

BI-ANNUAL REPORT

2011 12



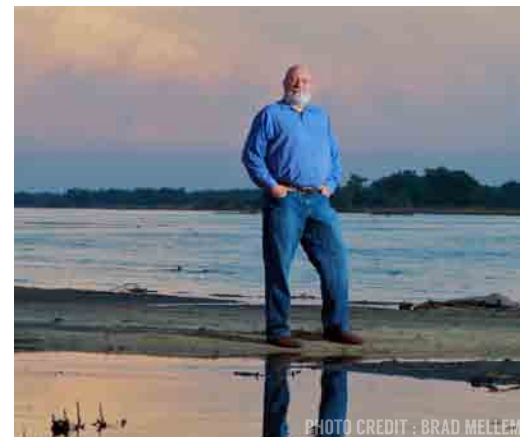
PLATTE RIVER
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM TARGET SPECIES



Top Left Piping Plover | 1986 Federally Listed as a Threatened Species
 Top Right Pallid Sturgeon | 1990 Federally Listed as an Endangered Species
 Bottom Left Whooping Crane | 1967 Federally Listed as an Endangered Species
 Bottom Right Interior Least Tern | 1985 Federally Listed as an Endangered Species

From the Executive Director



Serving the threatened
and endangered species of
the Platte River as well as
the people who live here.

The 2011–2012 BiAnnual Report covers years five and six of the Program’s thirteen year first increment. Six years represents almost half of the first increment. Much has been accomplished in that time, but much remains to be done. One of the most significant accomplishments is that the participants are all still together at the table and continue to work cooperatively. As long as that is true, the rest can be achieved.

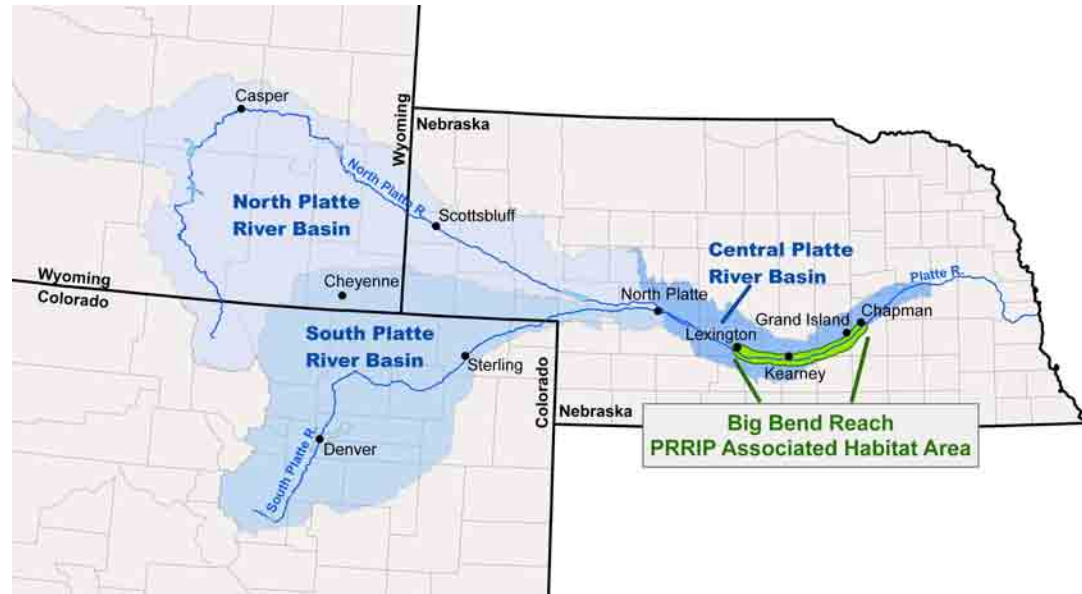
During the 2011–2012 period, capable leadership was provided by the Chairs of the Governance, Finance, and Advisory Committees: Dr. James Schneider of Nebraska and Michael Thabault of the us Fish and Wildlife Service for the Governance Committee; Mike Purcell of Wyoming and Gary Campbell of the us Bureau of Reclamation for the Finance Committee; Mike Besson of Wyoming for the Technical Advisory Committee; Cory Steinke of CNPID for the Water Advisory Committee; Scott Woodman, local landowner; and Mark Czaplewski of CPNRD for the Land Advisory Committee.

During this period, senior members of the group moved on to other phases in their careers after many years of contributions to the Program, such as John Lawson of the us Bureau of Reclamation and Mike Purcell of Wyoming. We also lost some people as they passed over to whatever lies beyond, Norm DeMott with the Goshen Irrigation District and the Wyoming North Platte Irrigators Association and Scott Woodman local landowner representative and LAC Chair. The contributions made by these individuals cannot be measured.

A debt of gratitude is owed all of these individuals and to all of the other committee and staff members of the participating organizations who contribute to the accomplishments we will summarize herein. But, once again, much remains to be done. It is good to reflect with pride on the accomplishments, and use that as inspiration for finishing what remains. Continued commitment to the spirit of collaboration, perseverance through the times when tough decisions will be made, and determination to finish what has been started—all of these things and more will be required of these people.

I and the Staff of the Executive Director’s Office look forward to working together with such a fine group of dedicated professionals as we move into the second half of the first increment and toward finishing what we have started.

Gerry F. Kenny



Program History

On July 1, 1997 the governors of Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and the Secretary of the Interior entered into a Cooperative Agreement to address the needs of four threatened or endangered species using the Platte River Basin while allowing water development to continue to occur. The named species were the endangered whooping crane, least tern, pallid sturgeon and the threatened piping plover. The agreement proposed a framework for a long-term Recovery Implementation Program to aid these species. Initially, the agreement was for three years to develop a basin-wide cooperative program. However, negotiations regarding the details of that program took place from 1997 to 2006.

