

UPPER ELKHORN NRD ANNUAL IMP REVIEW

MEETING NOTES

June 12, 2020, 1:30 p.m.

Meeting conducted via Zoom conference

ATTENDANCE (*ATTACHMENT A*)

Beth Eckles	NeDNR	Dan Sternkopf	NeDNR
Melissa Mosier	NeDNR	Dennis Schueth	UENRD
Michael Moser	UENRD	Joslynn Vanderslice	UENRD
Gene Kelly	UENRD	Jennifer Schellpeper	NeDNR
Kevin Schwartzman	NeDNR		

The meeting agenda is ATTACHMENT B. The meeting presentation is ATTACHMENT C.

1. REVIEW OF IMP GOALS/OBJECTIVES/ACTION ITEMS

NeDNR gave an overview of the 4 goals of UENRD's Voluntary Integrated Management Plan (V-IMP), which went into effect February 1, 2019, as well as the relating objectives and action items of the V-IMP. The goals are: 1.) Understand water supplies and uses within the District, 2.) Prevent or mitigate water related conflicts within the District, 3.) Plan for sustainable growth in water uses and demands, and 4.) Inform the public of the District's water resources and efforts to effectively manage those resources.

NeDNR discussed the two groundwater controls that apply to the entire District, which are: 1.) The certification of groundwater irrigated acres and 2.) The establishment of a limit on the expansion of groundwater irrigated acres. NeDNR continued by discussing the four surface water controls, which each apply to a different area of the District. Notably, the temporary stay on the development of surface water irrigation in Surface Water Control Area 4 expired on February, 4, 2020.

2. UENRD 2019 REPORTED DATA

UENRD reported that in 2019, 14 well permits were issued: 8 replacement and 6 new. Static water level monitoring was conducted at 360 monitoring and irrigation wells. Nitrate samples were collected from 334 irrigation wells. UENRD is continually working to certify groundwater irrigated acres by the February 2021 deadline highlighted in their V-IMP. As of February 11, 2020, 478,544 acres have been certified. UENRD then discussed their 2019 activities in relation to a map highlighting where acre expansions, well permits, and transferred acres occurred within the District. All of the 12 groundwater acre transfers occurred in Antelope County for a total of 424.5 acres and a 12.44 af decrease in depletions to the Elkhorn River subbasin. The 7 groundwater acre expansions all occurred in Antelope County for a total of 275 acres and an estimated depletion increase of 26.32 af. UENRD also discussed municipal water use, which totaled to roughly 532,000,000 gallons pumped in 2019.

3. NEDNR 2019 REPORTED DATA

NeDNR reported there were no new surface water applications, cancellations, or transfers in the District during the reporting period. NeDNR reported that there were no groundwater permits issued or cancelled during the reporting period. NeDNR discussed streamgauge data, comprised of average annual discharge, average total discharge, and the annual discharge trend, obtained from 3 NeDNR streamgages and 1 USGS streamgauge that the UENRD helps fund annually. NeDNR then discussed 2019 voluntary surface water use reporting with responses from 25 water users that showed 36% irrigated with groundwater, 32% irrigated with surface water, and 32% did not irrigate. NeDNR reported that no surface water irrigation pumpsite inspections occurred within the District during the reporting period. Furthermore, no surface water administration actions occurred in the District during the reporting period and there were no new depletions due to surface water uses to report.

4. EDUCATION & OUTREACH

NeDNR attended several education and outreach activities in 2019, including the Nebraska State Fair, Sandhill's Ranch Expo, Husker Harvest Days, Women in Ag, Women for Water, and the American Water Resources Association Spring Conference. UENRD participated in the Sandhill's Ranch Expo, KBRX Home Show, Antelope County Home Show, Wonderful World O! Water, and the regional Envirothon. NeDNR is interested in attending educational events in the UENRD area, when conditions allow. NeDNR and UENRD discussed how to get more stakeholders involved in the annual IMP review process, with NeDNR suggesting that further discussion in preparation for the next annual review will be beneficial.

¹ NeDNR and UENRD will coordinate on how to get more stakeholders involved in the annual IMP review process.

5. LOWER PLATTE RIVER BASIN COALITION ACTIVITIES

Both UENRD and NeDNR participate in the Lower Platte River Basin Coalition (LPRBC), which is supporting activities such as manager and technical team meetings, an annual reporting database that stores water use data from each NRD in the Basin, and a model for the Lower Platte Missouri Tributaries that analyzes aquifer-stream interactions. New depletions accounting of peak season depletions and consumptive use in the Lower Platte River Basin from 2016-2019, broken down by each NRD and NeDNR, are on track to meet the 5-year goal set out in the Basin-Wide Plan.

6. JOINTLY IDENTIFIED ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS

NeDNR discussed several jointly identified actions for the next two years. The first action is to continue to monitor progress made in reaching targets described in the goals and objectives of the IMP, with NeDNR highlighting the need to revisit the surface water control in Surface Water Control Area 4 that expired on February, 4, 2020. The second action is to continue to participate in basin-wide and regional planning efforts such as the Lower Platte River Consortium (drought planning) and Lower Platte River Basin Coalition (LPRBC). The third action is to continue efforts to develop a depletion/consumptive use tracking database as a part of LPRBC. The fourth action is for UENRD to continue the process of certifying groundwater irrigated acres. The fifth action is to participate in public outreach opportunities in the UENRD area, as they are available. The 2020 Sandhill's Ranch Expo was cancelled due to concerns related to COVID-19. The last action is to

review data from local studies, as available, such as the comparison of CENEb and ELM models. Olsson Associates has been hired to conduct a comparison of CENEb and ELM models. UENRD would like to participate in the comparison and will send NeDNR an email stating so.

NeDNR mentioned that Amy Zoller, a NeDNR employee, is working on a PhD dissertation that will create a statewide groundwater irrigated acres database and will be reaching out to UENRD for data.

² NeDNR will schedule a meeting in October with UENRD to discuss the expired surface water control in Surface Water Control Area 4.

³ UENRD will reach out to NeDNR via email expressing interest in participating in Olsson Associate's comparison of the CENEb and ELM models.

7. DATA REPORTING & COMMUNICATION

UENRD reports that being involved with the LPRBC has been helpful in the V-IMP development and implementation with the way partners look to help each other.

8. ANY CHANGES NEEDED MOVING FORWARD

UENRD suggest that in the future, NeDNR clearly define peak season and non-peak seasons in the slide headings related to streamgage data.

⁴ NeDNR will clearly define peak season and non-peak seasons in future IMP annual review presentations.

ACTION ITEM LIST

¹ NeDNR and UENRD will coordinate on how to get more stakeholders involved in the annual IMP review process.

² NeDNR will schedule a meeting in October with UENRD to discuss the expired surface water control in Surface Water Control Area 4.

³ UENRD will reach out to NeDNR via email expressing interest in participating in Olsson Associate's comparison of the CENEb and ELM models.

⁴ NeDNR will clearly define peak season and non-peak seasons in future IMP annual review presentations.

⁵ NeDNR will coordinate with UENRD to meet in March 2021 to begin preparation for the next annual IMP review meeting.