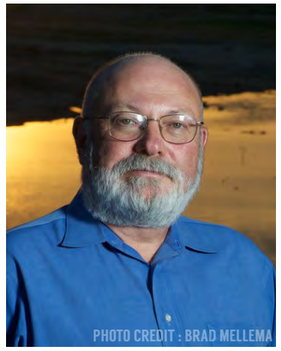
BIENNIAL REPORT 2013/14

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



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

From the Executive Director

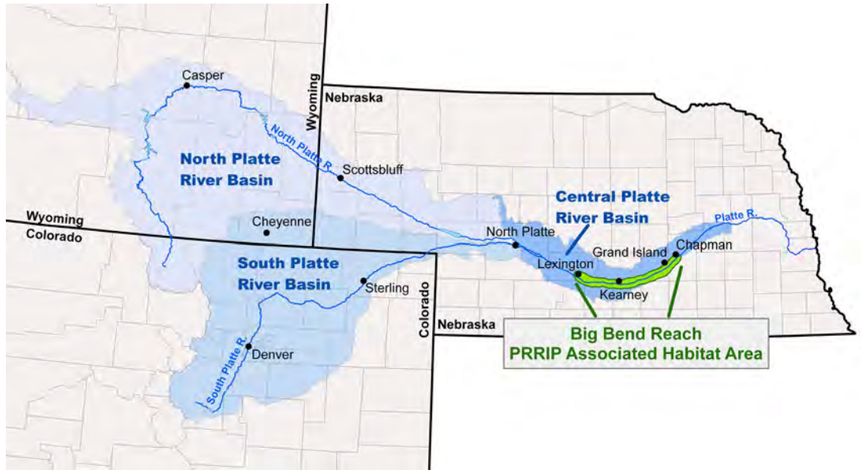
With the end of 2014, we have completed eight years of a thirteen year program. Time isn't slowing down and much remains to be accomplished in the next five years. On the financial side, we are less than half spent, even in terms of the $187 million budget in 2005 dollars, which has indexed up on the order of 10% since 2007. Large expenditures lay ahead, so the dollars will be needed soon. On the progress side of the ledger:

- the collaboration of all parties remains intact and strong, something never to be taken for granted,
- land acquisition is essentially complete with more than 10,400 acres in hand, but with some sand pit and off-channel wetlands acquisition remaining,
- water acquisition has seen significant progress made on the water plan with more than 117,000 acre-feet per year on average of additional water in-hand or soon to be realized, and
- on the adaptive management side monitoring and research efforts continue to add to the body of information, with large strides made in the data analysis and synthesis that transform information into meaningful knowledge useful for decision making.

The pages that follow provide a concise overview through words and images of the activities and progress on the many fronts that have occurred over the past two years.

The progress has come as the result of the hard work and dedicated efforts of many people; all of the stakeholder entities and their staffs, partners, contractors, consultants, Independent Science Advisors, Special Advisors, the staff of the Executive Director's Office, our friends and partners at the Nebraska Community Foundation and the Platte River Recovery Implementation Foundation, and others in categories I have inadvertently left out. And very importantly progress happens because of the widespread support from the public for the Program for whatever the reason: they may enjoy the Public Access the Program provides; revel in the spring migration spectacle along the central Platte; appreciate the Program's support in controlling invasive vegetation on the river; continue to carry on with business and life in the basin buoyed by a higher degree of regulatory certainty; happy to have received a favorable streamlined Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or simply taken comfort in the knowledge that efforts were being made to recover Threatened and Endangered Species here, whether or not they ever step foot in the Platte Basin.

Less than five years remain to accomplish the goals set for the Program. Much has been done, much remains. Stay tuned, things are going to get really exciting around here.



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 roughly a quarterly basis and Colorado provides funds in lump sum blocks. To date, the majority of the states' funds have been secured.

The Platte River is a complex system that must meet the needs of multiple interests and users. Stakeholders in Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming depend on the Platte River for water supply, irrigation and agricultural uses, and recreation. This wide range of interests and uses are all considered in the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program. The Program, with its demonstrated successes, is recognized as a model of conserving and restoring a river while complying with Endangered Species Act issues. In particular, the collaborative governance structure of the Program has attracted the attention of other developing river restoration projects as a model of governance.

