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*Natural Resources District*

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## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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### **NRDs Move Forward with Platte-Republican Diversion Project**

Tri-Basin and Lower Republican Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) will move forward with a final design for a project that will divert excess flows from the Platte River to the Republican River Basin. The project, a joint effort between the two districts, is intended to help both NRDs maintain adequate groundwater supply for future generations and to help Nebraska maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact. Tri-Basin NRD directors voted unanimously to move forward, following the receipt of a Feasibility Study Review from Olsson Associates, which determined the project to be cost-effective. Lower Republican NRD's directors voted to move forward with the project at their meeting last week.

The project will be the first inter-basin water transfer in the state. It will involve installing a culvert under U.S. Highway 23 to direct the diverted flows from the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID) E-65 Canal to the east branch of Turkey Creek in Gosper County.

"Based on the results of this feasibility study, the Platte Republican Diversion Project would be cost-effective," states the review. "With minimal improvements to the channel, and the existing bridge and culverts along Turkey Creek, diverting unallocated flows of up to 100 cfs from the Platte River Basin could provide substantial benefits to the Republican River Basin without negatively impacting Turkey Creek."

"The project does have a positive cost-to-benefit ratio," said TBNRD Manager John Thorburn. The total cost of the project is estimated between \$1.4 million and \$1.9 million, which computes to a cost of between \$60 and \$80 per acre foot of water over 20 years, factoring in costs of the project and the diversion of flows through CNPPID's canal system. The cost of the project will be shared by Tri-Basin NRD and Lower Republican NRD. The NRDs will apply to the state Water Sustainability Fund for a percentage of the project construction cost.

Landowners in both NRDs affected by the proposed project have already reviewed the Feasibility Study report, which is available for public review on Tri-Basin NRD's website, [www.tribasinnr.org](http://www.tribasinnr.org). TBNRD directors also voted to allow Tri-Basin staff and legal counsel to secure easements for the project, which is the next step in the process.

"I'm hopeful that we could start work [on the project] this fall and be able to deliver water in 2018," said Thorburn.

Tri-Basin NRD's board also:

- Voted to extend the Republican basin-wide planning process for one year, to allow the four Republican Basin NRDs and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) time to complete the basin-wide planning process.
- Approved a contract with JEO to revise the All-Hazards Mitigation Plan for counties in Tri-Basin NRD. This plan must be updated periodically in order for counties to receive federal disaster funding.
- Approved five certified irrigated acre transfer applications.
- Approved three well decommissioning cost-share applications and three applications for Tri-Basin NRD and NSCWP flowmeter cost-share funds.
- Moved the dates of several upcoming monthly board meetings. Meeting will be held: Thursday, April 6 at 1:30 p.m.; Tuesday, May 9 at 7:30 p.m.; Tuesday, June 20 at 1:30 p.m.; Tuesday, July 18 at 1:30 p.m.

Tri-Basin NRD's next Board of Directors meeting will be Thursday, April 6, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. (note change of date) at Tri-Basin NRD, 1723 Burlington in Holdrege, Nebraska.

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