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Natural Resources District

NEWS RELEASE

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Landowners in TBRND Conservation Priority Area Are Eligible for Incentive Payments

Landowners in portions of northern Gosper and Phelps Counties are eligible to receive incentive payments from Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (NRD) for permanently retiring irrigated acres. At their regular November meeting, Tri-Basin NRD directors voted to establish a Conservation Priority Area. Landowners in this area who sign up for the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) will not only receive the NRCS AWEP payments, but will be eligible to receive additional incentive payments from Tri-Basin NRD and the Platte Basin Habitat Enhancement Program (PBHEP) if they agree to permanently discontinue irrigation. Continued dryland crop production is allowed on land enrolled in the program.

"Tri-Basin NRD is required to reduce water consumption in the Platte Basin west of U.S. Highway 183," said John Thorburn, General Manager of Tri-Basin NRD. "We would rather achieve this goal by offering voluntary incentives than by regulating irrigation water use."

Tri-Basin NRD directors have set aside a total of \$100,000 for these incentive payments, and will accept bids from landowners for the funds. TBNRD directors reserve the right to reject bids. The deadline for submitting bids is February 2, 2011. A map of the Conservation Priority Area is available on Tri-Basin NRD's website at www.tribasinprd.org. Landowners who are interested in the program should visit their local NRCS office for more details about AWEP program sign up.