Executive Summary

This is the fourth accomplishments report of the Program, covering 2013 and 2014, 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

The Program, to date, has acquired approximately 10,379 acres through sponsorship agreements, purchases, leases, or perpetual easements from willing sellers/partners. Only 146 acres remain to fulfill program goals of needed palustrine wetlands. The Program pays property taxes on all purchased lands. In 2013 the Program paid over $88,000 in taxes and over $148,000 in 2014. A new complex was acquired in 2014, in the Kearney to Odessa bridge segment. Acquired land 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 in 2013 and 2014 has been primarily on developing projects that will retime excess flows and secondarily on the purchase or lease of water to reach the Water Plan objective of reducing shortages to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service target flows by an average of 130,000 to 150,000 acre-feet per year (AFY). The initial state water projects-the Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy, the Pathfinder Modification Project, and the Tamarack I Project are implemented and credited towards providing 80,000 AFY towards the water objective. The Program implemented three Water Action Plan (WAP) projects including Nebraska Groundwater Recharge under the Phelps County Canal, the Pathfinder Municipal Account Lease and Nebraska Water Leasing with the Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD). The J-2 Regulating Reservoirs, an excess flow retiming project near Overton, NE, was advanced through a conceptual design report and a signed water service agreement between the project sponsors. These four WAP projects provide an estimated yield of 37,000 AFY towards the Water Plan objective. The Program also completed a Short Duration Medium Flow (SDMF) release and canal bypass flow routing test in 2013, and completed a study on the North Platte River chokepoint capacity issue in 2014.

Adaptive Management

Adaptive Management Plan activities in 2013 and 2014 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. Aerial imagery and LiDAR were collected both years. The Program completed synthesis and peer review of investigations related to the ability of the Flow-Sediment-Mechanical (FSM) actions to create and maintain tern and plover habitat. The Program was a core partner for the Whooping Crane Telemetry Tracking Project, conducted the Whooping Crane Stopover Site Evaluation Project, completed the whooping crane habitat availability analyses based on observational data and began habitat selection analysis of Program data for use in decision making in 2015 and beyond. The Elm Creek Complex FSM "Proof of Concept" experiment was completed and the first two years of the FSM experiment at Shoemaker Island Complex were completed. The Sediment Augmentation Pilot-Scale Management Action was completed and a wet meadow on the Fort Kearny Complex was constructed. The Program completed its second data synthesis report, the 2013 "State of the Platte" Executive Summary. Activities related to independent science included two peer reviews, five meetings of the Independent Scientific Advisory Committee, and Program-wide Adaptive Management Plan Reporting Sessions in both 2013 and 2014.

Program Administration and Outreach

Through 2014, the Program has expended over $84 million. After the initial two years, expenditures have averaged about $12.8 million a year, fluctuations driven primarily by the amount of land acquired in a year and funding for the J-2 reservoir.

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 2013 and 2014, the Program was one of the sponsors of the Nebraska Educational Television time-lapse project on the Platte River and a sponsor of youth outdoor education at Rowe Sanctuary, Prairie Loft and South Platte River Environmental Education. The Program sponsored eleven events in 2013–2014 and we made over 10,000 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 2013 and 2014 (17 and 18 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 during the first increment, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have provided over 180 streamlined Section 7 consultations since the Program began.

