

MINUTES
Middle Republican Natural Resources District
Special Board of Directors Meeting
March 1, 2004
Holdrege, Nebraska

Board Members Present: Joseph Anderjaska, Duane Dodson, Kevin Fornoff, Gayle Haag, Dennis Hoyt, Wayne Madsen, Stan Moore, Mike Peters, and Kelly Wertz

Board Members Absent: Del Harsh and Don Roberts

NRD Staff: Dan Smith, Bob Merrigan, and Christy Peterson

Others: Roger Patterson, Ann Bleed, Mike Thompson, Jim Cook, Brad Edgerton, Dave Cookson, Justin Levene, Dean Edson, Don Blankenau, John Thornburn, Rich Hollaway, Mike Clements, Bryan Lubeck, Bob Hipple, and Directors (see attached roster)

Information Mailed to Directors:

Agenda	Patterson's Potential Allocation Scheme
JAP Considerations	2003 Acreage Reports
DNR Data Bank Reports	DNR Pumpage Reports

Information Distributed at Meeting:

JAP Procedures/Deadlines	"Walking Your Fields" by John Williams
Intro to Water Resources Management	

REGULAR MEETING

The special board meeting was called to order by Chairman Haag at 10:16a.m. The agenda and roster were circulated to those present.

Official notice of the special meeting was published in the **North Platte Telegraph** and the **McCook Daily Gazette** and was posted in the **NRD office**. As a courtesy it was also announced on **local radio stations**.

INTRODUCTIONS

John Thornburn, manager of the Tri-Basin NRD, made some general announcements. Roger Patterson, DNR, requested that everyone introduce themselves.

GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT

Dave Cookson, Attorney General, gave a power point presentation reviewing the Republican River Compact and the considerations that went into the settlement process.

Roger Patterson, DNR, reviewed the current situation. It is estimated that there are currently 1.3 million acres of irrigated ground in the Republican River Basin. An average of 1.5 million acre-feet is pumped from the Nebraska portion of the Basin each year, which creates an annual depletion to the stream flow of 200,000 acre-feet.

The three issues that need to be addressed are 1) how to stay within the allocation, 2) how to decrease pumpage for dry years, and 3) how to deal with the lag effect. Discussion was held on these issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00p.m. for lunch.

The meeting was reconvened at 1:10p.m.

Cookson reviewed the settlement and the possible penalties if Nebraska does not stay in

compliance. 2003 is the first year for the 5-year rolling average. It will be used to determine compliance in 2007. If the drought continues, the conditions for dry years will take effect. This means that the two-year average will take effect. 2005 and 2006 would be the first two years to be used for this average. Therefore, the State could have to meet compliance by 2006.

Patterson reviewed pumpage reports for years 1990-2003. The volumes presented for 1990-2000 are the amounts that were used in the model. Discussion was held on the pumpage, how they were calculated, and how they compare to meter readings. Discussion was also held on how these rates translate into allocations for the individual Districts.

Discussion was held on options available to meet the State's allocation. There are three options that the Districts will look at. One is to reduce water usage, two is to reduce acres, and third is to find a combination of the two. The Districts expressed the need for specific guidance in determining allocations so that they can get their rules written.

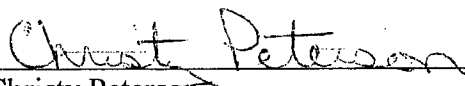
Jim Cook, DNR, reviewed the joint action plan timeline. As is specified in LB 108, each NRD/DNR joint action plan must be completed with one year of the NRD passing the resolution to proceed to develop a plan. The Middle Republican NRD passed their resolution on August 12, 2003. A hearing must be scheduled within 60 days of the completion of the plan. The District has 90 days to decide on the adoption of the joint action plan. If passed the plan has to become effective within 90 days after being adopted.

If LB 962 is adopted, it repeals a portion of LB 108; specifically the portion that covers joint action plans. If the plan is complete by the effective date of LB 962 (currently projected to be July 16, 2004), the plan could proceed without any stays. If the plan is not complete by the effective date, stays on new water uses and on increases in irrigated acres would take place between the effective date and August 1. LB 962 allows 3 years for completing a joint action plan once the District passes the resolution. The lawsuit settlement would not allow the Districts in the Republican Basin this much time, however. A handout concerning the procedures and deadlines was circulated to those present.

The individual Districts will determine at their next board meeting scenarios that each NRD wants to consider. DNR will run the various scenarios through the model. Mike Clements, Lower Republican NRD, recommended that a smaller group consisting of the managers and one or two Directors from each NRD meet to discuss various options before the entire group met again. All Districts will try to have scenarios into DNR within the next 10 days.

Patterson recommends that an effort should be made to have the joint action plans adopted by early fall.

Haag adjourned the meeting at 4:05p.m.



Christy Peterson
Board Secretary