

Playa Lakes Joint Venture Educator Resource Guide



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**This guide is also available online at:
<http://www.pljv.org/cms/education>**

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Playa Lakes Joint Venture Educator Resource Guide

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) Educator Resource Guide is a detailed index to educational materials and programs focused on playa lakes, associated birds and conservation issues in the PLJV region. The Guide is intended for educators of all levels who are interested in exploring playa lakes with their students. Resources showcased include those produced and/or sponsored by the PLJV, our partners and other environmental education providers.

Books and Field Guides:

Kansas Pocket Guide to Mammals

This handy guide published by the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, Kansas, features color photos and physical, behavioral and habitat descriptions for 40 mammals found in Kansas, including many which inhabit the western plains from black-tailed jackrabbits to pronghorn. Additional information can be found on the Nature Center [Mammals' Den web site](#). The guide is available for \$1.50 each if shipped by mail, or free if picked up at the Nature Center. Call (316) 683-5499 to order.

Birding Nebraska

From Lewis's woodpeckers in the Pine Ridge to whooping cranes on the central Platte River and warbler migrations along the Missouri River, Birding Nebraska will help birders be at the right place at the right time to see them. Lavishly illustrated with color photos and artwork, and trimmed with tidbits of bird lore and natural history, this edition is a must for birders seeking new species and new destinations to explore in Nebraska. Published by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; price \$12.95. Order [online](#).

Guide to Nebraska Wetlands

This guide was published by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and gives detailed information about the wetlands found throughout the state. Wetlands are defined and their importance explained. More detail is given for each type of wetland and the conservation issues they are faced with. Specific wetland sites are also listed with directions to access them. To receive a copy, contact Ted LaGrange at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (402) 471-5463 for more information, click [here](#).

Playas: Jewels of the Plains

Written by former PLJV board member Jim Steiert, and including images from award-winning photographer Wyman Meinzer, this book is a well-researched and artistic look at playa lakes. The book explores the complexities of the relationship between these lakes and life on the High Plains. *Playas* received the Texas Outdoor Writers Association top award for outdoor books in 1995. Printing of the book was funded in part by the PLJV. Click [here](#) to order the book.

Common Flora of the Playa Lakes

A detailed field guide and survey of 72 plant species that occur on playa lakes. The book is a handy guide for wildflower lovers, environmental educators and other naturalists who enjoy exploring the playa lakes region. Color photographs throughout highlight key identification characteristics for each species. Also provided is an introduction to the ecology of playa lakes and an appendix listing all known plant species reported on playa lakes. Written and researched by Drs. David Haukos and Loren Smith of Texas Tech University and funded in part by the PLJV. Click [here](#) to order the book.

Playas of the Great Plains

Written by former PLJV board member Dr. Loren Smith, this book provides a state-of-the-art survey of all that is currently known about Great Plains playa ecology and conservation. Smith synthesizes his own extensive research with other published studies to define playas and characterize their origin, development, flora, fauna, structure, function and diversity. He also thoroughly explores the human relationship with playas from prehistoric times, when they served as campsites for the Clovis peoples, to today's threats to playa ecosystems from agricultural activities and global climate change. The book will be available starting November 2003. Click [here](#) to order the book.

Birds of the High Plains and Rolling Plains of Texas

A field checklist of 451 bird species occurring the Texas Panhandle and Rolling Plains. Produced by Texas Parks and Wildlife with funding from the PLJV. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

Pocket Guide to Prairie Birds

Field guide to bird species of the shortgrass prairie with color photos, descriptions and identification notes. Contact Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) at (970) 482-1707 to order a copy.

A Summer in the Life of Wild Mallards

Illustrated children's book following the life and migration patterns of a wild duck family from nesting in the northern prairies to wintering in the south. Illustrated and written by Kent Olson and published by the Grand Teton Natural History Association 1989. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

Wetlands and Ground Water in the United States

Provides basic descriptions of wetland and ground water systems and their hydrologic relationships. Written by Andrew W. Stone of the American Ground Water Trust and Amanda J. Lindley Stone of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire. Contact the American Ground Water Trust for a copy at (603) 228-5444.

