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SPRINKLES & SPLASHES



SINCE 1972: protecting the natural resources of the district and assisting landowners in planning, funding, and applying conservation practices.

SPRING 2008

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES

VOL. 18 NO. 2

From Dan's Desk

There have been several meetings over the last two months between the three states involved in the Republican River Compact. The purpose of these meetings is to identify the issues before the compact administration to determine if they can be resolved. Failure to resolve these issues could result in non binding arbitration. This arbitration is required before going back to the Supreme Court with any issue. The issue for Kansas is the overuse of our share of the basin allocation in 2005 and 2006 and the damage associated with that overuse. Colorado wants the compact administration to approve their augmentation proposal that would pump ground water into the Republican River just upstream from the state line. Colorado overuses by about 10,000 to 15,000 acre feet per year. Augmentation is about the only method they have to achieve compliance. A number of ground water irrigated acres will be retired to get this water. Nebraska's primary issues are accounting procedures. These accounting procedures result in less of an impact on water uses to Nebraska and include pumping from the mound area and evaporation from Harlan County and below. Nebraska has also asked Kansas to quantify their damages. This was needed because we couldn't go to arbitration to discuss damages if we didn't know what they were asking. I fully expect the arbitration process to go forward. If any of the states are interested in taking the compact back to the courts this process must be implemented. Just going to arbitration is not necessarily a bad thing. It will take time and will have some administrative costs but it is possible to resolve all the issues without going to court. Now I don't expect all the issues to be resolved but they could be narrowed such that it is not worth the effort to go back to the courts.

The Kansas response on damages was interesting. Instead of saying that they were harmed because they couldn't irrigate a certain number of acres, their damage request is based on the economic impact in Nebraska of

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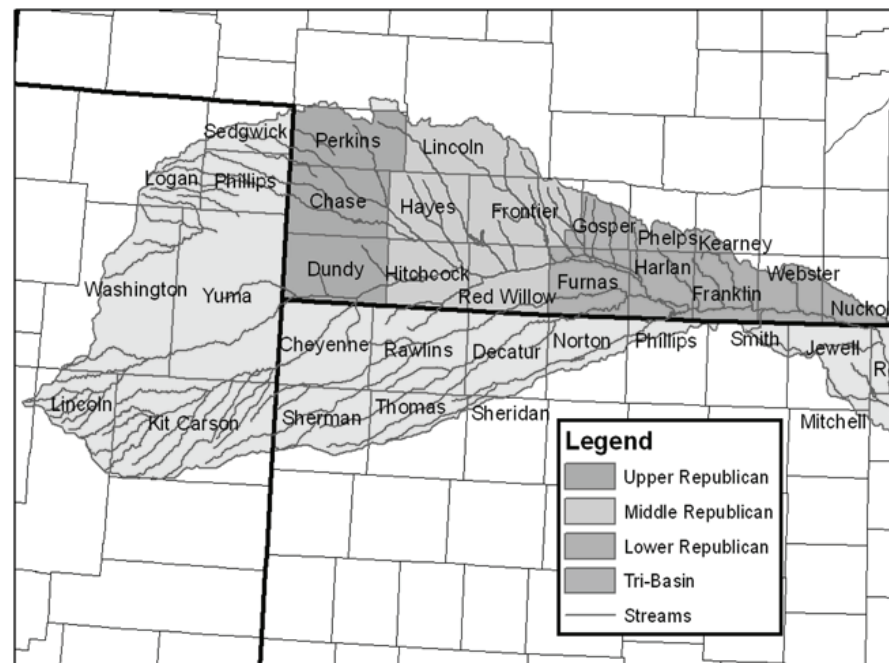
REPUBLICAN RIVER DROUGHT PORTAL National Drought Mitigation Center Needs Your Input

Story by Donna Woudenberg

The National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) – in collaboration with the Upper Republican NRD, the Middle Republican NRD, and the Lower Republican NRD – is developing a drought and water-related decision-support web portal for the Republican River Basin in Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas. Support for this effort is being provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