In late 2006, the governors of Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and the Secretary of the Interior signed the final program agreement, effective January 1, 2007. In May 2007 an Executive Director was selected and began his tenure with the program on July 1, 2007. On May 8, 2008 the President signed into law legislation to implement the federal share of the Program as part of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. This legislation included authorization for the federal funding of the Program.



The Program provides Endangered Species Act compliance for water related activities within Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming, while working to recover the threatened and endangered target species. The Program is authorized for a 13-year First Increment, which began in 2007, and is estimated to cost roughly \$320 million in 2005 dollars with the monetary portion of that being \$187 million. The federal government will contribute \$157 million in cash, and Colorado and Wyoming will jointly contribute \$30 million. The remaining portion will come in terms of land and water from the states; Nebraska's entire contribution will be of this nature. The total cost of the program in terms of cash, water, and land is shared equally between the federal government and the states. Federal funds are appropriated on a year-to-year basis and distributed on a monthly basis. Wyoming provides funds on a quarterly basis and Colorado provides funds in lump sum blocks. To date, the majority of the states' funds have been secured.

The Program is recognized as a model of conserving and restoring a river while complying with ESA issues. In 2011 the Program and the Platte River Recreation Access program were chosen by Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, as the two Nebraska projects that represent the most promising ways to reconnect Americans to the natural world. The projects were selected as part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to establish a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda and reconnect Americans to the outdoors. The projects were identified for their potential to conserve important lands and build recreation opportunities and economic growth for the surrounding communities. Realizing this potential will require close engagement with Governor Dave Heineman and the state of Nebraska, as well as private landowners, local elected officials, community organizations and outdoor-recreation and conservation stakeholders. In 2012, the Program was chosen by Secretary Salazar as one of nine projects in the Southwest and Great Plains states under America's Great Outdoors Rivers Initiative. The projects chosen were selected to provide examples of how communities across America can restore and reconnect with the rivers in their backyards.

Executive Summary

In 2009 and 2010, the Executive Director's Office (EDO) of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (Program) moved forward on implementation of the Program objectives and goals. The Program focused on land acquisition, feasibility studies to evaluate reservoir locations, and planning for the full-scale implementation of the adaptive management plan. This is the third accomplishments report of the Program, covering 2011 and 2012, and highlights the accomplishments achieved during that time.

This report is organized to mirror the structure of the Program and is correspondingly divided into four main sections; Land, Water, Adaptive Management, and Program Administration and Outreach.

Land

In 2011 and 2012 the Program continued to purchase land to meet the Program's land goal of 10,000 acres. The Program, to date, has acquired approximately 10,236 acres through sponsorship agreements, purchases, leases, or perpetual easements from willing sellers/partners. The Program pays taxes on all purchased lands. In 2011 the Program paid nearly \$50,000 in taxes and nearly \$75,000 in 2012. Land acquisition requires basic land management and the Program has developed and implemented land management plans that include activities such as building and repairing of fences, tree clearing, weed spraying and planting of grass. All of these activities are conducted under a good neighbor policy and the Program has maintained both good tenant and good neighbor relationships.

Water

The focus of the Program Water Plan has been primarily on developing projects that will retune excess flows and secondarily on the purchase or lease of water currently used predominantly for agriculture. The J-2 Regulating Reservoir upstream of Overton was selected as the preferred reservoir alternative to retune flows from periods of excess to periods of shortage. In 2011 and 2012, additional studies were completed to determine the feasibility of multiple reservoir operations with other water users. Storage in the aquifer can also retune water. Beginning in 2011, a pilot-demonstration project and feasibility study were completed for groundwater recharge with successful results that will soon lead to a more long-term arrangement. In addition, the Pathfinder Modification project was completed and operated to supply Pathfinder Environmental Account water in 2012. A lease arrangement with Wyoming for Pathfinder Municipal Account water was signed in 2011 with initial water delivery taken in 2012. Multiple water leasing opportunities have been identified and are being investigated with lease agreements to be concluded in the near future.

Adaptive Management

Adaptive Management Plan activities in 2011 and 2012 focused on management action implementation, associated monitoring and research, and data synthesis. Systematic monitoring for whooping cranes, least terns and piping plovers, geomorphology, and vegetation continued in both years, as did project-specific water quality monitoring. Aerial imagery and LiDAR were collected both years. The Program began extensive involvement in the Whooping Crane Telemetry Tracking Project, published the final report on the tern and plover foraging habits study, and began lateral erosion research. This time period saw implementation of the Elm Creek Complex Flow-Sediment-Mechanical "Proof of Concept" experiment, design of the Shoemaker Island Complex "Proof of Concept" experiment, and first-round implementation of the Sediment Augmentation Pilot-Scale Management Action. The Program completed its first data synthesis report, the 2012 "State of the Platte" Executive Summary. Activities related to independent science included three peer reviews, six meetings of the Independent Scientific Advisory Committee, and Program-wide Adaptive Management Plan Reporting Sessions in both 2011 and 2012.

Program Administration and Outreach

Through 2012, the Program has expended over \$53 million. After the initial two years, expenditures have averaged about \$12.5 million a year, fluctuations driven primarily by the amount of land acquired in a year.

While all of the Executive Director's Office is considered Administrative, staff efforts are largely focused on providing technical and organizational support for the planning and implementation of land, water, and adaptive management activities of the Program. Besides providing direct technical services, Program staff also provides technical support, oversight, and direction to all Program contractors.

Public outreach educates and informs the public about the Program and Program activities through a variety of venues. In 2012, the Program was one of the sponsors of the Nebraska Educational Television time-lapse project on the Platte River and a sponsor of the Lincoln Children's Museum Big Splash Water Exhibit. The Program sponsored ten events in 2011–2012 and we made over 8,000 contacts at Program exhibits at various professional conferences and public events. The Executive Director's Office staff presented on various aspects of the Program to a variety of audiences in 2011 and 2012 (22 and 15, presentations respectively).

