

**Order Adopting Revised Integrated Management Plan
Upper Republican Natural Resources District**

In the Matter of the
Upper Republican Natural Resources District
Groundwater Management Area Rules and
Regulations

Order Adopting the Upper Republican Natural
Resources District Integrated Management Plan
and Associated
Groundwater Controls

This matter came before the Upper Republican NRD Board of Directors (URNRD) for consideration pursuant to The Ground Water Management and Protection Act, *Neb. Rev. Stat.* §§ 46-701 to 46-756, which requires the affected natural resources district and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) to jointly develop an Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for a fully appropriated river basin, subbasin, or reach, and associated controls.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FIND:

1. The Ground Water Management and Protection Act provides the authority for the designation of a Ground Water Management Area and the adoption of rules and regulations to administer that area. It also provides for the amendment of existing rules.
2. The Ground Water Management and Protection Act provides the authority for the joint adoption, by a natural resources district and the NeDNR, of an IMP in a fully appropriated river basin, sub basin or reach.
3. The IMP subject to this order and jointly developed by the NeDNR and URNRD pursuant to The Ground Water Management and Protection Act is the fifth revision to the IMP since the first IMP was jointly approved by NeDNR and the URNRD in 2005.
4. On March 24, 2021, NeDNR and the URNRD held a stakeholder meeting to receive comments on the proposed modifications to the IMP, and stakeholders from the URNRD were also invited to provide comments on the proposed modifications to the IMP at meetings in the Middle Republican NRD and Lower Republican NRD on March 25, 2021.
5. In accordance with *Neb. Rev. Stat.* § 46-718, the NeDNR and the URNRD agreed on: (a) goals and objectives of the Plan; (b) the geographic area to be subject to controls; (c) the surface water controls, ground water controls and incentive programs that are proposed for adoption and implementation in the Plan for the URNRD.
6. Proposed modifications agreed upon by NeDNR and the URNRD on March 28, 2021, included an updated in-state accounting equation used to assess compliance; changes related to the Republican River Basin-Wide Plan including a proposed new goal; and updates related to changes in Republican River Compact Administration procedures. The NeDNR and URNRD determined that adoption of the IMP should be considered in accordance with *Neb. Rev. Stat.* § 46-718.
7. Notice of a July 6, 2021, joint public hearing by NeDNR and the URNRD on the proposed IMP revisions was published in accordance with *Neb. Rev. Stat.* § 46-743 in the following newspapers in the URNRD:
 - (a) Benkelman Post
 - (b) Imperial Republican
 - (c) Grant TribuneThe notice was posted at URNRD offices and copies of the proposed IMP were also made available by the URNRD at the time of publication of the newspaper notices.
8. A public hearing on the proposed IMP was held on July 6, 2021, as advertised. No comments were received at the hearing, nor in writing.

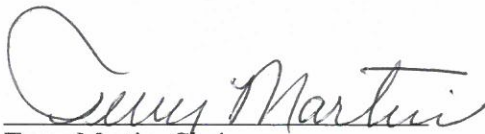
9. On August 3, 2021, the URNRD Board of Directors voted to adopt the IMP.
10. On August 16, 2021, the URNRD sent NeDNR a letter agreeing to adopt the proposed IMP.
11. On August 20, 2021, NeDNR sent the URNRD a letter agreeing to adopt the proposed IMP.

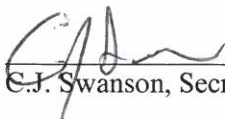
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF IMP GROUNDWATER CONTROLS:

1. Groundwater allocations
2. Moratorium on new wells and irrigated acres
3. Ability to reduce irrigated acres and target acres with high impacts on stream flow as alternatives to district-wide reductions in water-use allocations or irrigated acres.
4. Assurance via rules and regulations that no new groundwater uses initiated after July 14, 2004, will adversely impact surface water appropriators or groundwater users whose wells are dependent on recharge from the stream or river.
5. A 20 percent reduction in pumping over the long term from the baseline pumping volume, using a combination of regulation and supplemental programs, so that average annual groundwater pumping is no greater than 433,926 acre feet over the long term.
6. Maintain net groundwater depletions to stream flow within the URNRD's allowable depletions, applying two-year or five-year averaging as appropriate.
7. Management actions during Compact Call Years to ensure compliance with the Republican River Compact and associated settlement agreement.
8. Metering of all irrigation wells.
9. Regulation of transfers according to URNRD rules and statutory standards.

ORDER

It is therefore ORDERED that the Integrated Management Plan jointly developed by NeDNR and the URNRD including the groundwater controls in the plan are hereby adopted and will become effective September 27, 2021, thus superseding the January 15, 2016, Integrated Management Plan. The Integrated Management Plan and associated groundwater controls are available on the URNRD website, www.urnrd.org, the NeDNR website, www.dnr.nebraska.gov, the URNRD office in Imperial, Neb., at 511 East 5th Street, or by submitting a request to the URNRD: P.O. Box 1140, Imperial, NE, 69033, or (308) 888-1934.


Terry Martin, Chairman


C.J. Swanson, Secretary