

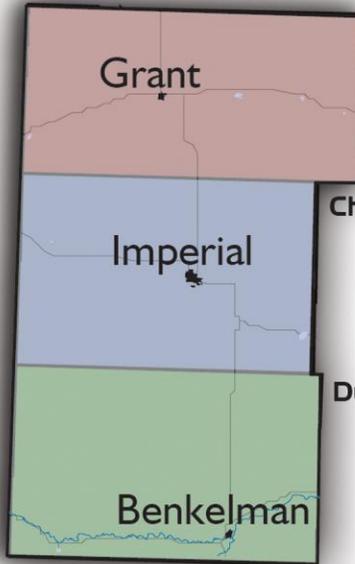
KNOW YOUR NRD



UPPER REPUBLICAN
Natural Resources District
Imperial, NE

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

2016



Perkins Co.

Chase Co.

Dundy Co.

UPPER REPUBLICAN NRD



**Local People
Providing
Local Solutions**

URNRD QUICK FACTS:

440,000 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 2016.

Augmentation: The Rock Creek project was not operated but NCORPE kept the state in compliance with the Republican River Compact in 2016. The NCORPE project prevented an irrigation shutdown on about 300,000 irrigated acres in the Republican Basin in 2015 and 2016, including more than 40,000 acres in the URNRD. The augmentation projects pump water that otherwise would have been used for crops into the Republican River.

Water-Saving Regulations: The District is believed to be the first entity in the U.S. to limit agricultural water use, having done so since 1979. Water-use allocations are imposed on

all irrigated acres in the District and the regulations have significantly slowed groundwater level declines. The allocation system has been a model for other parts of Nebraska, and neighboring states that don't yet have allocations. Regulations have encouraged the use of progressive, water-saving technology throughout the District. New rules are expected to reduce water use by 60,000-90,000 acre feet over the current allocation period.



Preserving Water for the Future

The District has helped put 350 water-saving probes on more than 45,000 acres since 2011 by reducing farmers' costs for the soil-moisture probes. This technology can reduce water applications by recommending to farmers when to irrigate and have been shown to reduce water use by 2 inches per acre. To date, water usage has been cut by an estimated 3 billion gallons, helping preserve the Ogallala Aquifer. Cost share has been provided with help from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

Conserving our Resources

The URNRD is actively involved in conservation and programs that maintain viable water allocations for users, as well as 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. The tax has produced revenue for programs including the augmentation project and irrigation retirement.

The District has also been 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.

Safeguarding 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.