

Assistant Manager's Report

May 12, 2026

I wrote my previous report on March 31. It's been 42 days since then. I think I could probably write up several pages of my report, but I'll spare the details and try to hit some highlights (or lowlights) relating to my activity since then.

First off, drought. I think we all understand where we're at – it's rather bad. Not just bad for our NRD but most of Nebraska west of Lincoln. Parts of Gosper County are in D4 drought (Exceptional) which is the worst classification for drought – and the western half of our NRD is in D3 drought. However, Nebraska isn't isolated; from the Missouri River west, the entire Rocky Mountains are seeing drought conditions; with D4 (Exceptional) at the headwaters of both the North Platte and South Platte Rivers. The lack of snowpack in the Platte headwaters is a major concern. It will be difficult to find sympathy however, as I mentioned the western United States are experiencing drought and all the United States south of the Ohio River and along the Atlantic coast is also seeing similar conditions. It's dry and it's dry nearly everywhere!

We completed static water measurements at the end of April. It takes most of May to get all the data compiled for hydrographs and send updates out, but we should have those prepared in early June. I've received several phone calls asking about results and water levels, folks are concerned about the drought. I compiled the rolling averages for southern Gosper and eastern Kearney Counties. It shouldn't come as any surprise when I say the results are disheartening. From the spring 2026 measurements, no additional townships qualify to become Phase II or Phase III – so that's the good news if there is any. However, trends continue downward and currently there seems to be little relief in sight.

In April we drilled an observation well east of Axtell. The location helps fill in some gaps in data coverage and allows us to better monitor the area of concern we have with declining water levels between Axtell and Minden.

We finished pumping our Turkey Creek augmentation well for Lower Republican NRD on May 7. The mild winter allowed us to pump nearly continuously since early December, and we found out our augmentation well is very productive, averaging 1,315 gallons per minute over the six months of pumping!

I attended the Water Advisory Committee (PRRIP) meeting in Ogalla last week. As part of that meeting, we toured the 'plumbing' of the Platte River system from Lake McConaughy to Elwood Reservoir. The committee is made up of several dozen folks from Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming, and we have added many new faces in recent years, so the tour was good to educate them on how we utilize the canal systems in Nebraska and how Platte River Recovery & Implementation Program fits in the picture.

I attended the CNPPID board meeting last week and highlighted our 33rd year of Water Jamboree!

That covers most of the heavy lifting for the past month. See you next week!