



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) -- The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's board of directors approved payment of an invoice at Tuesday's monthly board meeting that will extend dredging activities at Jeffrey Reservoir until Aug. 7.

Gothenburg Division Manager Kevin Boyd told the board that dredging at the lake near Brady has been proceeding satisfactorily and that the extension of the lease agreement for the dredge will enable removal of additional sediment.

Central initiated dredging activities in early May for what was intended to be a three-month project to improve the lake's operational, recreational and aquatic habitat aspects. Silt and sediment accumulations in the lake over the past 75 years had reached the point that dredging became necessary.

Central leased a specially-designed dredge from SRS Crisafulli of Glendive, Mont., for the project, with an option to purchase at the end of the lease period. The lease extension provides Central with additional time to evaluate the project's impact and to make a decision on whether or not to buy the dredge.

The cost of the lease extension, including the dredge itself, float pipe and associated equipment, was \$43,135.

Also at Tuesday's meeting:

- The board approved a budget amendment for a feasibility study for improvements at Bossung Lake, a small lagoon-like area at Johnson Lake. Central is discussing potential agreements with two engineering firms to study the feasibility of recreational improvements to the area. The amendment added \$50,000 to the project, bringing the total cost of the study to an amount not to exceed \$145,000. Staff may bring a proposed contract to the board in August.
- The directors approved purchase of a 20-foot work boat for the Gothenburg Division for \$25,951. The boat will be used to reach previously inaccessible areas along the Supply Canal for removal of noxious weeds.
- The board approved an application for work from the Nebraska Department of Roads to provide for use of Central labor and equipment to clean approximately one mile of road ditch along Highway 30 between Cozad and Gothenburg. The DOR stated in its application that it is unable to otherwise obtain performance of the work at a reasonable cost and at a convenient time.
- The board approved the preparation of an application to the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission's Water Sustainability Fund to offset costs associated with the potential construction of a regulating reservoir along the Phelps Canal, but delayed approval of actual submission of the application until later this month.
- Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford reported that the third run of the irrigation season began Monday, although demand so far is relatively low due to recent rainfall and cool temperatures. He expects irrigation activity to pick up over the next couple weeks as temperatures rise.
- The board listened to input from cabin-owners at Johnson Lake regarding potential revisions to lot leases. The rate associated with the current lease is scheduled for adjustment in 2018. Central and cabin-owners' representatives have been discussing potential changes to how the lease rate is structured.
- Civil engineer Cory Steinke reported that Lake McConaughy's elevation as of Tuesday morning was 3263.7 feet (a volume of 1,703,500 acre-feet; 97 percent of operating capacity), a slight increase over the past week because of continued higher than normal inflows and low irrigation demand in the Platte Valley.

The water elevation of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Glendo Reservoir on the North Platte River in Wyoming is declining, but is still in the flood pool as irrigation demand in western Nebraska remains lower than normal. Steinke said he expects that inflows to Lake McConaughy will begin to recede as irrigation demand from canals in eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska begins to pick up.

The next challenge, he said, is to bring Lake McConaughy down to elevation 3260.0 feet by Oct. 1, while fitting in time for outages at Central's hydroplants for annual maintenance projects this fall.

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