

TRI-BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT, HOLDREGE, NEBRASKA

ORDER ADOPTING THE SECOND-GENERATION TRI-BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THOSE PORTIONS OF THE TRI-BASIN NRD LOCATED WITHIN THE REPUBLICAN RIVER BASIN AND ASSOCIATED GROUND WATER CONTROLS

BACKGROUND

1. The Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (District) and the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (Department) jointly developed the first-generation Integrated Management Plan (IMP) in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 46-715 to 46-718, and 46-720, with an effective date of July 1, 2012.
2. The District and the Department consulted and collaborated on the development of the second-generation IMP with a group of stakeholders from 2021 to 2026. The stakeholder group consisted of the statutorily required entities pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-717(2) and other entities identified by the District and the Department. A final stakeholder meeting was conducted on February 4, 2026. Through this process of consultation and collaboration, the District and the Department jointly developed an IMP in accordance with the Ground Water Management and Protection Act (Act), particularly Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 46-715 to 46-718, and 46-720.
3. The District and Department made changes to the language of the ground water controls from the first-generation IMP. The revised ground water controls are listed in this Order.
4. The stakeholder group, the District, and the Department reached agreement on (1) the proposed goals and objectives of the IMP, (2) the proposed geographic area to be subject to the controls, (3) the surface water controls to be implemented by the Department, (4) the groundwater controls, which are to be adopted and implemented by the District through its rules and regulations, and (5) incentive programs that are proposed for adoption and implementation. Letters acknowledging the agreement were exchanged between the District and the Department.
5. The Department consulted with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. § 37-807(3). As stated in its January 27, 2026 response, NGPC determined that the adoption of the proposed second-generation IMP would have no adverse effect on threatened and endangered species or their habitat.
6. On February 4, 2026, pursuant to notices published in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-743(2), the District and Department jointly held a public hearing in Holdrege, Nebraska on the proposed second-generation IMP.
7. Following the hearing, the Department and District jointly considered testimony and exhibits provided and jointly agreed to adopt and implement the proposed second-generation IMP with minor revisions. One modification included changing “groundwater

elevation” to “groundwater levels” in Chapter II. The remaining revisions were non-substantive modifications and did not affect the goals and objectives of the IMP, the surface water controls and groundwater controls proposed for adoption and implementation of the IMP, and did not include any geographic area that was not identified in the notice of hearing as presented in the draft IMP.

8. On March 18, 2026, the District’s Board of Directors adopted the proposed second-generation IMP and associated groundwater controls.
9. On March 26, 2026, the Department sent a letter to the District agreeing to adopt the proposed second-generation IMP and associated surface water controls.
10. The District and Department met all publication requirements for this Order pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-744.

GROUNDWATER CONTROLS ADOPTED

The following five (5) groundwater controls and two (2) compliance standards will be implemented in the Republican Basin portion of the District under Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 46-715 (2)(c) and 46-739, and will now serve as the IMP controls, and will continue to be implemented in the future with the goal of maintaining Nebraska’s compliance with the Republican River Compact, subject to future IMP revisions:

1. Moratorium on wells for new water uses, with limited exceptions for de minimis uses and variances,
2. Certification of irrigated land and other non de minimis consumptive water uses,
3. Regulation of groundwater transfers,
4. Metering and reporting of water uses, including total annual volume of groundwater pumped, irrigation system details, type of use, and any volume of water returned to the stream, and
5. Allocation of groundwater use when determined by the District to be appropriate.
6. The District will: (1) Sustain a hydrologically balanced condition at the District’s southern boundary on a three-year rolling average and (2) Sustain hydrologically balanced condition at the District’s southern boundary over the long-term.

The groundwater controls that have been adopted by the District will be implemented through the Tri-Basin Natural Resources District’s “Rules and Regulations for Management and Protection of Land and Water Resources”, which are available on the district website:

www.tribasinnrd.org

ORDER

It is hereby ORDERED that the *Second-Generation Integrated Management Plan For those portions of District located within the Republican River Basin Jointly Developed and Administered by the District and the Department*, and the groundwater controls in the IMP are hereby ADOPTED by the District and will become effective on **May 8, 2026**.

TRI-BASIN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

March 31, 2026

Todd Garrelts, Chairman

This Order was sent to the Holdrege Daily Citizen to be published

Thursday, April 9th, 2026

Thursday, April 16th, 2026

Thursday, April 23rd, 2026

Copies of this Order and the Integrated Management Plan are available at Tri-Basin NRD, 1723 Burlington Street, Holdrege, NE 68949. Copies can be requested by email tribasin@tribasinnr.org, or by calling the district office at 877 995-6688.