

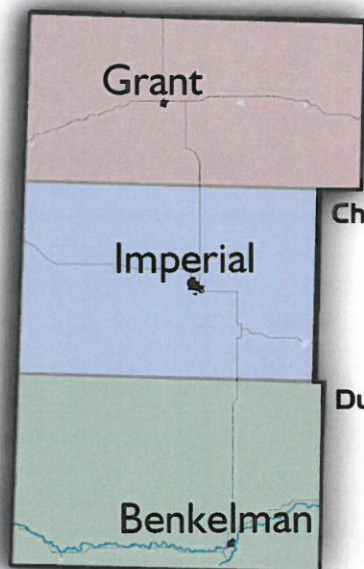
KNOW YOUR NRD



UPPER REPUBLICAN
Natural Resources District
Imperial, NE

2014

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
Making the Good Life Better Since 1972



Perkins Co.

Chase Co.

Dundy Co.

**Local People
Providing
Local Solutions**

UPPER REPUBLICAN NRD

URNRD QUICK FACTS:

451,804 Irrigated Acres

250 Water Samples Taken to
Monitor Water Quality

All Irrigation Wells Metered and
Regulated Since 1979

Groundwater Levels Monitored
at 400 Locations in Spring and
Fall

13 Observation Wells
Continuously Measuring Water
Levels

No New Irrigation Development
Since 1997

— Protecting Our Groundwater — Protecting Our Resource Based Economy — Protecting Our Future —

Maintaining Compact Compliance

Significant strides in the District's efforts to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact were made in 2013 and 2014.

Augmentation: The District prevented an irrigation shutdown on thousands of acres in 2014 by operating its Rock Creek Augmentation Project in Dundy County. It helped the State maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact. The URNRD also helped launch a new augmentation project in Lincoln County, NCORPE, that is a joint effort with three other NRDs in the Republican Basin and the Twin Platte NRD. That project began operations in early 2014 and prevented an irrigation shutdown on hundreds of thousands of acres in 2014. The project involves retiring 15,800 acres in Lincoln County south of North Platte from irrigated production and piping water that otherwise would have been used for

irrigation into Medicine Creek, a tributary of the Republican River. The augmentation projects are being paid for by irrigators. They were constructed on an accelerated schedule to prevent widespread and possibly catastrophic harm to the regional economy.



Water-Saving Regulations: The District recently approved rules that will reduce water use during the allocation period by an estimated 90,000 acre feet. The new rules

impose a stiff penalty on water users who run out of allocation and "borrow" allocation from the next allocation period. The new rules also limit to 7.5 inches the amount of carry forward allocation from previous years that can be used during the allocation period without penalty.

Preserving Water for the Future

The District has helped put water-saving technology on more than 25,000 acres the last three years by reducing farmers' costs for soil-moisture probes. The probes can reduce water applications by recommending to farmers when to irrigate and have been shown to reduce water use by 2-4 inches per acre. To date, water usage has been cut by an estimated 2 billion gallons, helping preserve the Ogallala Aquifer. Cost share is provided with help from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

Protecting our Producers

The URNRD is actively involved in conservation and programs that maintain viable water allocations for users, management practices that conserve water, and ensure that producers in the basin aren't threatened by the loss of water rights.



Producers in the District have shown their support for these efforts by paying an occupation tax on irrigated land the last few years that has produced revenue for programs including the augmentation project and irrigation retirement.

The District has also been active recently, and plans to become more involved, in promoting and helping pay for the use of irrigation-related

technology that can reduce water use. The use of such technology could help continue a recent trend of reduced water use.

Protecting the Local Economy

The economy of Southwest Nebraska relies upon agriculture - the URNRD is dedicated to protecting the viability of this ag-based economy by sustainably managing resources for today, and tomorrow.

Projects recently employed by the District are part of the multi-faceted plan to address short, mid and long-term needs without unnecessarily harming the economy of the region. The District will continue to consider regulations and policies that fit this strategy. One component of the District's state-approved plan to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact is reducing groundwater pumping.

Consumptive use will have to decrease across the District in coming years and it can be done in a gradual, progressive manner that tracks with the development of drought-resistant crops and other irrigation efficiencies.

Protecting Future Natural Resources

The URNRD provides conservation education to youth of the district by sponsoring a local week long science camp every other summer. We are protecting our future natural resources through education of our youth about water quality, conservation, stewardship, and encouraging critical thinking. Utilizing hands-on activities, children are learning how to become involved and are encouraged to further develop their knowledge of conservation.



- **Leading the way in groundwater management**
- **Protecting our natural resources since 1972**

Located in southwest Nebraska, the Upper Republican Natural Resources District consists of all of Chase, Perkins and Dundy Counties. The District is unique in that it borders both Colorado and Kansas; it also neighbors the Middle Republican NRD to the east, and the Twin Platte NRD to the north. Imperial is the largest municipality of the District's twelve cities and villages.

NRDs help Nebraskans respond to natural resource challenges with local solutions that work. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries of the 23 NRDs, which are governed by locally-elected boards of directors. These directors are elected by registered voters within the District. The board sets policy for the District and works closely with the staff through a committee system to carry out the District's goals.

Find out more about
Nebraska's NRDs at
www.nrdnet.org
and www.urnrd.org.