

Winter 2018

Volume 32, Issue 1

Tri-Basin Topics

A quarterly publication of Tri-Basin Natural Resources District

South Central Water Conference Set for January 30

The 2018 South Central Water Conference (formerly the Holdrege Water Conference) will be held Tuesday, January 30 at the Phelps County Ag Center. The conference has undergone a name change in order to welcome Lower Republican NRD as a sponsor and participant in the conference.

Registration will be at 9:30 a.m. and sessions will start at 10:00. There is no charge for admission to the conference and a free lunch will be provided for those attending. The program should conclude by 3 p.m.

The conference is sponsored by Tri-Basin Natural Resources District, Lower Republican Resources District, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, UNL Extension and Holdrege Area Chamber of Commerce. It is a joint effort to increase the public's understanding of water-related issues Nebraska.

Area agri-businesses will display their products and services at the water conference and will have representatives on hand to visit with conference participants.

Producers in Tri-Basin NRD's Phase 2 or Phase 3 Groundwater Quality Management Areas will receive nitrogen management recertification credit for attending the conference.



South Central Water Conference

2018 Tentative Agenda

- 9:30 Registration
- 10:00 **Cornerstone Resources Observation Plot-Test Irrigation Project (CROP-TIP)**
Dan Leininger, Water Conservationist, Upper Big Blue NRD
- 10:45 **Insights from the UNL Testing Ag Performance Solutions (UNL-TAPS) 2017 Farm Management Competition**
Daran Rudnick, Nebraska Extension Irrigation Management Specialist, UNL West Central Region
- 11:15 **Irrigation Efficiency vs. Sustainability: Confusing Productivity with Aquifer Life**
Darel Martin, Nebraska Extension Irrigation Management Specialist, UNL Water Resources
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 **Keynote: Climate Extremes in Nebraska**
Ken Dewey, UNL Regional Climatologist
- 1:30 **Platte Republican Diversion Project Feasibility Study**
John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD & Scott Dicke, Lower Republican NRD
- 2:15 **Water Resources Update**
Cory Steinke, Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District
Nolan Little, Tri-Basin NRD
Scott Dicke, Lower Republican NRD
Craig Scott, US Bureau of Reclamation



John Thorburn (TBNRD), Holly Rahmann (CNPPID), and Todd Whitney (Nebraska Extension) are pleased to have Lower Republican NRD joining as a sponsor of the South Central Water Conference.

"Dedicated to Conservation of our Natural Resources"

<http://www.tribasinrd.org>



Manager's Message

by John Thorburn
Platte-Republican Diversion

"In their efforts to provide a sufficiency of water where there was not one, men have resorted to every expedient from prayer to dynamite."

American historian Walter Prescott Webb, author of *The Great Plains*, (1931).

The Republican and Platte rivers run parallel for much of their courses, but the two rivers have very different characteristics. The Platte rises in the Rocky Mountains, whereas the Republican headwaters lie in the dusty plains of eastern Colorado. The Platte is filled with snowmelt and groundwater, while the Republican depends mostly on rainfall for its flows. The Platte has a vastly larger watershed, totaling over 90,000 square miles. For comparison, the Republican watershed area is 24,900 square miles.

The Platte is one of the most heavily irrigated river basins in the United States. It is the only river in Nebraska designated as overappropriated. The Republican River basin also has a large amount of irrigated cropland and is designated fully appropriated by the state. Water shortages in the Republican River have caused interstate conflicts between Nebraska and its neighbors, Kansas and Colorado.

Even though the water resources of both basins are heavily used, the potential for excess flows (flows that exceed demands) is much greater in the Platte than the Republican, due to the Platte's larger watershed and water sources. As part of its commitment to the Platte River Recovery Imple-

mentation Program (PRRIP), Nebraska has agreed to protect Platte flows up to certain levels for endangered species. These "target flows" are considered adequate to support and protect habitat for whooping cranes, least terns and piping plovers. Flows that exceed target flow levels are considered excess to the system and are available to use for other purposes. Nebraska NRDs and the PRRIP have made extensive use of excess flows over the past decade to recharge groundwater and augment baseflows of the Platte and its tributaries. These high flow diversions have saved valuable water, storing it underground for later use. In spite of these efforts, much of the Platte's excess flows pass by diversion dams and flow unimpeded to the Gulf of Mexico. This water is, at best, wasted. In the worst case, it contributes to flooding.

The Platte-Republican diversion project proposes to utilize a small portion of this wasted, excess Platte water to supplement the flows of the Republican River. This would be accomplished by diverting water through the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID) canal system to a point east of Elwood, Nebraska, where it would be piped into Turkey Creek, a tributary of the Republican. Tri-Basin NRD, Lower Republican NRD and CNPPID are working together to develop this project. To insure that diverting water outside of the basin doesn't interfere with potential future uses for excess flows within the basin, we will specify that we will not claim priority over future Platte basin projects if our water right is granted.

