



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) -- Groundwater levels in the area served by The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District have risen slightly over the past year, according to a report during Central's board meeting on Monday.

Irrigation Operations Manager Dave Ford told the board that semi-annual readings from Central's network of observation wells revealed small increases between the spring of 2018 and spring 2019, most likely due to timely rainfall last summer that reduced irrigation demand.

Ford also presented data from a ten-year period of 2009 to 2019, which showed increased levels in about half of the observation wells, primarily those in the area near Elwood Reservoir. The eastern half of the district, however, showed a decrease in groundwater levels. Additional data comparing current readings to the average groundwater levels during the years 1981 to 1985 showed an increase in groundwater levels in the west half and south half of Central's irrigated area, but declines in areas north of Holdrege and east towards Minden. Average declines in these areas ranged from 6 to 15 feet.

Also at Monday's meeting

- The board accepted a bid from Allen Blasting & Coating of Wever, Iowa to sandblast and re-coat the penstock and surge tank at the Johnson No. 2 hydroplant for \$940,600.
- The board approved a memorandum of understanding with the Central Platte Natural Resource District and Nebraska Public Power District for a pilot water exchange program for 2019. This agreement provides that CPNRD and NPPD will each receive credit toward the Environmental Account of water stored in Lake McConaughy in exchange for not irrigating a stipulated number of acres with surface water from canals owned by those districts.
- Civil Engineer Tyler Thulin reported that inflows to Lake McConaughy are currently 1,100 to 1,200 cubic feet per second. Lake McConaughy is currently at elevation 3257.1 feet above sea level with a storage volume of 1.51 million acre-feet (86.7 percent capacity). Thulin also reported that diversions into the Supply Canal are near capacity as Central continues to fill its canal system in preparation for irrigation season.
- The board voted to approve a delinquent residential lease payment policy that provides guidelines for staff to follow if lot lease fees are unpaid.
- The board approved a storage water delivery rate of \$150 per acre-foot for the release of water from Lake McConaughy for purposes of power plant cooling. The rate is in effect only for the 2019 water year, and Central's staff is authorized to provide the cooling water service so long as Lake McConaughy remains above one-million acre-feet, which it currently is. The most likely user of such service would be NPPD, in the unlikely event that the normal supply of water and existing contractual provisions or agreements are insufficient to meet the cooling needs of Gerald Gentleman Station near Sutherland.

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Contact: Jeff Buettner
Public Relations Manager
Office: (308) 995-8601
E-mail: jbuettner@cnppid.com

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