



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) - The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District board of directors discussed proposals from two engineering firms for investigations at Elwood Reservoir to study causes of and remedies to an area of seepage near the Carl T. Curtis Pump Station.

After much discussion, the board approved a bid from RJH Consultants, Inc. of Meridian, Colorado. RJH will be studying soil conditions and using geotechnical investigations to analyze the situation and make recommendations and identify costs for potential solutions.

RJH intends to collect data on soil conditions, conduct pump and seepage tests, and install monitoring wells. Other aspects of the study will include surveying the area involved and testing of results in a lab.

Hydraulic Operations Manager Cory Steinke said the extensive and detailed study will be designed to isolate the source of the seepage and develop either construction or operational solutions to the problem. He added that while the seepage diminished after Central reduced the volume of water in the reservoir, this project will ensure the continued safe operation of the facility.

The study could cost up to \$148,200 over a 22-week period. In a related action, the board approved a budget amendment of \$270,000 which includes funds for repairs if the study determines such action is needed.

Also at Monday's meeting (conducted via videoconference):

- Civil Engineer Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy is currently at elevation 3,257.9 feet above sea level, or 88 percent capacity. Inflows to the lake have been around 3,700 cubic feet per second (cfs) while outflows from the lake are currently around 1,900 cfs. Recent releases of 500 cfs from the Environmental Account in the reservoir were suspended as showers passed through the area, but are expected to resume this week. Thulin also mentioned that snowpack levels in the North Platte and South Platte basins are all near average and beginning to melt at a rapid pace.
- The board accepted bids totaling \$291,249 from Husker Steel of Columbus, Neb., for materials to replace the Supply Canal bridge east of Jeffrey Reservoir. Central employees will install the bridge.
- The board accepted a bid of \$247,900 a new 2020 Caterpillar long-reach excavator from Nebraska Machinery Co., of North Platte, Neb.
- Government and Public Relations Manager Jeff Buettner reported that the annual Water & Natural Resources Tour held in conjunction with the Nebraska Water Center has been cancelled because coronavirus concerns would make traveling with such a large group inadvisable. The tour, originally scheduled for June 21-25 in northeast Nebraska, will be held next summer on dates to be announced.
- The board approved amendments to water service agreements with Tri-Basin Natural Resource District and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources for Groundwater Recharge in the Waterfowl Production Areas and on the E-65 canal, Phelps Canal, and at Elwood reservoir.
- The board approved Water Exchange Agreements with Nebraska Public Power District and the Central Platte Natural Resources District which allow the districts to receive credits in the Environmental Account at Lake McConaughy in exchange for unused surface water irrigation on an agreed number of acres during the year 2020.
- Irrigation Operations Manager Dave Ford presented semi-annual readings from Central's network of observation wells. Ford mentioned that the majority of wells saw an increase in levels between Spring 2019 and Spring 2020 readings, due to timely precipitation. Over the past ten years, wells in the western part of the irrigated area have generally showed increases in groundwater levels, while wells in the eastern part of the irrigated area on the Phelps Canal generally showed decreases.
- Electrical Project Operations Manager Eric Hixson reported that work schedules for the systems control operators, who operate Central's supervisory control and data acquisition control center, will be altered to provide isolation and utilize the back-up control room facilities. An increase in coronavirus cases in counties where District offices are located caused management to make the decision to limit the number of personnel at each location to help slow the spread, protect the health of District personnel while continuing to provide reliable energy production and water to irrigation customers.

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