

DEPARTMENT OF WATER, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

2026 ANNUAL REPORT OF 2025 ACTIVITIES

TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOINTLY DEVELOPED INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PORTION OF THE UPPER BIG BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT WITHIN THE UPPER PLATTE RIVER BASIN

I. INTRODUCTION

On July 1, 2025 the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the Nebraska Department of Energy and Environment merged to form the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (Department). This report is intended to satisfy the Department's tracking and reporting requirements as described in the Monitoring and Studies section of the jointly developed Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the portion of the Upper Big Blue NRD (UBBNRD) within the Upper Platte River Basin. This IMP requires that the Department track and report on the following items annually:

- Any surface water permits issued.
- Any dam safety permits issued.
- Any groundwater permits issued.
- Associated offsets for any new permits issued.

The Department reports the following items every five (5) years:

- National Agricultural Statistics Service livestock data.
- U.S. Census Bureau population data.
- Inventory of sandpits.
- Inventory of reservoirs of less than fifteen (15) acre-feet.
- Any retirements of irrigated acres or other water uses.
- Offsets provided for depletions resulting from increased consumptive use related to the items listed above.

The items tracked and reported will be used by the UBBNRD and the Department to measure the success of the controls and other action items in meeting the goals and objectives of the IMP. The tracking, reporting, and evaluation processes are described in more detail in the Monitoring and Studies section of the IMP. In addition to the evaluation processes, the information that is tracked and reported will also be used by the State of Nebraska to help meet requirements of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP).

The 2026 report is the sixteenth report to be filed since the IMP was approved in October 2010. This report contains information on the above-listed items from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

II. ACTIVITIES TO BE REPORTED ANNUALLY

Items reported annually include permits that are issued by the Department. When a surface water or groundwater permit is reviewed, the Department assesses the potential of the permitted action to increase, decrease, or not affect water use. Depending on the circumstances, the applicant may be required to take action that would mitigate the effects of any increase in water use. Described in this section are any permits issued by the Department and the associated review of potential changes in water use.

The Department issued no surface water, groundwater or dam safety permits in 2025; therefore, there is no change in water use with respect to permitted activities.

These data, in addition to NRD-permitted activities, are incorporated by the Department into the annual reporting under the Nebraska New Depletions Plan.

III. ACTIVITIES TO BE REPORTED ON A FIVE (5)-YEAR BASIS

For purposes of the PRRIP, the Department is responsible for tracking certain activities within the Upper Platte River Basin portion of the UBBNRD on a five-year basis. The activities to be tracked include:

- National Agricultural Statistics Service livestock data.
- U.S. Census Bureau population data.
- Sandpits and other reservoirs smaller than fifteen (15) acre-feet (those not requiring a permit).
- Any retirements of irrigated acres or other water uses.
- Offsets provided for depletions resulting from increased consumptive use related to those items.

In 2019, these data were compiled and analyzed as part of the Upper Platte River Basin Robust Review¹. The Department has determined through this analysis that any changes in livestock population, human population, or sandpits and small reservoirs has had a de minimis impact on consumptive use in the Upper Platte River Basin portion of the District. The most recent Robust Review of the Upper Platte River Basin concluded in 2024 and will serve to fulfill the five-year reporting requirements of the IMP once a final report is published. Currently, as of April 1, 2026, the Upper Platte River Basin Robust Review report is not available but is scheduled to be published later this year.

¹ The 2019 Upper Platte Basin Robust Review
http://upjointplanning.nebraska.gov/media/RobustReview/20190612_RobustReviewReport_FINAL.pdf03.2

Appendix A: Figure illustrating the extent of the management area covered under the IMP.