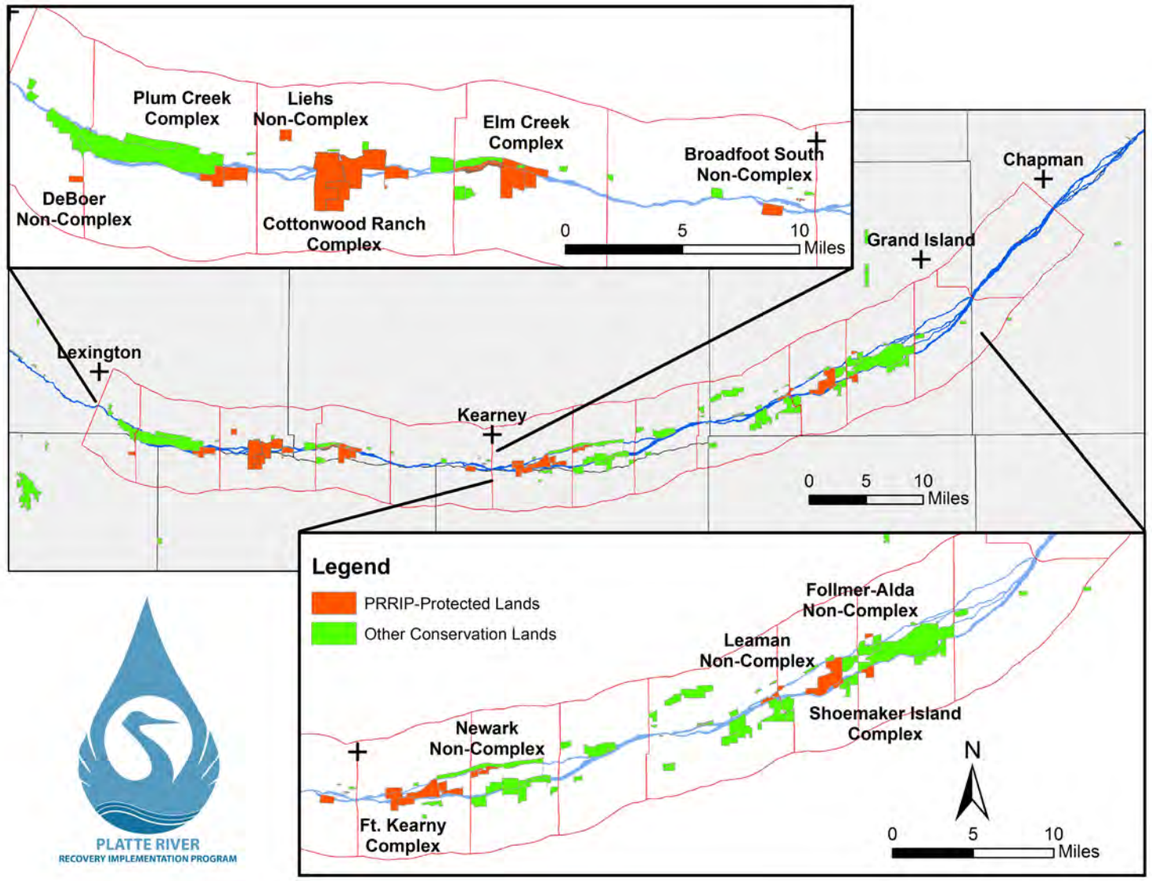
ACQUIRING, ENHANCING, RESTORING AND PROTECTING HABITAT LANDS FOR THE TARGET BIRD SPECIES

PHOTO CREDIT: WWW.JENSEN-PHOTOGRAPHY.COM

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	Acquisition of acres between Kearney and Odessa bridge segment Widespread public support of Platte River Recreation Access program Property taxes paid in six Nebraska counties

PRRIP Acquired Lands and Other Conservation Lands



PLATTE RIVER
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The Program evaluated a total of twenty-two properties in 2013/2014. This resulted in additional acres purchased and acres under contract, bringing the total acres of Program land controlled to 10,379. There are approximately 146 acres of palustrine wetlands that will need to be acquired to fulfill the Program's wetlands goal.

The start of a new complex between the Kearney and Odessa bridge segment was accomplished with the acquisition of over 230 acres in 2014. This section of the river had not previously had land under conservation ownership. The Program is working on contracts to acquire control of an additional 750 acres in this complex and plans to have those contracts completed in 2015.

Two hundred sixty eight acres of excess property that was not needed by the Program was sold in 2013 and 2014. As the maps above detail, the Program has final ownership and control over 9,637 acres in 6 complexes and 742 acres in 6 non-complex properties. The Program paid property taxes on Program owned lands in six counties. The Program paid taxes of over $88,000 in 2013 and over $148,000 in 2014.

Platte River Recreation Access

In Nebraska, 97% of the land is privately owned. The opportunity for recreational use of the land by the general public is therefore limited. Private ownership also affects the public's access to the Platte River. The Platte River Recreation Access (PRRA) program is in its fourth year. The PRRA 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. The PRRIP contracted with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) to administer and enforce the PRRA. The PRRA website (www.platteaccess.org), 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.

Allowed activities include; deer hunting, turkey hunting, hiking, fishing, bird watching, mushroom hunting, and limited waterfowl and small-game hunting.

