

brings up some good issues. I think any relicensing that is done by FERC will guarantee minimum instream flows to the Platte River at the Grand Island point. I think their water supply there will be safe because our State Constitution protects domestic water use and I think that will be one of the highest priorities of any relicensing. Of course, if Lake McConaughy is dry, then nobody gets water, but I don't think we are going to see that situation. Considering the drought we have had, we are very fortunate to have had the reservoir, and it has done a tremendous amount of good for instream flows that we have had that reservoir. A few points I want to make, Nebraska has a tremendous amount of water laws. They do a tremendous amount of regulation of water. My deep wells are registered. We send in water samples every year to the NRD and the NRDs do a tremendous job of keeping track of where our water is at, what kind of contamination levels we have. They come out and inspect each one of our systems to make sure that if we pump...we pump insecticides or fertilizer through the systems, that we are doing it properly, and that we have all the safeguards on there so that if there is a shutdown of the system, we won't have something run down the well. We have check valves. It is very comprehensive. The NRDs are doing a tremendous job of protecting our water supply. I'd just like to say that there are 5,000 tracts of land that have water rights on Lake McConaughy, over 5,000, affecting a half a million acres. This has a tremendous impact on the economy of central Nebraska. I would also like to point out that the federal government has an Environmental Protection Act which will protect any endangered species. If it is proven that the operation of the reservoir or the irrigation district is endangering any of these species, then FERC can order a change in the way the district is operating. I would like to point out those species that are endangered that use the river. They are the least tern, the piping plover, the whooping crane, and the bald eagle. On the first two, the least tern and piping plover, there is indications that their numbers are increasing on the river. The whooping crane very seldom uses the river. They fly over it. There has been a few sightings, but they have been very rare. The bald eagle numbers have tremendously increased when DDT was outlawed. There is hundreds of eagles that use the Platte River in the wintertime, and I would argue that 20 years ago you didn't see a bald eagle in the area, and it is very interesting, and very...to see bald eagles. They are a tremendous bird and they use the river extensively in the wintertime. Central has viewing areas for people to come out and look at the bald eagles