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Middle Republican Natural Resources District

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For Immediate Release

NRD Supports Culbertson Trails, Adopts Budget

Curtis – Several residents from Culbertson appeared before the Middle Republican NRD Board of Directors to request funds for improvements to a walking trail in Culbertson. The 2,290-foot trail was developed through volunteer labor, donations, and fundraisers. The existing trail is in need of an armor coating. Community Residents approached the board asking for a Community Assistance Grant to help fund the cost of this trail improvement. Middle Republican NRD Community Assistance Grants fund 20% of a project up to \$3000. In a unanimous decision, the board approved spending up to \$3000 for the armor coating of the trail contingent on receiving documentation of what has already been spent on the trail.

During the Open Forum, McCook resident Claude Cappel asked the board whether the District would be in a water short year in 2006. Manager Dan Smith indicated that 2006 would definitely be a water short year. Smith said, “On the books, we will be in a water short year, but the District is currently doing all that is needed to meet the requirements of the settlement. The allocation is still 39 inches for three years.” Both board members and staff discussed rumors circulating about increased regulations on water usage. The board has made no further restrictions on to water usage, nor have they discussed the possibility of any such changes.

The district scheduled a public budget hearing, the purpose of which was to receive support, opposition, criticism, suggestions, or observations of taxpayers relating to the proposed budget of the Middle Republican NRD. No members of the public presented testimony. Manager Dan Smith reviewed the proposed budget. Total Disbursements are \$1,477,133

with a cash reserve of \$65,000 and a property tax requirement of \$633,753. Smith also reviewed the Final Tax Request. The 2004-2005 property tax request was \$618,396 and the tax rate was .041863. The 2005-2006 proposed property tax request is \$633,753. The new tax rate would be .040760. The board adopted the budget for 2005-2006 as presented with a property tax asking of \$633,753 and a levy rate of .040760.

Other agencies reported at the September 13 meeting. Doug Whisenhunt gave a report on NRCS activities in the District. Whisenhunt reviewed approved EQIP application numbers by county. EQIP will be open for another signup by November. Whisenhunt also reviewed changes coming in EQIP, saying "Next year there will be a national template for determining rankings rather than them being set locally as they are now. Organic ranching and farming is being added. Control burns are also being added with the requirement of deferring grazing until the next spring, after the burn." Whisenhunt also reported that 37,000 acres have been signed up for CREP and must be planted by next spring.

Roger Stockton presented an update of Southwest RC&D activities. Stockton provided the District with copies of CDs and Videotapes of the Riparian Workshop held last March. Producers may borrow these CDs and Videotapes from the District by contacting Information and Education Coordinator Kara Gall. Stockton also circulated a handout concerning agri-tourism, which defined agri-tourism, listed ideas that could generate extra income for landowners, and gave information on a group (KAAPA) that will act as a middleman between farmers and tourists. This group is working on a website for this purpose. Stockton said that RC&D currently has 8 ongoing projects and they would like to have more. Stockton closed by asking the District to consider appointing a liaison to RC&D.

The Republican River Water Conservation and Education Coalition have scheduled an informational meeting for bankers and insurance representatives on September 22 in McCook. For more information, contact the district office at (800) 873-5613.

Assistant Manager Bob Merrigan reviewed a livestock waste control application submitted by the Nebraska Pork Partners, for enlarging lagoons. The board discussed water sampling that

has been done near these facilities and recommended that follow-up samples be taken since it has been a number of years since the base line tests were taken. The board approved the application with the condition that a monitoring well be installed.

The next regular meeting will be on October 11 in Curtis at the NRD Office at 7:30 p.m.

Full text of the meeting minutes, kept current, is available during regular business hours at the NRD office in Curtis or on the web at www.mrnrd.org.

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For more information contact: Kara Gall
Information and Education Coordinator