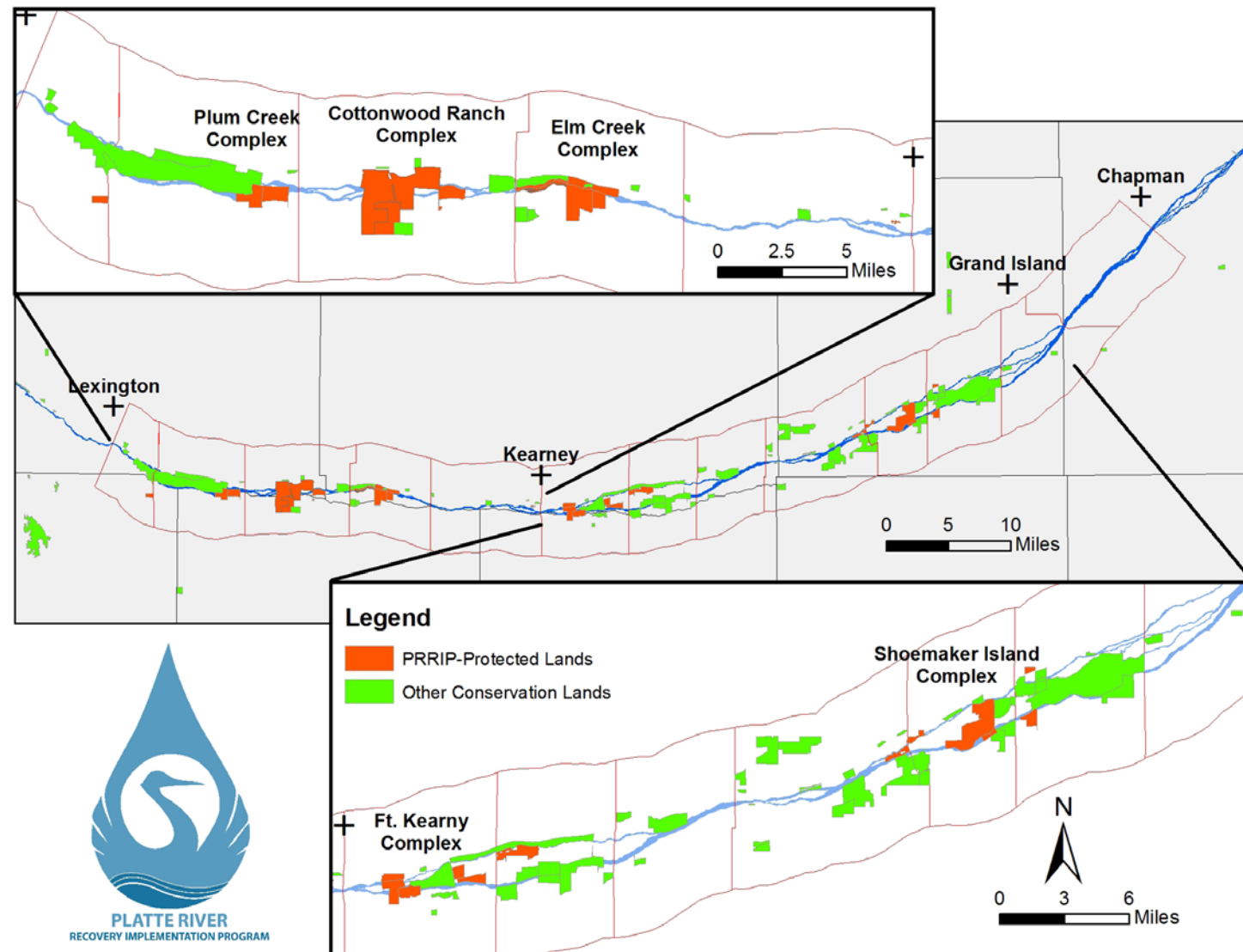
While not directly an EDO function, one of the key benefits provided by the Program is a streamlined Section 7 Consultation process. To date, the US Fish and Wildlife Service have provided over 150 streamlined Section 7 consultations since the Program began.

ACQUIRING, ENHANCING,
RESTORING AND PROTECTING
HABITAT LANDS FOR THE
TARGET BIRD SPECIES

LAND

Objective	Acquisition, protection and restoration of 10,000 acres of habitat for the three avian species
Key Concepts	Willing seller/willing buyer Good Neighbor Policy Will not shift tax burden
Highlights	Acquired more than 10,000 acres Implemented Platte River Recreation Access program Good neighbor and tenant relationships maintained

PRRIP Acquired Lands and Other Conservation Lands



**“YOU’RE REALLY A MODEL AND RECOGNIZED ALL OVER THE COUNTY.
YOU’RE DOING MORE HERE THAN PROTECTING TARGETED SPECIES.”**

Department of Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science,
Anne Castle, during her September 12, 2012 meeting with the
Program’s Governance Committee.

Platte River Recreation Access

In 2009 and 2010, the Program allowed hunting on Program land using a select number of responsible hunters. The allowed hunting removed many deer and resulted in less unwanted grazing on neighboring corn and bean crops.

In the June 2011 quarterly meeting, the Governance Committee of the PRRIP approved a recommended Public Access Policy on Program land. The policy provides the public the opportunity to use selected portions of the 10,000 acres controlled by the PRRIP during times when targeted species are not present. Program land can be used by the public for designated hunting, fishing, bird watching, and other responsible outdoor recreation. The Program subsequently contracted with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) to open several properties under the ownership of the Program for limited public recreation access. The sites opened through this partnership are referred to as the Platte River Recreation Access (PRRA) program. The NGPC developed a website (www.platteaccess.org), approved by the Program, that allows the public to access and sign up for dates available to use open land along the Platte River. The sites are available to a limited number of people each day and are completely closed to public access during the target species protection periods. Permission slips must be in hand to access land, and enforcement is a priority in order to follow the Program’s good neighbor policy. Administration and enforcement of the public access program is handled by the NGPC. The public access policy, and implementation of the website and on-line permission system, will allow for more hunters on Program lands and is expected to continue the deer harvest with no other negative effects. In addition to deer hunting; turkey hunting, hiking, fishing, bird watching, and mushroom hunting are allowed activities.

