

Manager's Report

May 12, 2026

There is no snowpack in the North or South Platte River basins. Most years, the snow is melting right about now, feeding mountain streams and filling reservoirs. Not this year. New record low snowpacks were a consistent feature this past winter. When spring came, there wasn't any snow to melt. Things aren't any better on the Plains. Holdrege has had a total of 2.56" of rain and snow over the past six months. The largest rain in that entire period was 0.38". Much of the rest came in short showers delivering 0.10" or less. Nolan and Pat are still entering spring static water level data, but the preliminary results are grim. Some wells dropped as much as three feet from Spring 2025 until last month. Some wells that we measure undoubtedly ran before we got out to measure them in early April. That's not a good sign, either.

The dry weather enabled several educational events to proceed without difficulty. We had our ever-popular Arbor Day tree giveaways around the district. We followed that with two days of Water Jamboree at Harlan County Lake. The weather was chilly and blustery, but no rain. The adults were cold, but the kids had fun in spite of the weather. Last week we helped at The Fort Kearny Outdoor Expo. Once again, the weather wasn't ideal, but the kids weren't bothered by it. Jaeger Farms did our tree plantings at the end of April as well. Dalton will report on that next month.

Our revised Republican Basin IMP took effect last Friday. Not much will change, as long as we can maintain a positive balance between imported water supplies and consumption of imported water by our irrigators. We also finished operating our Republican Basin augmentation well (the Holen well) on behalf of Lower Republican NRD last week. We pumped a total of 751 acre-feet over the course of about five months. Well output didn't decline at all over the operating period. The well started out pumping 1300 gallons per minute and was still running at that rate when we shut it off.

The Planning Committee met yesterday and went through our proposed rules changes with attorney Don Blankenau. The committee got into the details of the rules and provided some good feedback and suggestions for improvements. The committee recommends board approval of the rules changes, with additional revisions that they requested. The committee also reviewed and recommends approval of the form that we developed for annual certified acre leases.

Kyle from AMGL will present our audit this month (see audit report in packet). They were supposed to have completed the audit by the end of December, so it is very late. I

have identified a different auditing firm, Core CPAs, who will do our audit for less and do it (hopefully) on time next year. I recommend that the board approve the proposal from Core CPAs and terminate our agreement with AMGL.

Last month, the board authorized me to request proposals for our All-Hazard Mitigation Plan update. We only received one proposal, which was from JEO Engineering (see packet). Fortunately, JEO is the firm that has done our last two IMP updates, so I'm confident that they will serve us well this time around, too. You will recall that we need to get word from FEMA on our grant before we proceed, so this project likely won't happen until FY 2027-28.

Black Hills Energy replaced the gas line to the NRD office over the last couple weeks. Part of the lawn is torn up now, but we got rid of the big gas meter in the yard.

Our first summer intern (Cathy from Wisconsin) started this week. Our other two summer helpers (Rodney from Colorado and Liz from Wyoming) will be here next week. I'm really pleased that our internship program is developing enough of a reputation that we draw students from all over the country. The interns benefit from having opportunities to do real conservation work and spending time in rural Nebraska. The district benefits from the help we get from bright young students who are full of ideas and enthusiasm. It's a win-win!

Tri-Basin NRD will host the statewide NRD Managers meeting on June 2 and 3. The meeting will be at the Nebraska Prairie Museum on June 3. Any directors who would like to join managers playing golf or kayaking on June 2 would be welcome. Let me know if you're interested.

That's all that I have for this month. I hope to see all of you next Wednesday afternoon.