



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) -- Irrigation deliveries are ramping up this week as temperatures rise and crop water needs increase, according to a report during The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's monthly board meeting on Monday.

Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford said precipitation in most parts of the District's service area exceeded eight inches during June, three to four inches above average for the month. The soil moisture content benefited considerably from the rainfall, Ford said, and there was little demand for irrigation water until this week.

Despite the plentiful rainfall in June, Ford said the area is still about two inches below normal precipitation amounts for the year.

With irrigation deliveries to Central's customers limited to 9 inches/acre this season, the precipitation has been important to extending the supply of storage water in Lake McConaughy, he added.

While the rain fell in south-central Nebraska, Lake McConaughy benefited from a period of above normal inflows that helped the reservoir's storage level rise until reaching a peak of 3243.1 feet last week. That elevation was a half a foot higher than last year's peak and the reservoir is 7.5 feet higher and storing about 163,000 acre-feet more today than it was on July 7, 2013.

Late snowfall and precipitation above Glendo Reservoir in Wyoming that occurred after the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation had moved water from its upper North Platte River reservoirs in preparation for the irrigation season in the Nebraska Panhandle. The precipitation and runoff raised Glendo Reservoir's storage level into the flood pool, which prompted releases down the North Platte River and increased inflows to Lake McConaughy.

Inflows have recently fallen back below normal for this time of year. As of Monday, inflows were 417 cubic feet per second compared with a historic median (or normal) inflow of 604 cfs.

Another important factor in the storage supply equation was snowpack runoff and precipitation in Colorado's South Platte Basin that raised flows in Nebraska, enabling diversions of South Platte water instead of releasing water from Lake McConaughy to meet downstream demands.

The elevated South Platte flows also allowed Central, in cooperation with Tri-Basin Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, to divert excess flows into Elwood Reservoir. Pumping into the reservoir continued until Monday, putting about 13,000 acre-feet into the reservoir and raising its elevation by more than 13 feet. The water will provide groundwater recharge benefits in both the Platte River and Republican River watersheds.

Also at Monday's meeting:

- Civil engineer Cory Steinke reported that Central and its consultants held a joint agency meeting last week with representatives from state and federal agencies in regard to the Initial Consultation Document (ICD) for the proposed J-2 Regulating Reservoirs.

The purpose of the joint agency meeting was to review information in the ICD, discuss potential environmental effects and any needed studies to fill information gaps, and to identify all potential information needs and questions from the resources agencies.

- Gothenburg Division Manager Kevin Boyd reported that preliminary attendance at Lake McConaughy for the July 4th weekend was extremely high and may represent a record number of visitors, pending confirmation of visitor counts by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.
- The board approved three variances requests for construction projects at Johnson Lake.
- The directors approved revisions to the District's safety recognition program to promote safety on the job.
- The directors approved the board meeting schedule for the 2015 fiscal year.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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