

Assistant Manager's Report

January 12, 2026

Happy New Year! Most people use the start of each year as a fresh beginning and an opportunity to renew their best intentions. Apparently, Mother Nature doesn't believe in new year resolutions or fresh beginnings. The National Weather Service reported that this is the warmest meteorological start to winter on record (back to the 1890's) – for Grand Island the average high temperature is 7° above normal! Meteorological winter is from Dec 1 to Feb 28. We're halfway through that time period and the crystal ball at NWS isn't showing any predictions of things changing significantly! I suspect we have all been happy to keep our warm coats tucked in the closet as much as possible, however the warmer weather is a cause for concern. I've taken advantage of the warm weather and have been moving a lot of backfill around the new house my wife and I are building, but the dirt is as dry as can be – and there is no frost in the ground! Dry soil & vegetation combined with strong winds will mean red flag warnings are going to be common as we continue through the winter and into the spring. Here's hoping we get a small trace of winter – my kids haven't seen a decent snowstorm for sledding in several years!

I attended the Central Platte NRD board meeting on December 18. Tri-Basin didn't have a direct interest with any particular topic on their agenda, but I've been making an appearance at least a few times each year. Of personal interest, CPNRD's engineering consultant is putting the final touches on their Elm Creek and Turkey Creek flood plans. To make a long story short Turkey Creek is the tailrace of the Kearney Canal, part of the Kearney Water Trail and Whitewater Park, and the drainageway that flooded south Kearney in July 2019. The City of Kearney and particularly the Younes properties have been eager to avoid having another flooding event. Central Platte NRD has been working on a plan since the flood and is finally coming to the end of that research and design planning process. The project hasn't been approved for construction, rather CPNRD's board will vote during their January meeting to approve the plan, which would allow federal funding to be used on the project – which is currently estimated at fifty two million dollars.

Besides attending the CNPPID working board meeting and working on summer intern hiring, December has been filled with finishing reports, cleaning off my desk, and working through the holiday disruptions. I'll finish my report by mentioning we have been running the Turkey Creek augmentation well for Lower Republican NRD for over a month now. I'm happy to report the well has done very well! It has been consistently pumping an average of 1,290 gpm and there have been no additional drawdown within the well. From December 9-January 8 the well produced 147 acre-feet.

I hope your new year is off to a good start. See you next week for our board meeting.