2011–2012 Hunting Season statistics on usage of the land and some testimonials from users.

88% of surveyed users reported they were moderately or very pleased with their recreational experience on the property

44% of surveyed users reported that they would not have hunted deer during this season if they had not received permission to hunt this land

Average distance from the users home to the site ranged from 0.5 miles to 210 miles

44% of users took a youth with them as allowed on their permission slip

33% of users were aware of the opportunity through a newspaper article, 33% through the website, 28% through word of mouth and 6% through other methods including seeing the sign and posts on other Internet sites

Prior to obtaining the permission slip, 77% of users were not aware of the Program and its activities, after completing the survey 100% reported awareness of the Program

“Please continue to make these properties available as they are an amazing resource. Although we were unable to harvest a deer, we did see abundant wildlife and had a wonderful time.” – Anonymous

**“WHAT A GREAT PROGRAM YOU PROVIDE FOR RECREATIONAL AND HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES.
I HOPE THAT YOU CONTINUE IT FOR YEARS TO COME.”**

R. Thomsen, Amherst, NE

INCREASING STREAM
FLOW IN THE CENTRAL
PLATTE RIVER DURING
RELEVANT PERIODS

WATER

Objective	Reducing deficits to USFWS target flows by average annual of 130,000 to 150,000 AFY Short Duration High Flow (SDHF) for Adaptive Management
Key Concepts	Addressing New (Post-1997) Water-Related Activity Impacts Three States and Federal Depletions Plans Addressing Existing (Pre-1997) Water-Related Activity Impacts Three Initial Projects–Tamarack 1 (CO), Pathfinder Modification (WY), Lake McConaughy Environmental Account (NE) New water conservation/supply projects Short Duration High Flow (SDHF)
Highlights	Additional feasibility investigation for the J-2 Regulating Reservoir near Overton to evaluate joint project opportunities with other Program participants Non-irrigation season retiming through aquifer recharge implemented for two seasons with successful results Hydraulic and sediment transport model to evaluate the effects of vegetation and sediment deposition at the North Platte choke point

WATER OBJECTIVE

Reducing shortages to target flows by an average of 130,000 to 150,000 acre-feet per year (AFY)

A combination of reregulation and water conservation/supply projects will provide flows

Implementation of three initial water projects—the Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy, the Pathfinder Modification Project, and Tamarack I—will be credited an average annual 80,000 AFY toward Program First Increment water objective

Remaining portion of the First Increment water objective (50,000 to 70,000) will be met through a program of incentive-based water conservation and water supply activities, first identified in the 2000 Reconnaissance-Level Water Action Plan (WAP). Water plan activities during 2011-2012 focused on developing these alternatives.

Implemented Water Action Plan (WAP) Projects—Developed water supplies to meet Program objectives

Nebraska Groundwater Recharge—pilot-demonstration project conducted in 2011 to investigate recharge through the aquifer as a means for retiming flows. Successful results led to implementation of recharge project and continued data collection in 2012.

Pathfinder Modification Municipal Account —lease to provide an average of 4,800 acre-feet per year for Program was negotiated in 2011 and Pathfinder Reservoir dam construction completed and operational in 2012.



Feasibility Studies—Conducted studies in 2011 and 2012 to investigate the potential for retiming flows from periods of excess to shortage through reservoir operations and obtaining water sources through agricultural water leasing projects

J-2 Regulating Reservoir—site under the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID) system is being studied for potential use in meeting Program SDHF and target flow objectives, as well as its potential to mitigate fluctuations in river flows due to CNPPID hydrocycling and irrigation season operations.

Water Leasing in Nebraska—opportunities with other Program partners have been identified and are being studied for feasibility.

Cost Share Funding and Coordination for Conveyance Capacity Issues —The ability to convey water downstream is critical to meeting Program objectives. The conveyance capacity of the North Platte and Platte River has been significantly reduced by phragmites and other channel obstructions. The Program cooperates with other agencies to counter this trend. Since 2010 the Program has provided cost share funds to West Central and Platte Valley Weed Management Areas for channel spraying in the reach from North Platte to Chapman.



SYSTEMATIC PROCESS TO TEST
ACTIONS AND APPLY INFORMATION
LEARNED TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT
OF LAND AND WATER

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Objective	Improve production of least tern and piping plover from the central Platte River Valley
	Improve survival of whooping cranes during migration
	Avoid adverse impact from Program actions on pallid sturgeon populations
	Within overall objectives 1–3, provide benefits to non-target listed species and non-listed species of concern and reduce likelihood of future listings
Key Concepts	All research tied to management actions
	Scientific rigor is essential for meaningful learning
Highlights	All systematic and project-specific monitoring is in place
	Completed first “State of the Platte” synthesis report, highlighting initial assessments of 11 Program “Big Questions”
	Major implementation of first Flow-Sediment-Mechanical (FSM) “Proof of Concept” experiment at Elm Creek Complex
	First-round implementation of Sediment Augmentation Pilot-Scale Management Action
	Expanded role of independent science within Program through the Independent Scientific Advisory Committee and several Peer Review panels



Monitoring

Whooping Cranes

- Monitoring done in both 2011 and 2012
- Completed reports for both years
- Draft Data Analysis Plan for monitoring data

Terns and Plovers

- Monitoring done in both 2011 and 2012
- Completed report for 2011 and finalizing 2012 report
- Monitoring includes extensive banding of terns and plovers to track bird movements over time
- Annual report includes extensive data analysis

Forage Fish

- Executive Director Office staff assisted personnel from the Power Districts with implementing the Forage Fish Monitoring Protocol in 2011 and 2012
- Analyzed 2001–2011 forage fish data and found forage fish availability likely does not limit tern productivity along the central Platte River

Water Quality

- Systematic monitoring in 2011; project-based monitoring beginning in 2012
- Completed reports for both years

