

**Steve Gaul**

**From:** Steve Gaul [sgaul@dnr.ne.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 30, 2007 1:11 PM  
**To:** Ann Bleed  
**Cc:** Brian Dunnigan (bdunnigan@dnr.ne.gov); Guy Lindeman  
**Subject:** Discussion of Potential Actions on Proposed New Stream Gage Sites  
**Attachments:** TT\_Memo to DNR 06-09-06 (4).doc

Ann –

We currently have received NRD contact related to three stream gages that could be funded through our LB 962 funding and there is the potential for a fourth gage that might be useful. In each case, these proposed gages do have some value related to potential interrelated water management activity. You have already received a memo from an Elkhorn Basin Technical Advisory Team that includes Bill Birkel in regards to the Elkhorn River gages and I have attached it. The four proposed gages are:

**Elkhorn River at Tilden (or Meadow Grove) (Given priority by Technical Advisory Team for Upper and Lower Elkhorn NRDs)**  
**Elkhorn River at Nickerson (Given priority by Upper and Lower Elkhorn NRDs)**  
**Loup River near Columbus (Requested by Russ Callan on behalf of Lower Elkhorn NRD)**  
**Fox Creek near Curtis**

I have talked to Bill Birkel, Brad and Guy about the gages and have talked with Sue Lackey, Russ Callan and Mike Thompson about one or more gages. Below is my recommended course of action on three of them. I would note that I don't recommend any action until after the February 2 stream gaging meeting being called by Senator Nelson's office.

#### **Tilden Gage vs Meadow Grove Gage**

The Tilden gage received priority in the Elkhorn Basin Technical Advisory Team memo the NRD managers sent you. Provided we want a gage in this area Tilden vs Meadow Grove is an either/or proposition. Like the Loup River at Columbus, the Tilden gage is (and the Meadow Grove gage is almost) at the downstream boundary of an interested NRD. One of the questions is whether the gages at these points in the long run may help an NRD understand the success of its' interrelated water management efforts. In each of these two instances, I believe it would be helpful. Bill Birkel did express some concern that if we run low on funding in a few years we might need to drop one of the gages and indicated he felt the longer period of record a Neligh is more important. Bill indicated that neither of the two gages would be that difficult for the Field Office to work.

In the case of the Tilden versus Meadow Grove, Tilden is closer to the NRD boundary, has the NRD priority and may be somewhat easier to work. My inclination is to stick with the NRD wishes even though the Tilden site is reportedly a "party" area and may be subject to vandalism. However the Meadow Grove site does have monitoring wells nearby, has some previous record, is closer to being midway between two existing gages, and Guy is not necessarily convinced it would be hard to work or a bad spot for rating. He suggests we wait and that he would like some time to go up and examine the sites. My thought is that I would like to move quickly to show the NRDs we are on it and to get a leg up on expending the money this fiscal year. I am not convinced one site has a great advantage over the other. From our standpoint Meadow Grove may actually be better because of the previous record and lower vandalism potential. The NRDs probably would prefer Tilden because of the NRD boundary situation. Because 962 monies are to help with interrelated water management, I believe we should take NRD wishes into account more than we normally would. ***I recommend we call the Dennis and Stan and if they are strongly sold on Tilden we go with it. If they are open, we send Guy up to check out both sites when weather conditions improve.***

#### **Loup River Near Columbus**

In the instance of the Loup River near Columbus the nearest upstream gage is at Genoa. There was a gage at

2/2/2007

the Hwy 81 bridge at Columbus for a while, but it was difficult as far as rating and was discontinued. There may be some difficulties in the other sites as well. Bill Birkel took a look at them. **Since the Lower Loup NRD wants the gage and it is relevant to interrelated water management efforts, I would recommend we also go with that gage but work with the NRD to determine the exact site once ice is out of the river. It would be good to let the NRD know our intentions on this soon.**

#### Fox Creek Near Curtis

Fox Creek near Curtis is a tributary to Medicine Creek and we had a gage there until early 1990s. The rationale placing a gage here is that it could be used as an indicator of what is going on in the aquifer and trends in base flow. This would be in line with interrelated water management planning. I have not contacted the NRD for their feelings on a potential gage. Mike sees this gage as having a bit of a "canary in the coal mine" function. I did talk with Brad and he indicated he saw the gage as beneficial. **My recommendation on the Fox Creek gage is that Mike bring it up in next week's technical committee meeting with the NRD and that if they are in favor, we go ahead and put it in.**

#### Elkhorn River near Nickerson

Although I don't have a recommendation on Nickerson, I believe their Technical Advisory Team made a good case about it being the furthest point downstream not subject to the Platte. I have talked with Sue Lackey who indicated that Nickerson was actually her first choice among all the potential gages they considered. However, another angle is that this would be further for the Norfolk Office to administer and three new gages for one field office might be a bit much.

Steve

2/2/2007

DNR 011750

To: WPTF NO Email list  
Plus Jim Miller

September 1, 2006

To: Water Policy Task Force Members without E-Mail Access

From: Steve Gaul

Subject: Copy of Supalla Report on *Economic and State Budget Cost of Reducing the Consumptive Use of Irrigation Water in the Platte and Republican Basins*

A request was made at last week's Water Policy Task Force Meeting that all members receive a copy of Ray Supalla's report *Economic and State Budget Cost of Reducing the Consumptive Use of Irrigation Water in the Platte and Republican Basins*. A copy of the most recent draft of that report (August 21) is attached.

Attachment