



Nebraska's Decentralized Water Planning Framework

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NEBRASKA

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Providing the sound science and support for
managing Nebraska's most precious resource.



Water Planning



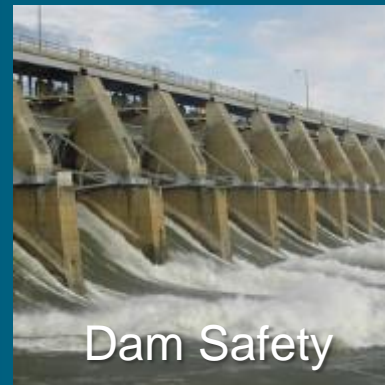
Surface Water



Groundwater



Floodplain
Management



Dam Safety



Field Offices

NEBRASKA

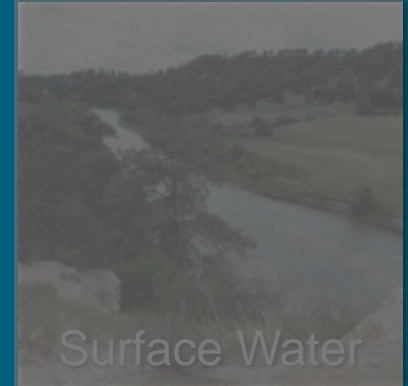
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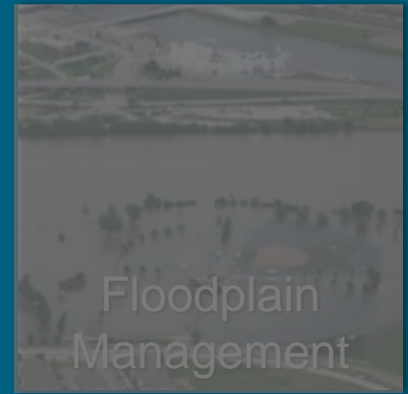
Water Planning



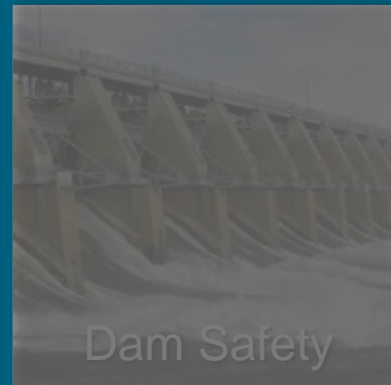
Surface Water



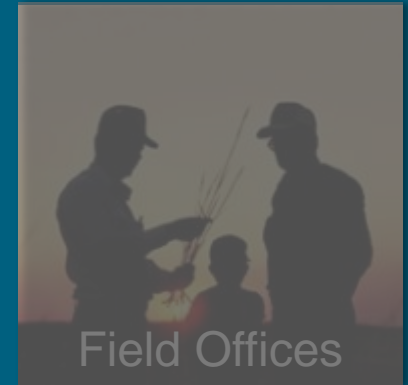
Groundwater



Floodplain Management



Dam Safety



Field Offices

Nebraska's decentralized water planning framework

1. Purpose of integrated water management planning
2. Nebraska's water planning process is unique
3. State, local, and public participation
4. Benefits and examples

How is this relevant to me?

