

NEWS RELEASE

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

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Department of Natural Resources Issuing Opening Notices to Surface Water Users in the Republican River Basin

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (Department) has begun to open surface water appropriations in the Republican River Basin after previously issuing closing notices for the Republican River Compact on January 1, 2013. These openings follow on earlier administration by the Department building on management actions taken by the local natural resources districts in the basin. Both the administration by the Department and the management actions by the local natural resources districts are key components of the joint water management plans developed between the Department, natural resources districts, and stakeholders in the basin.

Even with these openings there are no guarantees of how long or which appropriators will be open as surface water appropriations in Nebraska are administered on the "first in time, first in right" basis meaning the older, more senior, water right will receive water before newer, junior, rights in times of shortage. The weather in the next few weeks to months will likely determine whether additional appropriations can be opened or if those recently opened will again need to be closed. Brian Dunnigan, Director of the Department, stated, "We have evaluated the outlook in the basin in terms of this year's Compact compliance targets and believe that these actions are appropriate at this time. We will continue to monitor the situation closely as compliance with the Compact must remain our top priority."

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