Lower Rio Grande Valley Water District Managers' Association

Unified Agricultural Water Advocacy for the Lower Rio Grande

Investing in Irrigation District efficiency delivers the largest and most cost-effective water savings in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

Agriculture holds about
90%
water rights in the LRGV

LRGVWDMA represents
23
Irrigation Districts

LRGVWDMA controls over
1.2M
acre-feet of water rights

Sources: TAMU and the 2021 Rio Grande Regional Water Plan.

Executive Message: The Investment Case

Agriculture holds about 90% of all water rights in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Irrigation Districts control over 1.2 million acre-feet of irrigation water rights across 23 districts.

Irrigation District conservation projects show a lower cost per acre-foot conserved than municipal projects identified in the regional plan.

A 10% irrigation efficiency gain yields 100,000 acre-feet—more than 3× the municipal 10% gain.

Irrigation District projects:
$6,963
per AF

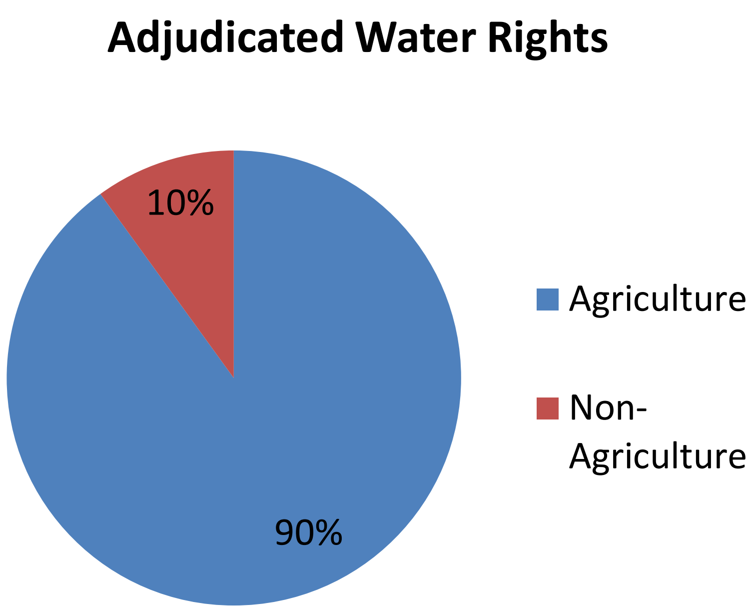
Municipal projects:
$10,629
per AF

ID's have a
3.6×
better ROI

Takeaway

Conservation investments in Irrigation Districts are significantly more cost-effective than municipal "new water" projects.

Why Agriculture is Central to the Water Strategy in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