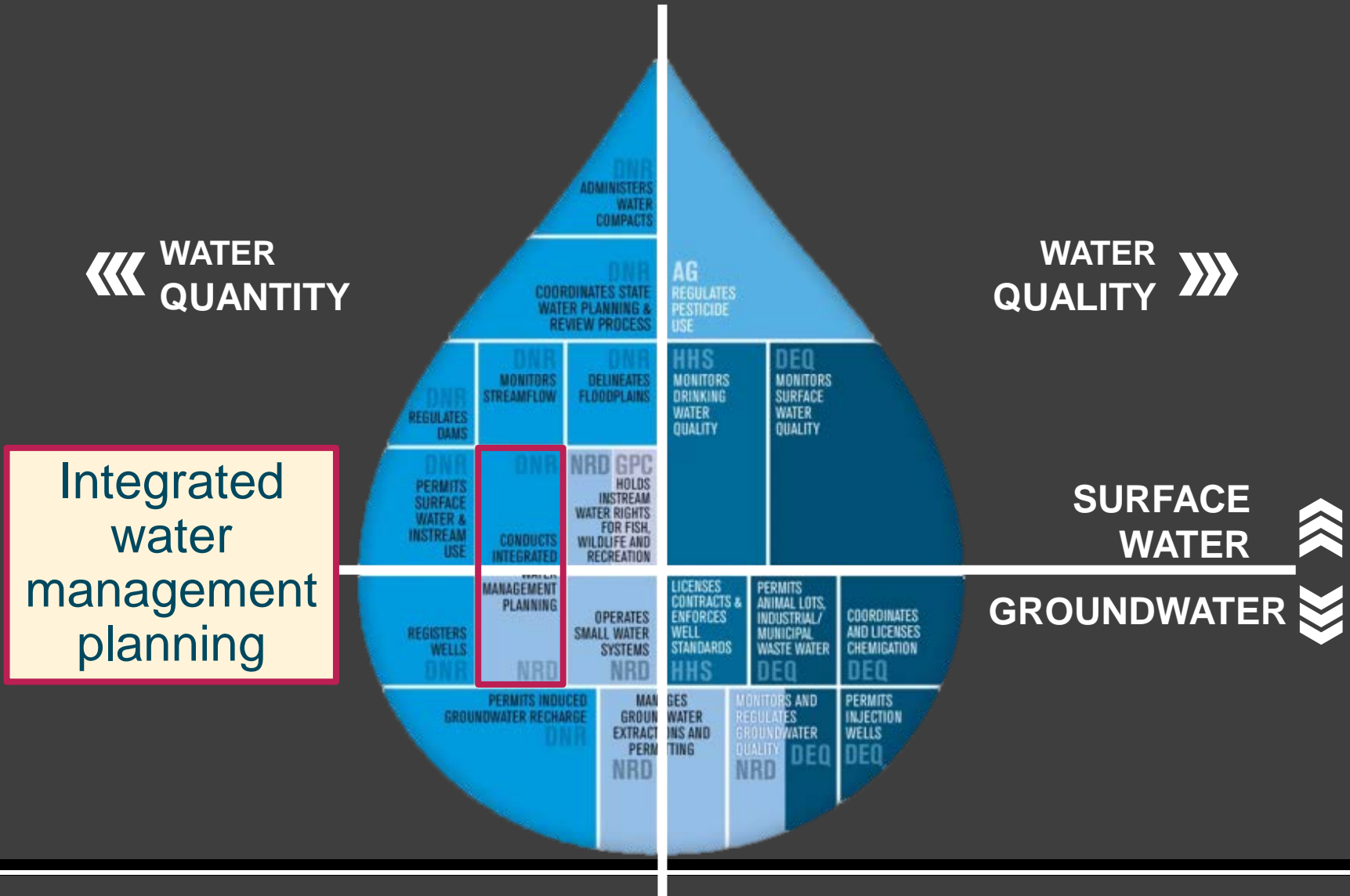


Integrated water management

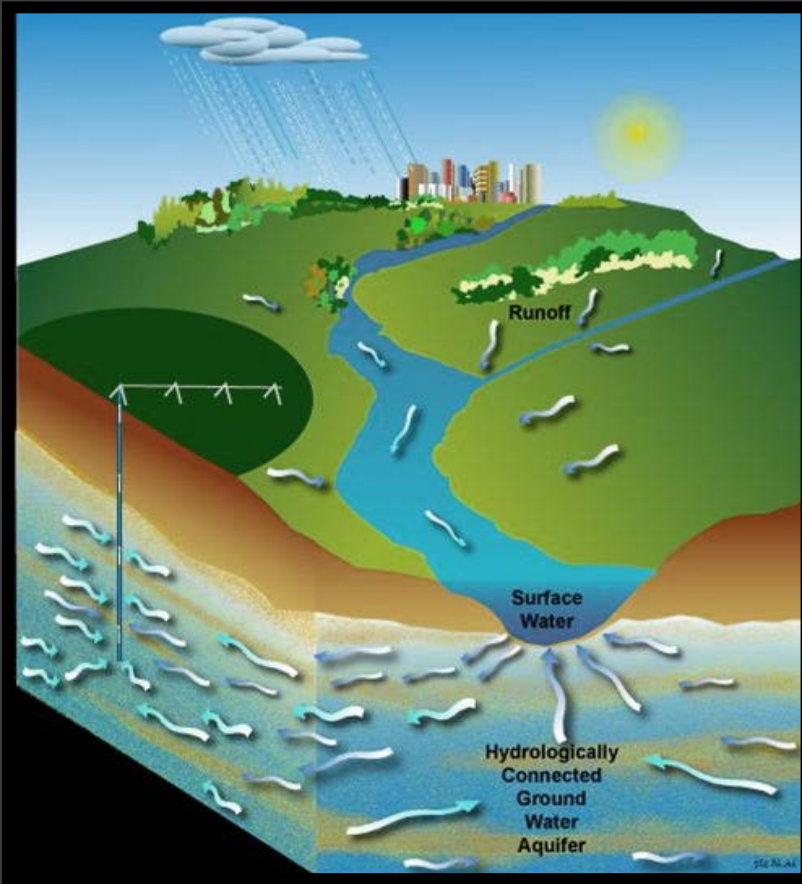
What is it?

Why do we do it?

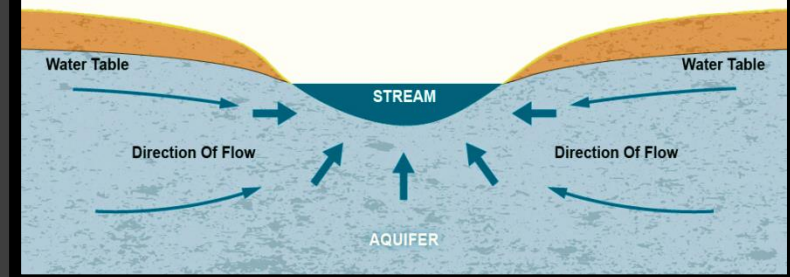
Water management in Nebraska



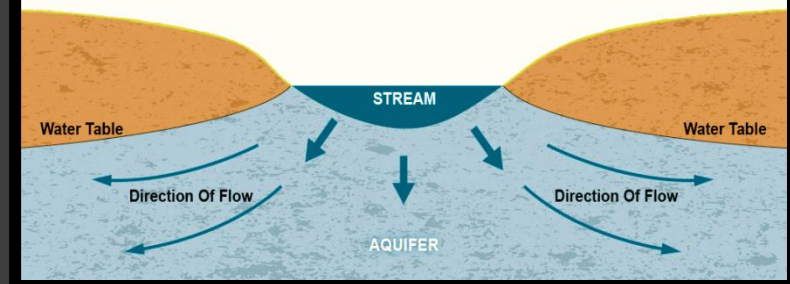
Hydrologically connected surface water and groundwater