Water is Nebraska's most precious resource. We must use it carefully and efficiently to insure that sufficient water is available to sustain our good life for future generations.

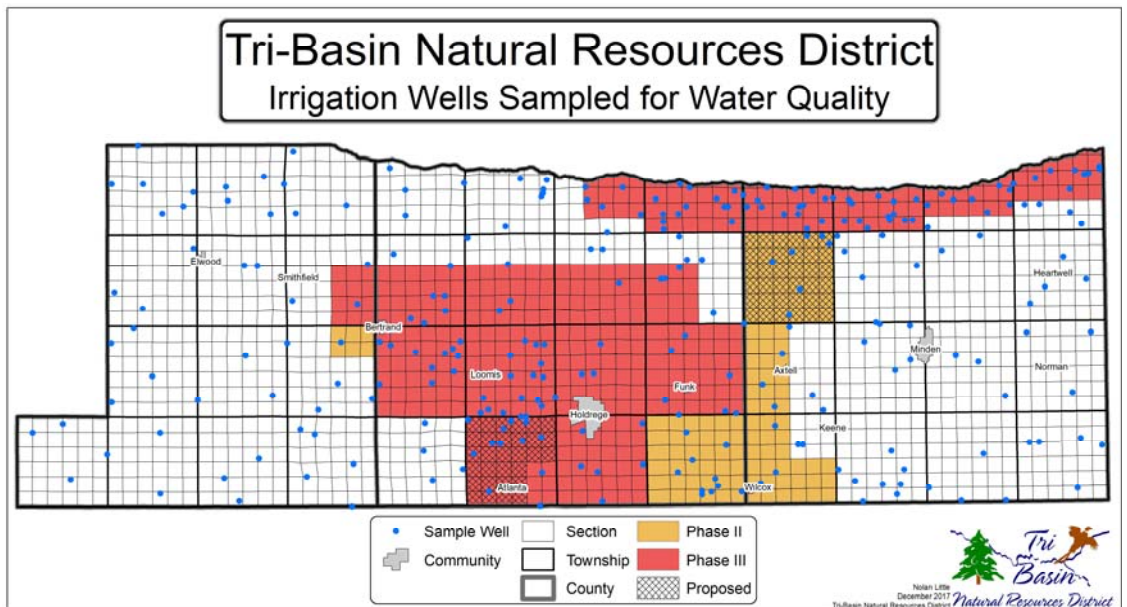
Blaine, Industry Townships to Change Groundwater Quality Phases

Industry Township (T5N-R19W) in Phelps County will enter Phase 3 of Tri-Basin NRD's Groundwater Quality Management Plan and Blaine Township (T7N-R16W) in Kearney County will enter Phase 2 of the Groundwater Quality Management Plan.

Tri-Basin NRD's directors voted on the designations at their December board meeting, following a public hearing to explain groundwater quality data prompting the change and answer questions from the public. The change will be effective February 2018, and will affect the 2019 crop year.

Tri-Basin NRD has an extensive network of wells that are tested each year for nitrate levels, in an effort to protect the quality of the district's groundwater. Nitrate levels in Blaine and Industry Townships over the past few years warranted additional regulation.

For more information on the requirements of Phase 2 and Phase 3 designation, call the TBNRD office at 1-877-995-6688 or go to www.tribasinprd.org.



Certified Irrigated Acre Transfer Overview

This information outlines the certified irrigated acre transfer application process in Tri-Basin NRD. **Specific rules apply to each transfer situation; producers who want to transfer certified irrigated acres should consult Tri-Basin NRD staff before proceeding with any projects.**

A landowner who wants to irrigate any portion of a parcel of land within the district that has not been certified for irrigation by Tri-Basin NRD must first apply for a Certified Irrigated Acre transfer permit. Each permit costs \$100.

The landowner must complete an NRD certified irrigated acre transfer permit application form, showing the number and location of certified irrigated acres that will be transferred and the location of the parcel to which they will be relocated. Aerial photos delineating the original location of the certified acres and the destination for the transferred acres must accompany the permit request. Landowners are required to have a title search done on the property from which the acres are being transferred. Anyone holding a lien on the property will have to sign a release form allowing the certified irrigated acres to be transferred from that parcel of land. Completed certified irrigated acre transfer permit requests must be received in the NRD office at least seven days prior to the monthly NRD board of directors meeting to be considered.

The TBNRD Board of Directors review certified acre transfer permit requests on the second Tuesday of every month during their regular monthly meetings. The board will approve certified irrigated acre transfer permit requests unless they find that approval would be contrary to federal or state laws or NRD rules.

