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Middle Republican Natural Resources District

For Immediate Release

Agreement Reached on NRD Water Rules & Regulations

Curtis – Following sixteen months of data review, data gathering, informational meetings and negotiation, the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the Middle Republican Natural Resources District have reached a consensus of opinion with regard to rules and regulations proposed by the Middle Republican NRD and the Integrated Management Plan developed by the Department and the NRD. When formally adopted by the Board of Directors, these rules and regulations will help Nebraska maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact Settlement.

The revised rules, which will be formally considered by the NRD Board in November, will limit pumping to a total of 39 inches over a three-year period beginning in 2005. Additional restrictions on pumping or irrigated acres are not proposed in this revision. Reductions resulting from active participation in existing and new incentive programs that will permanently or temporarily retire irrigated acres will be necessary to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact settlement. The Department of Natural Resources and the Middle Republican NRD will work toward developing and funding water conservation incentive programs to achieve these reductions. Additional revisions, based on annual review of Compact compliance, will be considered in the future.



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This process initially began in July of 1996 after the passage of LB 108, legislation that first recognized the relationship between ground water and surface water in Nebraska statutes. Action by the NRD and the Department was delayed when Kansas filed their lawsuit against Nebraska in May of 1998. With the settlement of the lawsuit in December of 2002 and the final determination made by the Department in June of 2003, the Department and the NRD began actively pursuing management concepts that would ensure compliance with the compact settlement without jeopardizing the economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the Republican River Basin.

The Middle Republican NRD held a hearing on October 6th to receive testimony on these proposed rules. While it is safe to say that there is objection to these rules, there is also support for the action the board is considering. Concerns include the economic impact to the area and the ability to grow irrigated crops on the limited allocations.

The revised Rules and Regulations for the Ground Water Management Area will continue the management actions of the NRD first started in 1998. The Integrated Management Plan will be the first such plan approved in Nebraska. The Department and the NRD must jointly approve this action. If approved by the NRD in November, and subsequently approved by DNR, the Rules and Regulations and the Integrated Management Plan will become effective in December and will apply to the 2005 crop year.



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