Geomorphology and In-Channel Vegetation

- Monitoring conducted in 2011 and 2012
- Completed reports for both years
- Completed Data Analysis Plan for monitoring data

LiDAR and Aerial Photography

- Aerial imagery acquired in both 2011 and 2012
- LiDAR successfully flown in 2011 and 2012
- Acquired additional imagery of the river for comparison to previous years images

Research

Tern and Plover Foraging Habits Study

- Final report published by USGS in 2011

Tern and Plover Habitat Colonization Study

- Field work completed in 2011 and 2012

Whooping Crane Telemetry

- Core Partner for the Whooping Crane Tracking Project in 2011 and 2012
- Initiated Whooping Crane Stopover Site Evaluation Pilot Study in 2012

Habitat Selection by Whooping Cranes in Nebraska

- Compiled Historic Whooping Crane Sightings Database (1942–2011) in 2011
- Began data analysis in 2012

Wet Meadows Information Review

- Final report completed in 2011

Lateral Erosion Research

- Completed field work in 2012 and most data analysis for study of lateral erosion and its effects on bars and banks stabilized by vegetation

Independent Science Review

Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC)

- Convened three ISAC meetings in both 2011 and 2012
- Specific ISAC input on the Platte River caddisfly and target flows in 2012

Peer Review

- Directed Vegetation Research Report peer reviewed in 2012
- Sediment Augmentation Pilot-Scale Management Action Technical Memorandum and Monitoring Protocol peer reviewed in 2012
- Lower Platte River Stage Change Study peer reviewed in 2011



Implementation

Sediment Augmentation Pilot Scale Management Action

- Completed technical memorandum and associated monitoring protocol for project implementation in 2012
- Secured us Army Corps of Engineers and State of Nebraska permits for augmentation in 2012
- Began initial augmentation through sand pumping and mechanical mobilization at two Program habitat complexes in 2012

FSM “Proof of Concept” Experiment

- Implemented experimental actions at Elm Creek Complex in 2011 and 2012
- Developed project implementation design for experimental actions at Shoemaker Island Complex in 2012

Complex Management Actions and Habitat Rehabilitation Actions

- Plum Creek Complex management actions—Conducted controlled burns of grassland restoration areas in 2012. Maintained off-channel bare-sand nesting habitat on sandpit peninsulas. Initiated sediment augmentation operations using a sand pump.
- Cottonwood Ranch Complex management actions—Conducted controlled burns of wet meadow grassland areas in 2012. Completed construction of off-channel nesting habitat in 2011. Removed trees along the bank line of the channel and between the off-channel nesting habitat and river in 2012. Augmented 50,000 tons of sediment in 2012 through mechanical mobilization.
- Elm Creek Complex management actions—Conducted controlled burns of riparian areas in 2012. Cleared woody vegetation along the north bank in 2012 to improve unobstructed view widths. Constructed eight in-channel tern and plover nesting islands in the fall of 2012.

Fort Kearny Complex management actions—Cleared woody vegetation adjacent to the channel in 2012 to improve unobstructed view widths. Constructed large-scale wet meadow restoration project in 2012 including excavation of 9,500 linear feet of wetland swales.

Shoemaker Island Complex management actions—Conducted controlled burns of wet meadow areas in 2012. Cleared invasive trees from meadow areas in 2011 and 2012. Cleared woody vegetation from mid-channel islands in 2012 in preparation for construction of in-channel nesting habitat.

Non-Complex tern and plover nesting habitat—Completed 10 acre off-channel nesting habitat rehabilitation project at sandpit near Newark in 2011. Maintained bare sand nesting habitat at sandpits near Kearney and Newark in 2011 and 2012. Constructed 22 acres of off-channel nesting habitat near Wood River in 2012.

