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## **Middle Republican Natural Resources District**

9/16/04

For Immediate Release

### **Middle Republican NRD Presents Draft of Water Management Area Rules and Regulations and Integrated Management Plan**

Curtis – The Middle Republican NRD Board of Directors presented a draft proposal of the new Water Management Area Rules and Regulations and Integrated Management Plan at their recent meeting. The proposed rules are available to the public on the District website at <http://www.mnrnd.org>.

The District will hold a public hearing for the purpose of receiving testimony with regard to proposed rules and regulations for the Ground Water Management Area and the Integrated Management Plan for the Middle Republican Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. The hearing will be at the Fairgrounds Community Building at the Red Willow County Fairgrounds at West 5<sup>th</sup> and O streets in McCook, Nebraska on October 6, 2004 at 7:00 P.M. Written testimony may be sent to the Middle Republican Natural Resources District at PO Box 81, Curtis, Nebraska, 69025. Written testimony will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

Members of the Ground Water Committee reported on their recent meeting with Governor Johanns in Lincoln. The Governor said that although irrigation is important to the State, compliance with the Compact is also important. When the committee requested that the Governor come out in support of the NRDs, the Governor indicated that he would send a letter of support to all irrigators in the Middle Republican NRD. Discussion was held on the outcome if the Middle Republican NRD is in compliance but other Districts do not comply. David

Cookson, Attorney General, indicated that compliance will be handled on a District-by-District basis.

A variance request from Baker Corporation to drill a new industrial well was considered. Two variances have been given to Baker Corp to drill industrial wells for the ethanol plant. The quantity of water with these two wells was sufficient but the quality of the wells has diminished, as it has developed problems with high nitrates. The District approved the request.

The board also considered a variance request from Don Rockwell to certify an additional 17.8 acres. The request was to include the corners of the pivot, which had been irrigated by surface water until 1998. The District approved the request.

The District voted to adopt the budget for 2004-2005 as presented with a property tax asking of \$618,396 and a levy rate of .041863. Director Anderjaska indicated that he hates to see taxes going up when water is being limited. Senator Tom Baker addressed the Directors concerning the one cent increase, referencing the Upper Republican NRD as one of the Districts in the state that had reached the limit and needed the increase in the levy limit.

Ben Hardin of the NRCS reported that new EQIP contracts are being serviced. \$1,100,000 was allocated to the District for EQIP. CRP signup is open until September 24 through the FSA. There is a new program, CSP, which could be available in the area.

After a discussion regarding a proposed contract with Tri City Meters to read and service meters in the District, the board approved the Tri City Meters Contract for reading of meters in Frontier and Red Willow Counties. Meter readings are scheduled to take place in October. The remaining meters in the District will be read by District staff.

Rex Nelson, Executive Director for McCook Economic Development, addressed the board with concerns about allocations for industrial and municipal water use, saying, "When companies are searching for a location, they will often eliminate a community if there will be any delay due to needing to file for any kind of variance." Nelson suggested that the District consider setting

aside an allocation that could be used for industrial use when a new business wants to come into the area without the delay of having to request a variance.

John Kilpatrick, of Nebraska Game and Parks, introduced himself to the Board and offered the assistance of Nebraska Game and Park in developing the Integrated Management Plan. Roger Stockton, the new RC&D coordinator for Southwest Nebraska, introduced himself and reviewed his background, discussing some of the projects his office is working on as well as projects he worked on before coming here.

John Bingham, City Manager for McCook, requested an opportunity to address the Board. Bingham said the City of McCook would like to be involved in the rules process, requesting time to sit down with the District staff and review concerns that the City has. Indicating that he had sent a letter to District Manager Dan Smith in June requesting time to participate, Bingham expressed concern that he would not have enough time to go back to the City Council to report on this meeting and get their direction before the October 6 public hearing.

Dan Smith introduced Kara Gall, the new Information and Education Coordinator. Gall reported on upcoming Education events and contests, including the area Range Judging Contest scheduled for September 22, 2004, Frontier County 5<sup>th</sup> Outdoor Education Day scheduled for October 6, 2004, and the Area Land Judging Contest scheduled for October 14, 2004. Discussion was held on the new design of the District website.

The cost-share fund report was accepted as presented.

The next regular meeting will be on October 12, 2004 at the NRD office in Curtis beginning at 7:30 p.m.

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**For more information contact:** Kara Gall  
Information and Education Coordinator