



## News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) -- The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's board of directors approved a staff recommendation to return a dredge that has been used for most of the summer to remove sediment from Jeffrey Lake and to solicit bids for a larger dredge on a lease/purchase basis.

Gothenburg Division Manager Kevin Boyd told the board that the 8-inch dredge currently being leased by Central has been "okay and performed as expected," but a larger dredge would enable Central to remove a greater volume of material in a shorter time.

Boyd displayed a table that compared dredge capabilities and said a different dredge would have several features that would make it a better investment for Central.

"Another dredge could be more versatile and better suited for use in other areas along Central's system, including at the Diversion Dam, in the Supply Canal, irrigation canals, and at other lakes where sediment issues exist," Boyd said.

Boyd said his recommendation was also based on having a dredge with a larger engine, greater cutting depth, a different propulsion system and a self-cleaning feature on the debris guard which, he said, would save down-time during dredging operations.

Central initiated dredging activities at Jeffrey Lake near Brady in early May on a 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. The dredge now in use will be returned to the manufacturer by Aug. 12.

Also at Monday's meeting:

- The board approved the use of Lake Improvement Funds as follows: 1) \$26,000 toward the purchase and installation of three boat motors and a side-scan sonar system for the Keystone/Lemoyne Fire & Rescue Department. The department had requested financial assistance from Central to improve their safety and rescue abilities in the Lake McConaughy area; 2) \$20,000 for a sewer connection to the Sanitary Improvement District for the Lakeside Country Club at Johnson Lake, contingent upon the club raising matching funds; 3) \$15,000 for the purchase and installation of playground equipment at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Johnson Lake State Recreation Area; and 4) \$1,000 for the purchase and installation of a picnic table along the Johnson Lake hike/bike trail.
- The directors approved a one-year extension of a water leasing agreement with the Nebraska Community Foundation and the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program). Terms of the agreement, under which Central's irrigation customers may lease water to the Program, remain the same as they were for the 2016 irrigation during which 1,037 acres were enrolled. The water is credited to the Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy and used to enhance wildlife habitat along the Platte River.  
  
A maximum of 2,000 acres can be enrolled in the program; customers who enter into the agreement will receive a payment of \$220/acre after verification that the acres were not irrigated during the 2017 season. Central will accept applications for the 2017 program from Nov. 15 to Dec. 15, 2016.
- The directors approved a work order for \$160,000 to replace the Jeffrey Hydroplant transformer breaker and two sets of disconnect switches, protection relays and controls.
- The board was updated on action by the Governance Committee of the Platte River Program last week in Denver. The committee decided that, due to rising costs and delays associated with the proposed J-2 Regulating Reservoir project, the project should be put on hold until further notice while alternative projects to reduce shortages to target flows in the Platte River are examined.

Natural Resources Manager Mike Drain said with the end of the first increment of the Platte River Program nearing, the Governance Committee members are discussing an extension of the Program and is focusing on studying other water projects which might be able to be completed sooner. For its part, Central will finalize studies related to the J-2 project and will suspend work on additional land acquisitions.

He added that details for putting the project on hold will need to be worked out between Central, the Platte River Program and the State of Nebraska.

- The board approved a budget amendment that moved \$50,000 from the Irrigation Division's 2016 budget to cover anticipated surveying expenses in the Lake McConaughy area. The amendment also added \$2,500 to the current budget for earthwork, bank protection and rock hauling in the Phelps Canal area.
- The board accepted a \$14,900 bid from Darren Samuelson of Bertrand to haul riprap and fill dirt to the E65 and Phelps Canal areas.
- Civil engineer Cory Steinke reported that Lake McConaughy's elevation as of Monday morning was 3261.6 feet (a volume of 1,640,800 acre-feet or 94 percent of operating capacity).

He said that the reservoir's elevation needs to be at or below 3,260 feet by Oct. 1 to meet Federal Energy Regulatory Commission lake level requirements. The process, he added, will be complicated by potential releases from Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs in Wyoming as storage space is created next spring's inflows. There will also be the need to reduce releases from Lake McConaughy in the fall to facilitate outages at Central's hydroplants for annual maintenance projects.

- Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford said the fifth of six irrigation runs on Central's canals began Monday. He expects irrigation deliveries to continue for a few days after Labor Day, depending on the maturity of crops and their need for irrigation water at the end of the season.

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