Following are statistics on usage of the land and quotes from the public regarding the PRRA program.

As of 2014, the PRRA had 9 sites and 3,300 acres available to the public

The most popular recreational activity is hunting, followed by hiking and bird watching

Average distance from the users home to the site ranged from 1 mile to 700 miles

Over 60% of users surveyed learned of the PRRA program by word of mouth

42% of users took a youth with them as allowed on their permission slip

"I am a youth hunter and am new to the sport and these properties allow me to have a safe place to hunt with my family due to the limited access. Land can be difficult to get on for hunting but these properties allow me a place to hunt with my dad and brothers. I hope this program continues so I can continue to make these memories with my family."

"Public hunting opportunities are scare in this part of Nebraska and the public properties that do exist are often overrun with hunters during the season. I enjoy hunting with companions, but I also enjoy hunting for the solitude and peace it provides. For these reasons and more, I am a big proponent of keeping the PRRA properties open to people on a limited draw basis. I would not hunt nearly as much without the PRRA properties."

"Great program! My son and I spent several mornings hunting. We would also like to explore other activities at these locations other than hunting. Great program! Hope it continues!"

"I used program lands during spring turkey and the archery and late rifle doe seasons during 2014/2015. The other hunters I encountered on program lands were friendly and courteous and I enjoyed the opportunity to hunt on PRRA land. I support the continuation of this program, including the safe use of rifles to effectively manage the deer population, and I hope this land is available for ethical use (for) years to come."

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 I (CO), Pathfinder Modification (WY), Lake McConaughy Environmental Account (NE)
- New water conservation/supply projects

Short Duration High Flow (SDHF)

Highlights

Non-irrigation season retiming of excess flows through aquifer recharge continued to be successful

Program signed an agreement to lease Pathfinder Municipal Account Lease water

Program signed an agreement with the Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) to lease the net consumptive use credit from surface irrigation water rights and groundwater recharge of excess flows

Conceptual design report and signed agreement among the sponsors completed for the J-2 Regulating Reservoirs near Overton, NE

Short Duration Medium Flow (SDMF) completed in 2013 with canal bypass flow routing test

Study on the North Platte River chokepoint conducted to identify the mechanisms causing sediment deposition and evaluate potential alternatives to sustain target hydraulic capacity

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 the Program First Increment Water Objective. The Environmental Account has been operational since the Program began in 2007; the Pathfinder Modification Project has been operational since 2012; and the Tamarack I project has been operational since 2010 with additional wells constructed in 2013 to increase the project's yield.

Remaining portion of the First Increment water objective (50,000 to 70,000 AFY) 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. Water plan activities during 2013–2014 focused on developing these alternatives. By the end of 2014, the Program achieved over 37,000 AF of supplies through a combination of the proposed J-2 Regulating Reservoirs project and other implemented water resources projects under the Water Action Plan.

Implemented and Proposed Water Action Plan (WAP) Projects-Developed Water supplies to meet Program objectives

Nebraska Groundwater Recharge –recharge operations on the Phelps County Canal under the CNPPID system were implemented in 2011 and continued to be successful in 2013 and 2014. A total volume of 5,590 AF was diverted into the canal for recharge activities for the Program in 2013–2014.

Pathfinder Modification Municipal Account – the Program signed a lease for 38,400 AF over the course of the First Increment. Releases from Pathfinder Reservoir under the Municipal Account lease occurred in 2013 and 2014 for a total volume of 14,400 AF.

Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) Lease - the Program signed an agreement in 2013 to lease accretions from recharge of excess flows and the net consumptive use credit from transferred surface water rights under the Thirty-Mile, Cozad and Orchard-Alfalfa Canals. The lease is for up to 20,500 AFY. In 2013–2014, the Program leased 1,550 AF of recharge accretions under this lease.

J-2 Regulating Reservoirs-proposed 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. A conceptual design report for the project was completed in 2013 and the final design, permitting and land acquisitions are currently underway. A water service agreement known as the "Three Party Agreement" was signed by the Program, the CNPPID and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) for co-sponsorship of the project.

