

**MINUTES OF THE
2017 ANNUAL BASIN-WIDE PLAN MEETING FOR
JOINT INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OF
OVERAPPROPRIATED PORTIONS OF THE PLATTE RIVER BASIN**

July 19, 2017 2:00 p.m. CT

Holiday Inn Express

North Platte, NE

Attendance:

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|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Pat Heath | City of Gering | Brian Barels | NPPD |
| Carson Sisk | City of Kimball | Jeff Shafer | NPPD |
| Don Kraus | CNPPID | Jerry Kenny | PRRIP |
| Jesse Mintken | CPNRD | Ryan Reisdorff | SPNRD |
| Brandi Flyr | CPNRD | Rod Horn | SPNRD |
| Jim Bendfeldt | CPNRD | Travis Glanz | SPNRD |
| Lyndon Vogt | CPNRD | Bill Halligan | SPNRD |
| Stephanie White | HDR | Kevin Derry | SPNRD |
| Ann Williams | HDR | Jared Derry | SPNRD |
| Dean Edson | NARD | Bernie Fehringer | SPNRD |
| Jennifer Schellpeper | NeDNR | Larry Reynolds | TBNRD |
| Jessie Strom | NeDNR | Russell Edeal | TBNRD |
| Melissa Mosier | NeDNR | Tyrell Anderson | TEI |
| Lacey Bodnar | NeDNR | Ann Dimmitt | TPNRD |
| Frank Albrecht | NGPC | Kent O. Miller | TPNRD |
| Chris Holley | NP Water | Rodney Schanaeman | Producer |
| Tracy Zayac | NPNRD | Jack Revell | Producer |
| John Berge | NPNRD | Dave Fisher | Producer |
| Elizabeth Miller | NPNRD | | |

- 1) **Introductions:** Vogt welcomed the group and started introductions that went around the room. The attendance sheet is included (Attachment A).
- 2) **Review Agenda & Meeting Procedures:** Vogt went over the agenda (Attachment B) and meeting procedures. There were no revisions or edits to the agenda.
- 3) **Monitoring & Management Actions**
 - a) **NeDNR Report:** Strom reported that between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2016, the Department issued five new surface water permits. Four permits were temporary for groundwater recharge, and the other permit was for storage in a reservoir (an existing use before the moratorium). The temporary recharge permits were for excess flow use only and do not constitute any new use, and the reservoir storage permit does not constitute new use. The Department did not have any new dam permits in this year. No new municipal or industrial groundwater transfer permits were issued. No offsets were required as the groundwater recharge permits were for excess flows only. There were eight cancelled surface water permits which were temporary groundwater recharge permits that expired within one year of the issue date. Two temporary construction permits were expired after one year. There was one power permit relinquishment and one irrigation permit relinquishment. An analysis of depletions was not warranted. Copies of the applications

and orders for these permits are available on the website at (<http://dnr.nebraska.gov/iwm/dnr-annual-reports-for-platte-basin-wide-meeting>).

Reporting on a five-year basis, changes in human and livestock populations and sandpits and reservoirs that are less than 15 acre-feet, and non-permitted changes in consumptive use. This information can be found in previous reports and we are currently working with the NRDs on the Robust Review which will account for all those activities. The results will be recorded when the Robust Review study is finalized. Work continues on a soil and conservation measures study and a study on the difference between current and fully appropriated levels of development.

