's portions of Frontier, Red Willow, Hayes, and Hitchcock counties are invited to attend. Students spend the day in hands-on educational activities focusing on water, wildlife, forestry, geography, and more. More than 1,400 students have attended the Outdoor Education Day since its inception. Presenters are drawn from a variety of local, state and federal agencies.

### Soil Stewardship

Materials prepared and distributed by the National Association of Conservation Districts are provided free of charge to district churches, schools and other groups by request.

### Natural Resources Education

The district cosponsors natural resources education programs at district schools. Other cosponsors may be schools, NRCS offices, and county cooperative extension offices. The district also supports related programs in adjacent districts.

### Land and Range Judging Contests & Nebraska Envirothon

The district will cosponsor all land and range judging contests and the Mid Plains Nebraska Envirothon when held within its boundaries and will cooperate with other groups/agencies to make those events successful.

### Arbor Day Programs

Each year tree seedlings will be given to students, schools and community groups in observance of Arbor Day. This program is dependant on the number of trees available each year. Each fifth grade student attending a school located in the MRNRD will receive a tree to take home and plant.



**Hayes Center 5th grade students answer a question at a Tree Olympics station as part of the Spring programs we provide throughout the District in April.**

"I plan on becoming involved and to work and develop technology that will help our farm continue to be productive, profitable, efficient, economical, and valuable for future generations."  
 Dylan McConville

" I will use my wildlife biology degree to work in the wildlife management field in southwest Nebraska."  
 Riley Garey

**Conservation Awards**

Honor conservation award, Outstanding Tree Planter, and Outstanding Grassland recipients may be selected district-wide. All recipients will receive a photo or print from the Middle Republican NRD commemorating their award selection. Presentations will be made at the annual Director's Luncheon in December or at the annual Southwest Nebraska Water Conference in March. Selected recipients accomplishments may be forwarded on for state and national award selection.

**Post-High Scholarships** of \$500 each are awarded each year to two graduating students whose permanent address lies within district boundaries. Preference is given to a natural resources or agriculture major. Preference is also given to students attending McCook Community College or the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. Applicants must be either a first or second year college student and show a financial need.

**Summer Camp Scholarships**

Camp scholarships equal to the camp registration fee will be available to district students attending the Nebraska Youth Range Camp and the ACE Camp at Halsey each year as well as the Groundwater Foundation's Groundwater University. Two scholarships are available from each county each year. Other camps, workshops, or seminars dealing with natural resources and leadership may also qualify. The

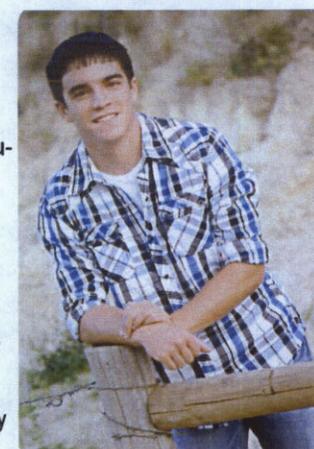
Middle Republican NRD Board of Directors will make the scholarship selections.

**Educator Scholarships**

The district will provide two scholarships to district educators attending continuing education workshops relating to natural resources conservation or agriculture. These scholarships are worth \$150 each. Recipients must intend to teach during the upcoming school year at a school either a) located in the Middle Republican Natural Resources District or b) serving a significant population of students who reside in the district.

**Newsletters & Media**

The district will publish and distribute the district-wide quarterly newsletter, Sprinkles and Splashes. An electronic bulletin, MRNRD Splash, will be distributed via E-mail to stake holders to announce or report on key events. News items will be released periodically to the media including press releases distributed after most board meetings. Media representatives are always welcome at all open district meetings and advance notice will be given. Interviews will be granted as time and circumstances permit.



Middle Republican NRD 2013 Post-High Scholarship Winners: (Top) Dylan McConville from Southwest High School and Riley Garey (Above), 2013 graduate of Medicine Valley Senior High School in Curtis.

