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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wyoming State Engineer Patrick T. Tyrrell has confirmed that priority administration for all federal reservoir storage in the North Platte River Drainage has been lifted, effective midnight April 30, 2013. The priority call for these U.S. Bureau of Reclamation mainstem reservoirs was put into effect on February 6, 2013 to allow for the filling of the reservoirs during the period of below average snowpack and low forecasted supply, as provided by the Modified North Platte Decree dated 2001.

The priority administration primarily affected municipalities and industries located above Guernsey Reservoir with water rights junior to December 6, 1904. To supplement supplies for municipal customers, six municipalities purchased water from the Pathfinder Modification Project (PMP) municipal account, which was recently completed to provide additional water for municipalities during a time of water storage.

Based on the May 2013 forecast from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the expected inflow through July combined with the current available water in Pathfinder and Guernsey Reservoirs is forecasted at 796,073 acre-feet. This forecast remains below the 1,100,000 acre-feet demand for irrigation water served by the federal reservoirs within the North Platte River system, although no further administration for those federal reservoirs is occurring.

“The snows in late April provided a bit of rescue from the bleak runoff outlook, and it was a welcomed event,” adds Patrick T. Tyrrell, Wyoming State Engineer. Snowpack levels throughout the North Platte River increased in the month of April, but true testament of the anticipated runoff is with the snow-to-water equivalent (SWE). The SWE percentages range from 75% to 130% throughout the basin, based on the most recent manual snow surveys conducted jointly with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the State Engineer’s Office.

While the call to fill the federal reservoirs on the North Platte River has lifted, the State Engineer’s Office will likely receive further calls for the normal intrastate priority administration of water rights during the irrigation season, which will also be the case in much of the state of Wyoming.

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