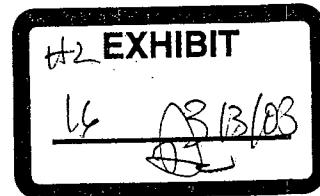


March 3, 2005



Board of Directors
Upper Republican NRD

I would like to address a few issues this evening, that I see as affecting the interest of all water users in the Upper Republican NRD, that are included in your proposals for an integrated management plan.

First I'll address the allocation proposal of 13.5 inches. I would like to quote section 2-3201: Natural Resources Declaration of Intent which states "The legislature hereby recognizes and declares that it is essential to the health and welfare of the people of the State of Nebraska to conserve, protect, develop and manage the natural resources of this state." I would specifically note the words conserve, protect and manage as we have already developed.

While I was a member of this board, the general consensus was DNR and the Republican River Compact were the bad guys. The Upper Republican NRD Board and patrons need to look at the problem. The problem is simply the overuse of a limited resource, not DNR and not the Republican River Compact.

I suggest the board look at the historical water use of the Upper Republican NRD. The historical water use in later allocation periods is closer to 12.5 inches than the 13.5 inches proposed. Using only the historical 12.5 inches we are still seeing excessive declines in our ground water and extensive loss of our surface water. Why should we be setting an allocation at 13.5 inches?

Look at Enders Lake, the Imperial Light Dam, Indian Creek, Buffalo Creek, Stinking Water Creek, Rock Creek, Champion Lake and the area north of the North Fork of the Republican River all showing affects of extensive declines and not all from drought as some propose, but from excessive use of groundwater. I suggest that the allocation be set at something below historical use – something below 12.5 inches.

For 25 years we have heard producers say they could not manage with less allocation, however, we have reduced allocation and they have still managed to save water and build carry forward. Producers have been able to adapt and we will continue to adapt even though we may need to change some crops and farming practices until technology produces crops that will respond with less water.

Carry forward – I understand your dilemma but wonder how you will manage declines by allowing it and its use.

I have read that there has also been some interest by the board in the transfer of water as proposed by Water Claim. This will not solve the Upper Republican NRD's problem. If the board has the interest of water conservation and the benefit of the people of the Upper Republican NRD in mind I think that money could be spent in better directions than in the support of piping water into Harlan County Dam. We could use that 5 or 6 million dollars to retire acres or supplement our users that would in return help ALL residents of the Upper Republican NRD. If you solve the Upper Republican NRD's problem of a declining aquifer we will have met our obligations of the Republican River Compact.

I think your approach to the floating township for pooling is commendable and should serve as a benefit to some irrigators in managing the use of the resource.

Another issue LB 962 addresses is the balance of water use and supplies for the near and long term. The goals and objectives for this balance are to be included in the integrated management plan as stated in 46-715 section 2. Someday the Upper Republican NRD will have to face this issue. Why not start and work toward that goal of sustainability so that all can change in a programmed manner rather than wait and face the crisis when it is mandated. Someday water will be valuable – more valuable than the \$1.75 corn we produce with it today. We need to forget our greed and selfishness in the use of this resource and see that our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren have the opportunity to use it more wisely than we. Imagine what the viability of the area would be without water and if we do not change our policies we will have no water for irrigation and much of the area will be lucky to have enough water for household and a few livestock.

In closing, I would like to present a perception of mine. I present Pumpkin Creek and the decision by the Nebraska Supreme Court. In my view I see Frenchman Creek, Indian Creek, Rock Creek, Stinking Water Creek and Buffalo Creek all in the same scenario. Can we continue to deplete them?

We need to work toward saving a resource that took thousands of years to place here. What gives us the right to deplete it in one generation?

Robert Ambrosek