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Middle Republican Natural Resources District

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For Immediate Release

NRD Board Discusses Plan for Frenchman Valley Water Diversions

Curtis – At their May 10 meeting in McCook, the Middle Republican Natural Resources District Board of Directors discussed plans for the Frenchman Natural Flow Policy. Don Felker presented a change in practice that the Frenchman Valley Irrigation District has made this year. Due to the drought and limited supply of water, the Irrigation District would like to make water available only to those who request it and have a valid appropriation. The Irrigation District requests that the NRD not deduct from a landowner's allocation water that is allowed to flow on by unused. A copy of the letter that will be sent to Frenchman's customers was mailed to Directors and states that "Since there is no allocation from the Irrigation District this year, the Natural Resources District will not consider it a transfer if the landowner chooses to not use surface water to irrigate land that also has a ground water well." Frenchman Valley will provide the NRD with the amount of water delivered at the farm turnouts. Surface water used will be deducted from a user's total allocation.

Three variance requests were considered. Gary Poindexter presented testimony concerning 112 acres that had not been certified. Jerry Mustion requested a variance request for 124.8 acres. Fred Mustion requested an additional 15.5 acres to correct fields that had been were identified correctly when certified but were labeled incorrectly. The District unanimously approved all three requests.

Roger Stockton of the Southwest Nebraska RC&D thanked the District for their support of the recent Riparian River workshop. The \$500 worth of scholarship funds committed by the District for scholarships were unused. Stockton asked the Board if a portion of the money originally committed for scholarships might be used to produce DVDs and/or video tapes to landowners. A motion was made by Moore and second by Wertz to use the funds for education purposes. The motion passed unanimously. Landowners interested in obtaining a copy of the DVD should contact the NRD.

In other business, NRCS Irrigation Specialist Ben Hardin reported on recent NRCS activity. Contracts are being written for EQIP. Contracts for \$410,000 have been written for the general fund. Contracts for another \$90,000 are being written. Between these contracts and the special area contracts, approximately \$1,000,000 in contracts will be signed. A former technician from Trenton is returning to fill the open position in that office.

Manager Dan Smith reviewed Legislative Summaries from the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD). \$6,000,000 have been budgeted by the committee for incentive programs in 2005-06. Smith also circulated a report showing the number of CREP and EQIP acres. 29,000 acres have been signed up in CREP from the Republican Basin. The Board adopted the cost-share summary report and the cost-share summary report on flow meters as presented. Smith indicated that two wells in Lincoln County will be issued cease and desist orders for not metering the well.

Smith also presented the Information and Education report, which detailed the results of the State Envirothon competition in Halsey. Wauneta-Palisade received second place overall and won the Orals section of the competition. Smith presented applications for the MRNRD Summer Camp Scholarship. Four nominations were received for the MRNRD Honor Conservation Award. Recipients for both the scholarship and conservation award will be announced at a later date.

In Personnel matters, Smith reported that Mike Keahey has resigned as technician in the District office to take a position in Wyoming. There is a part-time technician that could be used during the summer to cover some work until a full-time technician can be hired. The District will be advertising for the technician position in the next few weeks. Director Dennis Hoyt reviewed recommendations from the Personnel and Operations Committee. All recommendations were adopted with the exception of two salary items and an equipment item, which were tabled until the next meeting.

Assistant Manager Bob Merrigan reviewed two requests for temporary water transfers. Edward Smith has requested a transfer to Mary Jane McKillip. These two landowners share a pivot and each have a well. All the acres will now be watered by one well. Paul Schaffert requested to transfer an allocation to Edward Smith. Smith is the operator on this ground. Smith wants to be able to move this water to his acres. The Board approved both transfers.

The Board voted to support the upcoming Water Policy Task Force Tour of the Republican River Basin August 2 and 3. Governor Heinemann will conduct a meeting with the public when the tour

reaches McCook. The district will support the tour by assisting in the cost of meals and breaks for the 2-day tour.

The next regular meeting will be on June 14 in Curtis at the NRD office beginning at 8:00 p.m.

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For more information contact: Kara Gall
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