

Nebraska Natural Legacy Project

From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

Least terns and piping plovers nested on the re-created islands, marking these species' first use of sandbars in the central Platte River in more than a decade. This successful restoration project will serve as a model for future efforts to conserve fish and wildlife before they become more rare and costly to protect.

The Nebraska Natural Legacy Project brought together a diverse group of conservation and agricultural partners to improve wildlife conservation planning and implementation. The Natural Legacy Plan identified 40 biologically unique landscapes that contain high quality examples of the state's natural communities and host the greatest known assemblages of fish and wildlife diversity. Community-based conservation initiatives are being launched in many of these landscapes to implement the Natural Legacy Plan.

Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas Restoring the Central Platte River

The Natural Legacy Project identified the central Platte River as a biologically unique landscape in need of

conservation. Each spring the river comes alive with over half a million sandhill cranes and tens of thousands of ducks, geese, and shorebirds, creating a world class wildlife-viewing spectacle. In 2006, a 200-acre tract of river channel was purchased using federal, state, and private funds to protect critical

roost habitat. Restoration work included invasive tree removal, river channel recontouring, construction of nesting islands, and reseeded with native prairie seed. Within weeks of the restoration, endangered whooping cranes roosted on the river. In 2007, 10 pairs of least terns and two pairs of piping plovers successfully nested on the re-created

islands, marking these species' first use of sandbars in the central Platte River in more than a decade. This successful restoration project will serve as a model for future efforts to conserve fish and wildlife before they become more rare and costly to protect.

Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife

Conserving Tallgrass Prairies

To conserve the largest and highest quality tallgrass prairies remaining in the nation, Nebraska has launched two Natural Legacy Flagship Initiatives that are developing diverse partnerships between landowners, local communities, and conservation organizations. With less than 2 percent of the state's tallgrass prairie remaining, there is an urgent need to step-up conservation efforts to protect vital habitat for the greater prairie chicken, massasauga (snake), Ottoe skipper (butterfly), and other at-risk species. The spread of invasive species due to fire suppression and certain grazing practices is a principal threat. The Flagship Initiatives provide private landowners with technical and financial assistance to control invasive species and implement management practices such as rotational grazing and prescribed burning. These collaborative efforts help



Piping plover nest on the Platte River/
Matt Schwarz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

conserve wildlife and provide current and future generations with natural places needed for wildlife recreation.

Proactive Efforts that Benefit Wildlife and People
Wildcat Hills Conservation

The rugged escarpments of western Nebraska's Wildcat Hills are both historic and serve as an example of a biologically unique landscape. The Wildcat Hills helped guide early pioneers on their westward journey but are now threatened by development and invasive species. The Wildcat Hills Flagship Initiative is bringing together a diverse group of partners to aid in land protection and improve management on private lands. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, an at-risk species, were recently reintroduced to the Wildcat Hills and research is being conducted to determine how prescribed burning and grazing can be used to control invasive species that

are impacting wildlife and ranching. The effort is also focused on improving awareness of the Wildcat Hills and its wildlife and fostering nature-based recreation opportunities to diversify and strengthen the local economy.

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

444 North Capitol St, NW
Suite 725
Washington, DC 20001
202.624.7890
www.teaming.com
www.wildlifeactionplans.org

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

2200 N. 33rd St.
Lincoln, NE 68503
<http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/programs/legacy/>



Bighorn sheep/NEBRASKALand Magazine/
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

*The Wildcat Hills
Flagship Initiative
is bringing together
a diverse group
of partners to aid
in land protection
and improve
management on
private lands.*



Tallgrass prairie/NEBRASKALand Magazine/Nebraska Game and Parks Commission