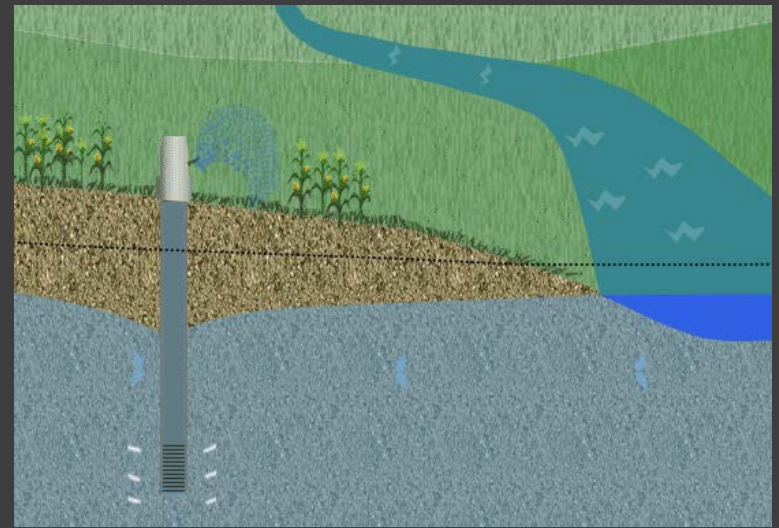
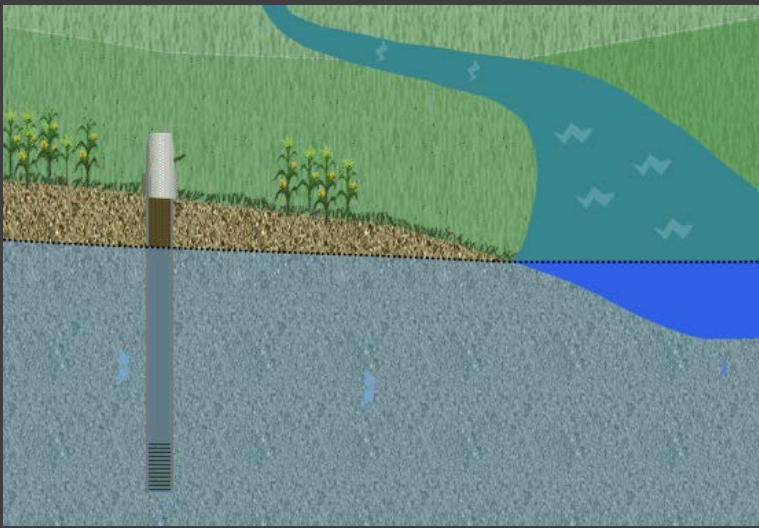


Gaining Stream

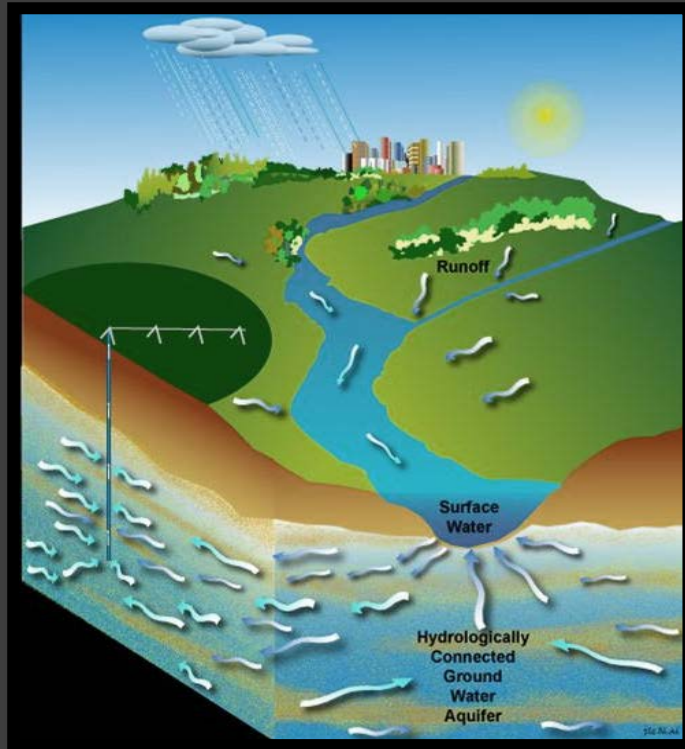


Losing Stream





Regulation and administration of water supplies in Nebraska



Surface water

- Regulated by NeDNR
- Prior appropriations



Groundwater

- Regulated by NRDs
- Correlative rights

Integrated management in Nebraska

- Pre-1963** Surface water & groundwater managed separately
- 1963** Wells < 50 feet of a stream considered part of surface water system
- 1983** Intentional and incidental recharge on surface water canal systems
- 1996** Joint action plans;
NRDs' first authority to regulate groundwater to protect streamflow
- 2004** Integrated management plans (fully and overappropriated)
Basin-wide plan (overappropriated)
- 2010** Integrated management plans (voluntary)
- 2014** Basin-wide plan (fully appropriated)

Purpose

...An integrated management plan shall include... Clear goals and objectives with a purpose of sustaining a balance between water uses and water supplies

so that the economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the river basin, subbasin, or reach

can be achieved and maintained for both the near term and the long term...

