

RRWCD Boundary to Change

Submitted by Deb Daniel, RRWCD General
Manager

House Bill 19-1029 passed the Colorado legislature and was signed into law by Governor Polis on April 16, 2019. It will become effective on August 2, 2019. The bill will modify the boundary of the Republican River Water Conservation District (RRWCD).

On September 17, 2003, Special Master Vincent McKusick signed the Final Report of the Special Master with the Adoption of RRCA Groundwater Model, which included a map of the Republican River Groundwater Model Domain.

On August 4, 2004, Senate Bill 04-235 created the RRWCD to assist Colorado in complying with the Republican River Compact which was signed in 1942. The compact between Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska apportioned the waters of the Republican River Basin among the three States.

The boundary of the RRWCD was set by SB04-235 using the topographic boundary of the Basin. The original RRWCD boundary did not match the boundary of the Republican River Groundwater Model Domain, which includes all land in the High Plains Aquifer that was in hydrologic connection with the Republican River. HB19-1029 modifies the boundary so that all wells that affect the groundwater covered by the compact model will be included in the RRWCD.

The change in the boundary will bring approximately 332 wells and the associated irrigated acreage into the RRWCD. The annual diversions from these wells has always been included in the groundwater model which tracks the use of water within each state, from which the depletions to the river are calculated.

The use of these additional wells has contributed to the depletion of the Ogallala, but because they were not been included in the RRWCD boundary, they have not paid the Water Use Fee as have the well owners that are located in the current RRWCD boundary.

The RRWCD will be contacting these well owners and the county assessors in Cheyenne and Kit Carson counties to notify these individuals that they are now being included in the RRWCD Water Use Fee tax roll.

After the Bill goes into effect, the Cheyenne County Commissioners and the East Cheyenne Groundwater Management District (ECGWMD) will appoint a landowner who lives within their area and within the RRWCD boundary, who will represent their organization on the RRWCD Board. The new Board members will be sworn-in at the beginning of the November meeting.

Additionally, HB19-1029 changes the date of the RRWCD Board meetings to the third Tuesday of February, May, August and November. The bill also includes a change to the requirement to be an RRWCD Board member to include an owner of real property that is within a county that lies within the boundaries of the ground water management district from which the director is appointed.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Deb Daniel, RRWCD General Manager (970)332-3552.