

Middle Republican NRD Partners with Riverside Irrigation Canal Company



The photo to the left shows the canal located near the water source. The photo to the right shows the filled-in canal through the cornfield with head gates in foreground.



“The shareholders of Riverside approached the Board of the Middle Republican NRD in the spring of 2011 and indicated they were willing to sell their irrigation rights to the NRD and the district was easy to work with during this process and we appreciate that,” said Roger Kolbet, land owner and shareholder of the Riverside Irrigation Company.

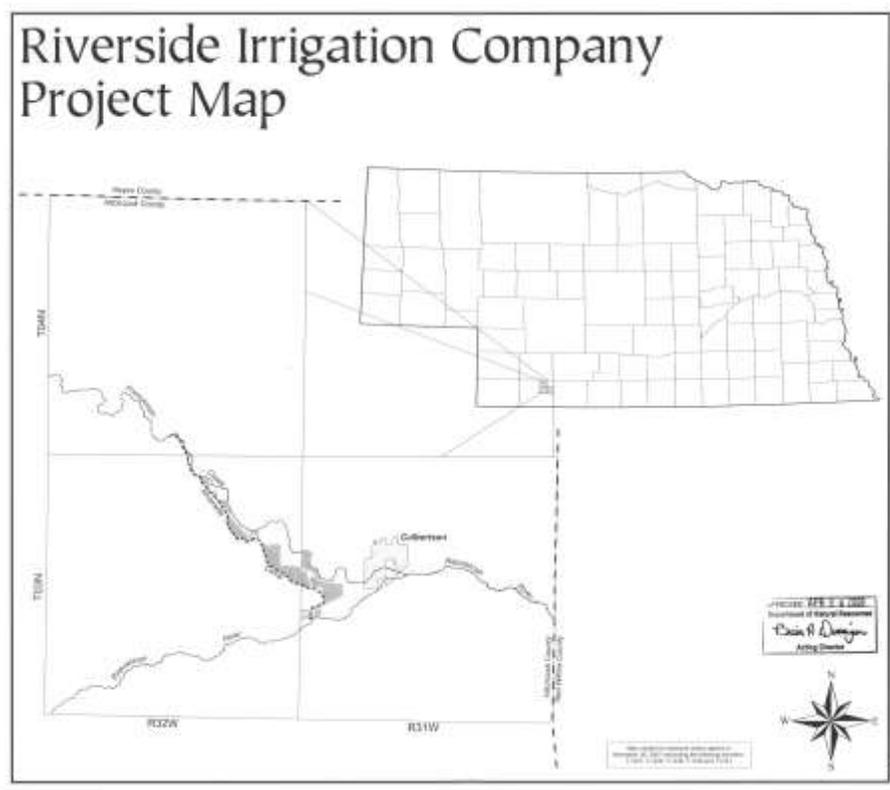
Project benefits include:

- Protects water supplies, future users, and helps keep Nebraska in compliance by increasing flows to the river.
- Protects the local economy and future water uses by staying in compliance with the compact and not having to shut off irrigation in the rapid response areas of the district.
- Reduces production costs to the farmer by eliminating operation and maintenance costs of the canal.
- Increases productivity and efficiency of the family farm. By filling in the canal farmers have added land to grow crops and created longer, more efficient rows on their property.
- By maintaining long-term compliance with the river compact, we help the State of Nebraska avoid additional legal fees and damages in the future.

“One of the main reasons we were interested in selling was that leasing the water to the district was hit or miss from one year to the next making irrigation and crop planning difficult. It made more sense for us to do a permanent sale. By selling our surface water rights we help the MRNRD stay in compliance,” said Roger Kolbet, land owner and shareholder of the Riverside Irrigation Company.

The Riverside Irrigation Company (RIC) has joined efforts with the Middle Republican Natural Resources District (MRNRD) to help the state stay in compliance with the three-state Republican River Compact, meet standards in MRNRD’s integrated management plan, and help protect the local economy. The MRNRD has purchased the surface water rights on 672 acres from shareholders of the RIC and landowners have begun filling in the irrigation canal. Riverside Irrigation Company by corporate resolution has surrendered all of their water rights to the MRNRD and turned over all interest in Riverside Irrigation Company to the NRD. The MRNRD will hold those rights and provide that water to the State of Nebraska to be used for compact compliance when needed.

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“Through the best management of all waters we can continue to protect the economy of the basin. Managing surface water and ground water together rather than separately can help Nebraska stay in compliance and maintain the maximum number of irrigated acres in the basin.

Reductions in consumptive use will continue to be needed, but proper management can keep Nebraska from having to impose a compact call year and restrict users in our part of the basin,” said Dan Smith, general manager of the Middle Republican NRD.



Pictured above is the Frenchman River. The Riverside canal travelled seven miles along the west side of the Frenchman River in Hitchcock County, west of Culbertson.

The project was funded with federal funds through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and through the NRD’s occupation tax. The purchase of the irrigation rights from Riverside Irrigation Company is a significant step taken by the Middle Republican NRD towards long-term compliance with the standards in our integrated management plan and provides extra water to the State of Nebraska when needed for compact compliance.