from *Neb. Rev. Stat. § 46-715 (2)*



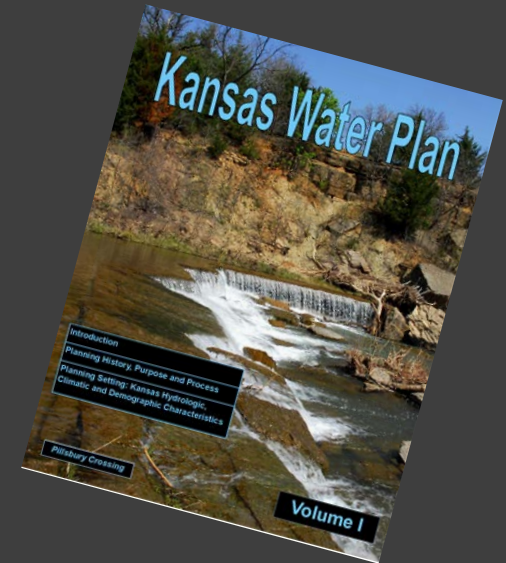
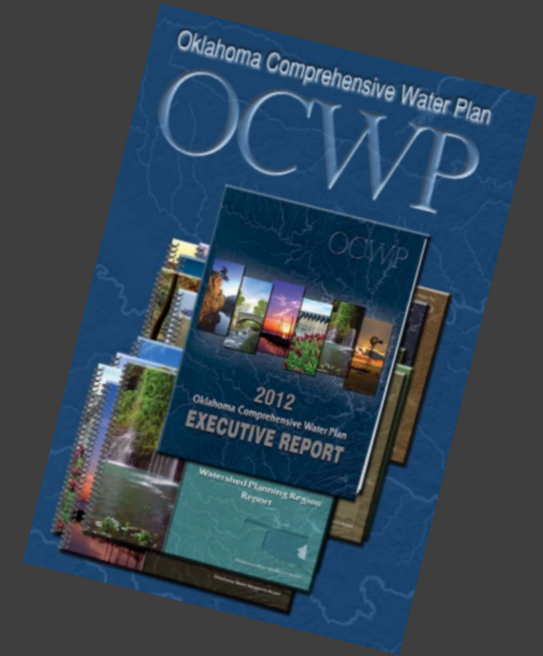
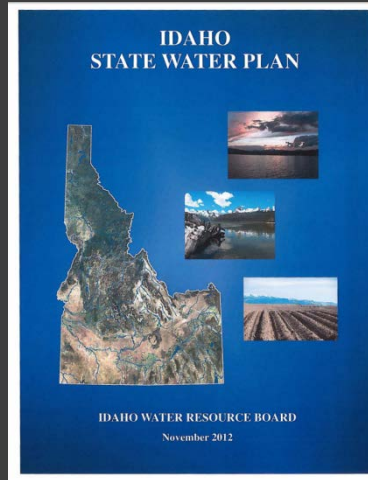
Other objectives

- Ensure compliance with interstate water compacts, decrees, or agreements
- Protect existing water users
- Monitor water supplies and uses
- Increase collaboration and communication between the state and local water managers

State water planning

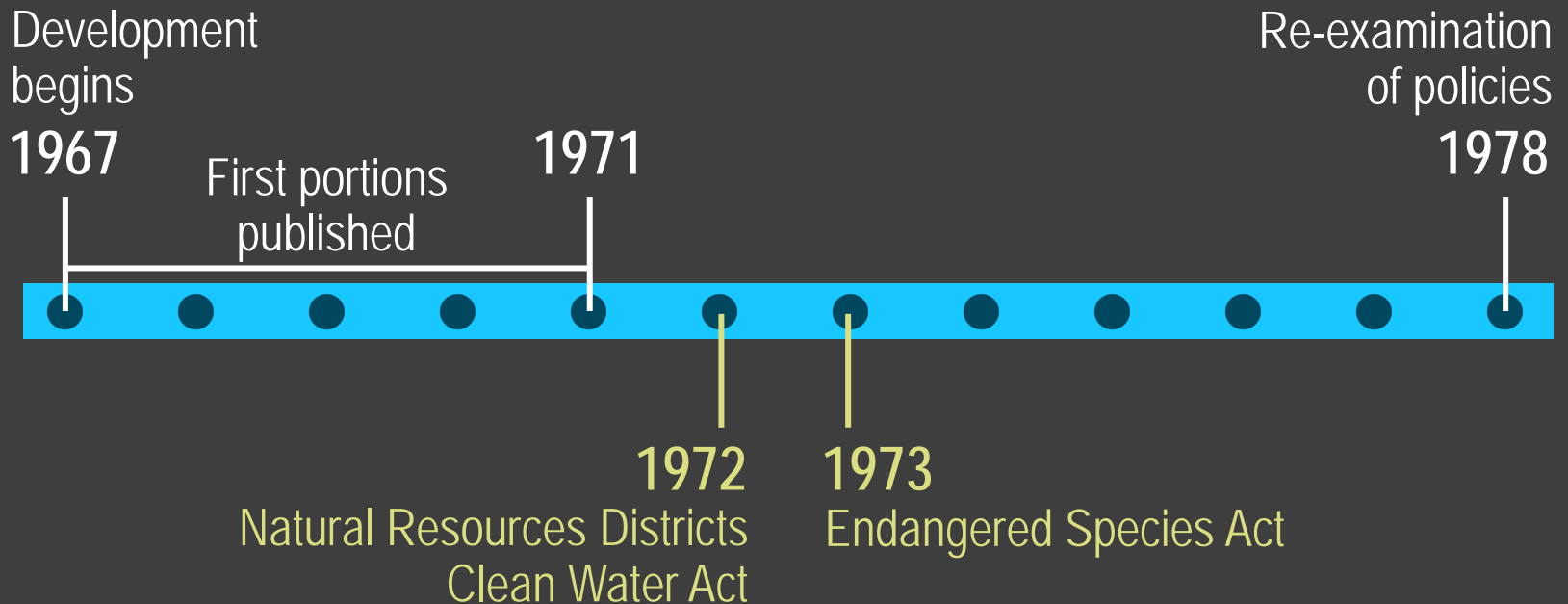
Nebraska's decentralized
framework is unique

State water plans



Nebraska's State Water Plan

Development of *The Nebraska State Water Plan*



Policy study - 1978

Report to the Legislature and Governor on the Nebraska State Water Planning and Review Process

Natural Resources
Commission and Work Plan
Development Committee



Policy study - 1978

“Experience has shown that published plans frequently become outdated rapidly, and some serve only to collect dust after a short time.”



Policy study - 1978

“those involved in the state’s water planning activities have been attempting to correct the misconception that the State Water Plan would be a blueprint and present their work as a continuing process that would provide flexible guides for future decisions.”