Short Duration High Flow (SDHF) and North Platte River Chokepoint Capacity Enlargement Activities

The Program completed a Short Duration Medium Flow (SDMF) of 4,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) for 2 days in 2013 for data collection and analysis. A canal bypass flow routing test was completed by delivering water from the North Platte River to the South Platte River using various irrigation canals to avoid the chokepoint limitation. The bypass proved to be a potential option to supplement flows for an SDHF event.

A study on the North Platte River chokepoint was completed in 2014 to identify the mechanisms causing observed sediment deposition and limited hydraulic capacity at the North Platte River chokepoint. Modeling results and various alternatives to achieve the 3,000 cfs target capacity were evaluated.

The Program continued to support and collaborate with The Platte Valley and West Central Weed Management Areas to work toward control of invasive vegetation in the river channel from Lake McConaughy to Columbus, Nebraska. These efforts include spraying and mechanical efforts to kill and remove vegetation from the channel to restore conveyance capacity and enhance habitat.

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

Contribute to 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

Developing useful scientific information to assist with decision making

Highlights

Synthesis and peer review of investigations related to the ability of the Flow-Sediment-Mechanical (FSM) actions to create and maintain tern and plover habitat

Completed Elm Creek FSM Proof of Concept experiment at Elm Creek Complex and first two years of FSM experiment at Shoemaker Island Complex

Completed Sediment Augmentation Pilot-Scale Management Action

Constructed wet meadow on Ft. Kearny Complex

Monitoring

Whooping Cranes

- Annual spring and fall migration monitoring in 2013 and 2014
- Completed reports for both years

Terns and Plovers

- Annual nesting season monitoring in 2013 and 2014 with final reports
- Extensive banding of terns and plovers on central Platte during both years to track bird movements over time

Geomorphology and In-Channel Vegetation

- Monitoring conducted in 2013 and 2014
- Completed reports for both years

LiDAR and Aerial Photography

- Aerial imagery acquired in both 2013 and 2014
- LiDAR successfully flown in 2013 and 2014

Research

Whooping Cranes

- Core Partner for the Whooping Crane Telemetry Tracking Project
- Conducted Whooping Crane Stopover Site Evaluation Project in 2013 and 2014
- Completed whooping crane habitat availability analyses based on observational data in 2013 and 2014
- Began habitat selection analysis of Program data for use in decision making in 2015 and beyond

Terns and Plovers

- Completed tern and plover habitat availability analyses in 2013 and 2014
- Drafted synthesis document for terns to evaluate relationships between forage abundance, flow, foraging behavior, and productivity
- Began habitat selection analysis of Program data for use in decision making in 2015 and beyond

Wet Meadows Hydrology Investigations

- Installed river stage gages, groundwater monitoring well transects, weather stations, soil moisture monitoring equipment, and other hydrologic monitoring equipment at two wet meadow sites in 2013 and 2014
- Expanded monitoring effort to two additional wet meadow sites in 2014 with groundwater monitoring wells, river stage gages, and equipment to monitor weather parameters.
- Developed groundwater models of two wet meadow sites based on data collected from monitoring effort.

Independent Science Review

Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC)

- Three Independent Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) meetings in 2013, two in 2014
- Specific ISAC input on Program peer review and publication policies, decision analysis, tern and plover habitat synthesis chapters, forage fish data analysis, and State of the Platte reports

Peer Review

- Four-person peer review of combined tern and plover habitat synthesis chapters in 2014
- Began peer review of wet meadows hydrology project monitoring approach
- Manuscripts drafted in 2014 for publication in 2015: tern and plover breeding pair methodology, directed vegetation research, lateral erosion, planform management



Implementation

Sediment Augmentation

Completed two rounds of mechanical augmentation at Cottonwood Ranch Complex and two rounds of sand pumping augmentation at Plum Creek Complex in 2013

Final report in 2013 with recommendations for annual augmentation approaches

FSM "Proof of Concept" Experiment

Completed final year of three-year experiment at the Elm Creek Complex (final report in 2015) and second year of three-year experiment at Shoemaker Island Complex (final report in 2016)

Actions included geomorphology, vegetation, and sandbar monitoring, modeling, and data analysis

Flow Consolidation

Completed conceptual design for flow consolidation actions at Cottonwood Ranch Complex; results led Program to determine that flow consolidation was not feasible as a long-term management action

Complex Management Actions and Habitat Rehabilitation Actions

Plum Creek Complex management actions – Conducted controlled burn of grassland areas in 2013. Maintained off-channel bare-sand nesting habitat on sandpit peninsulas in 2013 and 2014. Created in-channel bare sand nesting habitat in 2013 as a part of sediment augmentation operations. Disked active channel area in 2014 to control in-channel vegetation.

