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Natural Resources District

NEWS RELEASE

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TBNRD Delays Action on Phase 2 Designation for Grant Township

Following a hearing to include Grant Township (5N-13W) in eastern Kearney County in Phase 2 for groundwater quantity management, Tri-Basin Natural Resources District's (TBNRD) directors voted to table the issue until the December 11 board meeting. Several landowners from eastern Kearney County expressed concerns about the progress of the district's Joint Integrated Management Plan (IMP) with Little Blue NRD. Delaying the Grant Township designation will allow time for the joint IMP to be completed.

Grant Township was proposed for inclusion in Phase 2 because groundwater levels there have dropped to more than five feet below 1981-1985 average ground water levels. If TBNRD directors approve the designation in December, the applicable rules will take in effect January 2019. Irrigators in townships in Phase 2 have three years to install flowmeters on all irrigation wells. No certified irrigated acres may be transferred into a Phase 2 Township.

The district is working on several projects to recharge groundwater supplies in eastern Kearney County. A series of at least three groundwater recharge structures will be constructed along Sand Creek. Also, TBNRD directors are committed to completing the Joint IMP with Little Blue NRD to improve coordination of groundwater regulations between the two districts. Finally, Tri-Basin and Little Blue NRDs are working with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to conduct an in-depth geologic study to determine groundwater recharge rates in eastern Kearney County.

"Once we know the recharge rate, we can calculate the yield and know how much we can safely pump each year," explained TBNRD Manager John Thorburn.

In other action, Tri-Basin NRD directors approved a lower tax levy for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

The new levy for TBNRD will be .017583, compared to .027656 for the prior year. The one-cent drop is a result of a lower district budget for 2018-2019, which was possible because much of the funding for on-going district projects was included in prior year budgets.

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