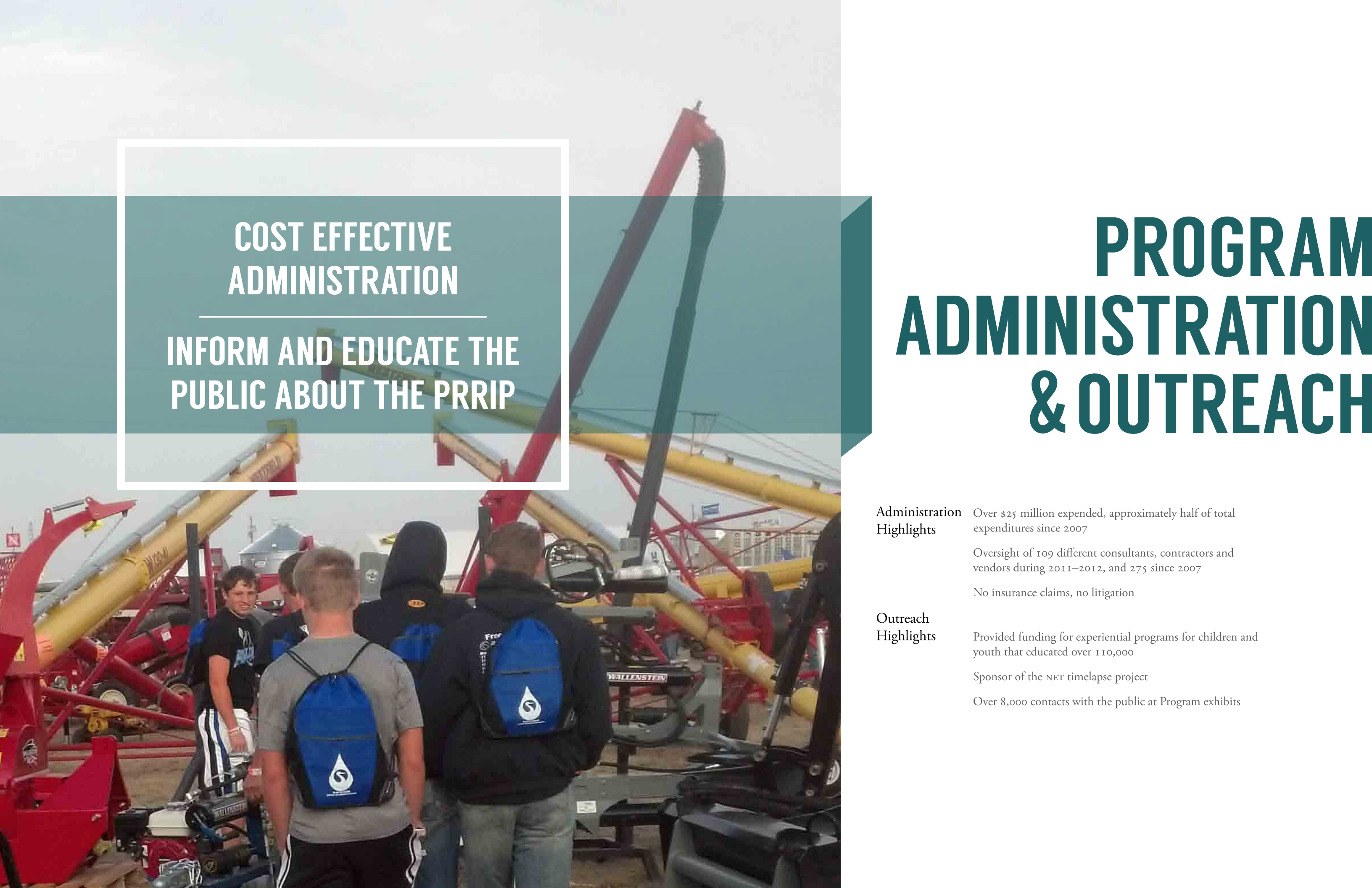
Planning

Completed first Program data synthesis report, 2012 State of the Platte Executive Summary; includes Program agreed-to Big Questions, Tier 1 hypotheses, and initial assessments of the Big Questions

Conducted Adaptive Management Plan Reporting Sessions in both 2011 and 2012—gathering of Independent Scientific Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Governance Committee, staff, contractors, and Special Advisors to discuss results of previous year’s monitoring and research

“TRULY AMAZING”

Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar describing the progress made to protect habitat and enhance river flows through the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program during his March 14, 2011 visit to Nebraska.



COST EFFECTIVE
ADMINISTRATION

INFORM AND EDUCATE THE
PUBLIC ABOUT THE PRRIP

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & OUTREACH

Administration Highlights

Over \$25 million expended, approximately half of total expenditures since 2007

Oversight of 109 different consultants, contractors and vendors during 2011–2012, and 275 since 2007

No insurance claims, no litigation

Outreach Highlights

Provided funding for experiential programs for children and youth that educated over 110,000

Sponsor of the NET timelapse project

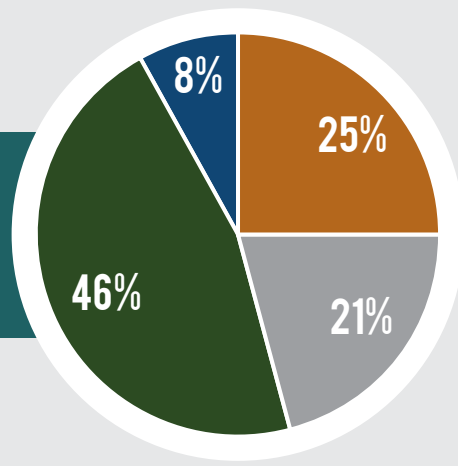
Over 8,000 contacts with the public at Program exhibits

YEAR BY YEAR EXPENDITURES

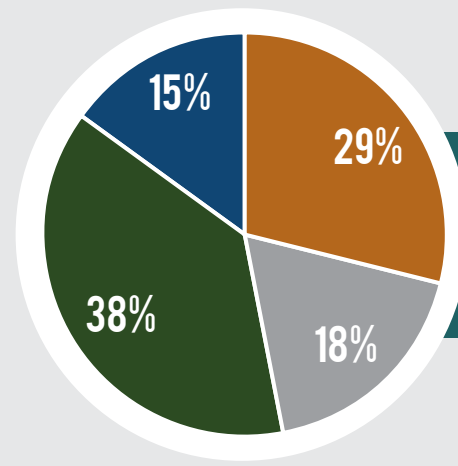
The organizational structure of the PRRIP is different than many of the other existing Recovery Implementation Programs. The key organizational difference is that the actual day-to-day implementation actions are carried out by an independent entity, Headwaters Corporation (a private sector firm), rather than a government agency. The services of the Executive Director and Program Staff are provided through a contract with Headwaters Corporation. In most other recovery Programs, these implementation functions are performed by Federal employees acting through their specific agency. This fairly unique structure was selected to truly embody the collaborative nature under which the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program has been undertaken.

Control of the Program rests with a group of stakeholders that prominently includes State and Federal representatives, water users and environmental groups. Governance of the Program is provided by representatives of the Department of Interior; the States of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming; water users; and environmental groups. Represented in the Program's Governance and Advisory Committee structure are a broad spectrum of diverse stakeholders from a variety of organizations and entities, including: the Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Colorado, the State of Nebraska, the State of Wyoming, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado Department of Water Resources, Denver Water, Greeley Water and Sewer Department, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District, Wyoming Water Development Board, Wyoming State Engineers Office, Casper-Alcova Irrigation District, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Central Platte Natural Resources District (NRD), Twin Platte NRD, Tri-Basin NRD, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, Nebraska Public Power District, Pathfinder Irrigation District, The Nature Conservancy, The Audubon Society, The Whooping Crane Trust, The National Wildlife Federation, The Nebraska Wildlife Federation, and Ducks Unlimited.

