



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) - The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's board of directors approved an amendment to a water leasing agreement with the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program) during Tuesday's monthly board meeting to increase the number of leased acres in the agreement to 2,100.

The original agreement limited the number of leased acres to 2,000, but the number of acres contained in applications for participation in the leasing program in 2018 exceeded that number by 54 acres.

This is the third year the water leasing program has been in place. The Program leases the water from Central's irrigation customers and the water is added to the Environmental Account of water stored in Lake McConaughy and is then available for release to benefit wildlife habitat along the Platte River.

Most of the leased acres are from pivot corners and irregularly shaped fields that are more difficult to irrigate. Under the agreement, the acres will not be irrigated during the one-year term of the lease.

Also at Tuesday's meeting:

- Civil engineer Cory Steinke reported that Lake McConaughy is at elevation 3,253.9 feet, about 11 feet from maximum elevation. Storage volume is currently 1.42 million acre-feet (82 percent of capacity). Inflows and outflows are both around 500 cubic feet per second.

"The North Platte River is pretty well iced up upstream from Lake McConaughy which is affecting inflows," Steinke said.
- The bitter cold in recent days is also affecting operations along the Supply Canal and off-season groundwater recharge efforts. Gothenburg Division Manager Devin Brundage reported that Central crews are working to keep check gates along the Supply Canal free of ice.
- Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford said recharge activities along the E-65 Canal and at Elwood Reservoir have been suspended for the time being, but some water is still being diverted for recharge purposes into the Phelps Canal where gates are set at a small opening and don't need to be moved.
- Brundage also reported that a siphonic spillway on the Supply Canal near Maxwell primed in the early hours of Dec. 25 because of a power failure at a check gate resulting in the release of water for about three hours. The spillway functioned as designed, he said, and the water flowed about one mile back to the Platte River through road ditches and natural drains without causing significant issues.

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