

June 15, 2004

Garold Ohmstede
Chair
Lower Republican Natural Resources District
RR 1 Box 161
Guide Rock, NE 68942

Dear Mr. Ohmstede:

It is our understanding from talking with Mike Clements that the Lower Republican Natural Resources District (NRD) intends to prepare a draft Integrated Management Plan for consideration by the Department of Natural Resources. Given that the Integrated Management Plan is a joint product to be developed by the LRNRD and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), we would prefer that the plan be drafted in a collaborative process; by having appropriate policy, technical, and legal representatives from both organizations work together to outline the initial draft.

As you know we have had a number of joint meetings between the DNR and the Republican River Basin NRDs, including the Lower Republican NRD. Those meetings resulted in the basis upon which the individual Integrated Management Plans are to be developed. Key components of the working framework developed at those meetings include:

- (1) Utilizing the 1998-2002 groundwater pumping and associated streamflow depletions as the baseline for use;
- (2) Any expansion of acres or use above this baseline must be offset within the individual NRD where such expansion has occurred;
- (3) In order to meet compact compliance, beginning in 2005 each NRD must:
 - A. Reduce their pumping/depletion by 5% from the 1998-2002 baseline;
 - B. Make an additional reduction in pumping/depletion in dry years;
- (4) Each individual NRD's responsibility for reducing use in dry years is based on their percentage of the 1998-2002 streamflow depletion. The Lower Republican NRD's percentage is 26%. In other words, if Nebraska needs to reduce depletions by an

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additional 40,000 acre-feet in dry years such as 2004, the Lower Republican NRD would have to reduce their depletion by an additional 10,400 acre-feet;

- (5) Tri-Basin NRD has agreed, as part of their responsibility for compact compliance, to maintain the ground water levels in the mound at the 1981-1985 average level;
- (6) The Integrated Management Plans are to be adopted by the DNR and individual NRDs this fall with implementation beginning in 2005.

We are hopeful that your board will schedule a meeting with the DNR so that we can work together to develop a joint Integrated Management Plan that includes the above components and enables Nebraska to comply with the Republican River Compact.

Please call me at (402) 471-2366 to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

Roger K. Patterson
Director

agk

cc: Michael Clements – Lower Republican Natural Resources District
Robert Hipple – Upper Republican Natural Resources District
Dan Smith – Middle Republican Natural Resources District
John Thorburn – Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
David Cookson – Nebraska Attorney General's Office