

Memorandum

To: Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Programs Projects and Operations Subcommittee
From: Paul W. Woodward, PE, Groundwater Management Engineer
Date: July 1, 2021
Re: Water Sustainability Fund Grant Application for the PMRNRD IMP Water Quantity Monitoring Project

In March of 2018, the PMRNRD Board adopted new Groundwater Rules and Regulations and updated District Policy 17.21 to include financial assistance to encourage the conservation and protection of groundwater. As part of these new rules, flow meters are required on all high-capacity wells in the hydrologically connected areas (HCA) to the Platte and Elkhorn River by March 1, 2023, see Figure 1.

Prior to March of 2023, the District has been offering 50% cost-share on flow meters to well owners. There are approximately 270 high-capacity wells in the HCA. Only approximately 10 of these wells are equipped with flow meters at the time of this memo. Each new flow meter is around \$2,000, so if the District provides \$1,000 of cost-share for each one, this will total around \$270,000.

Additionally, the 2019 flood between the Platte and Elkhorn River has impacted many of these irrigated fields and well owners; and has likely delayed the deployment of flow meters by 3 years or more. District staff waited to notify these landowners about the requirements for flow meters until the beginning of 2021 due to the flood. It is anticipated that the District should consider extending the deadline for installing flow meters.

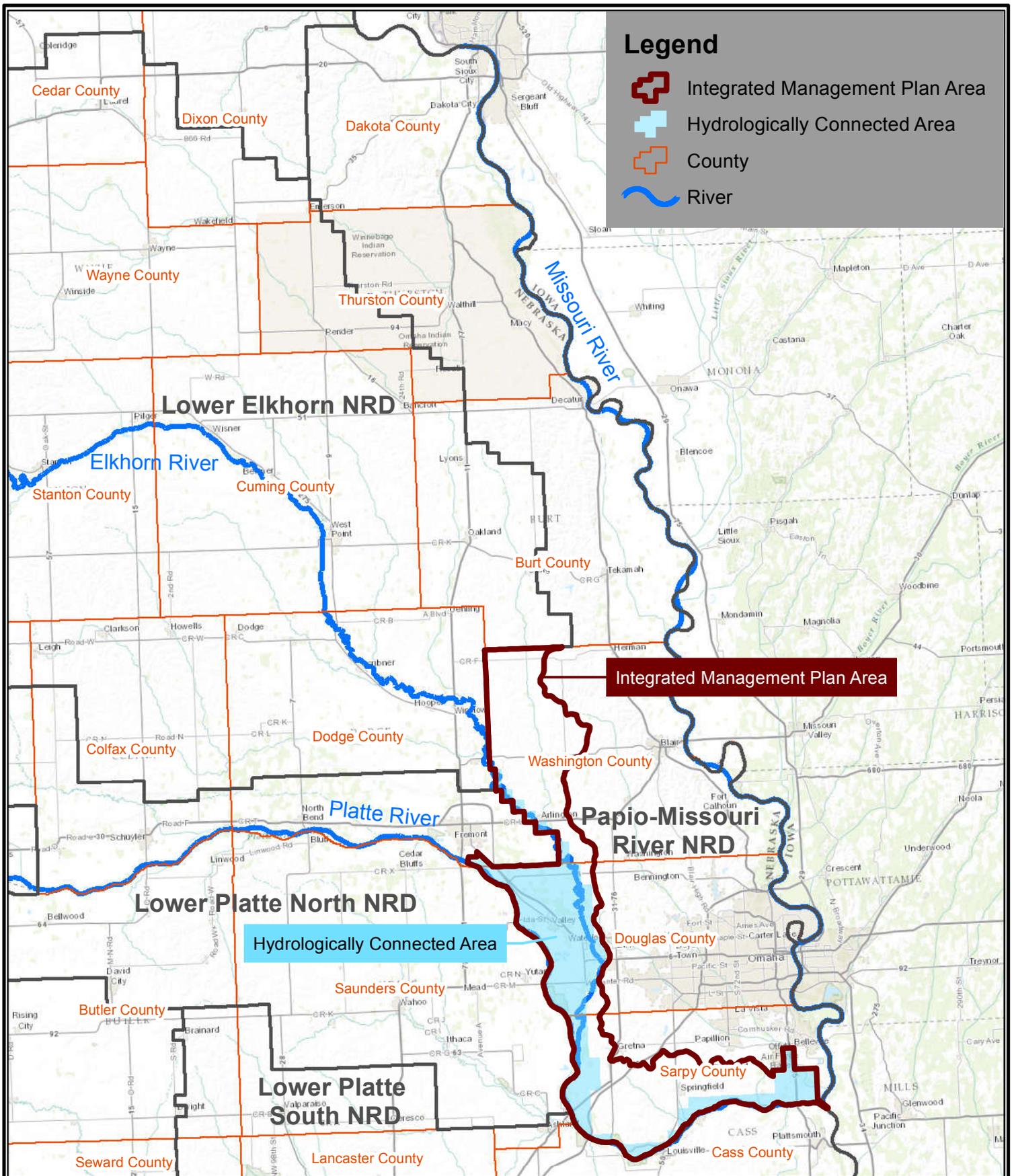
Today, the PMRNRD's proposed budget recommends that grant funds be secured to help cost-share flow meter installations. If secured, grant funds can help increase the available cost-share to help reduce both the District and landowner's costs. A proposed Water Sustainability Fund (WSF) grant application would increase the available cost-share to well owners from 50% to 75% where the NRD would provide \$600 per flow meter, the WSF grant would provide \$900 per meter, and the owner would cover the remaining \$500 or more per meter (~25%).

The projected cost and cost-share for the grant application is:

	TOTAL	WSF Grant	NRD Funding
270 Flow Meter 75% cost-share	\$ 405,000	\$243,000	\$ 162,000

There are future responsibilities and costs associated with flow meters and obtaining the data on water use from flow meters. Well owners would be expected to report their total irrigated water use each year. The NRD would provide an online website or app to allow easy access for owners to record these yearly readings. There would also be long-term maintenance costs to make sure the flow meters remain accurate.

Staff recommends that the subcommittee recommend to the Board of Directors that the General Manager be authorized to execute and submit a Water Sustainability Fund application for the PMRNRD IMP Water Quantity Monitoring project, subject to changes deemed necessary by the General Manager and approval as to form by District Legal Counsel.



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Miles



US Topographic Basemap

Figure 1 General Location Map of the Integrated Management Plan Area

