



N-CORPE

Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement



N-CORPE Manages Water For Economic Stability By:

- ◆ Preventing an irrigation shutdown on 300,000-500,000 acres in the Republican Basin with a market value of roughly \$960 million-\$1.6 billion.
- ◆ Stopping immediate, 60% reductions in allocations throughout the Basin that would have an annual, estimated economic impact of roughly \$860 million.
- ◆ Keeping control of our water in Nebraska, by our locally elected representatives, who understand the value of water in our area.

N-CORPE Manages Water For Resource Sustainability By:

- ◆ Preventing water from being wasted. If Nebraska relied solely on regulations, large amounts of water in wet years would be sent downstream as if Nebraska was at risk of non-compliance with the Republican River Compact.
- ◆ Storing and preserving water underground that otherwise would have been used to irrigate crops on 16,000 acres south of North Platte. When necessary, the stored water will boost stream flows.
- ◆ Restoring a large chunk of the Nebraska Sandhills to native rangeland. N-CORPE is one of the largest, if not the largest, Sandhills restoration effort in the history of Nebraska.

The Basics...

*In December 2012, four of Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts- Upper Republican, Middle Republican, Lower Republican and Twin Platte NRDs- purchased 19,500 acres in Lincoln County that straddle the Platte and Republican River Basins. About 15,800 of those acres had been irrigated with 115 groundwater wells. Ceasing irrigation of those acres allows water that would have continued to be used for irrigation to be stored in the Ogallala Aquifer. Then it can be piped from 30 groundwater wells into the Republican and Platte Rivers when needed to meet river flow obligations. The total capacity of the project is approximately 65,000 acre feet annually. A significant portion of that water will not be needed on an annual basis and will be "banked" for use in years when needed for compliance with the Republican River Compact. **The amount of water pumped under the project to help keep Nebraska in compliance with the Compact and prevent massive irrigation shutdowns will likely be less than what would be pumped had the property remained an irrigated farm. A new, annual credit of approximately 10,000 acre feet approved by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015 significantly increases the likelihood less water will be pumped. There is abundant groundwater underlying N-CORPE – the saturated thickness of the Ogallala Aquifer in the area is approximately 400-600 feet.***

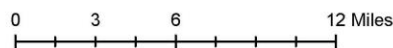
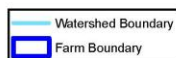
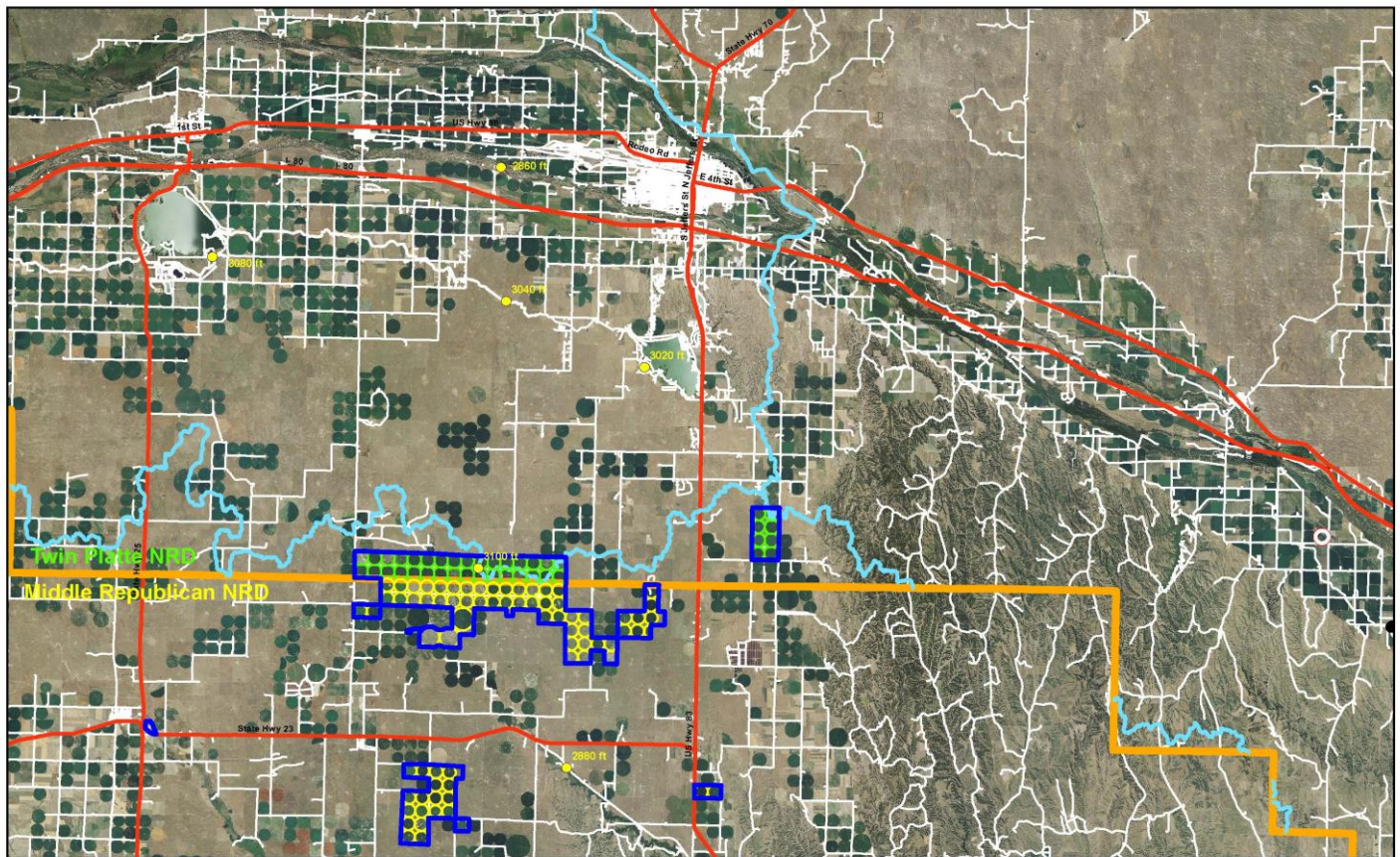
For More Information Visit:

