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Natural Resources District

NEWS RELEASE

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Tri-Basin NRD Directors Tour Project Sites, Approve Budget

Staff and directors of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD), made stops at two project sites on Tuesday, August 9, during their annual tour. Tour participants visited the diversion point of the proposed Platte-Republican Diversion Project. This project, a cooperative effort between Tri-Basin NRD and Lower Republican NRD, could divert excess flows from the Platte River to Turkey Creek in the Republican Basin through the Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID) canal system. The project is designed to help both districts maintain adequate groundwater supply for future generations and to help ensure that Nebraska remains in compliance with the Republican River Compact. Tri-Basin NRD General Manager John Thorburn explained to tour participants that this project could become the first basin-to-basin transfer of water in Nebraska.

"Such transfers are common in western states, but this would be Nebraska's first," said Thorburn. Both NRDs have held meetings with landowners along Turkey Creek to gather their input. Olsson Associates is conducting a feasibility study to evaluate potential benefits and challenges of the project.

An augmentation well along Turkey Creek in Gosper County was the second stop on the tour. The well, part of TBNRD's Republican Basin Streamflow Augmentation Project, is used to pump groundwater into Turkey Creek, which flows to the Republican River. This helps the district offset depletions to the Republican River, as required by the district's joint integrated management plan with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

The final stop on Tuesday's tour was Orthman Manufacturing's new facility in Lexington. Orthman manufactures tool bars and custom tillage implements under their name, in addition to producing equipment for John Deere.

Following the tour, TBNRD directors held their August board meeting, at which they approved the district's 2016-2017 budget. In preparing the budget, Tri-Basin's staff and directors worked to make sure necessary projects will be funded without increasing constituents' property taxes. The \$3.51 million budget will actually ask for \$7,800 less in property taxes than last year's budget.

Tri-Basin NRD's next Board of Directors meeting will be Tuesday, September 13 at 7:30 p.m. at Tri-Basin NRD, 1723 Burlington in Holdrege, Nebraska.



John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD manager, explains the proposed Platte-Republican Diversion Project to district staff and directors on their annual tour.

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