

MEMO



DATE: December 12, 2016
TO: Kansas Water Authority
FROM: Earl Lewis
RE: Republican River Update

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Over the past two years, the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Water Office have been working with officials from both Nebraska and Colorado to change both the relationships and manner in which the compact is implemented. Significant progress has been made over that period culminating with the adoption of two resolutions by the Republican River Compact Administration in August of 2016 that put in place long term agreements to jointly manage the water supply of the basin.

One of the key changes that has happened within the basin in recent years has been the development of augmentation projects to supplement the flow of the river during times of decreased streamflow. This factor within Nebraska, along with the August 2016 resolutions, give Kansas users more certainty of a reliable supply of water. The resolution also provides an opportunity to supply a broader group of Kansas users with access to water from Nebraska stored in Harlan County Reservoir.

Discussions have begun with stakeholders in the Lower Republican about development of a special district to gain legal access to the newly available water. There are a number of issues that will need to be resolved before a district can be formed. Most likely, a special district will take legislation to meet the unique needs and situation that exists.

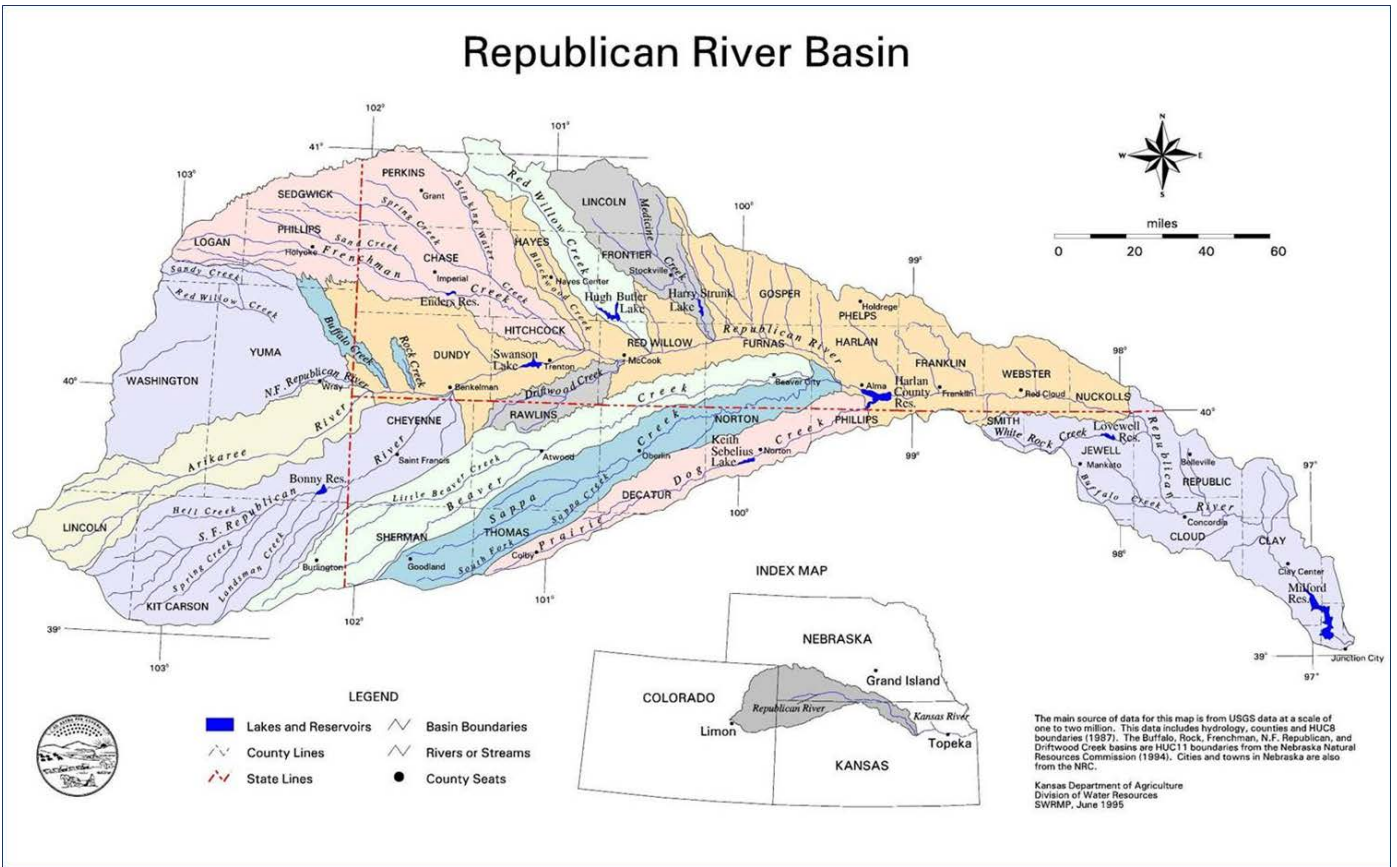
In addition to the changes in water management, \$5.5 million in damage award funds were received from Nebraska in June 2015. The first \$2 million was returned to litigation funds within the Attorney General's office. The remaining \$3.5 million was deposited within a fund managed by the Kansas Water Office dedicated to projects in the Lower Republican. Working with the stakeholder group, it was determined that \$2.5 million should be used for conservation projects within the Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District and \$1 million for projects outside the district.

The Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District is under contract to convert open canal laterals to a buried pipe system. This conversion will limit system losses to evaporation, seepage and operational spills. Two projects are underway outside the district. First, the Kansas Geological Survey is modeling the surface water system in support of the development of a special district. And second, Burns and McDonnell are evaluating the feasibility of four small reservoir sites in the Lower Republican as an option to store additional water for low flow times. Both of these studies will be completed in the next few months.

The Kansas Water Authority will hear presentation from Chris Bieghtel, Kansas Department of Agriculture, on how the water management will work with the new resolutions and Pete Gile, Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District, on their water supply and the ongoing efficiency improvements within the District, including converting open ditches to underground pipe.

This item is information only. No action required.

Republican River Basin



Lower Republican River Effective Alluvium and Mainstem Surface Water Users

