

# TPNRD Stakeholder Meeting #4 Minutes

Project: 2<sup>nd</sup> Increment Stakeholder Process for Twin Platte NRD Integrated Management Plan (IMP)

Subject: Stakeholder Meeting #4

Date: Tuesday, November 13, 2018 from 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Location: Holiday Inn Express & Suites, North Platte, NE

## I. Welcome

Stephanie White introduced agenda, meeting materials, and slides. Open Meetings Act is posted in the back of the room and previous meeting recap was discussed as agenda items for this month's meeting

## II. Basin-Wide Plan

- The Basin-Wide Plan was mailed to Stakeholders prior to the meeting.
- Stephanie provided a general overview of the five goals of the Basin-Wide Plan (BWP) was given as follows:
  - Goal 1: Incrementally achieve and sustain a fully appropriated condition, while maintaining economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the basin; with six objectives (SLIDE 7). There was additional information under Objective 1.3: Make progress toward a fully appropriated condition (SLIDES 8 and 9).
  - Goal 2: Prevent or mitigate human-induced reductions in the flow of a river or stream that would cause non-compliance with an interstate compact or decree or other formal state contract or agreement; with one objective (SLIDE 10).
  - Goal 3: Partner with municipalities and industries to maximize conservation and water use efficiency; with 3 objectives (SLIDE 11). Main focus is Objective 3.3: Establish baseline water use levels for municipal and industrial users by January 1, 2026.
  - Goal 4: Work cooperatively to identify and investigate disputes between groundwater users and surface water appropriators and, if determined appropriate, implement management solutions to address such issues; with two objectives (SLIDE 12).
  - Goal 5: Keep the Upper Platte River Basin-Wide Plan current and keep stakeholders informed; with three objectives (SLIDE 13).

## III. Triggers and 2<sup>nd</sup> Increment Goals

- SLIDE 15 displayed the “bar chart” discussed at last month’s meeting, “Increment Goal – Projects”. Ann Dimmitt summarized the projects TPNRD worked on in the

first increment (irrigation districts, J-2, non-irrigated certified acres, conservation tillage measures, and CPNRD agreement) which totaled approximately 7,700 af. Second increment possible activities (irrigation districts, NCORPE, conservation tillage measures, new concepts) total approximately 17,300 af.

- SLIDE 16 displayed allocations instead of projects for the second increment, “Increment Goal – Allocations”, totaling approximately 17,300 af, costing TPNRD about \$3.4 million/year. Triggers would need to be discussed. Would also need to consider the potential cost to landowners for CU reduction.
- Ann discussed “Annual Funds Available” (SLIDE 17) showing property and occupation tax available to TPNRD, approximately \$4.4 million. There are “State Matching Funds (WRCF)” (SLIDE 18) with up to \$6.6 million available for **all** overappropriated and fully appropriated areas, not just TPNRD.
- Question: has the NRD ever figured out what percentage of water is used by municipalities versus irrigation? Answer: no, but it is very small. Years ago a comparison showed that if you placed pivots over North Platte, that’s about how much water North Platte uses if that area was irrigated for corn, so a very small percentage. Questioner continued: would there be allocations on the cities/villages too? Answer: it would typically be a non-consumptive use. TPNRD tracks municipality pumping and discharge, so there is some consumptive use. Most cities do not pump as much as they are allocated.
- Question: is the 40/60 match of the WRCF being applied to the principle interest an operational costs to NCORPE? Answer: what we’ve gotten so far has been applied only to construction of NCORPE, not operation and maintenance. Questioner continued: can 40/60 WRCF match be applied to operation and maintenance of future projects, or just construction? Answer: the money has to be disbursed according to guidelines in statute.
- Jesse Bradley presented an 11x17 handout (SLIDE 19) about how the results from the Robust Review could be implemented into a second increment plan. It can be used to help set trigger points and assess target progress. Trigger effectiveness could be considered and triggers/targets can be reassessed and revised every three years over the next 10-year increment. The Robust Review findings/science can lead to changes in targets on an incremental process.

