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Tri-Basin NRD  
1723 N Burlington Street  
Holdrege, NE 68949



Phone: (308) 995-6688  
Fax: (308) 995-6992  
Email: [tribasin@tribasinnr.org](mailto:tribasin@tribasinnr.org)

*Natural Resources District*

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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For more information, contact: Nicole Salisbury, Information & Education Coordinator  
Phone 308-995-6688 or email [nsalisbury@tribasinnr.org](mailto:nsalisbury@tribasinnr.org)

# **TBNRD to Explore Options for Protecting Groundwater Resources in Platte, Republican Basins**

Tri-Basin NRD's Board of Directors are taking the next steps in protecting our groundwater resources in the Platte and Republican River Basins by exploring options for meeting the requirements of the Republican River Compact and the Platte River Recovery Program. At their regular board meeting Tuesday evening, the directors took actions aimed at meeting the district's depletion offset requirements in both basins.

Directors voted to proceed with negotiations with Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District to lease surface water rights for a period of ten years. Currently, Tri-Basin NRD has a one-year lease of 2500 acre-feet of CNPPID surface water rights. This provides Tri-Basin NRD with most of the offsets needed in the Platte Basin. In order to help offset the remaining depletions, TBNRD directors decided Tuesday evening to move ahead in the process of identifying new no-till acres in the Platte Basin portion of the district. Tri-Basin NRD staff will identify those acres using satellite photographs.

In the Republican Basin portion of Tri-Basin NRD, directors and staff will be developing a plan for offsetting depletions to the Republican Basin Virgin Water Supply. The main options for maintaining compact compliance are reducing water use by regulating water users or

utilizing an occupation tax on irrigated cropland to fund projects and programs that augment streamflows or provide incentives for water use reduction. Before deciding which options to pursue, Tri-Basin NRD directors will hold a public hearing to describe the options and gather input from the public about their preferences.

“Tri-Basin NRD will do our part to keep the state in compliance with the Republican River Compact. We want our constituents to help us figure out how to do this in a way that minimizes the impact on their farming operations,” said Tri-Basin Manager John Thorburn.

The hearing is tentatively set for August 10 in Bertrand in conjunction with the board’s regular August meeting. More details about the hearing will be published when available.