Pocket Guide to Kansas Raptors

Several dozen raptors are highlighted in this guide, complete with beautiful full color photographs, field observation tips and natural history information. Additional raptor information can be found on a companion web site, [Raptor's Roost](#), hosted by the Great

Plains Nature Center in Wichita, Kansas. To obtain a copy of the guide, contact the Nature Center at 316-683-5499.

Activity Guides:

NEW: Playa Lake Teacher Trunks for New Mexico

The playa lake teacher trunk has hands-on activities for K-8 students. The activities can be adjusted for older students as well. The projects are based on soil, plants, animals, as well as other extensions. There are science activities covering a multitude of national standards as well as language arts, math and art. Contact Cindy Wall at (505) 762-4769 with Curry County Soil and Water Conservation Office to check out a trunk.

Project WET, WILD and Learning Tree Activities for Playas

Educators from the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks have sifted through Project WET, Project WILD and WILD Aquatic, and Project Learning Tree activity books and have come up with dozens of lessons that can apply to playa wetlands. The activities are compiled in concise two-page index listing the lesson title and corresponding page number in each of the books. To obtain a copy of the list, contact the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777.

Project WEBFOOT

Project WEBFOOT is a nonprofit wetlands education program and curriculum created by Ducks Unlimited for educators and 4th-6th grade students. The program includes lesson plans, interactive waterfowl id CD-ROM, activity books, posters, youth memberships to DU's Greenwings program, and more. To receive more information about Project WEBFOOT, contact Project WEBFOOT, c/o Ducks Unlimited, One Waterfowl Way, Memphis, TN 38120, or contact your local DU chapter, also visit their [web site](#).

Playa Lakes Teaching Unit

Selected classroom activities from Project WILD, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Federation and USDA Soil Conservation Service that highlight playas, bird migration and wetland ecology. Produced by the PLJV with funding support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

Shorebirds- Migratory Super Heroes!

Companion activity guide for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Shorebird Sister School Program (see USFWS listing under PLJV Partner Programs below) exploring shorebird migration, identification and biology. Contact the SSSP Coordinator at (304) 876-7783 for a copy.

The Shortgrass Prairie

Explores all types of grasslands and dependent bird species and raises awareness of this endangered ecosystem. Contact the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) at (970)

482-1707 to order a copy.

Birds in Hand & Field

Guide explains what happens at bird banding stations, how to identify different parts of birds and why this information is valuable for bird conservation. Contact RMBO at (970) 482-1707 to order a copy.

Bald Eagle Behavior

Activities are developed around observing and documenting Bald Eagles in the wild. Contact RMBO at (970) 482-1707 to order a copy.

Playas: Gems of the Plains Student/Educator Materials

The information in this activity guide complements the Playas: Gems of the Plains exhibit (see Exhibits, Festivals, Trails and Other Field Programs below) and can be used in conjunction with the exhibit or on its own. The materials include eight activities focused on playa lakes, groundwater, biodiversity and cultural connections. Most lessons are designed for grades 4 through 8, but can be adapted for younger or older students. Click [here for the PDF version](#) of the activity guide.

Taking Flight

Participatory program that guides students through activities based on bird identification, backyard birding, habitat and community action. Students earn patches for each section completed. Contact RMBO at (970) 482-1707 to order a copy.

Playa Wetlands Curricula

A three-volume collection of 30 themed lessons on wetland Adaptation and Survival, Food Chains and Ecosystems, and Cycles: Change Over Time. Developed for grades 4-6 by Texas Tech University, contact Julie Thomas (806) 742-1997) or David Haukos (806) 742-2843) for copies or download the lessons [online](#).

Flying WILD

[Flying WILD](#) provides a new, major bird component to Project WILD. Flying WILD extends upon Project WILD by providing resources and guides for School Bird Festivals in conjunction with International Migratory Bird Day. The program allows students the opportunity to get involved in learning through researching, planning, and hosting a bird festival at their school.

Magazines and Articles:

NEW: The Playa - A High Plains Oasis

An article on playas written by Chad Love for the Jan/Feb 2006 issue of Outdoor Oklahoma, the magazine of the Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation. The article is a 14-page, full color feature that goes into detail about playas and playa conservation efforts in Oklahoma. Contact the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 for a copy of this issue.

