

## Discussion of Measurable Hydrologic Objectives for the Plan

### Relevant language from statute

Purpose of plan's goals and objectives (*Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-744 (4)*):

A basin-wide plan shall (a) have clear goals and objectives with a purpose of sustaining a balance between water uses and water supplies so that the economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the river basin, subbasin, or reach can be achieved and maintained for both the near term and the long term, (b) ensure that compliance with any interstate compact or decree or other formal state contract or agreement or applicable state or federal law is maintained, and (c) set forth a timeline to meet the goals and objectives as required under this subdivision, but in no case shall a timeline exceed thirty years after April 17, 2014.

Requirement to include measurable hydrologic objectives (*Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-755 (5)(b)*):

A basin-wide plan developed under this section shall include a schedule indicating the end date by which the stated goals and objectives are to be achieved and the management actions to be taken to achieve the goals and objectives. To ensure that reasonable progress is being made toward achieving the final goals and objectives of the plan, the schedule shall also include measurable hydrologic objectives and intermediate dates by which the objectives are expected to be met and monitoring plans to measure the extent to which the objectives are being achieved. Such intermediate objectives shall be established in a manner that, if achieved on schedule, will provide a reasonable expectation that the goals of the plan will be achieved by the established end date.

Requirements of five-year analysis (*Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-755 (5)(d)*):

Within five years after the adoption of the basin-wide plan, and every five years thereafter, the department and affected natural resources districts shall conduct a technical analysis of the actions taken in a river basin to determine the progress towards meeting the goals and objectives of the plan. The analysis shall include an examination of (i) available supplies, current uses, and changes in long-term water availability, (ii) the effects of conservation practices and natural causes, including, but not limited to, drought, and (iii) the effects of the plan in meeting the goal of sustaining a balance between water uses and water supplies. The analysis shall determine if changes or modifications to the basin-wide plan are needed to meet the goals and objectives pursuant to subdivision (4)(a) of this section. The department and affected natural resources districts shall present the results of the analysis and any recommended modifications to the plan at a public meeting and shall provide for at least a thirty-day public comment period before holding a public hearing on the recommended modifications. The department shall submit a report to the Legislature of the results of this analysis and the progress made under the basin-wide plan. The report shall be submitted electronically. Any official participant or stakeholder may submit comments to the department and affected natural resources districts on the final basin-wide plan adopted by the department and affected natural resources districts, which shall be made a part of the report to the Legislature.

### Draft measurable hydrologic objectives, for discussion

1. Maintain each NRD's groundwater depletions within their portion of Nebraska's allowable groundwater depletions, as specified in the IMPs
2. Maintain groundwater depletions at a relatively constant level over the long-term
3. Balance water storage for future use during drought. Evaluate existing and new management actions to determine the long-term water availability trends that provide carry-over storage supplies to meet crop-water needs during drought.
4. Take actions that help prevent special regulations in the Rapid Response area for Compact compliance
5. Take actions that help prevent administration of surface water use for Compact compliance

## Current draft plan language about measurable hydrologic objectives, for discussion

The purpose of this Plan's measurable hydrologic objectives is to ensure that reasonable progress is being made toward achieving the Plan's overall goal of balancing water supply and use within the Basin. As described in *Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-755 (5)(b)*, each measurable hydrologic objective must include intermediate objectives and dates by which those intermediate objectives are expected to be met, and the Plan must include monitoring plans to measure the extent to which the objectives are being achieved.

A detailed timeline and monitoring plan for each of this Plan's measurable hydrologic objectives is described in the *[Cross reference to Monitoring Section of the Plan]*. The general timeline for each measurable hydrologic objective is as follows:

1. Intermediate objectives for each measurable hydrologic objective are set at five-year intervals, to correspond with each five-year technical analysis.
2. NeDNR and the NRDs will exchange any data required to evaluate progress towards each measurable hydrologic objective annually, as part of each annual review.
3. Progress towards each intermediate objective will be evaluated as part of each five-year technical analysis.
4. If the evaluation of any measurable hydrological objective indicates a need to revise this Plan, the resulting Plan modifications will be made following the procedures described in *[Cross reference to Modifications to the Plan section]*.