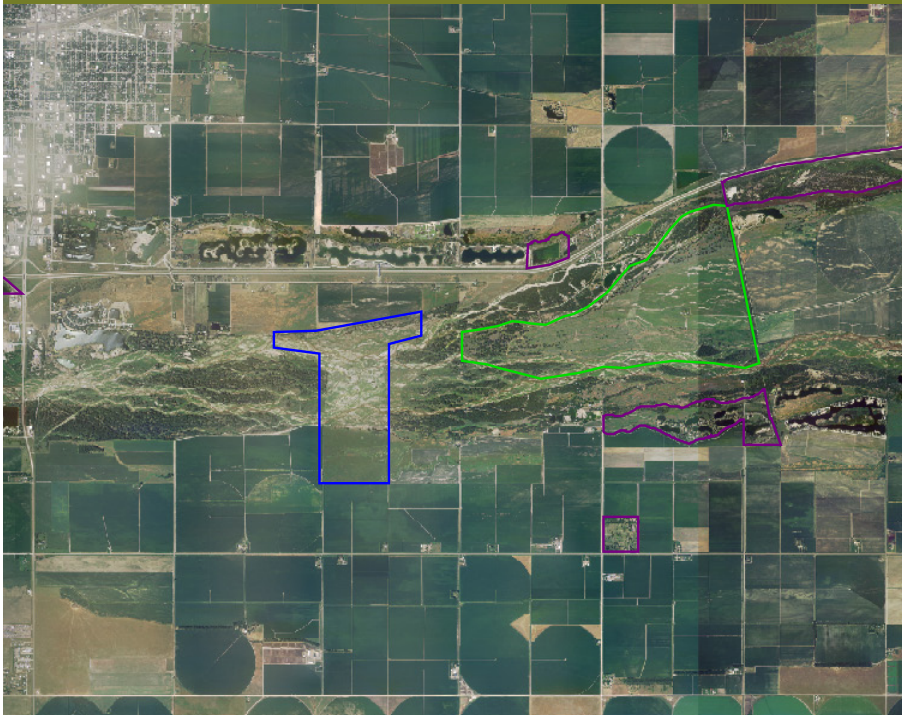


CENTRAL PLATTE

NEBRASKA

Great Plains Fire Learning Network

2.1 million acres



The Platte River runs through a highly fragmented landscape, with patches of grassland and woodlands scattered in an agricultural matrix and dissected by a major interstate highway. Conservation areas are outlined in color by ownership: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (blue), The Nature Conservancy (green) and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (purple).

THE CENTRAL PLATTE LANDSCAPE lies within the main Platte River floodplain in the central third of Nebraska. This fragmented landscape is characterized by cropland, degraded native pasture, and woodlands that have encroached upon the grasslands since European settlement. The I-80 highway corridor parallels the river and sprawling development is occurring. Conservation targets that are under pressure in this landscape include grasslands and wetlands, which have been subjected to fragmentation and altered hydrology; migratory birds, which rely on vanishing wet meadows and well as roosting habitat; and whooping cranes, which face reduced roosting habitat and increased predation.

Partners have engaged in a variety of activities to reintroduce fire and increase the resiliency of the landscape. The Central Platte Natural Resources District, with Conservancy support, has employed a prescribed burn crew to assist private landowners in fire management to improve the land for agriculture, wildlife and hydrologic integrity. Partners have also co-hosted a National Wildfire Coordinating Group fire training academy for the region to engage volunteer fire departments, helped in the organization of landowner fire cooperatives and developed materials for private landowner workshops and outreach.

LANDSCAPE PARTNERS

Central Platte Natural Resources District
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Prescribed Burn Task Force
Private landowners
The Nature Conservancy—Nebraska
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Volunteer fire departments

LANDSCAPE GOAL

By educating and involving private landowners and public agencies in the uses and benefits of fire, and using a variety of tools, partners will maintain a highly diverse and heterogeneous native grassland system. Partners also aim to alter the cultural perception of fire, and foster awareness of its benefits in the next generation of land managers and citizens.

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