Policy study - 1978

“the agencies involved ...felt that it was necessary to eliminate any reference to a State Water Plan and concentrate on the Process.”



Nebraska's approach, then and now

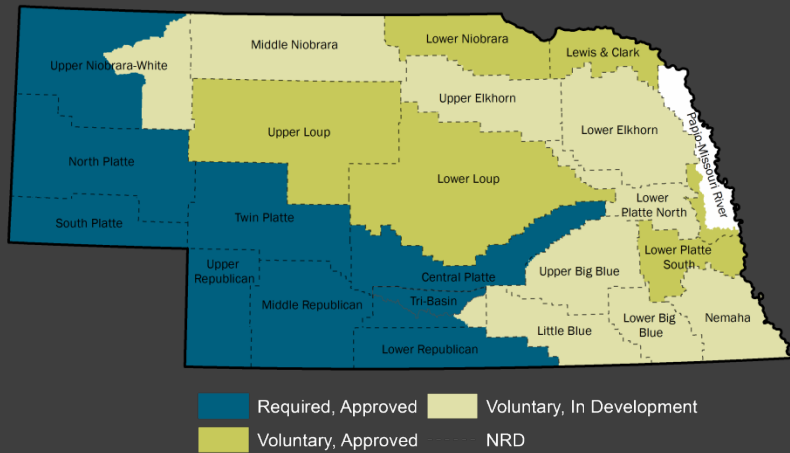
1967-1978
State Water Plan

1978-present
Focus on the process

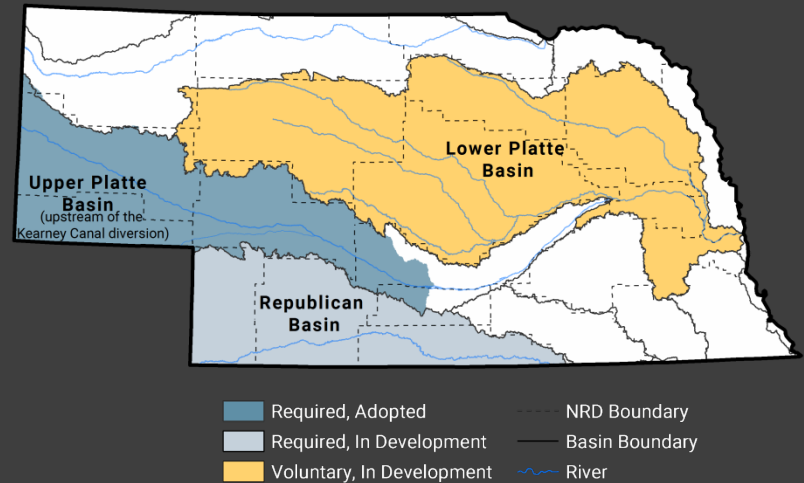


Nebraska's decentralized water planning framework

Integrated management plans



Basin-wide plans



A state water planning process, not a state water plan

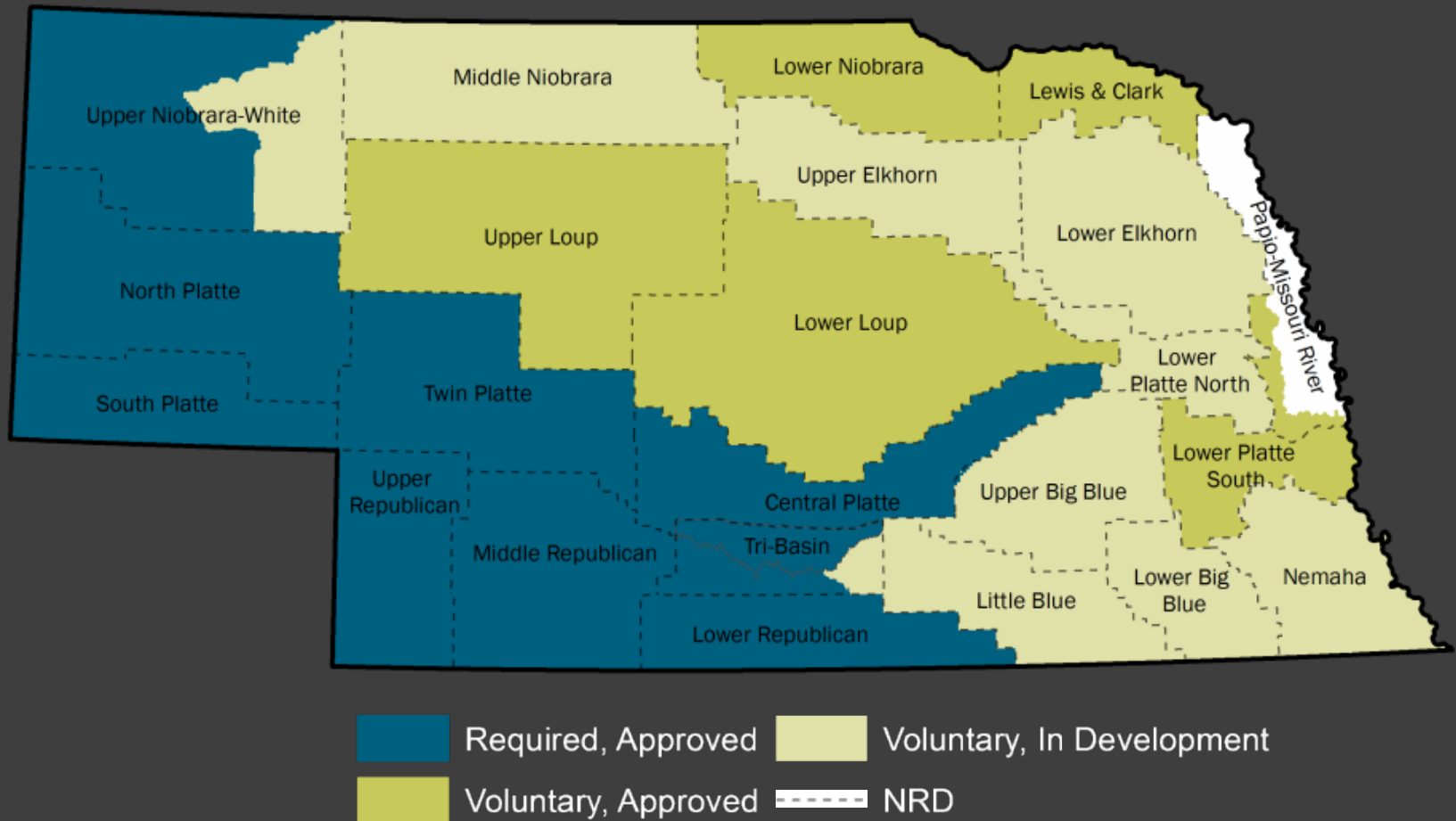
Integrated management plans

- 1 NRD & NeDNR