Down the Drain: The Destruction of Waters and Wildlife in the Southwest

A report by the National Wildlife Federation about southwest wetlands, including playas, at risk from habitat destruction, drought, and lack of regulation. Published November 2004. Download the PDF version from the [NWF website](#).

Trail Tales Magazine

Trail Tales is a quarterly magazine for kids about nature and the outdoors, filled with articles, puzzles, games, drawings and photos. The magazine is published by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and is used in schools throughout the state. Individual subscriptions cost \$15 for two years. To order, contact: Trail Tales Magazine, P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370 or call toll-free 1-(800) 632-5263.

Great Plains Playa Lakes: The Most Vital Wetlands You've Never Birded

This article highlights birding opportunities in the relatively unknown playa lakes region of western Oklahoma. The article also provides a summary of playa lakes ecology, conservation issues and PLJV efforts to protect the resource. Published in the August 2003 issue of *Winging It*, the newsletter of the American Birding Association. Contact *Winging It* editor [Rick Wright](#) for a copy.

Grassland Elegy

A poetic, photo-rich essay describing native prairie species such as the prairie dog, lesser prairie-chicken, swift fox and others, and their struggles to exist in a changing grassland environment. Written by Gary Lantz for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's *Oklahoma Outdoors* magazine June 2003. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

A Storm of Toads

Playa lakes aren't just havens for birds, but also for more than a dozen species of toads. This article details the life cycle of several species, including spadefoot toads, named for the hard, darkened 'spades' on their hind feet that allow them to dig deep into the soil. Written by former PLJV board member Dr. Loren Smith for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

Treasures of the Playas

Ducks Unlimited magazine article from Nov/Dec 1998 highlighting playa lakes as important waterfowl areas and treasured areas for duck hunters. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

Playa Lakes: A Unique Feature on the Western Kansas Landscape

Full-color brochure illustrating playa lakes, their characteristics, origin and importance to wildlife and people. Produced by the Kansas Biological Survey and National Resources Conservation Service. Contact the [Kansas Biological Survey](#) for a copy of the brochure at 785-864-1500.

Ground-Water Recharge in the Southern High Plains of Texas and New Mexico

The U.S. Geological Survey has published this concise, clearly written informational brochure about playa lakes' role in recharging the Ogallala Aquifer. Written by USGS

Research Hydrologist Dr. Warren W. Wood, the pamphlet explains in plain terms how and when recharge occurs under playa lakes and the implications for groundwater management. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

Audio/Visual Materials:

NEW: Playas - Reflections of Life on the Plains

In an effort to raise awareness and conservation of these vital wetlands, the PLJV has produced a new film, [*The Playas - Reflections of Life on the Plains*](#), which is available on DVD or VHS. The 28-minute film illustrates the values of playas to wildlife, water and people, threats to the wetlands and how people are working to conserve them. The film features sweeping aerial footage of playas captured by hot air balloon and interviews with playa experts, biologists, landowners and community leaders throughout the six-state playa lakes region. There is no charge for the film except for shipping and handling of \$5.95. Contact Debbie Slobe at (303) 926-0777 to order a DVD or VHS copy.

NEW: Playa Country Radio Series

Playa Country is a weekly radio program produced by the PLJV and aired on High Plains Public Radio and select farm radio stations across the PLJV region. Programs are educational featurettes about wetlands, prairies, wildlife and the people and communities working to conserve these resources. Show archives can be downloaded from the [PLJV website](#).

NEW: Lesser Prairie-Chicken: Echoes of the Past?

This video was produced by the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks, in cooperation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. and the Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation in an effort to instill an appreciation of the lesser prairie chicken and to improve understanding of the issues associated with their long-term conservation. To obtain a DVD or VHS copy, contact Randy Rodgers of KDWP at (785) 628-8614.

Seasons in the Prairie

This video, produced by Berlet Films and Video in Jackson, MI, shows how life in the prairie changes with each year. It shows footage from short grass and tall grass prairies and focuses on many different animals and how they adapt to the changing seasons. Highlighted species and events are prairie dogs, bison, pronghorn antelope, burrowing owls, coyote, grasses, flowers, fire and insects. The video is about 20 minutes long and is available for check out through the Project WILD office at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (402) 571-5581.

