



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) -- The summer irrigation and recreation seasons just got a little longer after decisions made by The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District.

Central board members voted at a special board meeting Friday to extend the irrigation delivery season by one week to accommodate customers who may have late-maturing crops or who had to replant after spring storms. In addition, staff recommended that the planned drawdown of the Supply Canal system -- including Johnson Lake -- to finish the last irrigation deliveries be delayed until after Labor Day.

A relatively small drawdown is expected to occur after Labor Day to finish irrigation deliveries, but how much the lake might decline will be subject to weather conditions, precipitation and irrigation demands.

In addition, a more significant drawdown will take place later this fall to allow completion of construction projects near the inlet by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Dates for the construction project are yet to be determined.

Both decisions were made possible by water supply conditions that exceeded pre-season projections. Projections are typically made during the previous fall to accommodate producers' planning processes for the next irrigation season, but weather and water supply conditions can change markedly from available trends and forecasts.

Such was the case this year when snowpack runoff, spring and summer precipitation, and significant contributions to the hydro-irrigation system from the South Platte River Basin combined to alter the water supply picture.

Lake McConaughy is almost ten feet higher and holding more than 200,000 feet more water than it was at this time last year, a significant improvement over pre-irrigation season projections.

"We were fortunate to have a series of weather events in both the North and South Platte basins over the last 12 months that has increased the projected end-of-season level for Lake McConaughy by about 12 feet above the projection made last fall," said Central civil engineer Cory Steinke.

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Contact: Jeff Buettner
Public Relations Coordinator
Office: (308) 995-8601
Cell: (308) 991-3228
E-mail: jbuettner@cnppid.com

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