



Republican River Accounting: How It's Done

Annual exchange of data about water supply and use in the Republican River Basin with Kansas and Colorado

This is the first part of an anticipated four-part series that will explore how Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado work together to administer the Republican River Compact (Compact) and how Nebraska uses Compact accounting data to help manage water and forecast future water availability in the Republican River Basin. Part One describes NeDNR's participation in the annual data exchange, which occurs every April.

By Kari Burgert

April 15 – to Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) staff this is not just Tax Day. April 15 is the Republican River Compact (Compact) annual data exchange deadline. On or before this deadline each year, the states of Nebraska, Colorado, and Kansas exchange data about supplies and uses of Republican River Basin water in each state for the purposes of Compact accounting. Similar to income tax accounting, we spend months before the April 15 exchange date gathering and processing the data required to assess compliance with the Compact. To obtain information about the water supplies and uses within the Republican River Basin of Nebraska, we contact individual water users, power districts, irrigation districts, natural resources districts (NRDs), the US Geological Survey, and the US Bureau of Reclamation, among other sources.

Following the April 15 exchange, we switch gears as accountants from compiling data from our own state to processing data from all three states. Review of all three states' data and completing groundwater model runs will take place over the next several months. When all three states have completed their review of the 2016 data, the Compact Administration will take action to approve the 2016 Compact accounting. Each state's accounting data is used to assess its compliance with the Compact, following compliance tests outlined in the Compact Administration's accounting procedures.

How does the annual data exchange affect water planning, regulation, and management in Nebraska? Following procedures outlined in each NRD's integrated management plan, the data from all three states help NeDNR and the NRDs determine what water management actions are needed and assist with forecasting future water supplies for the Republican River Basin.

1. Share Data
2. Analyze Data
3. Determine management actions

