

LOWER LOUP RIVERS

NEBRASKA

Great Plains Fire Learning Network

5.1 million acres



LANDSCAPE PARTNERS

Lower Loup Natural Resources District
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Pheasants Forever
Prescribed burn associations
Prescribed Burn Task Force
Private landowners
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Volunteer fire departments

A stretch of the North Loup River, just north of Broken Bow, shows a typical mix of irrigated farmland on the river bottoms and native prairie on the divides. © John Ortman / Lower Loup NRD

THE LOWER LOUP NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT project area comprises all or parts of 16 counties and covers 7,923 square miles in central Nebraska, including the Central Loess Hills and parts of the southern Sandhills region. Set up along hydrological boundaries, the Districts are responsible for managing a variety of natural resource challenges, protecting and maintaining natural resources in areas ranging from water quality and quantity to forestry, range management, soils and more.

About half of the district is tilled agricultural land; the remaining 2.5 million acres are native grasslands, which are severely threatened by eastern red cedar encroachment. Numerous landowner cooperatives have formed to manage this threat, and their numbers are increasing in the region. Lessons learned from their efforts will be shared with other landscapes in the Great Plains FLN that face similar issues.

Outreach to volunteer fire departments, landowner training and burn plan development are planned for the coming year to develop further capacity in the landscape. This project will also provide leadership to the regional network.

LANDSCAPE VISION

Partners wish to maintain the biologically unique Central Loess Hills Prairie as prairie, both by reversing brush encroachment and by improving and restoring diverse native plant communities.

To this end, the area's private landowners and managers are becoming empowered to take the control of fire into their own hands to safeguard their economic well-being and the region's ecological integrity.

Contact: Dr. John Ortman john.ortman@ne.nacdnet.net

(308) 728-3244 x 116