



220 Center Ave.
PO Box 81
Curtis, NE 69025

Phone: 800-873-5613
Fax: 308-367-4285
Email:rlawson@mnrnd.org

Middle Republican Natural Resources District

PRESS RELEASE

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Irrigators Want Compensation During Well Shut Down

Or

NRD Board and DNR Hear Testimony For and Against The Integrated Management Plan

A public hearing on revisions to the joint integrated management plan between the Middle Republican Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources was held in Curtis on the evening of June 8, 2010. With about 50 people in attendance, the Board of Directors of the Middle Republican NRD and a representative from the Department of Natural Resources heard testimony from 11 people. Written testimony was also provided by another 4 individuals. Before testimony began, NRD staff provided a summary of the plan's general contents. Testimony was provided by the Department of Natural Resources, the Bureau of Reclamation, Frenchman Cambridge Irrigation District and Hitchcock and Red Willow Irrigation District. The remaining testimony came from individuals residing in the District.

The proposed revisions to the existing integrated management plan could impose a "shutting off" of some ground water and surface water users in a compact call year or when supplies in the basin are forecasted to be short enough that Kansas may not receive its share of the basin's allocated water supplies. While provisions exist in the plan that could keep this event from occurring, nearly all of the testifiers were concerned with the lack of compensation for being required to stop irrigating for a year and the equity issue in that some irrigators are shut off while others continue to use water. There were a

number of concerns over the shutdown of surface water supplies from those who think that ground water and surface water, which have different administrative systems, should somehow be administered the same with surface water having priority. Changes in statute, farming practices and flow in the river were acknowledged by some and ignored by others.

The Board of directors, during their board meeting, chose not to make a decision on the IMP revisions in light of the quantity of material and testimony received during the hearing. The IMP revisions will be on next month's agenda.

In general, nearly all the testimony was not in favor of the adoption of the proposed plan. Many of the comments offered were constructive and will benefit the NRD and the Department in their consideration of the proposed changes. Copies of these revisions are available by contacting the NRD in Curtis and are posted on the district's web site at WWW.MRNRD.ORG.

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Roger S. Lawson
Information and Education Coordinator
rlawson@mrnrd.org

(308) 367-4281