

December 22, 2017

NEWS RELEASE

CPNRD Board Approves Groundwater Evaluation Toolbox Contract

(GRAND ISLAND, NE)- Central Platte Natural Resources District's (CPNRD) staff will have the capability to run scenarios to track water flows back to the river with Thursday's approval of a Groundwater Evaluation Toolbox (GET) use contract. The CPNRD board of directors approved the service contract with Olsson Associates on Thursday at their December meeting. CPNRD will have access to the subregional models for Thirty Mile, Southside and Cozad canals at no charge for one year.

OTHER ACTION/AGENDA ITEMS

-Board Officer Nominating Committee The committee recommended Marvion Reichert for board secretary and Charles Maser for treasurer. Election of the two offices will be held at the January board meeting. Board officers may serve two, two-year terms. Barry Obermiller, Grand Island, has served two full terms and is not eligible for re-election as secretary. Charles Maser, Grand Island, has served one full term and is eligible for re-election as treasurer.

-Cease & Desists Update In early December, 82 Cease and Desist Orders were issued to irrigators for failure to submit 2017 crop report forms. Vogt reported that 32 irrigators remain out of compliance as of December 21, 2017. Irrigated acres under a cease and desist order cannot be irrigated until they have come into compliance with the Program. Potential penalties for violation are: possibility of a fine not less than \$1,000 up to \$5,000 per violation and/or a loss of irrigated acres, ineligibility for any NRD cost share money, and restriction from transferring any irrigated acres.

-Platte River Program Mark Czaplewski, biologist, reported that the Governance Committee (GC) for the Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan met in Denver on December 5th. The GC approved the Program's FY 2018 budget and work plan including \$1.5 million for implementation of the Land Plan, \$2.2 million for the Adaptive Management plan (including monitoring, research, and science review), and \$15.9 million for implementation of the Water Plan. The major items in the Water Plan include over \$7 million for the broad scale recharge project beginning with a demonstration project on NPPD's Cottonwood Ranch property, and \$2.8 million for slurry wall sandpit pilot projects south of the Platte in the Overton-Elm Creek area.

Much of the remaining funds set aside for water leases and groundwater recharge projects including estimated costs of just over \$1.6 million for CPNRD surface and groundwater leasing. Actual payments would be dependent on future precipitation. The GC is planning an auction sale for parts of three properties considered of lesser habitat value for the target species to help purchase higher value habitats.

-Voting Delegates The board elected Jerry Wiese as voting delegate and Ed Kyes as alternate for the Nebraska Association of Resources District's Legislative Conference to be held January 23-24, 2018 at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln, NE.

-Natural Resources Conservation Service Joe Krolikowski, district liaison, reported on the FY 2018 CPNRD Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) fund codes for cropland, grassland, water conservation for sprinkler irrigation systems, and water conservation for sub-surface drip irrigation systems, water conservation for irrigation water management, and invasive species. The priority system criteria for each fund code is subject to change, pending receipt of the FY 2018 EQIP Practice Payment Schedule and will be used to assign a high and low priority designation to each application.

-Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Dean Edson, executive director of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, reported that lawmakers are faced with a nearly \$200 million shortfall, with cuts to the Water Sustainability Fund likely. Edson also reported that a proposed rule change to the Water Sustainability Fund would require that permits be in place, including 404 permits, to be eligible for funding. After discussion, the board voted to send a representative to testify in opposition of the proposed change to the hearing scheduled for January 18, 2018. Mick Reynolds, CPNRD director, is the Middle Platte Basin representative on the Commission.

-Cost Share The board approved four applications through the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation and CPNRD cost share programs in the amount of \$9,922.46. Practices funded were center pivot incentive, tree planting and well decommissioning.

-Awards Service awards were presented to: director Barry Obermiller for 20 years of service on the board; Duane Woodward, hydrologist-25 years; Mark Czaplewski, biologist-20 years; Jesse Mintken, assistant manager-10 years.

-Upcoming Events The board will meet on January 25, February 22, and March 22. Water Information Update: February 7 from 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at the Hotel Grand Conference Center in Grand Island.

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