b) NRD Reports

- i) CPNRD:** Woodward provided the 2016 report for CPNRD. The CPNRD currently has 1,028,055 certified irrigated acres, of which 936,000 acres are groundwater, 14,300 acres are surface water, and 77,200 acres are for co-mingled use. There were 123 transfers with 1,200 acres within those transfers being newly certified acres, and 918 acres used for offsets. CPNRD issued 118 well permits and of those, 85 wells were replacement wells, 12 supplemental groundwater irrigation wells, and 14 new well permits associated with the transfers. In the overappropriated area above Elm Creek, CPNRD bought two groundwater properties and retired the irrigated acres. This resulted in a 90 acre-feet gain on 194 retired acres. At the end of 2016, 2,652 acre-feet of water was in the water bank that has been accumulated in the over-appropriated area for the last several years. Projects worked on were the rehabilitation of the surface water canals and excess flows were diverted in the amount of 57,000 acre-feet. That resulted in 35,000 acre-feet of recharge. Conjunctive water management studies are currently being conducted to help with water management decisions. Over the last four years, CPNRD has been collecting real-time data in the areas of pumping, soil moisture, and precipitation and using it to look at on-farm efficiencies (center pivots, gravity, and sub-surface drip systems). This information will help make improvements in crop water uses.
- ii) NPNRD:** Berge reported that in 2016 NPNRD did not have any new certified acres, transfers, variances, or any other new permits approved. The irrigation well flow meter data in the overappropriated area was approximately 104,000 acre-feet on 183,512 certified acres. In 2016, there were 235.19 groundwater-certified irrigated acres permanently retired, and temporarily retired 16.4 acres. NPNRD entered into a surface water lease equivalent to 315 acres. This water will be returned to the river and used as depletion offsets. In the spring of 2016, 48,747 acre-feet was diverted from the North Platte River with a recharge credit of 19,498 acre-feet. There were no water banking activities. Throughout the year, a total of 580 telemetry units were deployed throughout the District. Berge reported that significant changes were made to the budget which will focus on special project dollars for cost-share on technology improvements to groundwater irrigation systems.
- iii) SPNRD:** Reisdorff reported that SPNRD approved six transfers: two irrigation related, and four industrial transfer permits offset by irrigation allocation. No new consumptive use on any of those projects. There was one permit in the District for a temporary well, and one variance. SPNRD continued to monitor their industrial wells. There are 26 active industrial wells and some have offset use by certified irrigated acres. Seventeen of the wells have approved active baselines and pumped roughly

243 million gallons or 748 acre-feet annually. There are 10 municipalities being monitored and they pumped 1 billion gallons of water or 3,136 acre-feet. There were 132,134 certified acres and roughly 93,573 acre-feet of water was pumped from the SPNRD or approximately 8.8 inches per acre. The irrigated crop mix is 44% corn and 23% small grains. This is the 10th year of allocations on irrigated land in the Lodgepole Creek Valley and the 8th year of allocations on the fully appropriated areas (Tablelands) and the South Platte Valley. There were three retirements for a total of 352 acres which was 49 acre-feet of credit. Excess flows in the spring of 2016 were converted by the Western Irrigation District Canal for a total of 36 days.

- iv) **TBNRD:** Larry Reynolds, TBNRD Board Director, gave the 2016 report and stated that there are 298,714 total irrigated acres in the Platte Basin of the District with 112,200 of those acres being commingled. There were 17 certified acre transfers, 16 replacement irrigation wells, and one new commercial-industrial permit (no new water use). There was one approved well variance. In the reporting year some of the acres that qualified for transfer was due to the removal of building sites to enable pivots to circle around the irrigated area. Water usage is reported on commercial and industrial users as well as the towns and village within the Platte Basin boundaries. Also, reported on were TBNRD's streamflow accretion activities and groundwater recharge diversions.
- v) **TPNRD:** Dimmitt reported that in 2016, TPNRD had 320,000 certified irrigated acres and approved 12 transfers involving 900 acres. TPNRD issued nine replacement well permits and seven new well permits. They continue to work with municipal and industrial users in the establishment and maintenance of annual baselines. The District has worked with six of the seven irrigation canal companies on various projects in 2016. Landowners are encouraged to have re-use pits and ponds to help store excess flows and recharge the aquifer. The District is also involved in the N-CORPE Project and construction of the north pipeline is currently underway. TPNRD has a new project with the Cody-Dillon Irrigation District wherein land is being irrigated to justify water rights with hopes to engage in long-term leases

c) Data, Information, Studies

i) Progress Toward Increment Goals (measuring the success of the IMPs)