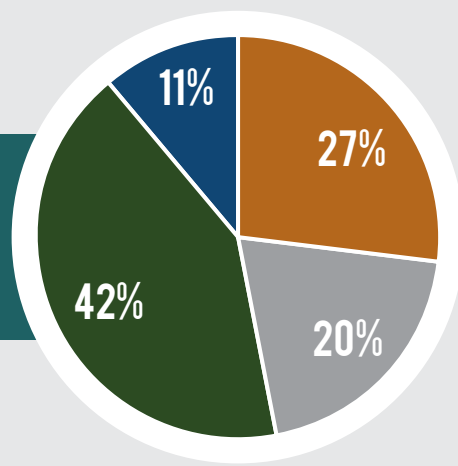
2007–2010 Expenditures



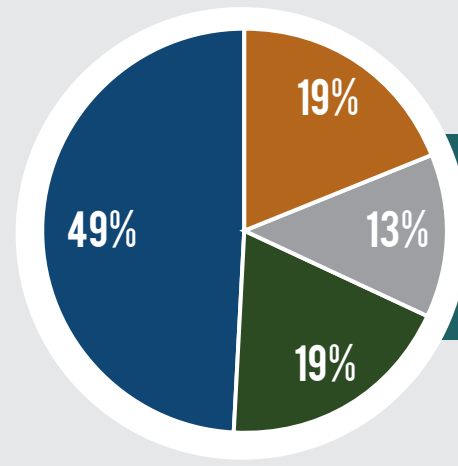
2011–2012 Expenditures



2007–2012 Expenditures



2007–2019 Estimated Expenditures



AMP

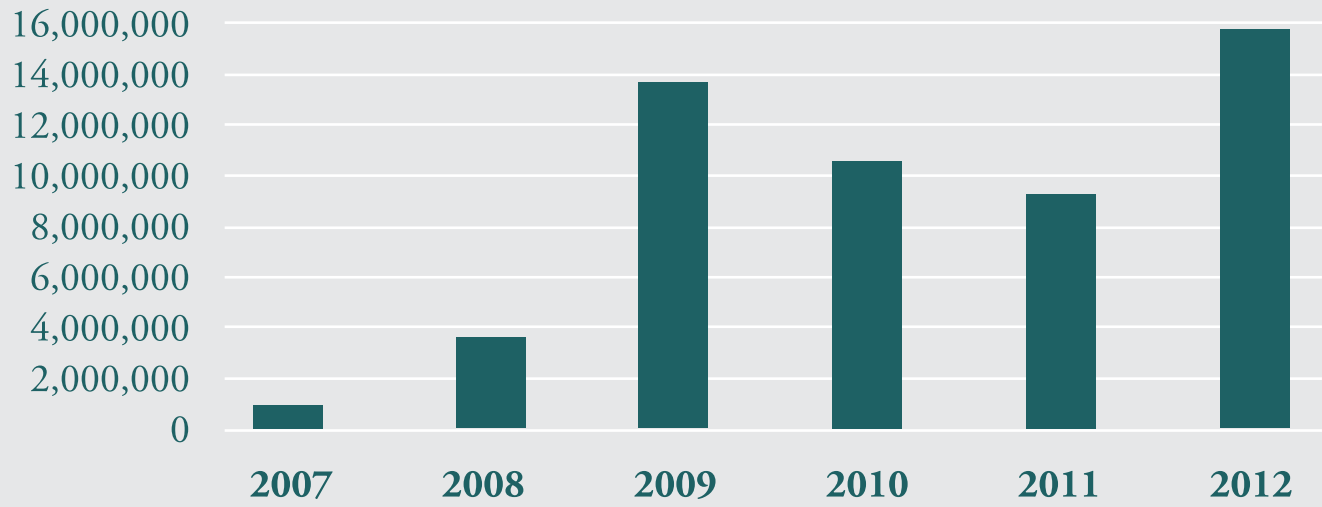
WATER

LAND

ADMIN.

Through 2012, the Program expended over \$53 million. The total expenditures by year are shown on the bar chart on the following page. After the initial two years, expenditures have averaged about \$12.5 million a year, fluctuations driven primarily by the amount of land acquired in a year.

The series of pie charts on the following page provide a breakdown of the expenditures by category; Land, Water, AMP and Administration. The pie charts tell a clear story. The distribution of expenditures in 2011–2012 are very similar to the distribution seen from 2007–2010; consequently, so too is the distribution of 2007–2012. The distribution is about 40% Land, 30% AMP, 20% Administration and 10% Water, reflecting the near completion of land acquisitions and heavy habitat rehabilitation and monitoring efforts during this period. Comparing this distribution to the ultimate distribution we expect, it is clear that the focus of future expenditures will be in Water.



PRRIP EXPENDITURES



Outreach

NET Timelapse Project

Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, Michael Forsberg Photography, the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Cooper Foundation, and Nikon Corporation together with the Program have collaborated on the Platte Basin Timelapse project. The Program provides a portion of funding for the project, access to Program lands, and logistical support in central Nebraska. Utilizing customized digital camera systems installed at key locations in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska, throughout the Platte River system, they are recording time-lapse images of the river's cycles. Cameras from the headwaters to the confluence with the Missouri, will capture snowfall and snowmelt along the Continental Divide in Colorado and Wyoming, the corresponding ebb and flow of tributaries and the river, the filling and draw down of reservoirs, the seasons of grassland on a golf course in Denver and in the Sandhills of Nebraska, the cycles of agriculture in the Platte Valley, and the migration of sandhill cranes (and whooping cranes if we are lucky) in the central Platte. The project will demonstrate the natural and manmade forces that shape the river and educate the public about the Platte River system in a comprehensive visualization never before available to scientific or lay audiences. These timelapse sequences can be accessed from a link on the Program website.

Lincoln Children's Museum

In early June 2012, Lincoln Children's Museum opened the Big Splash Water Exhibit. Since that time, nearly 108,782 visitors have enjoyed this new permanent exhibit which was made possible thanks to sponsors such as the Program.