After approval by the board, NRD staff will submit the certified acre transfer permit request to the county assessor. The landowner must inform the assessor how many acres will be irrigated on both the original parcel(s) and the destination parcel. The assessor will measure the parcels and report the corrected number of irrigated acres listed on the property tax rolls to the NRD. If the assessor determines that the number of certified irrigated acres is equal to or less than the number requested for transfer, both parcels will be adjusted, and the transfer will be considered complete. If the assessor determines that the number of certified acres available on the original parcel or parcels is insufficient to complete the requested transfer, the landowner must either withdraw or correct and resubmit a certified acre transfer permit request.

After a certified irrigated acre transfer request is approved by the board, the NRD office will send written notification to the landowner. A copy of the approved permit will be kept on file at the NRD office.

Nitrogen Reports Due

Nitrogen Management Reports for the 2017 crop year were due December 31, 2017. If you have fields in the Phase 2 or Phase 3 areas of the Groundwater Quality Management Area and have not turned in your reports, please do so as soon as possible. If you need forms or help filling them out, contact the TBNRD office.



TBNRD Trees Honor District Newborns

Tri-Basin NRD offers parents of newborns in the district the gift of a seedling tree. These trees are available to the family of any child born in Gosper, Phelps or Kearney Counties since the previous tree season (April 2017). You can reserve a baby tree by calling our office at (308) 995-6688 or 1-877-995-6688 or by emailing the baby's name, birthdate, parents' names, address and phone number to nmunter@tribasinrrd.org. We will send you a postcard in April letting you know when and where to pick up your tree. If you have any questions, please call our office and ask for Nate.

Nitrogen Management Certification Classes Offered

The Groundwater Quality Management Areas established by Tri-Basin NRD have allowed district staff to work cooperatively with farmers and agronomists for more than 25 years to help improve the timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness of fertilizer application. These efforts have resulted in stable or declining nitrate-nitrogen levels in groundwater supplies throughout much of the district, thus safeguarding the quality of our groundwater.

Producers in Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas of the Groundwater Quality Management Area need to have current Nitrogen Management certification. The current schedule is listed below; times and dates are subject to change. For a current class schedule check our website at www.tribasinrrd.org or call us at 1-877-995-6688. Attendance at the South Central Water Conference on January 30 also qualifies for Nitrogen Management Certification (be sure to sign in for credit).

Holdrege - Phelps Co. Ag Center	
January 23	9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
February 27	9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Minden - Kearney Co. Fairgrounds	
February 6	8:30 a.m.
March 14	12:30 p.m.
Elwood - Gosper Co. Legion Hall	
February 14	9:30 a.m.

Chemigation Classes Scheduled

In January, Tri-Basin NRD will send out renewal forms to producers who had chemigation permits last year. Those producers whose chemigation certification has expired will need to attend one of the chemigation training sessions held in February and March. Currently, trainings are set for February 27 at 1:30 p.m. and March 7 at 1:30 p.m., both at the Phelps County Ag Center in Holdrege. Additional regional trainings will be held, but those have not yet been set. For more information about the trainings or to check on additional dates, call your county Extension Office.

Chemigation renewal permits are due in the Tri-Basin NRD office before June 1, 2018.



Tri-Basin Topics

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

Tri-Basin Natural Resources District
1723 Burlington St. Holdrege, NE 68949
(308) 995-6688
email: tribasin@tribasinrd.org
www.tribasinrd.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

CALENDAR

January 9.....NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*
 January 15... NRD Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 January 30..... South Central Water Conference
 February 13NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*
 February 19NRD Closed for Presidents' Day
 March 13.....NRD Board Meeting, 1:30 p.m.*
 April 10..... NRD Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
 * Times are tentative. All meetings are at TBNRD office in Holdrege unless otherwise noted.

TRI-BASIN NRD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Olsen, Chairman	Minden, NE
Bradley Lundeen, Vice Chairman	Wilcox, NE
Joe Bilka, Treasurer	Holdrege, NE
Todd Garrelts, Secretary	Holdrege, NE
Brian Bergstrom	Axtell, NE
Mike Cavanaugh.....	Minden, NE
Ed Harris.....	Loomis, NE
Robin Hinrichs	Axtell, NE
Phyllis Johnson.....	Bertrand, NE
Greg Jorgensen	Minden, NE
Joe Larson	Loomis, NE
David Raffety	Kearney, NE
Larry Reynolds	Lexington, NE

TRI-BASIN NRD STAFF

Charles Brooks	Land Resources Coordinator
Amy Dutton	Minden Office Secretary
Tammy Fahrenbruch	Water Programs Coordinator
Lori Hagan	Elwood Office Secretary
Nolan Little.....	Water Resources Manager
Carie Lynch.....	Administrative Secretary
Nate Munter	Land Resources Technician
Patrick Nott	Water Resources Technician
Tami Reese	Holdrege Office Secretary
Nicole Salisbury	Information & Education Coordinator
Esther Smith	Office Assistant
John Thorburn	General Manager
Jeff VanEperen	Field Technician

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@tribasinrd.org.

