



News Release

March 4, 2004

For Immediate Release

Nebraska Partnership Receives \$855,000 for Wetland Project

On March 3, 2004, the [Migratory Bird Conservation Commission](#), as authorized under the [North American Wetlands](#)

[Conservation Act \(NAWCA\)](#), approved \$855,000 in match funding for a \$3 million conservation project to protect in perpetuity more than 3,000 acres along the North Platte River in western Nebraska. The project was developed by Platte River Basin Environments, Inc. (PRBE), a conservation partnership based in Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Human land-use practices have either destroyed or damaged critical wetland habitats in the North Platte Basin through altered hydrology, overgrazing, cropping of highly erodible soils and development. What began 10 years ago as a grassroots effort to address these threats has grown into a strong, diverse partnership involving federal and state agencies, local governments, universities, nongovernmental organizations and local and regional businesses.

PRBE partners on this project include: the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, University of Nebraska, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and several private landowners, among others.

These partners received an \$855,000 NAWCA grant to affect 3,092 acres of wetlands through acquisition, restoration, and enhancement. Their project is located in Scottsbluff, Morrill, Garden, Banner, and Keith Counties in Congressional District 3. PRBE will be the initial title holder to the 2,337 acres to be acquired. After portions of these lands are restored and/or enhanced, titles will be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Partners also will restore and enhance wetlands and upland habitats on several privately owned lands.

Project lands contain important wintering, migration, and breeding habitat for waterfowl species such as mallard, wood duck, northern pintail, scaup, redhead, canvasback, ringnecked duck, and American wigeon. Other wetland-

Land acquired through this project will provide additional public lands on which people can hike, photograph nature, hunt, bird watch, hunt, and receive environmental education. This project helps to advance the habitat goals of the [Playa Lakes Joint Venture](#), North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and Partners in Flight, and benefits the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North Platte National Wildlife Refuge. The 18 partners making this project possible added a total of \$2,050,321 to grant funds to help accomplish their goals.

NAWCA is non-regulatory program that calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands conservation projects to benefit wetland-associated wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds.

For more information about this project, contact:

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"We are very proud of the number of partners we have, and our success depends largely on the guidance and mentoring of the many organizations that have contributed money and expertise to our projects," said Hod Kosman, President of PRBE. "More importantly, we have always relied on good science, biology and information from our partners."

associated migratory birds to benefit from partners' efforts include long-billed curlew, western grebe, northern harrier, red-headed woodpecker, and Swainson's hawk. Upland acres to be acquired will provide a buffer for the adjoining wetlands and will offer cover for upland-nesting birds. These grassland buffers also will help to filter runoff, enhancing water quality.

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