



Utah Department of Natural Resources Division of Water Rights

What is Saved Water?¹

Saved water is the *NET* decrease in depletion or *NET* reduction in diversion for a perfected water right, which results from an agricultural water optimization project.

Depletion is the consumptive-use portion of water, diverted from a surface or groundwater source, that is consumed by use or delivery and that does not return to a natural water source or other body of water.

Diversion is the removal of water from its natural source. The difference between diversion and depletion is the amount of water returned to its natural source.

When engineers evaluate this NET saved water, they are evaluating real, actual water savings. It's not a bookkeeping exercise. On a saved water change application, engineers compare how water was **actually used** with what is being **proposed**. (For example, they won't necessarily use alfalfa as a benchmark if you weren't growing alfalfa previously.)

The proposed, saved water change must be approved **BEFORE** the agriculture optimization project is implemented.

What are the advantages of a Saved Water Change Application?

If a change application is approved, the saved water can be used separately from the underlying right.

Who is the water saved for?

Water is saved primarily for the water right holder who can then use it separately from the underlying right or market for other purposes.

(more on other side)

¹ References: Utah Code §73-1-4, §73-3-3, §73-3-8, and §73-109



Does participating create a risk of losing water rights?

No. Participating in the agriculture program does not create a water rights loss risk. Keep in mind, however, that you need to follow through with your plans. The "Saved Water Change Application" can lapse if a proof or extension isn't filed (just like any other water rights application). And although statute protects "saved water" from forfeiture under 73-1-4(2)(e)(xii) -- even after certificated -- any water right that isn't being used can be subject to forfeiture after seven years of nonuse.

Can I get my saved water back?

A change application for saved water can be withdrawn, however there may be grant requirements with UDAF that would limit when that could occur.

What can I do with saved water?

With the depletion portion of saved water, you can potentially:

- Expand your acreage of less-consumptive crops
- Market to other water users
- Use it for environmental purposes

Note: diversion savings are limited to non-consumptive uses.

