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Natural Resources District

NEWS RELEASE

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Tri-Basin NRD Moves Forward with Recharge Projects

Tri-Basin Natural Resources District's (TBNRD) directors selected EA Engineering to design small-scale recharge structures in the Little Blue Basin portion of the district. These structures will slow the flow of water in Sand Creek in Kearney County, increasing groundwater recharge in that area. Groundwater levels in eastern Kearney County have been declining in recent years; the recharge structures are an effort to protect and perpetually sustain groundwater supplies.

Tri-Basin NRD directors also moved forward with a project to divert excess flows of the Platte River through Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's (CNPPID) canal system to federally-owned wetlands for groundwater recharge. This project is a collaboration with Rainwater Basin Joint Venture (RBJV), US Fish and Wildlife Service, and CNPPID.

"This gives us the ability to distribute groundwater recharge over a wider area," explained TBNRD Manager John Thorburn. In addition, Tri-Basin NRD will receive reimbursement for a portion of the recharge water delivery cost, making the project more affordable for the district. Thorburn noted that the agencies involved in the project will set trigger levels for nearby groundwater observation wells; if the water table rises above these triggers, deliveries will be suspended until groundwater levels decline to below the trigger levels. This should prevent problems caused by perched water tables and groundwater seepage from the wetlands.

Nolan Little, Tri-Basin's Water Resources Manager, reviewed fall groundwater level data with directors. Overall, the groundwater level trends were consistent with fall readings from recent years.

"We look at spring readings, not fall readings, to determine groundwater quantity regulations," Thorburn reminded directors. "But it's good to look at the fall readings to discern trends in recharge and drawdowns."

In other business, directors voted to set a public hearing on groundwater quality management designations in Industry Township (5N-19W) in Phelps County and Blaine Township (7N-16W) in Kearney County. Data indicates those townships should move into more restrictive phases of the district's groundwater quality management plan, in order to protect the quality of groundwater in those areas. The public hearing will be held in conjunction with the December board meeting at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 12 at the Tri-Basin NRD office.

Ashley McNally of Tonniges Associates reviewed the 2016-2017 budget year audit with TBNRD directors. The results of the audit were favorable, with no serious deficiencies noted in the district's finances.

Board members also approved five applications for well decommissioning cost-share funds, two applications for irrigation flowmeter cost-share funds, and one application for windbreak renovation cost-share funds.

Tri-Basin NRD's next Board of Directors meeting will be Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. in the conference room at Tri-Basin NRD, 1723 Burlington St., Holdrege, Nebraska.

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