**Web Sites**

The Middle Republican NRD maintains an internet web site located at [www.mrnrd.org](http://www.mrnrd.org). Information pertaining to district news, programs, upcoming events, and the regular board of directors meetings will be published. The District also maintains a website [www.rrbdp.org](http://www.rrbdp.org) developed by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's National Drought Mitigation Center. A website is being developed for the N-CORPE project.

**Teacher Training Programs**

In cooperation with schools, ESU Offices and other agencies, the district will host or sponsor teacher training opportunities that introduce educators to successful techniques for integrating natural resource conservation topics into their classroom curriculum while supporting the state standards.

**Demonstrations & Tours**

The district will cosponsor and cooperate on demonstration projects about natural resources management that are consistent with its goals and policies. Tours will be organized for special projects. Participation will depend upon the nature and purpose of the tour.

**Outdoor Classrooms**

The district will work with schools or community groups in the establishment of outdoor classrooms as materials and funds are available.

**In-Service Training & Education**

Staff and board members will attend workshops, field trips, demonstrations, meetings, and seminars periodically to stay updated on topics of interest.

**Resource & Video Library**

Environmental curricula, games, storm drain stencils, DVDs and videos are available for check out by teachers and youth group leaders. Free educational comic and coloring books are also available. Many activity guides and environmental curricula provide ideas for the K-12 classroom including Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, Project WET and Project Food, Land and People.

**Legislative Information**

Legislative activities will be monitored at the state and national levels. Testimony will be provided for proposed legislation when appropriate.

**Southwest Nebraska Water Conference**

Established 24 years ago, the SW Nebraska Water Conference began as a means to educate irrigators dealing with water quality problems. During the late 1990s, the conference served to update people on the progress of the Kansas v. Nebraska lawsuit. Our current aim is to educate producers on integrated management, bringing to the table the combination of information and practical application suggestions that irrigators and professionals can implement in their businesses.

**ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT NEEDS**

**Personnel ..... 33**  
**Funding ..... 34**

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT NEEDS

**Personnel**

Staff time requirements by project and program have been estimated for FY2013-14 and are shown in Table 8 (below). These figures are estimates of time spent in these activities.

Administration time covers several aspects of the daily business activities including planning, budgeting, grant applications, public relations, correspondence, daily transactions, record keeping, leave time, and paid holidays.

Contracted services for FY2013-14 will include tree planting and mulch installation.

**Table 8: Annual Planned Use of Personnel by Hours 2013-14\***

Project or Program:	Manager	Assistant Manager	Office Supervisor	GW Prog Assitant	Info & Ed Coordinator	Secretary/ Receptionist	NRCS Secretaries	NRD Techs	P/T	TTL
Administration . . . . .	720	160	400	300	260	1,520	800	40	40	4,240
Information & Education. . . . .	100	60	80	120	1,520	80	320	80	80	2,440
NRCS Support. . . . .	40	40	40	40	10	40	6,320	80	80	6,690
Wildlife Habitat . . . . .	40	80	0	0	10	40	80	80	80	410
Groundwater Management. . .	800	1,520	1,520	1,620	240	200	160	5,180	1,120	12,360
Flood Control . . . . .	40	40	0	0	10	10	0	240	40	380
Project O&M. . . . .	180	100	0	0	10	30	0	400	40	760
Cost-Share Programs. . . . .	120	40	40	0	10	40	320	80	1,180	1,830
Tree Planting. . . . .	40	40	0	0	10	120	320	60	140	730
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>8,320</b>	<b>6,240</b>	<b>2,800</b>	<b>29,840</b>

\*Based upon 2,080 Hours/Yr/Person

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT NEEDS

**Funding**

Personnel needs, salaries, program funding, and other matters are reviewed each year and a work budget is then prepared to summarize the projected financial planning. The board of directors continue to refine this work budget until the annual budget can be presented at a hearing, approved and filed. The FY2013-14 budget is shown on Table 9 below. Budget reductions at the state level will continue to have an impact on the district budget.