- Goals, objectives, & controls
 - Tailored to local issues and opportunities
 - May be more specific
- Must be consistent with basin-wide plan, if there is one

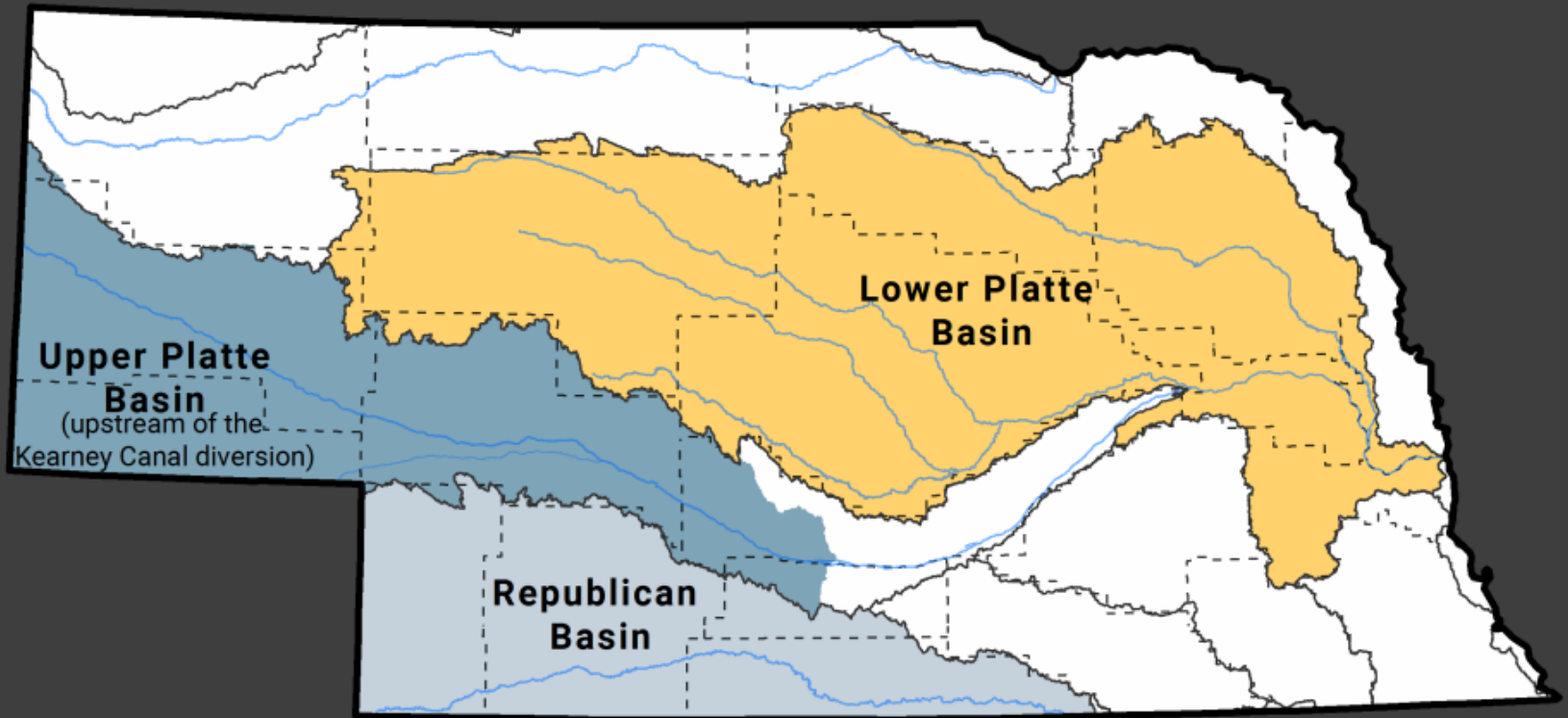
Basin-wide plans







- All basin NRDs & NeDNR
- Goals & objectives
 - Focused on regional, cross-boundary issues and opportunities
 - May be more of a general framework

Integrated management plans (IMPs)



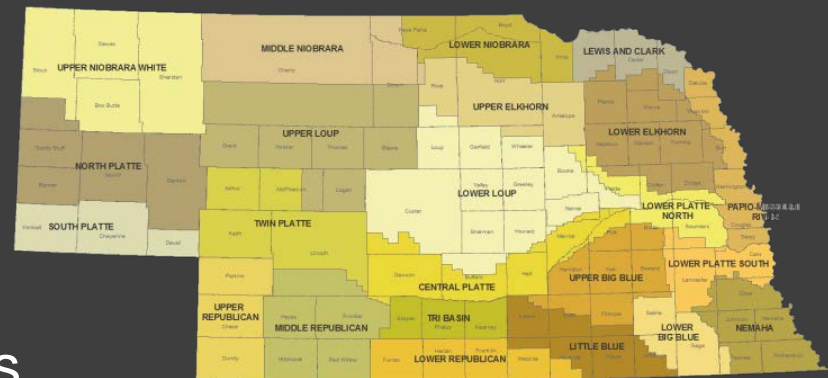
Basin-wide plans



- | | |
|--|--|
|  Required, Adopted |  NRD Boundary |
|  Required, In Development |  Basin Boundary |
|  Voluntary, Adopted |  River |