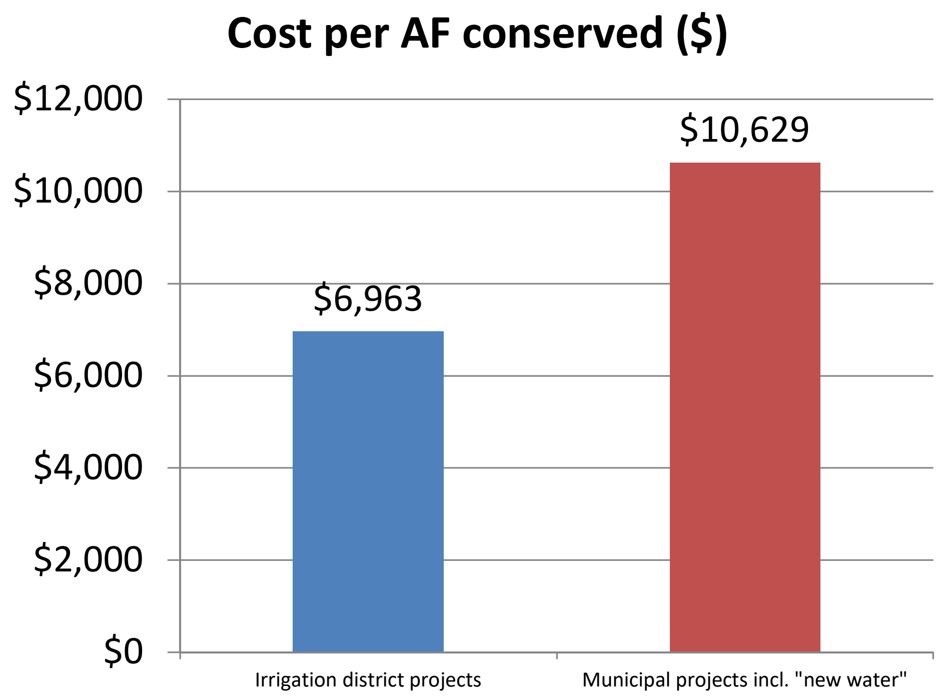


Since Irrigation Districts hold a vast majority of the water rights, individual district-level investments can influence the largest share of the regional water portfolio.

A vast majority of municipal water suppliers rely on Irrigation Districts as their primary source of water.

Policy implication: fund projects where the underlying water volume is concentrated.

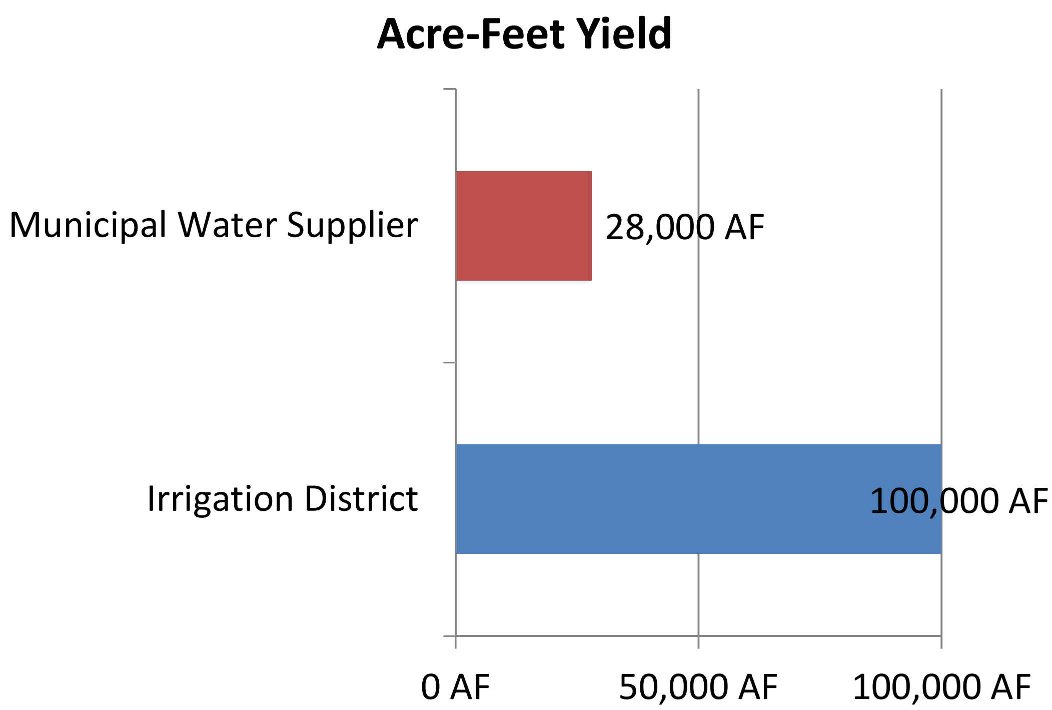
Cost per Acre-Foot: Irrigation District compared to Municipal Projects



Budget Message:

Irrigation District conservation projects have a lower cost per acre-foot than municipal water supplier projects, including "new water."