Cottonwood Ranch Complex management actions – Conducted controlled burns of grassland areas in 2013. Maintained off-channel bare-sand nesting habitat in 2013 and 2014. Created in-channel nesting islands in 2013 as part of sediment augmentation operations. Disked active channel area in 2014 to control in-channel vegetation. Implemented active pumping and structural improvements to improve wet meadow hydrology.

Elm Creek Complex management actions – Conducted controlled burns of grassland areas in 2013. Maintained in-channel bare-sand nesting habitat in 2013 and reconstructed habitat in 2014 following a natural high flow event. Disked active channel area in 2013 and 2014 to control in-channel vegetation. Removed woody vegetation infestations in wet meadow areas in 2014.

Ft. Kearny Complex management actions – Seeded large wet meadow restoration project in 2013 and installed weather and hydrologic monitoring equipment. Removed eastern red-cedar infestation from grassland area in 2013. Disked active channel area in 2013 and 2014 to control in-channel vegetation.

Shoemaker Island Complex management actions – Developed public access facilities in 2014. Constructed in-channel bare-sand nesting habitat in 2013 and additional habitat in 2014. Disked active channel area in 2013 and 2014 to control in-channel vegetation.

Non-complex tern and plover habitat – Completed tree clearing projects around off-channel nesting areas in 2013 to remove predator perches. Maintained bare sand nesting habitat at sites near Alda, Wood River, Newark and Kearney in 2013 and 2014.

Non-complex palustrine wetland habitat – Began restoration of palustrine wetland site in Gosper County in 2013 by clearing woody vegetation from wetland area. Began restoration of palustrine wetland site near Overton in 2014 by removing woody vegetation and debris from property.

Planning

Completed final draft of 2013 State of the Platte Report and first draft of 2014 State of the Platte Report; includes an assessment of 11 Program "Big Questions" and associated priority hypotheses

Adaptive Management Plan Reporting Sessions in 2013 and 2014 (both in Omaha, NE) – gathering of ISAC, Technical Advisory Committee, Governance Committee, Program staff, Program contractors, Special Advisors, and interested parties to discuss results of previous year's monitoring and research, data analysis, and data synthesis

COST EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

INFORM AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE PRRIP

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & OUTREACH

Administration Highlights

Over $30 million expended, total expenditures of over $84 million since 2007

Oversight of 159 different consultants, contractors and vendors during 2013–2014, and 323 since 2007

Outreach Highlights

Provided funding for experiential programs for children and youth that educated over 9,000

Sponsor of the South Platte River Environmental Education (SPREE) program

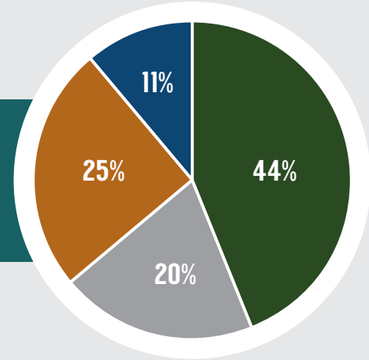
Over 10,000 contacts with the public at Program exhibits

The organizational structure of the PRRIP is different than many of the other existing Recovery Implementation Programs. They 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.

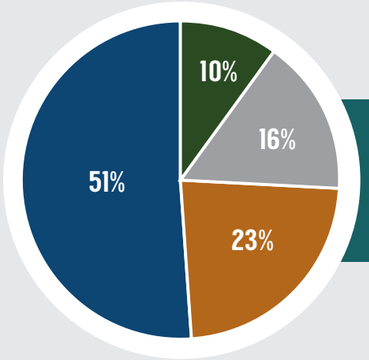
Control of the Program rests with a group of stakeholders that prominently includes State and Federal representatives, water users and environmental groups. Governance of the Program is provided by representatives of the Department of Interior; the States of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming; water users; 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.

