



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) - Irrigation season is finally in full swing following an abnormally cool, wet beginning of summer. Irrigation Operations Manager Dave Ford reported at Monday's board meeting that the drier conditions last week prompted most irrigation customers to begin irrigating - nearly two months after the first scheduled irrigation run of the season.

Ford also reported that an additional two-week "run" will be added to the end of the irrigation season. After comments from irrigation customers regarding the potential for additional time for irrigation to meet the needs of late maturing crops, plans were put in place to extend the season.

Also at Monday's board meeting:

- Civil Engineer Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy is currently at elevation 3258.5 feet above sea level (1.55 million acre-feet or 89 percent capacity). Inflows to the lake are currently around 1,800 cubic feet per second (cfs) and are expected to rise by approximately 1,000 cfs in the next week. Outflows from the lake are currently around 3,200 cfs to meet water demands for both Nebraska Public Power District and Central's irrigation systems and other downstream irrigation canals.

Thulin and Hydraulic Project Operations Manager Cory Steinke also reported that they would be receiving updated information regarding the collapsed Gering/Ft. Laramie irrigation structure at a meeting on Tuesday; if the repairs on that structure are completed on time, the additional expected inflows to Lake McConaughy will be diverted to that canal system instead.

- The board of directors approved an agreement with the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program to make arrangements to conduct a North Platte River Channel Capacity Test. Steinke said this agreement would allow other involved parties to begin making plans for the test to take place possibly sometime this fall. Steinke added that he would report with more details in the future as plans progress.
- The board approved a partnership agreement with Pheasants Forever for a habitat improvement program along the Phelps Canal north of Holdrege near A22.1 and A22.5.
- The board approved a proposal from JEO Consulting Group for a feasibility study for the installation of a boat ramp at Phillips Canyon Lake for \$17,880.
- Natural Resources and Compliance Manager Mike Drain gave an update on the ongoing Federal Energy Regulatory Commission project boundary review process.
- The board approved a budget revision for 2019, adding \$18,500 to the original budget amount of \$36,500 to erect a steel building over the pumps at the Elwood Reservoir pumping station to protect the pumps from cold weather during winter groundwater recharge operations.

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