

NRD votes to buy 50% of Thirty Mile

Written by Gothenburg Times
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The Central Platte Natural Resources District's board of directors voted Thursday to take 50% interest in the 30-Mile Canal.

The NRD will share management, income and expense responsibilities. Benefits for the NRD include the transfer of water rights to aide in getting the over-appropriated area of the district back to a fully appropriated status as required by LB 962 and the Platte River Program. This will satisfy requirements without having to regulate landowners.

Benefits for the canal shareholders are to generate adequate income to maintain their project through the rehabilitation of the canal.

The board also approved changes to the Integrated Management Plan; which the NRD developed with the Department of Natural Resources to better manage groundwater and surface water in the District.

The changes set up a new area of groundwater management consisting of those areas within the NRD whose groundwater impacts the Platte River below Chapman (parts of northern Hall County, Howard, Nance, Platte, Polk, and all of Merrick County except the southwest corner) within the Central Platte NRD.

Kent Cordes, Miller & Associates, provided an update on the bidding schedule for the Thirty Mile Canal project. Phase I will consist of 12+ miles of channel clearing and grading; split into five bid packages.

The board approved the bid date of Feb. 20 with contracts to be awarded on Feb. 23. Cordes said ideally March 1- April 1 would be beginning construction date, however; the area has been designated as habitat for the American Burying Beetle (an endangered species.) If the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission find that construction would disturb the beetles habitat, then construction would likely start in October 2012. The area is also subject to the Migratory Bird Act which wouldn't allow tree removal from April 1- Sept. 30.

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Board member Jay Richeson of Gothenburg was selected as chairman of the water resources committee.