The Water Quality Fund for FY2013-2014 will provide about \$40,000 in state funds to be used for eligible activities of the district. This requires at least a 150% match in local funds. Receipts for the district in FY2012-2013 were \$37,351.35. These expenditures including the local match are shown in Table 10.

Taxing authority for NRDs is capped at 4.5 cents per \$100 of valuation. However, in addition to the 4.5 cents, up to 1 additional cent is available for ground water management over an above the baseline established in the 1993-1994 budget year and LB 701 allowed districts that had been designated as fully or over appropriated an extra 3 cents of authority. The occupation tax authority provided by LB701 as amended allows the district to levy up to \$10 per acre tax on irrigated lands. The 2013-2014 budget levy rate on property is .034141 and the occupation tax is \$10.00 per acre. Bonding for the NCORPE Project had a significant impact on the FY 13-14 budget. Bonds for the purchase of the property for \$19,300,000 have already been issued and additional bonds for the construction of about \$6,000,000 will be issued in 2014.

**Table 9: Combined Funds Budget FY 2013-14**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Cost-share	148,000
Ground Water Management	1,160,453
Habitat/Incentives	6,000
Capital Outlay	95,000
Personnel	751,410
Gen. Operations	347,350
Inventory	95,000
Watershed O & M/Rehab.	52,000
<b>Total General Fund Expenditures</b>	<b>5,911,100</b>
NCORPE Expenditures	31,499,990
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>34,155,203</b>
Cash Reserve	263,000
<b>Total Required</b>	<b>34,418,203</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Cash	11,359
Investments	668,570
County Treasurer's Balance	15,068
Federal	15,000
State	62,700
Local	26,100
Sales	140,000
Property Tax	986,945
Enhancement Fund	2,992,461
Bonds	29,500,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>34,418,203</b>

**Table 10: Water Quality Fund Use 2012-2013**

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>\$ 37,351.35</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Administration	\$ 29,400.00
GM, AM, OS, I&E, SR*	
Technical	\$ 25,003.28
Chemigation	\$ 21,078.00
929 Renewal, 128 New	
<b>Programs</b>	<b>\$ 46,760.54</b>
Soil Moisture Equip	7,212.94
COOP UN-L	2,000.00
COOP NRCS	25,000.00
Local Cost Share-Decommissioning	1,857.62
Local Cost Share-Meter Management	10,689.98
Ground Water Management Area	\$10,989.49
Quality Management Area	\$819.00
Other Ground Water Mgmt	\$1,642.20
15%	
Professional Education	\$ 675.00
Information & Education	\$ 2,836.29
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 139,203.80</b>
<b>Required Match</b>	<b>\$ 56,027.03</b>
<b>Actual Local Match</b>	<b>\$ 101,852.45</b>

**PROJECTED NEEDS**

**Personnel ..... 36**  
**Integrated Management..... 36**  
**Watershed Operations & Maintenance ..... 36**  
**Funding ..... 37**

## PROJECTED NEEDS

### Personnel

**The staff positions** outlined in Table 11 are envisioned in the next five years. All units listed are full time equivalents and the years listed are fiscal years. In FY 2005-06, the board hired a third technician to support increased activity in ground water management.

#### **Contracted Services**

The ability to use contracted services for the following district programs will allow the district to limit the need for additional personnel.