Potential Water Yield from a 10% Efficiency Improvement



100,000 AF
yield for Irrigation

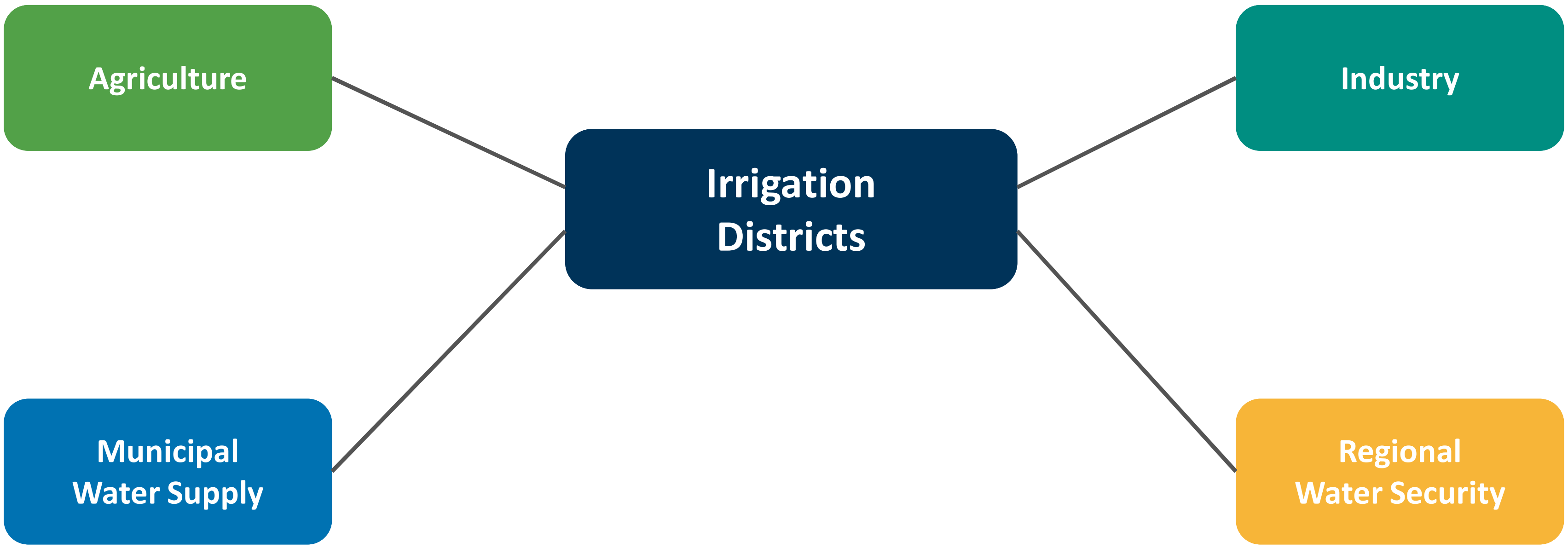
28,000 AF
Yield for Municipal Water Suppliers

Scale matters: the same percentage improvement yields more water where use is larger.

Takeaway

Irrigation Districts are both the "Lowest Hanging Fruit" and the "Largest Fruit".

Irrigation Districts Are Regional Water Infrastructure



Takeaway:

Irrigation Districts are the backbone of water deliveries not only to agricultural users, but also industries and municipal water suppliers.

Legislative Ask: Prioritize High-ROI Conservation

1 Prioritize

Give Irrigation District efficiency projects strong weight in federal, state, regional, and local funding decisions.

2 Stabilize

Recognize that water supply shortages have reduced Irrigation District revenue at a time when capital investment is needed.

3 Coordinate

Align investments that are consistent with our "One Voice" approach, the Rio Grande Regional Water Plan.

Thought Provoking Questions & Concise Answers

Why Irrigation Districts?	Irrigation Districts holds about 90% of agricultural water rights in the LRGV, controlling over 1.2 million acre-feet spread across 23 districts throughout Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties.
Why now?	Ongoing water supply shortages persist greatly reducing district's revenue. Also, as deliveries are low system availability is easier to achieve.
Where is the ROI?	When you compare the cost per acre-foot yield between projects for irrigation districts (ID) and municipal water suppliers, the ROI is approximately 3.6x higher for money put into ID projects.
What is the broader benefit?	Irrigation districts deliver water to agricultural users, industries, and municipal water suppliers across the Lower Rio Grande Valley.