1. Annual Review (NeDNR): Strom reported on the "Report on the Depletions and Mitigations (Accretions) from 2016 Permitted Activities for Central Platte, North Platte, South Platte, Tri-Basin, and Twin Platte Natural Resources Districts for the 2017 Basin-Wide Meeting." Of the permitted activities in 2016, only the NRD groundwater acre transfers required analysis of their impact to streamflows. CPNRD had 123 transfer permits, NPNRD no permits, SPNRD 3 permits, TBNRD 17 permits, and TPNRD 12 permits which were evaluated. The total net affect for the five NRDs is a positive and the overall total net effect is 24.0 acre-feet coming back to the river by 2019.

2. Update on Studies (Zayac):

a. Zayac reported on three collaborative studies between the NRDs and NeDNR:

- i. The Difference between Current and Fully Appropriated Levels of Development Study is ongoing. The technical work is done for the most part and the reports are still in draft form and being reviewed by the NRDs, NeDNR, and the consultants. Once the reviews are done, this study will be complete.
- ii. The Soil and Water Conservation Measures Study is also a phased approach. Phase I is complete (this can be found on the NeDNR website on the Upper Platte page). Phase II is looking more specifically at irrigation and tillage practices and their impact on depletions. The Western Water Use Model (WWUM) area is now complete and the COHYST model area should be completed in October 2017.
- iii. The Robust Review Study is a complete review of all the NRD and NeDNR activities to gain an understanding of what effect all the management actions are having on streamflow. Currently the project is looking at groundwater only for depletions and offsets and is projected to be complete by the end of 2017. The next phase will look at surface water and commingled uses, depletions, and projects.

4) Second Increment Basin-Wide Planning: Schellpeper reported good progress made in the last year at the stakeholder meetings. A significant amount of time has been devoted to education on models, hydrology, and on the plan etc., which has fostered pertinent conversations and participation on the task at hand. Work with the stakeholder group on plan goals and objectives has begun. The timeline is to continue with plan development until early 2018 with the expectation to be finished developing the plan, consensus on a full plan, and adoption of the plan and having it in place in 2019. The timeline for the individual NRD integrated management plans is to initiate stakeholder planning processes in 2018, and plan development through the summer of 2018 and into the beginning of 2019. The deadline for all the plans (basin-wide and individual IMPs) is to be done by September 2019, when the current plans all expire.

5) Review of Revision to the Basin-Wide Plan or to Individual IMPs: No revisions in the last year.

6) Written Requests for Revisions to the Basin-Wide Plan or to Individual IMPs or Disputes: A letter was received from Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID). Don Kraus explained the letter was sent, as in past years, because the requirement for identifying the overall difference between fully appropriated and over appropriated was to be in place in 2009. He stated this estimate was crucial to the basin-wide planning as it moves forward. The POAC host, Lyndon Vogt, told Kraus that a response letter from the POAC NRDs would be forthcoming.

7) Public Comment Period:

- Kevin Derry stated, "I'm glad I could contribute to the 11,000 additional acres."

- Don Kraus, CNPPID, stated he submitted a letter to Director Jeff Fassett, NeDNR, regarding using recharge during the irrigation season as a credit. A practice in irrigation districts is that when they start putting water in the irrigation ditches, it signifies the start of the irrigation season. This varies amongst irrigation districts, but is typically around mid-April. This is a “sharp-line” that the water doesn’t count for recharge at this time. There is concern that some may be getting credit for use of irrigation ditches during the irrigation season. This does not provide new offsets for depletions.

8) Meeting Summary

a) Action Items: 1. The NRDs will respond to CNPPID’s letter requesting a revision to the Basin-Wide Plan.

b) Schedule Next Annual Meeting: The 2018 Annual Meeting for the Upper Platte Basin-Wide Plan will be on July 18, 2018, at 10:30 a.m. CT, at the Holiday Inn Express in North Platte, NE.