

UPPER PLATTE BASIN-WIDE PLAN ANNUAL MEETING

NORTH PLATTE NRD OFFICE

100547 AIRPORT RD, SCOTTSBLUFF, NE 69363

MEETING ALSO CONDUCTED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE

AUGUST 3, 2023, @ 1:00 P.M. (MT)

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendance:

Jesse Mintken, CPNRD	John Thorburn, TBNRD	Annie Folck, City of Gering
Scott Schaneman, NPNRD	Jennifer Schellpeper, NeDNR	Devin Brundage, CNPPID
Craig Uhrig, NPNRD	Ryan Kelly, NeDNR	Kari Burgert, NeDNR
Danielle Madden, NPNRD	Caitlin Kingsley, NeDNR	Shelly Julian, NeDNR
Galen Wittrock, SPNRD	Avery Dresser, NeDNR	Arik Vossler, NeDNR
Ryan Reisdorff, SPNRD	Brooke Mott, NeDNR	Judy Eggleston, Southside Irrigation District
Kent Miller, TPNRD	Dean Edson, NARD	

*Shaded areas indicate online attendees.

- 1) Introductions
 - Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm Mountain Time.
- 2) Review Agenda & Meeting Procedures
 - There were no modifications to the agenda.
- 3) Monitoring & Management Actions
 - a) NeDNR Report: Caitlin Kingsley
 - i) Kingsley presented NeDNR's 2022 permitting activities, results from the depletions and mitigations analysis of 2022 NRD activities, and project updates. Kingsley noted that NeDNR approved 9 new surface water permits (8 were temporary recharge permits, and one was for temporary manufacturing for less than 10 acre-feet), 1 groundwater transfer permit (TA-55 that was issued for groundwater transfer out of state), and 3 new dam construction approvals (which all were dam repair projects). The depletions analysis of NRD transfers from 2022 showed a net positive effect through 2030 (accretion to the Platte River).
 - b) NRD Reports
 - i) CPNRD: Jesse Mintken

1. CPNRD had a total of 1,018,829 certified acres in 2022. Of those acres, 936,817 were groundwater irrigated acres, 5,239 were surface water irrigated acres, and 76,773 were considered commingled acres.
2. In 2022, CPNRD approved 114 groundwater transfers which resulted in 1,349 acres of new irrigated ground with 1,100 acres being used for offset. They issued 106 well permits (29 were supplemental to groundwater wells, 67 replacement wells, 1 new well permit, 8 new watering wells, and 1 domestic that pumps over 50 gallons/minute). CPNRD retired 177 certified groundwater irrigated acres in the overappropriated area of Dawson County, which had an estimated accretion of 116 acre-feet to the Platte River. At the end of 2022, CPNRD had an estimated balance of 3,064 acre-feet of groundwater rights available for offset across the district and 2,500 acre-feet of surface water rights available for offset in their overappropriated area. In 2022, through agreements with the CNPPID and PRRIP, agreed to transfer 1,400 acre-feet of unused canal storage water to the Environmental Account.

ii) NPNRD: Scott Schaneman

1. NPNRD had no new certified acres in 2022. They had 1 new transfer (for 40.7 acres, which is the first transfer NPNRD has successfully been able to approve since use of WWUMM began) and 17 variances. Previously had the ability to irrigate with groundwater flood irrigated acres with an exemption to the allocation if they set aside and did not irrigate 6.7% of the acres or 1/15th. They did remove this from regulations last time they were reviewed and reanalyzed the amount of set aside acres and increased acres to 9.75%, which were required to be dry and not irrigated to offset extra groundwater pumping only certifications.
2. NPNRD approved 7 well construction permits, which were all replacement wells. The collection of fall flow meter readings showed an average groundwater withdrawal of 12.7 inches per acre. 2,698 acres remained in the NRD lease programs.
3. For the EPIC program, what is stated in report is correct, but there was a certification that applied for the EPIC program that did not get paid. NPNRD purchased 114 acre-inches over 627.71 acres that was actually paid, but one producer was not paid as they were found to not be in compliance with their agreement. Average acre-inches per acre sold was an average 12.7. Only one contract did not sell the full allocation. NPNRD purchased 664 acre-feet of water. No other water banking activities.

