

Summer 2014
Volume 28, Issue 3

Tri-Basin Topics

A quarterly publication of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District

Tri-Basin Projects Protect, Enhance Water Resources

Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (TBNRD) is committed to sustaining groundwater supplies across the district at levels equal to or greater than average groundwater levels in the period 1981-85. The district also committed to carry out integrated water management plans developed in cooperation with the state Department of Natural Resources to protect streamflows in Platte and Republican tributaries from depletions due to groundwater pumping. In order to reach these goals, Tri-Basin has developed several projects to augment streamflows and sustain groundwater levels in the district's portions of the Platte, Republican, and Little Blue River Basins.



Elwood Reservoir

Late spring flows on the Platte River have increased steadily, as a result of snowmelt and runoff from Rocky Mountain streams into the South Platte River. In anticipation of possible high flows, Tri-Basin NRD, Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District (CNPPID), and Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) developed an agreement to have CNPPID divert as much as 10,000 acre-feet of water into Elwood Reservoir for groundwater recharge credit in both the Platte and Republican River Basins. CNPPID will charge \$39 per acre-foot for the diversions, the cost of which will be split between TBNRD and NDNR. The agreement will be effective through December 31, 2014. Diversions began Tuesday, June 10; as of Tuesday, June 24, 6,494 acre-feet had been diverted.

Tri-Basin NRD has moved into the second phase of the North Dry Creek streamflow augmentation project in northern Kearney County. A second augmentation well has been drilled. This project utilizes groundwater to augment streamflows of North Dry Creek, a tributary of the Platte River. The purpose of the project is to help the State of Nebraska fulfill its commitment to the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program to reduce shortages to Platte River flow targets by offsetting impacts to Platte streamflows resulting from post-July 1, 1997 water uses within Tri-Basin NRD.

Tri-Basin staff have also expanded the district's network of observation wells this summer. An observation well has been drilled next to the new North Dry Creek augmentation well for the purpose of monitoring groundwater levels in that area. In addition, three more dedicated observation wells have been added to the network in eastern Kearney County to help Tri-Basin NRD staff get a clearer indication of groundwater level trends there.

The dedicated observation wells are part of a district-wide network of irrigation wells and observation wells in which groundwater levels are monitored in order to protect the district's groundwater supply. Tri-Basin has installed at least one dedicated observation well in every township in the district. Data loggers in the observation wells automatically measure water levels at regular intervals, which helps



A completed dedicated observation well.

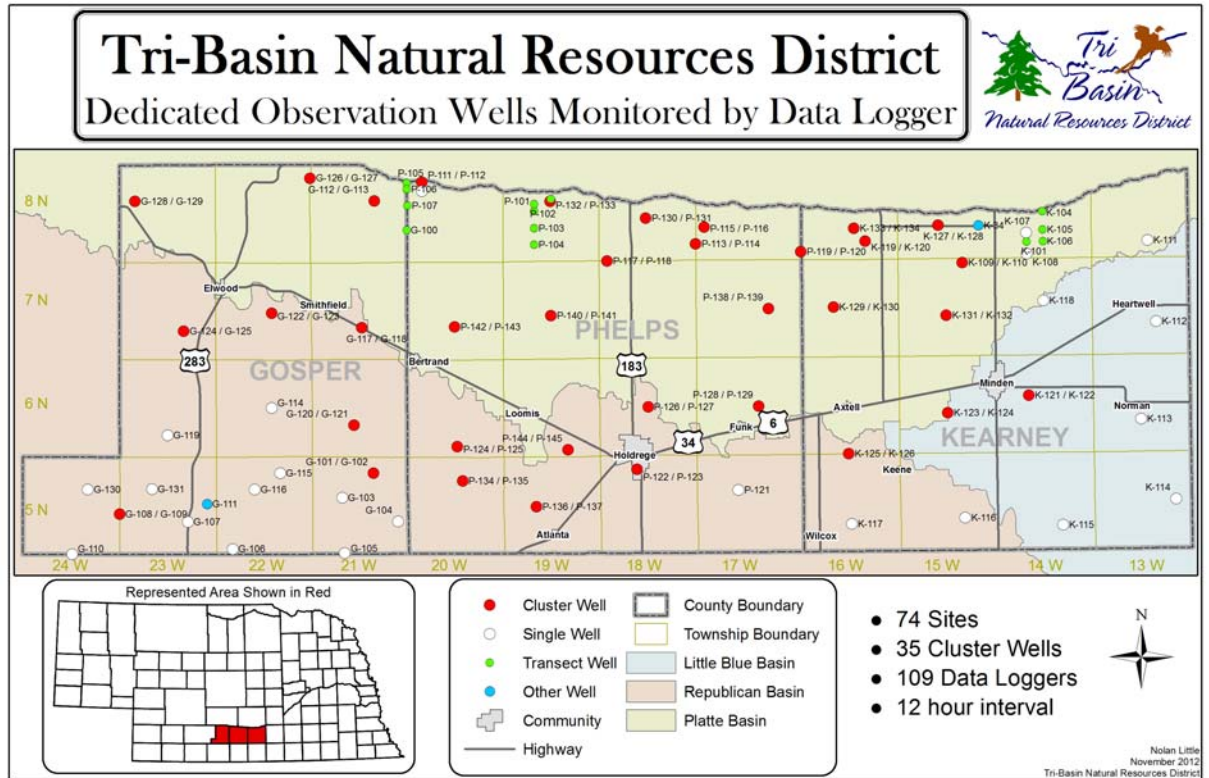
"Dedicated to Conservation of our Natural Resources"

<http://www.tribasinrd.org>

...TBNRD Groundwater Projects Progress

(continued from page 1)
Tri-Basin NRD directors make better-informed decisions about management actions needed to protect our groundwater supplies and discern trends in water levels.