The attraction covers approximately 2,000 square feet on the Museum's lower level. It rises 18 feet into the air, and—true to life—water rains down from clouds over a mountain peak. With its fascinating combination of discovery and learning for youths ages birth to 10 years old, children gain a stronger understanding of how living creatures impact the water cycle

The exhibit incorporates multiple hands-on play stations, including locks and dams to build, toys to float, sand to sift and waterfalls to run little hands beneath. Big Splash also includes five water-spitting beavers, safe splash seats designed for infants at the base of the mountain, and a water table where older children apply ideas related to mechanical engineering. Children can sift real sand through their fingers and interactive educational concept displays on the perimeter of the exhibit teach children and adults about the various roles of water in our daily lives. Notches along the winding river provide spaces for children who use wheelchairs or walkers the option of accessing the exhibit. The tactile elements along the surfaces feature impressions of leaves, stones and paths. These add interest for children with and without visual impairments.

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary

The Program provides funds for the educational programs at the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. Rowe Sanctuary's unique outdoor, experienced-based education programs provide children, families and adults with opportunities to experience the Platte Valley ecosystem and its wildlife by utilizing indoor and outdoor classrooms, viewing blinds and trails that meander along the Platte River, through wetlands, wooded areas and prairie remnants. Big Bend SOAR (Summer Orientation About Rivers) Camp is a nature day camp where children can learn about the Platte River and other natural areas in and around Buffalo and Kearney Counties. Campers take part in a variety of activities that include natural and physical science, language arts, history, agriculture, music and art, while having fun. In addition to SOAR, Rowe Sanctuary also offers Flying Higher camp, Rowe River Rats Program and Rowe Adventures. In both 2011 and 2012, over 300 campers and family members attended educational programs and experienced nature first hand.

Prairie Loft

The Program provides funds for the educational program of the Prairie Loft Center for Outdoor and Agricultural Learning. Prairie Loft's mission is to teach agriculture appreciation, outdoor education, cultural traditions, and the wise use of natural resources. Prairie Loft is helping to create systemic change in the wider Nebraska community by introducing teachers, students, families, and groups to the cognitive and physical benefits of spending time together in active outdoor learning. Education programs involve preschool, elementary and middle school students and their families through hands-on, place-based learning programs. Prairie Loft aims to increase participants' knowledge and understanding of the natural and agricultural environments, and the role of human interaction with these environments. In 2011 attendance at Prairie Loft field trips and lessons was 385 students and 38 teachers/parents, in 2012 attendance was 898 students and 212 teachers/parents.

Wildlife Viewing Blind

The Program placed a wildlife viewing blind on the Elm Creek complex during the 2012 crane migration season. The blind was purchased with Program outreach and education funds and is utilized for those specific purposes. Although the blind is used primarily during spring migration season, it is utilized year round for wildlife monitoring and viewing. All use of the blind is coordinated through the Office of the Executive Director of the Program, specifically through the Director of Outreach and Communications.

2011 Exhibits

Colorado Water Congress—January
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture—February
Joint Ornithological Societies—March
North American Crane Working Group & The Waterbird Society—March
Rivers and Wildlife Conference—March
Nebraska Nature & Visitors Center—March
Rowe Sanctuary—March
Husker Harvest Days—September
South Platte Forum—October

2011 Sponsorships

North American Crane Working Group & The Waterbird Society—March
Collaborative Adaptive Management—April
Kearney Public Schools Foundation—April
Summer Orientation About Rivers (SOAR)—June
Nebraska Grazing Conference—August
Kearney Chamber of Commerce—August
Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environmental Education—September

2012 Exhibits

Nebraska Weed Management Association—January
Colorado Water Congress—January
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture—February
Irrigationists Symposium—March
Rivers and Wildlife Conference—March
Rowe Sanctuary—March
Crane Trust Nature & Visitors Center—March
Husker Harvest Days—September
South Platte Forum—October
Central Platte Natural Resources District—October

2012 Sponsorships

4 States Irrigation Council—January
Prairie Fire “Nebraska Skies 2012” Series—January, February, March
Nebraska Environthon—May
Nebraska Grazing Conference—August
Kearney Chamber of Commerce—August

Staff Public Presentations

Audience	2011	2012
Irrigators	2	1
Professional Associations	7	1
Natural Resource Districts	3	1
Academic	3	4
Water Conference/Symposium	3	5
Environmental Groups	3	0
General Public	1	3
TOTAL	22	15

StateContacts

Colorado	374
Nebraska	219
Nebraska	500
Nebraska	194
Nebraska	386
Nebraska	
Nebraska	
Nebraska	2,380
Colorado	205

State

Nebraska
New Hampshire
Nebraska
Nebraska
Nebraska
Nebraska
Nebraska

StateContacts

Nebraska	177
Colorado	162
Nebraska	120
Colorado	
Nebraska	296
Nebraska	
Nebraska	
Nebraska	2,650
Colorado	250
Nebraska	

State

Colorado, Wyoming & Nebraska
Nebraska
Nebraska
Nebraska
Nebraska

One of the benefits provided by the Program is a streamlined Section 7 Consultation process. To date, the USFWS has provided over 150 streamlined Section 7 consultations since the Program began.

Streamlined Section 7 Consultations by USFWS

	Colorado	Wyoming	Nebraska	Federal	Total by Year
2007	13	6	1	0	20
2008	18	4	6	1	29
2009	23	4	2	3	32
2010	14	4	1	2	21
2011	15	0	3	6	24
2012	21	1	1	5	28
Total by State	104	19	14	17	154



PROGRAM
EXHIBITS &
SPONSORSHIPS



**“FOR PERSONS OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER WHEN THE IDEA OF
EVER SEEING A WILD WHOOPING CRANE SEEMED LITTLE MORE
THAN A FANTASY, THE PRESENCE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED BIRDS
NOW ALIVE IN THE WILD SEEMS ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.”**

Dr. Paul Johnsgard, Sandhill and Whooping cranes; ancient voices over America's wetlands. 2011

Headwaters Corporation

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PLATTE RIVER
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Serving the threatened and endangered species of the
Platte River Basin as well as the people who live here.

platteriverprogram.org