

**MINUTES OF THE REPUBLICAN BASIN IMP ANNUAL PROGRESS MEETING**  
**Wednesday, September 26, 2018 – 11:00 a.m.**  
**Tri-Basin Natural Resources District**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The annual meeting concerning the Republican River IMP Annual Progress for Tri-Basin Natural Resources District was called to order by John Thorburn, General Manager, at 11:00 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

NeDNR Staff: Carol Flaute, Brian Harmon, and Philip Paitz

TBNRD Staff: John Thorburn, and Tammy Fahrenbruch

**BUSINESS**

The public was given the opportunity to bring other specific business or non-agenda items before the group for comment and/or discussion. There was no public comment.

1. Introductions
2. Review Agenda & Meeting Purpose
  - a. **Agenda Review:** There were no changes made to the agenda.
  - b. **Meeting Purpose:** The purpose of the meeting is to review integrated management planning activities, to exchange and review reports, and to consider any actions that may be necessary.
3. Old Business—There were no topics reported under Old Business.
4. Monitoring & Management Actions
  - a. **TBNRD Report** – (John Thorburn)
    - i. Certified acres in TBNRD vary due to corrections made with the county assessor data and spot checks of fields.
      1. John described the four-acre rule: if a change to certified acres is less than four acres then TBNRD makes the change automatically. If the change is greater than four acres, the landowner is contacted to allow them to dispute the change before it is made.
      2. For other changes to certified acres to be accepted, landowners must prove that irrigation occurred between 1997 and 2003, and during three of the last five years.
    - ii. Transfers are pro-rated when they move from a lower to higher SDF. Landowners try to avoid that so they usually move acres where they can have a 1-1 transfer. That was the case during 2017 (tables 2A and 2B).
    - iii. John explained groundwater transfers, where groundwater from one property is used on another property. Typically, a center pivot going over two parcels where the well is on one parcel. Landowners have the right to use groundwater on their own property but not their neighbor's property, so TBNRD has chosen to regulate this activity via a permit requirement. If this activity occurred before 2004 a record, not a permit, is needed.
    - iv. There were no new well permits. Five replacement wells were permitted. Discussion included type of registration. Wells can be registered as new wells (transfer to previously unirrigated land) or conditional replacement (drilled with previous well still existing to supplement pumping on same property). Other common permit types include municipal, of which Holdrege is the largest, industrial, or de-watering (e.g. TBNRD augmentation well).

1. There was a new commercial well, which required an offset from the entity of six acres.
- v. Municipal water use
  1. Arapahoe and Holbrook have wellfields in TBNRD even though the municipalities are not.
- vi. Tri-Basin NRD's main offset activity is groundwater recharge by diverting high flows from the Platte. John noted that there is an appendix in the report that shows the calculations, and that the recharge division table in the draft report still needed to be updated to include 2017 data.
- vii. Augmentation well is ready when needed.
  1. Discussions are underway with Lower Republican NRD to jointly operate the well for purposes of augmenting flows to the Republican River.
- viii. Platte-Republican Diversion
  1. Process is ongoing
  2. September 26, 2018, is the due date for TBNRD to respond to comments filed.
- b. **NeDNR Report** – (Carol Flaute)
  - i. **Permitted Activities:** One new surface water permits and one associated dam safety permit. The permit is for an existing right.
    1. No groundwater transfer permits
    2. No surface water diverted for irrigation
  - ii. **Evaporation:** Evaporation from small reservoirs was estimated at 198 AF/year.
  - iii. **Streamgage Data:** Graphs are provided, with preliminary data in light blue-filled boxes. Graphs are truncated at 50 CFS for visualization purposes.
  - iv. **Streamflow Depletions Assessment:** The three-year average still shows a small accretion. Based on the current analysis, TBNRD will not need to pump its augmentation well in 2018 to comply with the IMP. The analysis was calculated using the same method as previous years. The slight increase was due to a wetter than average year. NeDNR added language to the report based on discussion from 2017 on how NeDNR and TBNRD would offset up to 1,000 acre-ft of water to offset depletions. Carol added that TBNRD would need to pump 3 times the 3-year average to offset the entire depletion. The offset would need to be taken into account in the balance to balance out the effect of augmentation. John agreed and indicated that TBNRD is ready to augment when needed.
  - v. NeDNR provided a handout summarizing an additional, future-looking analysis. Two models, projecting extrapolations based on two assessments, were shown. The three-year model of 2011-2013 hydrologic conditions extrapolated out seven times showed a net-depletion trend with time to about 4,000 AF/year. The seven-year model of 2010-2016 conditions extrapolated out three times showed a net-depletion trend of about 2,000 AF/year. The likely outcome is probably between these values. NeDNR clarified that last year's analysis incorrectly predicted an accretion trend of about 2,000 AF/year.
    1. Carol asked whether different scenarios might be more useful to TBNRD. John asked how excess flow diversions were accounted for geographically when modeling recharge in the canals, as location could under-estimate the benefits of excess flow recharge projects.

Philip replied that he thinks the water distributed evenly along the length of the canal, but that he would need to confirm this after looking at the model files. After some discussion, Carol stated that NeDNR could do an assessment to address John's question of whether it makes a difference whether the water is modeled as being in the full canal or just the specific part that the water is directed to for recharge projects.

- vi. **Information and Education** – John will share the date of the South-Central Water Conference with NeDNR. NeDNR plans to attend if staffing limitations allow.

**5. Republican River Basin-Wide Activities**

- a. The next step is to notice the hearings. A draft notice of all the hearings will be sent out for review within the next week.

**6. Other IMP Topics**

- a. There was discussion on whether there was a shapefile of up-to-date certified acres. NeDNR will look into previous work that was conducted on a shapefile and whether it can be shared.

**7. Meeting Summary**

**a. Action Items**

- i. NeDNR will send all meeting-related materials electronically to TBNRD.
- ii. TBNRD will send all meeting-related materials electronically to NeDNR
- iii. NeDNR to look into excess flow geographic assumptions in the model
- iv. NeDNR will look into whether an effort to standardize certified acres was completed, and whether the product is of sufficient quality to be shared.

- b. **Schedule Next Annual Meeting** – Future IMP meetings may be held under a different format, based on the Republican River Basin-Wide Plan, but a public meeting may still be held in order to share net depletion data in a timely fashion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no more business, the meeting was closed at 11:56 a.m.