In the Little Blue Basin, directors continue to move forward with a project to construct a reservoir on Sand Creek in eastern Kearney County. This reservoir would store water for the purpose of groundwater recharge in that area. Tri-Basin NRD directors are currently negotiating with landowners affected by the proposed project.



Tri-Basin NRD Increases Cost-Share Benefits

If you are thinking about adding flowmeters or soil-moisture sensors to your irrigation systems, be sure to apply for Tri-Basin NRD's NSWCP cost-share program. In February 2014, NRD directors voted to increase cost-share funding for these beneficial water management tools. The following changes were made: all cost-share, including funding for flowmeters and soil moisture sensors, was increased to 50 percent of actual or average cost, whichever is less, with a \$5,000 limit per owner per year. Flowmeter and soil moisture sensor cost-share is limited to \$750 of cost-share per application.

If you would like to apply for cost-share, visit your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office. Cost-share applications must be approved before you can do any work or make any purchases for your project.

Nebraska Natives

Giant Goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*)

There are numerous species of goldenrod native to Nebraska, that grow throughout the state. Giant Goldenrod was named the state flower of Nebraska through a legislative action in 1895. Giant goldenrod is an erect, coarse-looking perennial herb that grows two to three feet tall. The small yellow flower heads, which are grouped into elongated or flattish clusters, appear from July through October.

The nectar and pollen of the flower heads attract many kinds of insects, including bumblebees, digger bees, dagger bees, and wasps. The caterpillars of several types of moths feed on the flowers, developing seeds and roots. Rabbits, deer, vole, and muskrats feed on the leaves and stems of the plants. Because the plants grow in colonies, they also provide some cover for wildlife.



TBNRD Interns Gain Natural Resources Experience

The Tri-Basin NRD Summer Internship Program gives college students an opportunity to gain natural resources management experience. Interns collect and test groundwater quality samples, monitor wildlife habitat, test irrigation system efficiency, and help maintain drainage improvement project areas, or IPAs. The interns also work with staff from Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Phelps County Weed Control Authority.



Lacey Nichols, Zach Gray, and Hunter Ringenberg are interns at Tri-Basin NRD this summer.

TBNRD currently has three interns.

Zach Gray, from Holdrege, is returning for a second summer as an intern. He attends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is studying agronomy. Zach enjoys hunting, boating, and spending time outdoors.

Hunter Ringenberg is from Johnson Lake. He is studying

chemical engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he is a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity. His interests include golfing, hunting, fishing, and boating.

Lacey Nichols, from Elm Creek, is in the pre-veterinary program at Wayne State College. She enjoys playing softball, hunting, and fishing.

Periodic Flowmeter Checks Suggested

We would like to remind producers to check flowmeters on their wells periodically throughout the irrigation season. Making sure flowmeters are working properly benefits both Tri-Basin NRD and you, as an irrigator, so that you can keep accurate irrigation records. It is the responsibility of producers to make sure flowmeters function properly during the irrigation season.



It has also come to our attention that producers who have Senninger brand flowmeters may want to make sure the batteries they are using are the correct size. These meters take lithium 3.6 volt batteries instead of standard 1.5 volt AA batteries. Using standard AA batteries could cause these flowmeters to not work properly.

Tri-Basin Will No Longer Issue Nitrogen Cards

At the April board meeting, Tri-Basin NRD directors voted to discontinue the practice of routinely issuing Nitrogen Management certification cards to producers who have taken Nitrogen Management certification training. Those who farm in Phase 2 or Phase 3 areas of Tri-Basin NRD's Groundwater Quality Management Areas will still be required to take Nitrogen Management certification classes. Instead of issuing certification cards, Tri-Basin will maintain a current list of certified producers at the Tri-Basin NRD office. The list will also be posted on Tri-Basin's website at www.tribasinprd.org. Producers who still want a printed card verifying their training may request one by contacting the Tri-Basin NRD office.

Tri-Basin NRD is on Facebook and Twitter!

It's now easier to keep up with Tri-Basin NRD activities, programs, and deadlines! TBNRD news is just a click away and can be accessed on your desktop or mobile device. Follow us on Twitter (@Tri_Basin_NRD) or like us on Facebook (Tri-Basin NRD) today!



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Summer 2014

Non-Profit Permit
U. S. Postage
PAID
Holdrege, NE 68949
Permit No. 220

Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
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www.tribasinprd.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nebraska's NRDs: Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future

CALENDAR

July 8NRD Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.*
 July 12-16 Kearney County Fair
 July 19-24Phelps County Fair
 July 30-August 1 Gosper County Fair
 August 12NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*
 September 1 NRD Office Closed for Labor Day
 September 9NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.*
 September 9-11 Husker Harvest Days
 September 16 Area 3 Range Judging in TBNRD
 September 18 Rainwater Basin Conservation Day

* Times are tentative. All meetings are at TBNRD office in Holdrege unless otherwise noted.

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A mailing list is maintained and requests to be placed on the list should be sent to the above address. Comments and suggestions may be addressed to the General Manager.

Get Tri-Basin Topics in your inbox instead of your mailbox!

To request an electronic version of this newsletter, send an email nsalisbury@tribasinprd.org.