Natural resources districts (NRDs)

- Established 1972
- Conserve and protect natural resources
 - Manage and regulate groundwater
- Local government entities
 - Local control; elected boards
 - Address local issues with local solutions
- Roughly follow basin boundaries



Nebraska's NRDs are unique

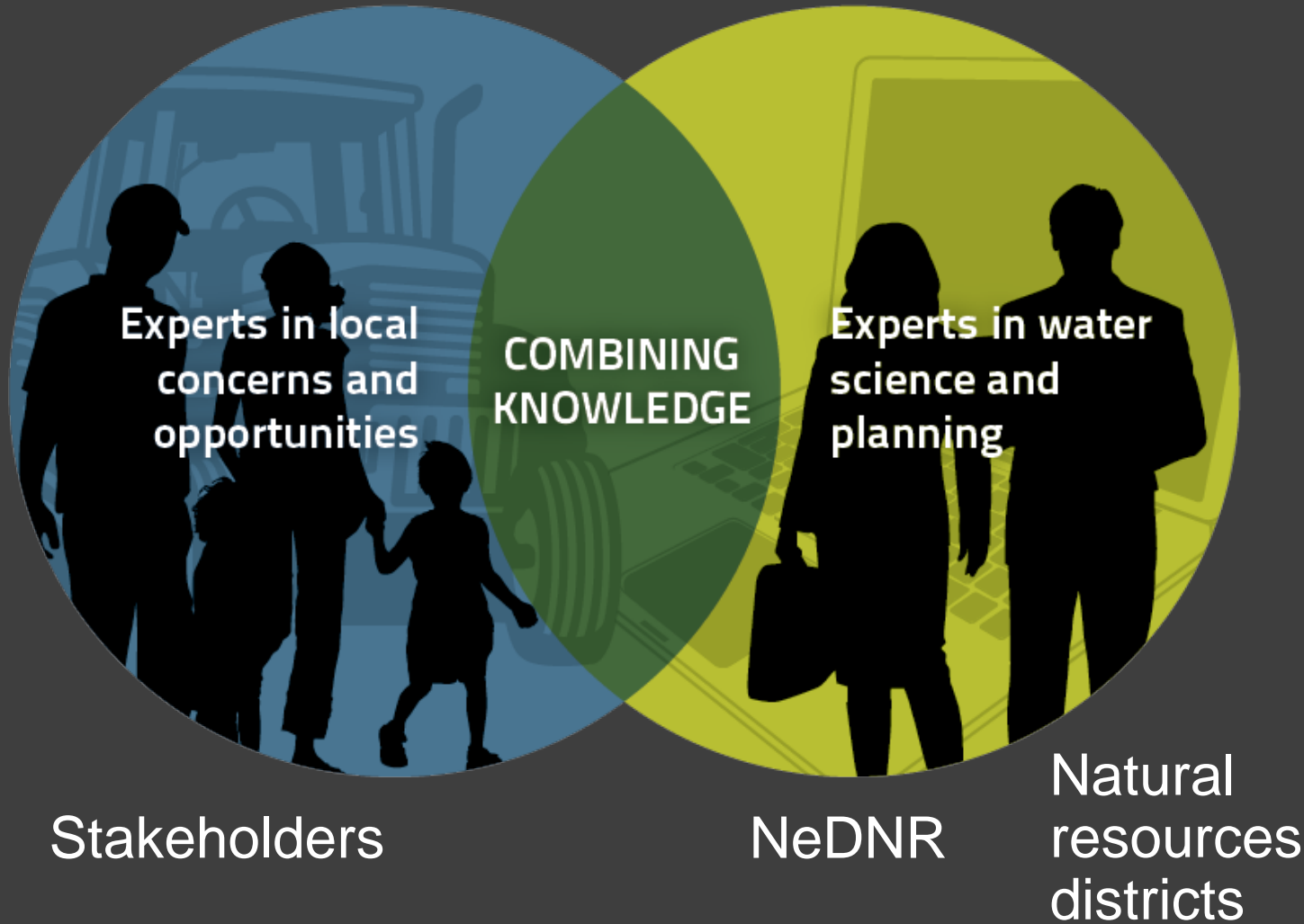
- Differences from other states
 - Local
 - Based on watershed boundaries
 - Regulatory powers
 - Taxing authority
- Benefits
 - Flexible, specific, and quick action
 - Targets regulation and projects where they are needed
 - Local meetings: easier for citizens to be heard and participate
 - Funding for projects that reduce the need for regulation
 - Leverage state and federal match

Participation and collaboration

Who is involved?

What does each bring to the process?

