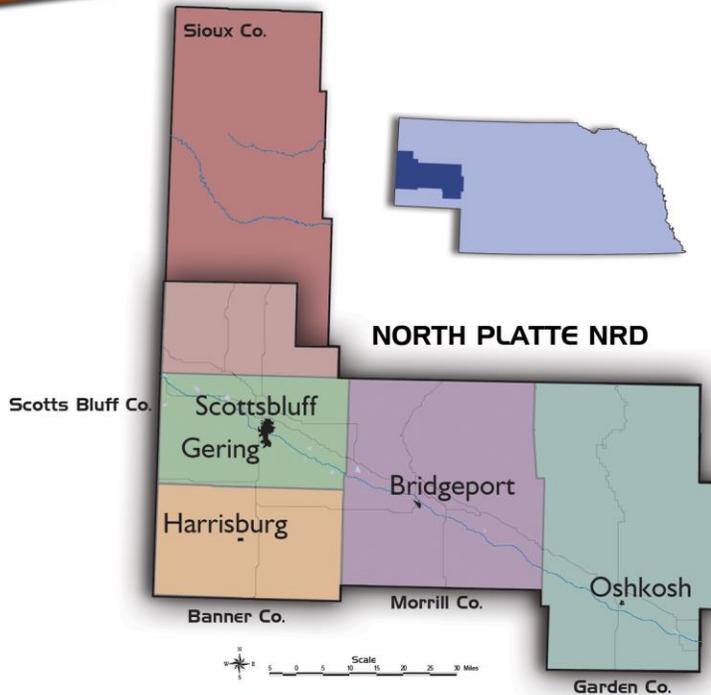


# KNOW YOUR NRD



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

2019



## NRD QUICK FACTS:

‘17 Precip: 15.65” (Scottsbluff)  
Active, Certified, Irrigation Wells: 2,496  
Monitoring Wells: 800  
Trees Planted: Over 5.2 million  
Total Irrigated Acres: approximately 450,000  
Ground Water Only Acres: 145,660  
Over half of the District’s total irrigated acres are supplied by commingled (114,315) water acres and ground water only acres.  
Western Nebraska’s ground water is greatly dependent upon the series of canals, tributaries, and seasonal irrigation run-off, which recharge the aquifer.  
A moratorium on new water well drilling in 2001 was the first such moratorium on the Platte River.

### Protecting Lives



The North Platte NRD protects the well-being of western Nebraska residents by providing

hydrographs of static ground water levels and nitrates levels from all our monitoring wells in the District. The NRD also manages a ground water management subarea in Garden County, where nitrates are closely monitored, and measures the static ground water levels in 800 monitoring wells located throughout the District. We administer a well decommissioning program to help landowners properly seal their abandoned wells, protecting children, pets, and property.

### Protecting Property

The North Platte NRD cooperates with landowners and the state of Nebraska to provide conservation cost-share programs that combine the financial resources of landowners, the NRD, and the state to provide financial incentives to landowners to protect soil, water and other resources for the general welfare. The NPNRD Board of Directors recently approved changes to the program. These changes include: a ranking system to assess applications, a year-round open enrollment, raised the cost-share limit to \$5000, and adjusted the practices to align with the District’s water management goals. These practices include: irrigation management, windbreaks, planned grazing systems, soil moisture probes, and others.

### Protecting the Future



The North Platte NRD protects the future by providing area producers with tools to

manage ground water more effectively. The NRD offers a flow meter maintenance program to help ensure more accurate ground water readings. The NRD has instituted a telemetry program that provides real time data from flow meter readings to both the District and producer. The multi-year ground water allocation period in the overappropriated areas provides flexibility for producers to plan ahead with crop rotations. By working with area producers, the North Platte NRD is poised to protect the future of western Nebraska’s water.

### Science-Based Management

In the effort of making more informed, fact-based resource management decisions, the North Platte NRD has partnered with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the University of Nebraska, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and other NRDs to conduct studies that will provide comprehensive science-based knowledge for present and future management decisions. The North Platte NRD is currently using the **Western Water Use Management Model**, which is specific to the North Platte and South Platte NRDs, to simulate and estimate future aquifer conditions and the effects of ground water withdrawal in specific areas of the District. The model will be used to help accomplish the goals of the North Platte NRD's water management efforts.



The North Platte NRD is protecting the future by partnering with Irrigation Districts and Canal Companies in the District to form the North Platte Valley Water Association. The partnership works together to protect, maintain, and enhance the water resources in our area. The partnership demonstrates that surface water and ground water entities can work together to protect our water resources.

### Wise and Safe Ground Water Use

The North Platte NRD has taken great pride in its efforts to meet our obligations by reducing consumptive use within the District. In addition to placing a moratorium on new well drilling, allocations on overappropriated areas, certifying all ground water uses, and metering ground water uses, the North Platte NRD has also permanently retired ground water irrigated acres throughout the District, including nearly 3900 in the Pumpkin Creek Subbasin and in the past two years, approximately 1500 in the North Platte River Valley. The NRD has also leased 774.7 surface water and comingled acres. The retired acres in the Valley will immediately contribute to our goal of getting water back to the North Platte River. These lands were converted to dryland, rangeland, or wildlife habitat.

The NRD has also instituted several programs to promote the reduction of consumptive use in the District. The Board instituted the Encouraging Producers Innovation through Conservation (EPIC) program which provides a bonus incentive payment to landowners of the District to renew their expiring federal conservation program participation and provides grants to landowners who propose innovative agricultural practices to realize water savings. These options include allocation buy-down, soil health, wildlife conservation, and other natural resources goals.

In 2016, the NRD received a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to provide over 850 telemetry units to be placed on flow meters in the District. These units have a camera placed on the meter to take a picture. The data is then transferred to both the NRD and the landowner to use in their water management decisions. The NRD also received a grant from the Water Sustainability Fund to retire 1000 ground water only acres, and have secured and/or are in the process of securing 629 acres. With retrievable land becoming more scarce, the NRD is looking at increasing on-farm efficiencies as a way to help reduce consumptive use in the District.

These management actions will help the District comply with state statute in returning the District to 1997 levels of use and protecting the resource for long-term sustainability.

- Protecting ground water by monitoring nitrate, arsenic, and uranium levels
- Protecting over 3 million acres in western Nebraska with tree planting, soil conservation, flood control, and ground water projects
- Protecting crop land and wildlife habitat by planting over 5.5 million conservation trees over the past 41 years
- Effectively using only 6.2 cents per \$100 for programs and services

### What is Comingled Water?

Comingled water is one of our District's greatest assets, and greatest management challenges. Comingled water is irrigation water that is derived from both surface (canal) water and ground (well) water. North Platte NRD needs the surface water irrigation system in order to recharge the aquifer and is working to encourage irrigators to use their surface water before tapping the ground water supply.

### YOUR Investment in LOCAL Natural Resources

The North Platte NRD is a local government agency that operates on a portion of your annual property taxes. Compared to State and County Governments and School Districts, the NRD uses a very small percentage of the total property taxes collected in each county. For example, in the North Platte NRD, on a \$100,000 home, this would equate to less than \$65 per year. To help fund programs, studies, and cost-share assistance, the NRD also utilizes money available from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Bureau of Reclamation funds, and other state and federal agencies.