4. There was a slight increase of pumping over Minatare community and are currently working with them. There was also a slight overage at Bridgeport Ethanol and are also working with them. NPNRD had \$83,183 for irrigation efficiency improvements through NC-17 practice.

iii) SPNRD: Ryan Reisdorff

1. The SPNRD had 131,819 certified groundwater only acres which pumped 144,910 acre-feet of water or 13.6 inches per acre on average.
2. In 2022, they completed 2 transfers for new pivot installations that did not expand any new acres. No new supplemental, temporary, or de-watering well permits. There were 2 replacement well permits and 1 new industrial well permit, pumping less than 50 gallons/minute. One variance issued as a part of the current pooling program where multiple irrigated tracts can be merged into one allocation and all acres must fit in a floating township or a 6 by 6 mile square. The parcels did not fit within a floating township, but the wells did, so the board approved the variance.
3. Industrial use included 29 active industries using water, ten of which are getting complete and total offset through buying out irrigated acres. Nineteen existing industries that have approved baseline through the district with industrial water which equated to 332,000,000 gallons used. Ten municipalities that pumped around 1.1 billion gallons of water in 2022.
4. There were no new retirements in 2022.
5. There were no excess flows in 2022.
6. Five out of the ten municipalities have a conservation plan or ordinance considered conversation plan.

iv) TBNRD: John Thorburn

1. In 2022, TBNRD had essentially no change in irrigated acres. For transfers, they most must be prorated if going to a high depletion rate area and one transfer fit into this category. One transfer occurred from one livestock swine yard facility to another that was a one-to-one transfer. Well permits were mostly replacement wells, but there was 2 supplemental to groundwater and one supplemental to surface water.
2. No excess flows in 2022 and did not operate augmentation wells other than to exercise the equipment. TBNRD is now responsible for the augmentation wells at Cottonwood Ranch for PRRIP, which operated for 6 weeks last summer and 6 weeks this spring.

- v) TPNRD: Kent Miller
 - 1. The TPNRD had 320,079 certified irrigated acres. For 2022, they approved 1 transfer with no new net increase to stream depletion. There were 11 replacement wells and 9 new well permits.
 - 2. NCORPE is the main project involving streamflow augmentation with the TPNRD's share being 4,000 acre-feet and for 20 years an additional 1,600 acre-feet available.
 - 3. In their annual report, paragraph F includes a sentence which lists "CPPNID" that should not have been included.
 - 4. TPNRD has been discussing if there are opportunities for conjunctive management with irrigation districts below Lake McConaughy, which are mainly commingled irrigated acres, to leave their surface water in Lake McConaughy and use groundwater in dry years. Also working with those irrigation districts to hopefully get NRCS money for modernization, mirroring previous actions of CPNRD and Dawson County.
- c) Data, Information, Studies
 - i) Overall net positive impacts of 2022 activities on streamflow both within and above the PRRIP Associated Habitat Reach.
- d) Project Updates
 - i) NeDNR
 - 1. Robust Review model runs are planned to be finished by September 2023 with completion of the Robust Review by the end of the year. Updates that have been completed or are currently being updated are to be done to the COHYST model, WWUM model, land use, municipal and industrial pumping calculations, additional excess flow recharge amounts, and CROPSIM from the Conservation Study.
 - 2. Action Item 1.3.4 of the Basin-Wide Plan requires NeDNR and the NRDs to develop a basin-wide Drought Contingency Plan. The basin-wide Drought Plan will serve as a guide to individual NRDs who are to develop drought plans by end of the Second Increment. The final planned stakeholder meeting for Drought Plan development occurred on June 27, 2023. The current timeline (subject to change) is to review and incorporate comments through August, then to submit the draft to the Bureau of Reclamation for review per the WaterSMART Grant. The goal is to finalize and adopt the plan by the end of the year.
 - 3. Kingsley reminded the group of the Decision Support System for excess flows which contains status updates on instream flow rights and status of any active excess flow permits, which is publicly available through the NeDNR website. NeDNR Water Administration Division

communicates when excess flows are available to the owner/operator of the recharge appropriation and allowed diversion rate, as well as delivering closing notice when excess flows are no longer available. In 2023, there was a high volume of water moving through the South Platte River which allowed excess flow permits to be opened for diversion

- First event had canals opened for diversion May 16, 2023, and closed around May 24.
 - Second event where canals opened on June 9, 2023, and closed around July 24.
- 4) Review of Revisions to the Basin-Wide Plan or to Individual IMPs
 - There were no revisions to the BWP or to individual IMPs.
 - 5) Written Requests for Revisions to the Basin-Wide Plan or to Individual IMPs or Disputes
 - There were no written requests for revisions to the BWP, individual IMPs, or disputes.
 - 6) Public Comment Period
 - There were no public comments.
 - 7) Meeting Summary
 - a) Action Items
 - Schedule the 2024 Basin-Wide Annual Meeting
 - NRDs will provide comments, edits, and other feedback on the draft Drought Contingency Plan
 - Decide if another stakeholder meeting should be held regarding the Drought Contingency Plan.
 - b) Schedule Next Annual Meeting
 - The next meeting will occur remotely/in person on 08/01/2024 at the Central Platte NRD office, time TBD.