Roles during plan development



Stakeholder committee

- Required representation*
 - Irrigation districts, reclamation districts, public power and irrigation districts, mutual irrigation companies, canal companies, ground water users, range livestock owners, the Game and Parks Commission, and municipalities that rely on water from within the affected area
 - NeDNR and NRDs may choose to include others

**list differs slightly by plan type*

Stakeholder participation

- Required minimum level of stakeholder involvement

Required IMPs (FA)
Voluntary IMPs

Required IMPs (OA)
Required basin-wide plans

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Public participation

- General public
 - At least one public meeting
 - Public hearing on final draft

Role of municipalities

- Development
 - Stakeholder representation
- Implementation
 - Data
 - Partner in management actions
 - Can attend annual meetings and/or read annual reports

Adaptive management



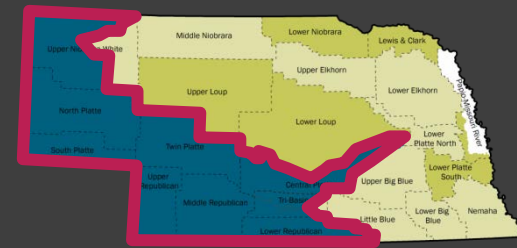
Benefits and examples

How a decentralized planning
framework helps address Nebraska's
water management needs

Benefits

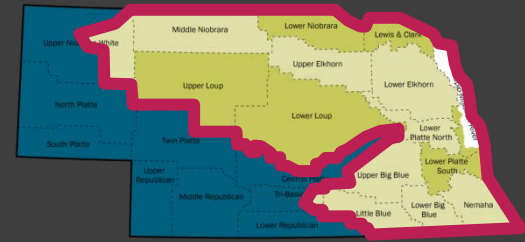
- Builds a collaborative relationship between state and local water managers
 - Development & implementation
 - Annual meetings
 - Decision-making
- The state gains a better understanding of local or regional issues and data needs
- Encourages focused and proactive management

Examples



- Reduce or limit demands
 - No new or expanded uses
 - Reduce pumping by 20% from baseline
 - Incentive programs (e.g., conservation measures, acreage retirements)
 - Mandatory water meters
 - Limit transfers' consumptive use
 - Allocations
- Increase or re-time supplies
 - Augmentation
 - Offset requirements
 - Recharge projects
 - Increase surface water storage

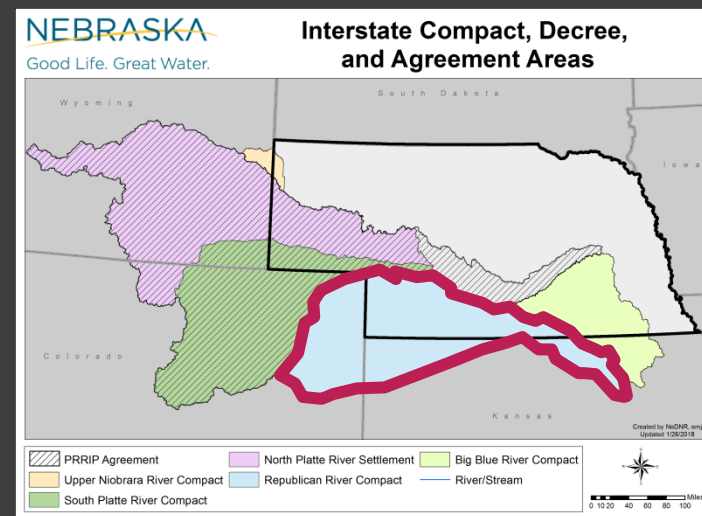
Examples



- **Identifying and filling information gaps**
 - Identify/Inventory
 - Critical hydrologic areas
 - Current and future demands
 - Where additional data is needed
 - Location and source of supplies and uses
 - Additional streamgages
 - Voluntary water use reporting
 - Groundwater meters (often voluntary)
- **Proactive planning**
 - **Assess** potential impacts to existing users
 - **Study** opportunities for future projects or programs
 - **Project** changes due to growth
 - **Potential for** future moratoriums, allocations, or other controls if needed
 - **Future** drought mitigation plan
 - **Review and research** conservation programs
 - **Evaluate** current irrigation practices

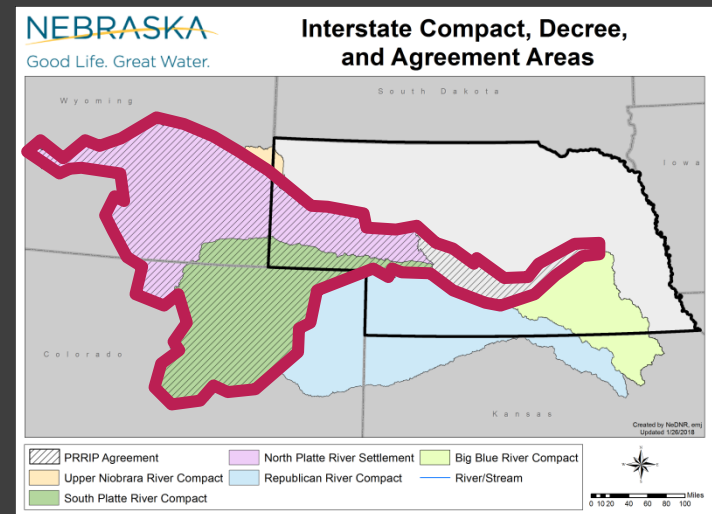
Examples: compliance with interstate agreements

- Compliance with Republican River Compact
 - Rapid Response Area
 - Forecast/Compact Call Year procedures
 - Apportionment of NE's allocation among NRDs



Examples: compliance with interstate agreements

- Compliance with Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP)
 - Compliance with Nebraska New Depletions Plan
 - Ability to transfer existing surface water appropriations to instream flow
 - Water banking for credits or offsets



Examples: urban issues



- Stormwater BMPs
- Landscaping water conservation
- Wastewater reuse
- Rainwater harvesting
- Urban growth
- Indoor water conservation practices

The collaborative integrated management process allows **flexibility** in meeting the state's objective of balancing water supplies and uses **in a manner that fits each area's unique needs and conditions**

In summary

- Nebraska has a state water planning process, not a state water plan
 - Decentralized and flexible
 - Not one size fits all
 - Focuses on the water needs of each area
- Plans work together for the benefit of the state
 - Improve water availability
 - Improve ability to respond to emergencies
 - Provide mechanisms for compliance with interstate obligations

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<http://dnr.nebraska.gov/water-planning>

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