NDMC and NRD representatives are currently planning a series of listening and feedback sessions in the Republican River Basin, scheduled for the following dates and times, to be held in "working lunch" fashion:

Wednesday, May 28; Upper Republican NRD, Imperial; 11:00AM-1:30PM



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Calendar of Events

visit: www.mrnrd.org/calendar

May	3	Nebraska Envirothon, State 4-H Camp
May	13	Board of Directors Meeting*
May	13	Primary - Don't Forget To Vote
May	13	Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival
May	26	Memorial Day - Office closed
June	10	Board of Directors Meeting*
June	21	First Day of Summer
July	4	Independence Day
July	8	Board of Directors Meeting*
August	12th	Board of Directors Meeting*

*Check online calendar or newspaper notices for meeting times and place.

Chemigation Permits must be renewed through the NRD Office in Curtis by May 31st.

Board of Directors: Joseph Anderjaska, Hayes Center; Kevin Fornoff, Hayes Center; Josh Friesen, Wallace; Gayle Haag, Bartley; Ben Loomis, Maywood; Stanley Moore, Bartley; Jerry Mustion, Culbertson; Dan Nelsen, Moorefield; Brad Randel, Indianola; Marty Schurr, Maywood; and Rick Spencer, Culbertson

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Irrigators, you are reminded that water meters must be permanently attached to your wells by the beginning of this irrigation season!

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Notes and Reminders

Chemigation permits must be renewed through the NRD Office in Curtis by May 31st.

Water Meters

Irrigators are reminded that water meters must be permanently attached to their wells by the beginning of this irrigation season!

Envirothon

Wauneta-Palisade High School Envirothon Team wins State competition in Halsey and goes to the Cannon National Envirothon in July and August held this year at Flagstaff, AZ.

"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."
Aldo Leopold



From Dan's Desk

using water that supposedly should have gone on down the river to Kansas. This is about 62 million dollars, for the years 2005 and 2006, with another 10 million dollars for inflation. This total of 72 million dollars is what Kansas is expecting along with some significant reductions in acres that could prevent this from happening again. Differences in the methods of accounting have arisen between Kansas and Nebraska. Nebraska maintains that the remedy proposed by Kansas is excessive. Those changes would result in water, that could legitimately be used by Nebraska, flowing down the river.

Thursday, May 29; Middle Republican NRD, Curtis; 11:00AM-1:30PM
Friday, May 30; Lower Republican NRD, Alma; 11:00AM-1:30PM

The goal of these sessions is to gather local perspectives and to identify and compile drought monitoring and planning information needed by farmers, ranchers, and resource managers in the basin. Information gathered at these sessions will be used to guide the development of the portal. Potential listening and feedback session participants will include farmers, ranchers, government agency representatives, local community planners and

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The integrated management plans first adopted by the NRDs resulted in Nebraska being in compliance in just three years during one of the worst droughts we have experienced.

during one of the worst droughts we have experienced. While some over-use occurred in 2005 and 2006, we should be well within our allocation in 2007. With a little luck and a couple of timely rains 2008 will be a "plus" year for Nebraska also. We know that the future will

ag related businesses. The portal, which should be up and running in 2009, will be housed on the existing Upper Republican, Middle Republican, and Lower Republican NRD websites.

