

New rules approved for groundwater use

Written by Gothenburg Times
Thursday, 01 May 2014 16:32 -

The Central Platte NRD's Rules & Regulations for Groundwater Use in Fully & Over Appropriated Areas updates were approved following a public hearing on Thursday.

The updates include: a Dec. 31, 2014, deadline to certify irrigated acres; allowances for limited transfers on Class VIIe soils; and transfers of groundwater for irrigation of cropland on Class Vw, VIw, VIs, VIIw, VIIs, VIIIw, or VIIIs soils if approved by the Corps of Engineers and NRCS.

Another update addresses ground water declines by not allowing transfers and supplemental wells into any sub-area if the declines are 25% or more of the acceptable decline as defined in the Rules & Regulations.

There are 24 Groundwater Supply Management Areas established as part of the district's Groundwater Management Plan, initiated in 1987. The plan includes a phased program that implements controls when they are needed.

The maximum acceptable decline ranges from 10 feet in the eastern end of the district to 30 feet in portions of the western end of the district.

Board action/reports:

NRCS Report—James Huntwork, USDA-NRCS district liaison, invited the board to the CPNRD Local Working Group Meeting for the FY 2015 program year on at 9:30 a.m. on May 14 at the NRD office. The purpose of the meeting is to provide recommendations to the district conservationist and state conservationist on local natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs. The meeting is also open to the public, with a public forum scheduled for comments and recommendations.

Western Projects Committee—The board approved the committee's recommendation to deny the request from Dawson County Drainage District #4 to financially assist in the construction of a double box culvert in the amount of \$50,000. Director Marvion Reichert presented a drainage

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situation of a mile west of Elm Creek that could be resolved by removing a berm that is preventing proper drainage. Staff will look into the situation in more detail and present their findings at a later date.

Water Resources Committee—

Jesse Mintken, projects manager, reported that the Cozad and Thirty Mile Canal rehabs are being finalized after three years of construction. A tour and dedication of the Cozad Canal and the Thirty Mile Irrigation District will be held in late June after the canals begin taking water. The Orchard Alfalfa rehab is moving forward with construction of the headgates.

Kevin Prior, Olsson Associates, requested a change order in the amount of \$24,827.78 for Simon Contractors for Phase III of the Cozad Canal rehab project. The board approved the request. Prior also presented a financial summary of the Cozad project as requested by director Ladd Reeves.

The board approved a request by Lyndon Vogt, general manager, to increase the line of credit with Five Points Bank by \$3 million to pay contractors for the canal rehabs. The increase is necessary as Central Platte NRD must up front the costs prior to reimbursement from the State. Orchard Alfalfa contractors, Perrett Construction, also finished six months ahead of schedule.

COHYST—Duane Woodward, hydrologist, reported that the Cooperative Hydrology Study groundwater model will be used more as a tool than for calibrating from here on out. The Land Use data set for 2006-2009 and watershed components including surface water, natural flow and storage are completed and will be added to the groundwater model. Woodward said the Environmental Account information will also be added back in. He said the final step now is to rerun the groundwater and surface water models together to confirm the calibrations from 1980-2005 comparisons are accurate.

A workshop is being held in August to update the COHYST document and begin extending data sets to 2010. Woodward said the Conjunctive Management Group is using the model to look out 50 years to see if the model would be able to be used for predictions.

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Legislation—Mark Czaplewski, biologist, presented an end of the session report with two major natural resources bills being passed—LB 272 and LB 1098. Czaplewski said the Legislative Resolution to watch for next session is LR 491, which would study the power and authority of political subdivisions that protect and conserve the quantity or quality of groundwater and surface water resources.

Cost Share—The board approved 15 cost share applications in the amount of \$17,441.98. Practices approved include: well decommissioning, tree planting, center pivot and soil moisture sensor.