www.ncorpe.org

Where: The 19,500 acres purchased by N-CORPE are located in Lincoln County, approximately 15 miles southwest of North Platte. The majority of the property is adjacent to, and in some cases intersects, the surface water divide between the Platte and Republican Basins. Approximately 10,400 of the formerly irrigated acres are located in the Middle Republican NRD; the remaining 5,400 acres are in the Twin Platte NRD.

Project Funding: The total cost of the project including land and construction costs is approximately \$120 million and will be paid for using the occupation tax on irrigated land. The overhead and administration expenses are shared equally by the four member NRDs. Capital project costs, which are constructed to benefit member districts, are prorated based on the benefit to the member districts. While N-CORPE issues bonds to pay for these capital costs, the revenue source is the bonds issued by the individual member districts, which are repaid by taxes collected by the individual districts. This structure prorates the expenses amongst multiple districts and the transactions pass through the Districts. Thus, when the District is audited on an annual basis, the transactions involving the interlocal agency are audited by each District's auditor. Each board approves the expenditure of its funds that are used to pay interlocal agency expenses, in addition to their approval by the interlocal agency board, thus there is arguably an additional step of oversight in the process than there is if the funds were expended directly by the Districts themselves.

Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement Project N-CORPE



CERTIFIED IRRIGATED ACRES	
Twin Platte NRD	- 5,363.4 acres
Middle Republican NRD	- 10,433.6 acres

Date: November 20, 2012
By: Phil Heimann
Sources: TPNRD, MRNRD, DNR

Lower Republican NRD
www.lrnrd.org

Middle Republican NRD
www.mrnrd.org

Twin Platte NRD
www.tpnrd.org

Upper Republican NRD
www.urnrnd.org

For More Information Visit:



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Why N-CORPE: A state law passed in 2004 required NRDs in the upper Platte Basin in Nebraska to impose moratoriums on groundwater irrigated acres in a large stretch of the river that was deemed over-appropriated - essentially having an imbalance between water supplies and demands. NRDs in the over-appropriated area have to return the Platte River to 1997 conditions and, ultimately, a fully appropriated condition. In the Twin Platte NRD, the requirement to return to 1997 conditions as spelled out in an integrated management plan it has with the state is to begin placing 5,859 acre feet of offset water annually into the Platte and increases to 7,700 acre feet annually in 50 years. Related, an agreement between Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aimed at protecting federally endangered species requires Nebraska to return the Platte to 1997 conditions.

The Republican River's use is dictated by a 70-year-old water interstate water compact between Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado that the State of Kansas has used to instigate litigation in recent years. Kansas sought a permanent shutdown of groundwater irrigation on 300,000-500,000 acres in Nebraska. In February 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling that was mostly favorable to Nebraska: No irrigation shutdown will be required, Nebraska receives a roughly 10,000 acre foot annual credit because it is no longer charged with the consumption of water imported from the Platte Basin, and the monetary payment to Kansas for noncompliance in 2005 and 2006 is 7% of what Kansas requested. Unlike obligations in the Platte, NRDs in the Republican Basin won't have to use the project annually to increase river flows. It will only be used during exceptionally dry times. Water will be delivered to Medicine Creek, whose confluence with the Republican River is located near Cambridge.

When: Pumping into Medicine Creek began on Feb. 28, 2014 to prevent a basin-wide shutdown of irrigated acres to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact and ended in late March 2015. The picture below shows managers of the four NRDs in NCORPE at the project discharge point in May, 2014.

