



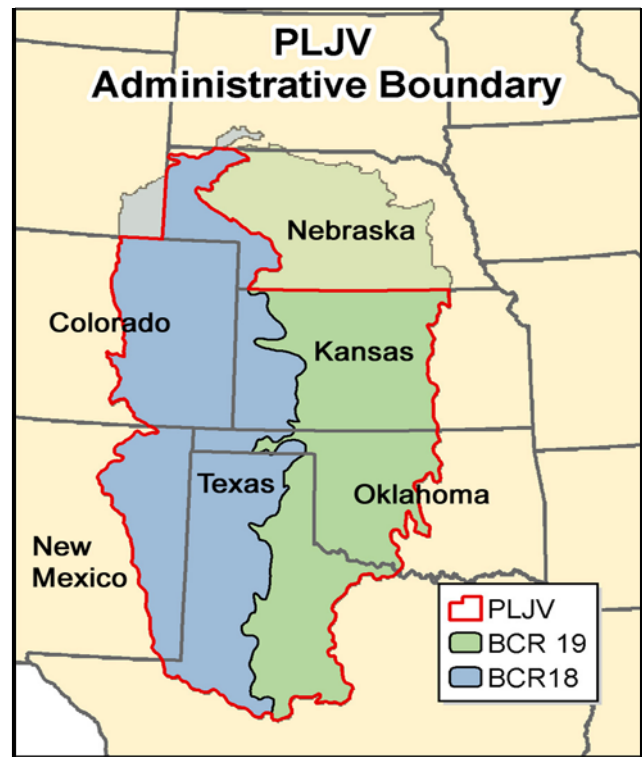
**What is the Playa Lakes Joint Venture?** The Playa Lakes Joint Venture's (PLJV) mission is to conserve playa lakes, other wetlands and associated landscapes through partnerships for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people. The PLJV works in portions of six states— Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas— that lie within the short and mixed grass Bird Conservation Regions 18 and 19. The PLJV facilitates partnerships with private landowners, conservation and sportsman groups, state and federal wildlife agencies and corporations to coordinate biological, outreach and funding efforts for implementing conservation projects within its boundaries.

### PLJV partners include:

- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- ConocoPhillips
- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- Farm Service Agency
- Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish
- Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation
- Pheasants Forever
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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### Recent PLJV accomplishments

Over the past few years, the PLJV has focused on building regional and local conservation partnerships, leveraging habitat project dollars, and advancing biological planning and communication efforts. Some of these recent accomplishments include:

- Increased capacity of member states to develop habitat conservation projects by granting more than \$700,000 to local partnerships since 2002.
- Created a Geographic Information System to assess habitat across the PLJV region.
- Developed an integrated biological planning process for all bird species and habitats across the PLJV region.
- Spearheaded the creation of a new Farm Bill program to protect playa lakes.
- Launched a multimedia communications campaign to raise awareness about playas.

These recent gains build upon the PLJV's successful history of raising nearly \$50 million to conserve more than 100,000 acres since the Joint Venture's inception 1989.

## What are playa lakes?

One of the most numerous wetland types in the PLJV region are playa lakes, which are concentrated throughout the Joint Venture above the Ogallala Aquifer formation. They are shallow, seasonal wetlands that are generally round and small, averaging 17 acres in size. Playa lakes have clay-lined basins and naturally fill with water periodically from rainfall and associated runoff. Precipitation is inconsistent in the PLJV region and drought is a common occurrence. The resulting wet-dry cycle of playa lakes produces a highly diverse plant community. These plants produce large quantities of nutritious seeds, essential for waterfowl and other birds which migrate and winter in the region. Playa lakes may be the most important wetland habitat type for birds in the region.

## Playa lakes facts:

- More than 60,000 playa lakes are found in the High Plains.
- Playa lakes support 37 mammal species, 185 bird species and 340 plant species.
- More than 90 percent of playa lakes are privately owned.
- Playa lakes are the primary source of recharge for the Ogallala Aquifer.



## Playa lakes face many threats

The majority of playa lakes are located in or adjacent to farms, grazing lands and feedlots, which can result in number of impacts including: pesticide and fertilizer runoff, contaminants from feedlot runoff, overgrazing and sedimentation. Sedimentation is the primary threat to playa lakes. Sediment runoff into playa basins reduces the volume of water they can hold and may disrupt the wet-dry cycles necessary for vegetation growth.

## Playa lakes and recharge

Playa lakes are the primary source of recharge for the Ogallala Aquifer– a 174,000 square-mile formation spanning sections of eight states, including all six of the PLJV region. The Ogallala is an important resource for western Great Plains states which have relied on pumping the aquifer for agricultural, municipal and industrial use since the turn of the century. But the Ogallala's water supply has been steadily declining since the 1940s, and recent figures show a 1.35-ft drop per year from 1992 to 1997. Recharge from playa lakes, coupled with water conservation practices, will hopefully slow this decline and maintain the resource for future generations.