- Tree Planting
- Mulch Installation

**Table 11: Five Year Staff Projection**

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
<b>Full-Time Position:</b>					
Manager .....	1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Manager .....	1	1	1	1	1
Office Supervisor .....	1	1	1	1	1
Secretary/Receptionist .....	1	1	1	1	1
Ground Water Program Assistant					
Technicians .....	3	3	3	3	3
Field Office Secretaries .....	4	4	4	4	4
Information & Education Coord. ....	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total Full Time .....</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Part-Time Seasonal Employees .....</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

### Integrated Management

**With the adoption** of the revised rules and regulations for the Ground Water Management area and the Integrated Management Plan, ground water activities will be the most pressing need over the next five years. Reporting of data to the State, meter maintenance, record keeping and administration of controls will require additional staff time and expenditure of funds.

#### **Watershed Operation & Maintenance**

While the work plans for the Blackwood Creek watershed and the Upper and Lower Medicine Creek watersheds have been closed, operation and maintenance activities for the existing structures will continue. The possibility of major repairs due to a storm event will require that the district continue to inspect these structures and make necessary repairs.

PROJECTED NEEDS

**Funding**

Table 12 (below) consists of the MRNRD's projected requirements and revenues for each fiscal year through 2018-2019. All items are listed as \$1,000 units. Increases in personnel costs and ground water management activities will be offset by reducing cost-share dollars and increasing property taxes. Continued support for ground water management activities from the State will be needed.

Bonding for the NCORPE project will have a long term impact on district budgets. Nearly \$8.00 of the districts \$10.00 authority will be needed for bonds to pay for the acquisition and construction of a pipeline. An additional \$1.00 of occupation tax authority will be needed for annual operation of the project.

**Table 12: Projected Requirements and Revenues (\$1,000 units)**

	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Cost-share.....	120	130	140	150	150
Groundwater Management.....	1,200	1,200	1,250	1,300	1,350
Habitat.....	10	11	12	13	14
Capitol Outlay.....	130	135	140	145	150
Personnel.....	770	795	820	845	870
General Operations.....	386	398	410	422	434
Cost of Goods Sold.....	103	105	107	109	111
Watershed Rehab.....	2,000	20	1,500	20	1,000
NCORPE.....	300	300	300	300	300
Bond Payment.....	1,800	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
<b>Total Expenditures.....</b>	<b>6,819</b>	<b>5,494</b>	<b>7,079</b>	<b>5,704</b>	<b>6,779</b>
Cash Reserve.....	263	263	263	263	263
<b>Total Required.....</b>	<b>7,802</b>	<b>5,757</b>	<b>7,342</b>	<b>5,967</b>	<b>7,042</b>
<b>Revenues</b>					
Cash.....	20	20	20	20	20
Investments.....	739	500	250	250	250
County Treasurer's Balance.....	30	30	30	30	30
Federal.....	2000	20	20	1,500	20
State.....	60	60	60	60	60
Grants & State Assistance.....	50	50	0	0	0
Local.....	133	135	135	137	139
Enhancement Fund.....	2,950	2,950	2,950	2,950	2,950
Property Tax.....	1,100	1,992	2,095	2,198	2,291
<b>Total Revenue.....</b>	<b>7,802</b>	<b>5,757</b>	<b>7,342</b>	<b>5,967</b>	<b>7,042</b>



## N-CORPE

*Nebraska Cooperative  
Republican Platte  
Enhancement*



Natural Resource Districts (NRDs) in all or parts of Platte and Republican River Basins in Nebraska have determined that the Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement Project (N-CORPE) is a cost-effective way to aid and protect the Republican and Platte Rivers, the tax base and agricultural economy of the region, and taxpayers statewide by ensuring long-term compliance with interstate water agreements and Nebraska required Integrated Management Plans.

**WHAT:** In December, four of Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts purchased 19,500 acres in Lincoln County, Nebraska, that lie squarely between the Platte and Republican Rivers. About 15,800 of those acres have been irrigated. Ceasing irrigation of those acres will allow water that otherwise would have been used for irrigation to be stored in the underlying Ogallala Aquifer. The stored water can then be piped from approximately 30 groundwater wells into the Republican and Platte Rivers when needed to meet river flow obligations. The total capacity of the project will be approximately 15,000 acre feet annually, though a significant portion of that available water will not be needed on an annual basis and will be "banked" for use in years when needed for compliance with the Republican River Compact. There is an abundant supply of groundwater underlying the property purchased by the NRDs – the saturated thickness of the Ogallala Aquifer in the area is approximately 400-600 feet. Under N-CORPE, water that otherwise would have been irrigated on and consumed by corn and other crops will instead be piped into the Republican and Platte Rivers when needed to meet river flow requirements.