YEAR BY YEAR EXPENDITURES

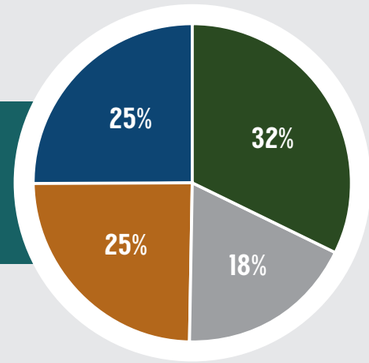
2007–2012 Expenditures



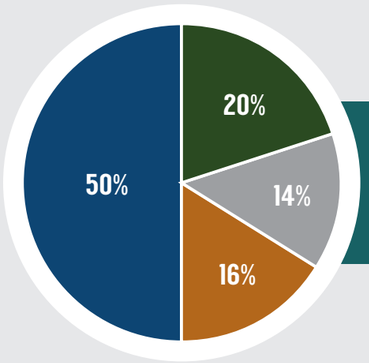
2013–2014 Expenditures



2007–2014 Expenditures



2007–2019 Estimated Expenditures

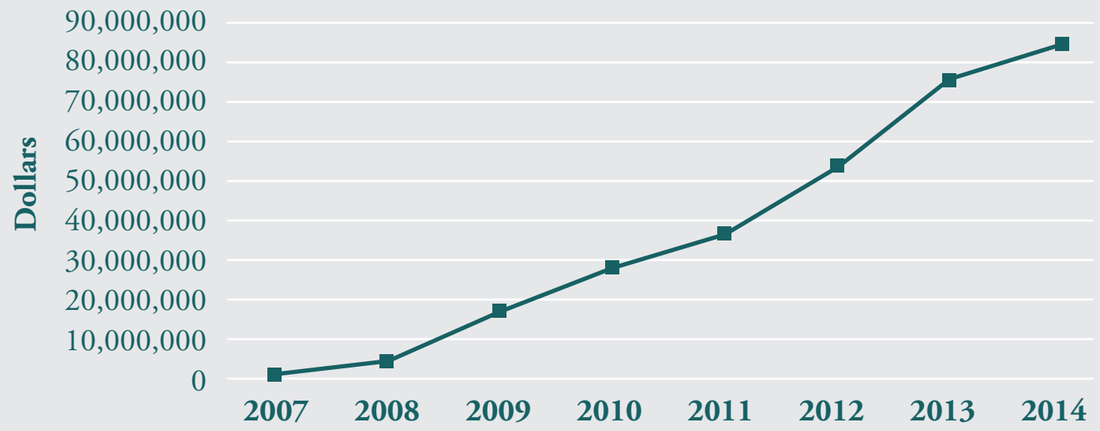


AMP WATER LAND OTHER

Through 2014, the Program expended over $84 million. The total cumulative expenditures by year are shown on the graph on the following page. After the initial two years, expenditures have averaged about $13 million a year, fluctuations driven primarily by the amount of land acquired in a year and secondarily by funds expended for the J-2 reservoir and water leasing.

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 2013–2014 show the large expenditures for water, in contrast to the distribution for 2007–2012, when the majority of expenditures were for land acquisition and heavy habitat rehabilitation activities. When considered in total, the expenditures for 2007–2014 were basically balanced amongst the four categories of expenditures. The 2013–2014 distribution marks the shift in expenditures from land to water and foreshadows the ultimate distribution we expect for the first increment.

PRRIP EXPENDITURES





Outreach

NET Timelapse Project

The Program continued to contribute funds to the Platte Basin Timelapse Project (PBT) in 2013 and 2014. The PBT is a partnership of Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, Michael Forsberg Photography, the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Nikon Corporation. The project has more than 40 timelapse camera systems placed throughout the 90,000 square-mile basin, from its headwaters along the Continental Divide in the Colorado Rockies to the river's confluence with the Missouri River on Nebraska's eastern border. There are permanent cameras on the Elm Creek and Plum Creek complexes and temporary cameras are installed as need for events such as ice jams and high flows in the river. Each timelapse camera tells one part of the story of the proverbial drop of water as it makes a journey of roughly 900 river miles through the Platte River Basin. In 2014, the PBT team began building new, innovative multimedia content to tell the various stories of the Platte Basin and began work on a documentary film for public television. The project is also developing Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) based educational curriculum for middle and high school science students. Overall, the project will demonstrate the natural and manmade forces that shape the river and educate the public about the Platte River system. The website is www.plattebasintimelapse.org.

Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary

The Program contributes funds to the educational programs at the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary in Nebraska. 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 2013, 198 campers and peers leaders experienced nature first-hand at a camp and 1,379 family members attended an educational program. In 2014, 200 campers and peers leaders experienced nature first-hand at a camp and 604 family members attended an educational program.

South Platte River Environmental Education (SPREE)

In 2014 the Program began contributing funds to The Greenway Foundation's South Platte River Environmental Education (SPREE) program in Colorado. Over the course of its 40-year history, The Greenway Foundation has introduced tens of thousands of children to the South Platte River through SPREE. On SPREE excursions children learn about the river, its role in Denver's history, and that the South Platte River was, and still is, Denver's most valuable natural resource. In 2014, SPREE educators guided over 4,000 learners on environmental education field trips along the most urban stretches of the South Platte River and taught over 600 children at two summer camp locations. SPREE educational programs connect children to the environment in a hands-on way through ecology, history, folklore, and recreation along the South Platte River in Denver. The excursions, events, and day camps help these children build a connection to the River as well as the knowledge and skills that they will need to be active and engaged decision makers.

Prairie Loft

The Program contributes funds to the educational program of the Prairie Loft Center for Outdoor and Agricultural Learning in Nebraska. 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 2013 attendance at Prairie Loft field trips and lessons was 1,024 students and 465 teachers/parents, in 2014 attendance was 1,469 students and 380 teachers/parents.

2013 Exhibits

	State	Contacts
4States Irrigation Council – January	Colorado	296
Colorado Water Congress – January	Colorado	474
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture – February	Nebraska	189
Rivers and Wildlife Conference – March	Nebraska	185
Platte Valley Weed Management Field Day – August	Nebraska	145
Husker Harvest Days – September	Nebraska	2,995
Natural Resources Districts Conference – September	Nebraska	254
Society for Ecological Restoration – October	Wisconsin	658
South Platte Forum – October	Colorado	442
NE Water Resources Association/NE State Irrigators Association Conference – November	Nebraska	161

2013 Sponsorships

	State
4States Irrigation Council – January	Colorado
Prairie Fire Migration Special Birding Guide – January, February, March	Nebraska
Nebraska Environthon – May	Nebraska
Nebraska Grazing Conference – August	Nebraska
South Platte Forum – October	Colorado

2014 Exhibits

	State	Contacts
Nebraska Weed Management Summit – January	Nebraska	94
4States Irrigation Council – January	Colorado	137
Colorado Water Congress – January	Colorado	520
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture – February	Nebraska	225
Audubon Crane Festival – March	Nebraska	206
Husker Harvest Days – September	Nebraska	2,361
Natural Resources Districts Conference – September	Nebraska	361
South Platte Forum – October	Colorado	256
Kearney Children's Museum	Nebraska	N/A
NE Water Resources Association/NE State Irrigators Association Conference – November	Nebraska	83

2014 Sponsorships

	State
4States Irrigation Council – January	Colorado
Prairie Fire Migration Special Birding Guide – January, February, March	Nebraska
Nebraska Environthon – May	Nebraska
Water & Natural Resources Tour – July	Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming
South Platte Forum – October	Colorado
Collaborative Adaptive Management Network Rendezvous – October	California

Staff Public Presentations

Audience	2013	2014
Irrigators	2	1
Professional Associations	4	6
Natural Resource Districts	1	2
Academic	2	0
Water Conference/Symposium	4	5
Environmental Groups	2	1
General Public	2	3
TOTAL	**17**	**18**

PROGRAM EXHIBITS & SPONSORSHIPS

One of the benefits provided by the Program is a streamlined Section 7 Consultation process. To date during the first increment, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have provided over 180 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
2013	14	2	2	5	23
2014	9	0	0	3	12
Total by Entity	**127**	**21**	**16**	**25**	**189**

603

Whooping Cranes in the world

Wild Populations

304	95	29	8
Aransas-Wood Buffalo Migratory	Eastern Migratory	Louisiana Non-Migratory	Florida Non-Migratory

Cranes in Captivity

161

DATA COURTESY OF: INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION PHOTO CREDIT: ABBY JENSEN

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

PLATTE RIVER
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

platteriverprogram.org