For more information on the portal – or if you are interested in attending – please contact:

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📧 Donna Woudenberg, NDMC, dwoudenberg2@unl.edu, 402-472-8287 or

📧 Roger Lawson, MRNRD, rlawson@mnrnd.org, 308-367-4281

have years that are drier than normal. The most recent revisions to our IMPs address this with small reductions to our current

allocations and emphasis on incentives, augmentation and lease programs. Our rules also provide for additional reductions if needed in dry years. We felt it was important to work toward compliance using normal average conditions. To project adverse situations into our allocations would have required reductions that wouldn't be needed

The success of this project depends on input from you. The Curtis session will be

every year just to be compliant in a dry year. Using average conditions allows for rational planning without the need for yearly panic. Our allocation has been set at 60 inches for 5 years or an average of 12 inches per year. Should you expect to pump that much every year? ABSOLUTELY NOT. You as producers need to continue the trend you set in our first three year allocation. Over that time frame average use was less than 9 inches per year. If you continue to keep yearly use at this reduced level, then the year that comes by that requires you to pump 12 or 14 inches will not have a devastating

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held on the NCTA campus and lunch will be provided.



The above figure represents a draft appearance of the Republican River Basin Drought Portal Website.

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impact on our overall uses. Water short year designations change the way yearly uses are accounted but in the normal five year rolling average process it is not a problem to exceed our use on any given year as long as we stay within our allocation over the five year average. We are aware of energy costs and other costs of production. Technology for drought resistant hybrids is just around the corner. All of these things along with reasonable water use will help Nebraska maintain the yearly compliance we have achieved. The NRD will continue to look for methods to supplement our supplies when needed. ♣

ern Red Cedar, Salt Cedar and Russian Olive. At the completion of phase one, an estimated 800 acres will have been cleared, including 100 acres in Furnas County, 320 acres in Dundy County and 206 acres in Hitchcock County. This action is being taken to enhance stream flow; besides consuming large quantities of water, this vegetation can also hinder stream flow by “clogging” up the river channel.

At present, Furnas County is more than 100 percent completed for this fiscal year; Hitchcock County is approximately 65 percent completed, and Dundy County is nearly 30 percent completed. With roughly

Mechanical Tree Removal Taking Place on Republican River

Story by Jennifer Tenbenschel and Traci Withuhn

You’ve probably noticed some chopping, buzzing and sawing along the Republican River channel over the past several months – it’s all a part of the first phase in the Southwest Weed Management Area’s (SWWMA) riparian vegetation removal process.

Funding for the first phase of this project was made possible through a grant SWWMA received from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture in 2007. LB 701 provided the State of Nebraska with \$2 million for invasive species removal along rivers in this state. Using this funding, SWWMA will remove invasive species in the Republican River from the Colorado border to the diversion dam east of Cambridge. It was recently announced that SWWMA will be receiving LB 701 funding for phase two of their project as well; this NDA grant is in the amount of \$617,260.

SWWMA awarded the contract for this project to BSB Construction, Inc., in January. BSB subcontracted with two other local companies, Adams Construction of Arap-

ahoe and Vrbas Construction of Stratton, giving them the time-saving advantage of having several crews working simultaneously. Since mid-February, crews have been removing trees within 100 feet of the Republican River, targeting East-



A stretch of the Republican River before mechanical tree removal in February.

33 miles of ground cleared on the Republican River in phase one, the second portion of the project will facilitate work from the Colorado border to Swanson Reservoir.

According to SWWMA president Rick Hedke, equipment used in the removal process has included the Timber Ax, Bobcat, Grinder, Shears and Turbo-Saws. He estimates phase one to be completed on schedule and looks forward to continuing work on the Republican.

Tim Smith, project coordinator, is also pleased with the progress. “Considering the scope and complexity of the work, things are

going really well. We have good contractors working in sometimes very difficult conditions and they are doing a great job. We have also had super cooperation from the landowners involved and I would really like to thank them for helping us out so much.”

Southwest Weed Management Area includes representation from weed superintendents from Furnas, Red Willow, Hitchcock and Dundy counties, Southwest RC & D, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, and the Middle and Upper Republican NRDs, has taken on the project. ♣



A stretch of the Republican River after mechanical tree removal in February.

GROUNDWATER FACT:

NATIONWIDE, GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES HALF OF THE WATER FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION, AND ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF INDUSTRIAL WATER NEEDS.