

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 46-718 of Nebraska Revised Statutes, the Lower Republican Natural Resources District (LRNRD) and the Department shall hold a public hearing on Thursday June 16, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., at the Johnson Center, 509 Main Street, Alma, NE. As required by Section 46-718(1), the purpose of the hearing is to take testimony concerning the revisions of the Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the LRNRD and the Department. The proposed IMP revisions affect the entire geographic area of the LRNRD.

The goals of the IMP are to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact, ensure that ground water and surface water users assume their share of the responsibility to keep Nebraska in compliance with the Republican River Compact, distribute that responsibility in an equitable manner, reserve and protect from other uses the streamflow available from regulation or programs and protect those uses in place prior to the time of designation from new uses.

The objectives to achieve these goals are to prevent new or expanded uses of ground and surface water, ensure that surface water appropriations are administered in accordance with the Compact and Nebraska law, reduce existing ground water uses through regulation or incentives, maintain the net depletions to streamflow at or within twenty-six percent of the allowable ground water depletion, provide for additional restrictions in water short years, manage vegetative growth.

The existing groundwater controls are those controls found in chapter 5 through 7 of the Groundwater Management Rules and Regulations. These controls will be modified in the future to comply with the proposed Integrated Management Plan. These controls include a moratorium on new wells, limiting or preventing the expansion of irrigated acres and metering. Allocations have been adopted that will limit the amount of ground water irrigation uses.

The existing surface water controls are increased administration as required by the Settlement Agreement, metering of all surface water diversions from a stream, continuing the moratorium on new surface water permits, denying transfers of surface water permits if they jeopardize the state's compliance with the Compact, and continuing to monitor surface water use.

Additional ground water and surface water controls may be implemented in a compact call year. These controls will restrict the use of surface water and ground water in identified areas of the basin. These controls may be mitigated through the establishment of augmentation and incentive programs that would provide for additional stream flow and the reduction of ground water depletions during a compact call year.

The proposed additions to the existing ground water controls include compliance standards, and management activities including one year allocations and/or the curtailment of ground water pumping within the Rapid Response region in “Compact Call Years.”

The proposed additions to the existing surface water controls include regulation and administration of surface water in the entire Republican River basin to ensure Compact Compliance in “Compact Call Years.”

The proposed modifications to the IMP also include significant updates to the Monitoring and Studies section. These modifications are intended to better forecast Nebraska’s ability to ensure Compact Compliance with an emphasis on dry year compliance and flexible options to achieve compliance.

Any interested person may appear at the hearing and present written or oral testimony concerning the proposed IMP revisions. Individuals with disabilities may request auxiliary aids and service necessary for participation by contacting the LRNRD or the Department by June 9, 2011. Testimony relevant to the purposes of the hearing may also be submitted in writing to the Lower Republican Natural Resources District at PO Box 618, Alma, Nebraska, 68920; or to the Department of Natural Resources, 301 Centennial Mall South, P.O. Box 94676, Lincoln, NE 68509-4676; or by electronic mail to the LRNRD at mclements@lrnrd.org or to the Department at Jim.Schneider@Nebraska.gov by 5:00 P.M. on June 15, 2011.

For further information regarding the proposed IMP modifications or the full text of the proposed IMP, refer to the LRNRD website, at <http://www.lrnrd.org> or the Department’s website, at <http://www.dnr.ne.gov>; contact the LRNRD or the Department at the addresses above; or contact the LRNRD at (308) 928-2182 or the Department at (402) 471-2363.

Following the public hearing on the proposed IMP modifications, the LRNRD and the Department will make a joint decision within 60 days as to whether to implement the proposed IMP with or without modifications and whether to adopt and implement the ground water and surface water controls proposed in the IMP.

Publish weeks of May 23, May 30, and June 6, 2011