**TRI-BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
2018 HAND PLANT ORDER FORM**

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____ PHONE: _____

ORDERS MUST BE IN MULTIPLES OF 25.

Tree Order Deadline is April 2, 2018.

QUANTITY	SPECIES
	CONIFERS
	AUSTRIAN PINE
	COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE
	NORWAY SPRUCE
	PONDEROSA PINE
	RED CEDAR (Eastern)
	BROADLEAFS
	AMERICAN ELM
	BLACK WALNUT
	BUR OAK
	HACKBERRY
	RED OAK
	SWAMP WHITE OAK
	SHRUBS
	AMERICAN PLUM
	CHOKECHERRY
	COTONEASTER
	ELDERBERRY
	GOLDEN CURRANT
	LILAC
	SAND CHERRY
	SKUNKBUSH SUMAC
	Total # of Trees
	Multiply total # of trees x .80
	Mulch x .35/foot
	Staples x .15
	Subtotal
	Tax (Holdrege 7%, Elwood 6%, Minden 7.5%)
	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE/PAID

Tree Pickup will be at: _____ Tri-Basin NRD _____ Minden NRCS _____ Elwood NRCS

WHY PLANT A WINDBREAK?

Windbreaks and shelterbelts provide many benefits. Windbreaks planted along field boundaries reduce soil erosion by reducing wind velocity. Shelterbelts planted around farmsteads reduce heating costs in homes and shop buildings. Shelterbelts can protect livestock from blizzards and serve as "living snow fences." Trees and shrubs also provide food, shelter and nesting habitat for many species of birds and mammals.

NRD TREE & SHRUB PLANTINGS

Contact the NRD Office or your county NRCS for help with determining the type and number of trees and shrubs you need. The technician will make arrangements for the tree order and planting service. The NRD will plant the trees according to the plan.

Trees are planted in the spring as soon as conditions are suitable. The NRD tree planting crew will notify landowners of the approximate date and time of planting.

SITE PREPARATION

Good site preparation is a key to rapid tree growth and survival. The best site preparation begins the year before the trees are planted. On heavier soils, working the ground to kill competing vegetation is an excellent method of preparing the site. The technician assisting in planning a windbreak or habitat plot can advise you about the type of site preparation needed. The technician can also help you determine if herbicide carryover will be a problem.

WEED CONTROL

Weed control in the form of plastic mulch is available through the district. This woven material is installed over the trees after planting. Slots are then cut for the trees. Plastic mulch not only eliminates weeds but also helps to preserve soil moisture.

PRICES

Trees & Shrubs..... 80¢ each/multiples of 25

PLANTING SERVICE

Tree planting (no mulch) 50¢/ft

Trees, tree planting, mulch and mulch laying..... \$ 1.75/ft

Drip tape 25¢/ft

Drip tape set-up Minimum \$35

Pull-in Charge..... \$50

Renovations* \$250

Shrub thickets* \$300

Minimum 500 foot per planting

Plastic Mulch (Material Only)..... 35¢ per ft

Stakes..... 15¢ each

Seedling Tubes..... \$1.10 each

Prices are subject to change.

*Contact Tri-Basin NRD for site review.

PLANTING YOUR OWN TREES

You can order trees and shrubs at the NRD or your local NRCS Office. Orders must be in multiples of 25 per species. We will send you a postcard when your trees arrive. We also have tree spades available to rent.

DRIP TAPE

Tri-Basin has subsurface "drip tape" available for watering trees planted by the District. The water source could be a portable tank or a hydrant. Check with the TBNRD Land Resource Coordinator for more information.

COST-SHARE

Tri-Basin NRD offers cost-share funds for tree plantings and plastic mulch installation. You should apply at your county NRCS office before March 1.

All sites must be properly prepared before planting to qualify for cost-share. Reimbursement is made only after full payment is received. The minimum total cost of plantings eligible for cost-share is \$500.

Cost-share may also be available from your county USDA office. Pheasants Forever and Nebraska Game & Parks Commission also offer programs for wildlife habitat improvement. NRCS staff can help you determine which programs have funds available and best suit your needs.

BILLING ON NRD PLANTINGS

Tri-Basin NRD bills for trees/tree planting service after completion. Full payment is due upon receipt of the billing. Cost-share payments will not be made until payment is received at the Tri-Basin or NRCS office.