

Mike Thompson

From: Jim Cook [jcook@dnr.state.ne.us]
Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2006 4:48 PM
To: Ann Bleed; Mike Thompson >; Ann Diers
Subject: FW: Information requested on January 24

FYI. Jim

-----Original Message-----

From: Sen. Beutler, Chris [mailto:cbeutler@unicam.state.ne.us]
Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2006 4:42 PM
To: Jim Cook
Subject: RE: Information requested on January 24

Jim,

Thank you for the information. I will be getting in contact with you again soon.

Chris

-----Original Message-----

From: Jim Cook [mailto:jcook@dnr.state.ne.us]
Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2006 1:21 PM
To: Sen. Beutler, Chris; Sen. Loudon, LeRoy
Cc: Ann Bleed; David Cookson; Justin Lavene; John Erickson" <
Subject: Information requested on January 24

Senator Beutler and Senator Loudon,

Here is the information you requested on Tuesday.

Number of acres irrigated in the Republican River Basin:

- Acreage certification is an ongoing process but there are approximately 1,275,000 acres certified for irrigation with ground water in the Republican River Basin. If you would like the most up-to-date acreage number for each NRD, those could be obtained from the district offices or we will get those at your request.
- For surface water, the total acreage under permit is about 116,000. Only about 1/3 of those acres are being irrigated under the current drought conditions.
- A significant portion of the acres under surface water permit also have the capability to be irrigated with ground water, so there would be some overlap on the acreage numbers noted above.

Amount of ground water pumped in the basin:

- The amount pumped varies considerably from year to year based on weather conditions.
- For 2003, the estimated amount pumped was 1,411,004 acre feet (1,400,091 for irrigation and 10,913 for municipal/industrial uses).
- For 2004, the estimated amount pumped was 1,241,967 acre feet (1,228,065 for irrigation and 13,902 for municipal/industrial uses).

Amount of surface water diverted in the basin:

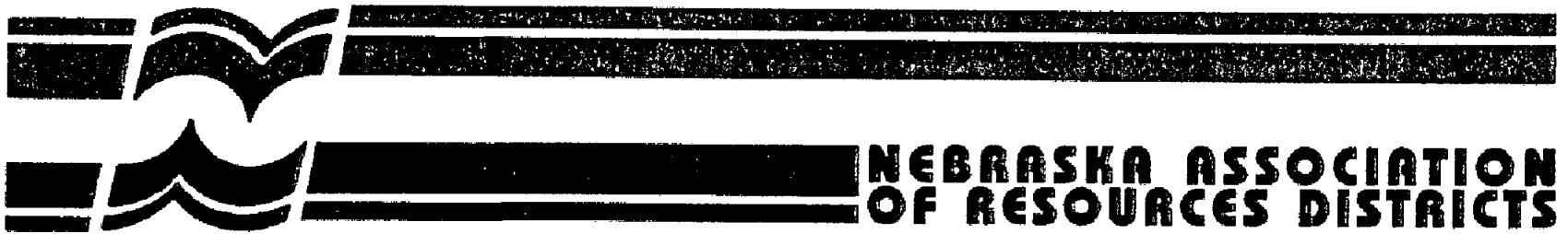
- As with ground water this varies a lot from year to year and is largely affected by the available surface water supply.
- For 2003, the estimated amount of surface water diverted in the basin was 68,610 acre feet.
- For 2004, the estimated amount diverted was 47,581 acre feet.

All irrigation wells in the Republican Basin portions of the URNRD, MPNRD, LPNRD and Tri-Basin NRD should now have meters in place because installation of meters was to be completed for all those areas by the 2005 irrigation season.

The **per irrigated acre** charge that would be needed to raise \$1M in the basin would be approximately 78 cents (\$1M / 1.275M acres) if only the ground water irrigated acres were assessed and slightly less if all irrigated acres were assessed.

If a fee were to be based on **ground water pumpage** only, the charge necessary to raise \$1M in 2003 would have been approximately 71 cents per acre foot (0.22 cents per thousand gallons) and approximately 81 cents per acre foot (0.25 cents per thousand gallons) for 2004. The charge would be somewhat less if surface water irrigated acres were also included. For surface water diversions, a decision would have to be made as whether any portion of the amount diverted that was later returned to the river would be subject to the fee.

Jim Cook



January 9, 2006

Honorable Dave Heineman, Governor
State Capitol Building
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Governor Heineman:

We the undersigned NRD Board Chairmen want to thank you for your support of water management activities in the Republican River Basin. In particular, we are encouraged by your support for incentive programs and management activities that will help the State of Nebraska stay in compliance with the terms of the Republican River Compact and the *Kansas v. Nebraska* settlement agreement.

Republican Basin NRDs are committed to do our part to help the State of Nebraska maintain compliance with the Compact as adopted in 1943 and as implemented in accordance with the 2003 Settlement Agreement approved by the United States Supreme Court. In addition, we want to ensure that Republican Basin ground water and surface water resources are protected and preserved for the benefit of future generations.

We are encouraged by water use reports for this year from across the basin. Groundwater users pumped 15-30 percent less water in 2005 than they were allocated. We are proud of our farmers' good stewardship of our groundwater resources. We continually encourage farmers to avoid additional mandatory reductions in water use by maintaining these high levels of water use efficiency.

The integrated management plan objectives for Republican Basin NRDs call for compact compliance to be achieved through a combination of regulatory and incentive programs designed to limit, and if necessary reduce beneficial consumptive use of basin water supplies. All districts have adopted regulatory programs that are deemed sufficient by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources to maintain compact compliance under average climatic conditions. We realize that in 2008-2010, basin integrated management rules may need to be revised, depending on hydrologic conditions, to limit water use during periods of extreme drought.

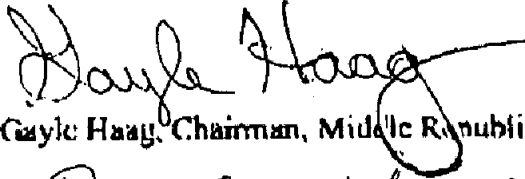
Basin-wide incentive programs, particularly those aimed at reducing surface water consumption, will be an effective tool to help Nebraska stay in compliance with the compact during water short years. In the longer term other activities, such as riparian vegetation management and maximizing Nebraska's imported water supply credit, will also help insure compact compliance.

If incentive programs and other actions prove inadequate to insure compact compliance, Republican Basin NRDs will work with the State of Nebraska to develop rules and regulations that equitably and effectively reduce water consumption by all water users. In conclusion, we look forward to continuing to work with you and other state officials to honor Nebraska's commitment to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact and the *Kansas v. Nebraska* lawsuit settlement.

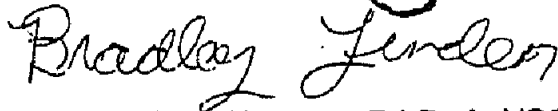
Respectfully,



Greg Pelster, Chairman, Upper Republican NRD



Doyle Haag, Chairman, Middle Republican NRD



Bradley Lundeen, Chairman, Tri-Basin NRD



David Nelson, President, NARD

Cc: Ann Bleed
John Ericson
Dave Cookson
Dave Nelson
Bruce Cutshall