**WHO:** The four N-CORPE members that formed an interlocal agency are: Upper Republican NRD based in Imperial; Middle Republican NRD based in Curtis; Alma-based Lower Republican NRD; and the Twin Platte NRD, which is based in North Platte. The N-CORPE project fits the mission of the individual NRDs to balance environmental, economic, and, in the case of interstate water agreements, legal objectives tied to water supplies. Each NRD has an equal share in the agreement.

**WHY:** A state law passed in 2004 required NRDs in the upper Platte Basin in Nebraska to impose moratoriums on new groundwater irrigated acres in a large stretch of the river that was deemed over-appropriated - essentially having an imbalance between water supplies and demands. NRDs in the over-appropriated area have to return the Platte River to 1997 conditions and, ultimately, a fully appropriated condition. In the Twin Platte NRD, the requirement to return to 1997 conditions as spelled out in an integrated management plan it has with the state is to begin placing 5,859 acre feet of offset water annually into the Platte by the end of 2013 and increases to 7,700 acre feet annually in 50 years. Related, an agreement between Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aimed at protecting federally endangered species requires Nebraska to return the Platte to 1997 conditions. The agreement also sets requirements for new water annually of 130,000 acre feet during the first increment of the agreement which could increase in subsequent increments to over 400,000 acre feet of new water annually in the critical habitat area of the Platte River.

The Republican River dissects the southwestern and south-central parts of the state. Its use is dictated by a 70-year-old interstate water compact between Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado that the State of Kansas has used to initiate litigation in recent years. Kansas has sought a permanent shutdown of groundwater irrigation on 300,000 acres in Nebraska, or about ¼ of all groundwater irrigated acres in Nebraska's part of the Basin. This proposed remedy has not been acceptable to residents of Nebraska and a draft recommendation recently issued by the Special Master appointed by the U.S. Supreme Court doesn't recommend that remedy be imposed. The NRDs in the Republican Basin have long imposed water restrictions to reduce consumptive use of water, and development of new groundwater-irrigated acres is prohibited. All irrigation wells in the Basin are metered and annually checked by NRD employees to document water usage to ensure compliance with water-use restrictions. Additionally, millions of dollars have been spent to

