

KNOW YOUR NRD



UPPER REPUBLICAN
Natural Resources District
Imperial, NE

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

2013

Local People Providing Local Solutions



Perkins Co.

Chase Co.

Dundy Co.

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 2012 and 2013.

Augmentation: The District in early 2013 began operating its \$14 million Rock Creek Augmentation Project in Dundy County and began work on another augmentation project in Lincoln County. A portion of the water that otherwise would have been used to irrigate crops on 3,260 acres purchased by the NRD and retired from irrigated production began being piped into Rock Creek in February 2013 to increase Republican River flows. It prevented farmers near the Republican River and its tributaries in the District from facing irrigation shutdowns in 2013 to maintain Compact compliance. It was expected that approximately 16,000 acre feet of water would be piped into Rock Creek in 2013. In late 2012, the

URNRD partnered with the Twin Platte, Lower Republican and Middle Republican NRDs to implement the Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement Project (NCORPE). 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. Construction began in September 2013 and the project is expected to be operational in 2014.

Water-Saving Regulations: The District approved new rules effective in 2013 that are expected to 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 is helping put water-saving technology in the field by reducing farmers' costs for soil-moisture probes. The NRD has committed \$100,000 to provide cost-share for probes that can save 2-4 inches of water annually. A \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is being used to provide cost-share and a \$50,000 grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Approximately 16,000 irrigated acres in the District have been enrolled. The District is also helping study the effects of using soil-moisture probes and is involved in an educational effort to promote use of the probes and educate farmers about how to use them.

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.