#### IV. Example Projects for 2<sup>nd</sup> Increment

- **Other NRDs:** Brian Harmon presented examples projects from other NRDs (SLIDE 22). These ranged from indirect to very direct management actions
- **Other States:** Brian provided examples from other states (SLIDES 23 to 27) that was retrieved from “The Future of Groundwater in California” pdf, url provided on slide 23. SLIDE 23 is Incentive-Based Tools, SLIDE 24 is Agency-Based Tools. Brian commented that many of these broad project ideas have been discussed by the group already.
- **Stakeholder Suggestions:** Ann went over stakeholder provided suggestions (SLIDES 29 and 30). Ideas included voluntary allocation program (incentivize), increase recharge activities outside of growing season (so not for “beneficial use”), water storage, use canals to recharge, increase efficiency of canals, work

with CNPPID, promote deficit irrigation, purchase Glendo water, rotational fallowing, incentive payments on previously irrigated land, work with municipalities, and augmentation plans similar to Colorado.

- Questions about canals leaving water and licensing.
- Question about virtual water versus wet water. Jesse answered that everything is measured relative to use in 1997, so “credits” would be assessed based on 1997 use.
- Question about how many acres would be needed to attempt a voluntary set-aside? Kent Miller answered roughly 4,000 acres of fallowing, but many considerations for this number. Comment that since 1997 there has been about 50,000 new acres in TPNRD, so to get back to 1997 levels you could imagine getting rid of those 50,000 acres, but that’s a tremendous cost to producer and economy.
- Question about water being released for in-stream flow purposes out of Lake McConaughy. Comment that the call for the water is by USFWS. That water doesn’t count toward TPNRD meeting offsets. Timing is often in spring and fall. Much discussion about USFWS flows and the environmental account. Ann mentioned that this is the reasoning behind Goal 2 of the plan.
- Idea that producers should measure what they’re using, but on a voluntary basis. NRD can help with money and assist with monitoring. Wants to cooperate with canals for recharge. Water is a statewide issue, maybe manage more statewide, more partnerships with other NRDs.
- Daran Rudnick reviewed some ideas of what the Bazile group is working on regarding audits to reduce consumption, not meters.

#### V. Additional Considerations

- Roric Paulman handed out a GISC proposal handout, it’s a co-op and a tool. The tool helps producers collect and store farming data including water use. This can provide the NRD a way to look at data. This tool can educate water users, measure water use, inventory all practices (BMPs), end gun acre lease, and reduced irrigation program lease. He also talked about the Master Irrigator Program, with NRCS.
  - Comment that if we don’t measure, we can’t manage it.
  - Jesse Bradley asked if the data put into the tool could be accessed by an agency. Roric said yes, through a “virtual handshake”.
  - Roric said this tool can answer most of the questions brought up in this meeting.
  - Question about consumptive use versus population of planting and abandoning the worst land and then still having the same consumptive use.
  - Question: is getting rid of an end gun voluntary set aside? Roric clarified as end gun leasing.

- Question: how much data (years) do we need? Roric: we can actually go back in time, and even project out. So after 18 months we can have an understating about where we are and where we are going.
- Overall, measurement is important, should go in IMP. As long as it doesn't mean allocations. Better data put into the model (COHYST) the more accurate the output. This group should provide the recommendation that we need to measure, but this group doesn't need to figure out how to measure.
- Some stakeholders stated that they didn't feel it was their job to tell groundwater users how to manage their water. Statement that if you're not directly involved in farming, it's easy to try and regulate, but its people's livelihoods.
- Municipality stated they already measure.
- Big goal ideas: 1) Measurement, 2) Education, 3) others included special projects/programs, economic understanding/incentives, time is of the essence, 4) Allocations and abandonment at last resort.

#### **VI. Next Steps**

- At the next meeting on ~~January 15, 2019~~ (rescheduled for February 26, 2019) the first draft of the IMP will be presented to the stakeholders. On June 13, 2019 the NRD board will vote on taking the IMP to public hearing. A public hearing will be held on July 16, 2019 and a final vote on the IMP and basin-wide plan will be held on August 8, 2019.
- Request that the draft IMP be sent out early before the next meeting.

#### **VII. Public Comment**

- There was no public comment.

**Next Meeting: ~~January 15, 2019~~ (rescheduled for February 26, 2019)**