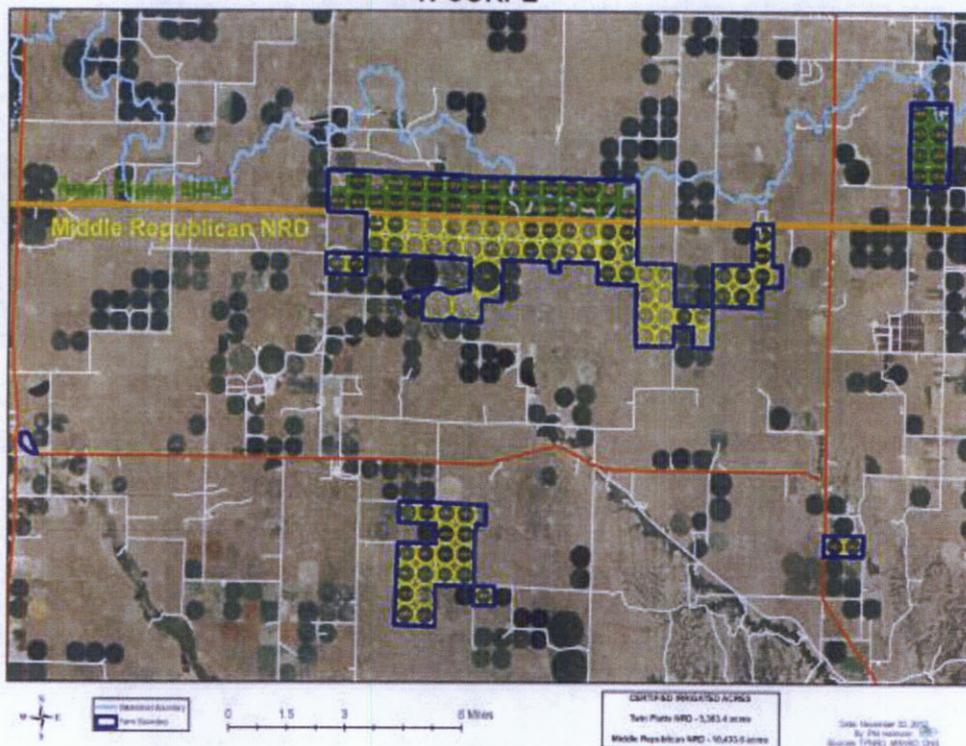
permanently retire some irrigated acres that have substantial impacts on stream flow. Unlike obligations in the Platte, NRDs in the Republican Basin won't have to use the project annually to increase river flows. It will only be used during exceptionally dry times when needed to offset depletions to stream flow caused by groundwater pumping in Nebraska's portion of the Basin. The pipeline to the Republican Basin will be constructed first; it's expected that the main pipeline will have a 42-inch diameter and be approximately six miles long. Water will be delivered to Medicine Creek, whose confluence with the Republican River is located near Cambridge.

**WHERE:** The 19,500 acres purchased by N-CORPE are located in Lincoln County, approximately 15 miles southwest of North Platte. The majority of the property is adjacent to, and in some cases intersects, the surface water divide between the Platte and Republican Basins. Approximately 10,400 of the formerly irrigated acres are located in the Middle Republican NRD; the remaining 5,400 acres are in the Twin Platte NRD.

**PROJECT FUNDING:** The total estimated cost of the project including land and construction costs is an estimated \$120 million - \$130 million and will be paid for using the occupation tax on irrigation. Currently, three NRDs in the state impose the tax that can be up to \$10 an acre, and the three NRDs are all part of the N-CORPE group that is undertaking the project: Upper Republican NRD, Middle Republican NRD and Lower Republican NRD. Twin Platte NRD will begin to levy an occupation tax over the next couple years. The occupation tax has been levied in the Republican Basin over a six-year period on approximately 1.1 million acres, generating about \$25 million in revenue for water projects.

**WHEN:** The goal is to have the project operational in late 2013 or 2014, with the portion of the project benefitting the Republican Basin constructed first.

**Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement Project  
N-CORPE**



(The navy blue line outlines the N-CORPE property. The orange line is the Platte Basin/Republican Basin NRD boundary. The green line outlines certified irrigated acres in the Twin Platte NRD and the yellow line outlines certified irrigated acres in the Middle Republican NRD.)

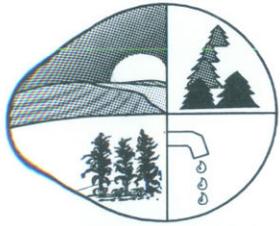
**For More Information Visit:**  
<http://www.mrnrd.org/n-corpe.html>

*Lower Republican NRD*  
[www.lrnrd.org](http://www.lrnrd.org)

*Middle Republican NRD*  
[www.mrnrd.org](http://www.mrnrd.org)

*Twin Platte NRD*  
[www.tpnrd.org](http://www.tpnrd.org)

*Upper Republican NRD*  
[www.urnrd.org](http://www.urnrd.org)



**MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT**  
**P.O. Box 81**  
**Curtis, Nebraska 69025**



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**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**

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