Nebraska's Threatened and Endangered Wildlife

This CD-ROM, produced by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society, teaches kids about Nebraska's threatened and endangered species through interactive graphics, quizzes and videos.

Do Your Part

This video illustrates the diversity of aquatic life, water birds and other wildlife that depend on wetlands, why they are disappearing, their crucial role in bird migration and how students can help preserve wetlands, especially playa lakes. Originally produced by the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture and US Fish and Wildlife Service and adapted for use in the PLJV region in 1993. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to order a copy.

Water: For the Life of Texas

This video examines Texas' water planning process and the long-lasting impacts the state's water management decisions have on the economy and environment. Produced by The National Wildlife Federation; contact Jennifer McMahon at (512) 476-9805 for a copy.

The High Plains of Oklahoma

In this episode of "Outdoor Oklahoma", a TV program of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, one can explore a relatively unknown part of the state - the High Plains. The High Plains are located in the northwest or "Panhandle" portion of the state, where elevation rises to about 3,000 feet and the short and mixed grass prairie occurs. The program educates audiences on the wildlife, playa lakes, and vegetation of the area. Call the PLJV office at (303) 926-0777 to request a copy.

Mountain Plover Conservation Video

With more than 70 percent of Mountain Plover breeding habitat in private ownership, landowners and managers are key for conservation of this species of special concern throughout the PLJV region. Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's (RMBO) Prairie Partners program is developing a video concerning Mountain Plover biology, identification, habitat requirements and conservation needs to raise awareness of this species for landowners, managers and the general public. The video will be available fall 2003. To obtain a copy, contact Tammy Vercauteren of RMBO at (970) 482-1707.

Texas: The State of Water

This TV program produced by Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas Public Broadcasting explores water use by people, wildlife, agriculture and industry throughout Texas from the Rio Grande to the Ogallala Aquifer. The program educates audiences about water scarcity, quality and value, and raises awareness of water conservation issues. Contact Dana Hivley at Texas Parks and Wildlife to order a copy at (512) 389-4637.

The Shorebirds of Kansas

This handy, interactive field guide to shorebirds developed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) is a must-see for birdwatchers. The DVD teaches audiences how to identify 23 species of shorebirds, including sandpipers, plovers and Wilson's phalaropes. The birds were filmed at the Quivera National Wildlife Refuge and Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area in Kansas, but most of the species are also found in wetlands in surrounding states, making the DVD a useful guide for birdwatchers throughout the PLJV region. Contact Bob Mathews at KDWP at (620) 672-0719 for a copy.

Wetlands of Nebraska

This video is produced by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and gives an overview of all the wetland types of Nebraska and explores conservation issues related to each. To receive a copy, contact Ted LaGrange at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (402) 471-5463 for more information, click [here](#).

Exhibits, Festivals, Trails and Other Field Programs

NEW: Riverside Zoo Prairie Habitat

The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, in partnership with the [Riverside Zoo](#) and the Riverside Zoological Society in Scottsbluff, have created an interactive, demonstration short grass prairie habitat with a small wetland for the benefit of students and zoo visitors.

NEW: The Great Plains Trail of Oklahoma

The Great Plains Trail of Oklahoma is a highway-based wildlife viewing trail showcasing western Oklahoma's best public and private wildlife viewing sites. Local communities worked alongside state wildlife agency representatives, conservation groups, private landowners and area businesses to develop trail loops under the leadership of the [Oklahoma Wildlife and Prairie Heritage Alliance](#) and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. The trail features 13 driving loops encompassing more than 100 sites, including everything from buffalo to prairie-chicken viewing.

NEW: The Colorado Birding Trail

The Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Audubon, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and Colorado Field Ornithologists are collaborating to create a statewide highway-based and online birding trail system, beginning with southeast Colorado. The [web site](#) is close to completion and the southeast portion of the trail is scheduled to officially open to the public in the spring of 2007.

NEW: Lee Richardson Zoo Waters of Kansas Exhibit

During the spring of 2005, the [Lee Richardson Zoo](#) in Garden City added a new exhibit featuring live otters and native fish and interactive displays showcasing various water resources in Kansas, including playas, rivers and streams.

Playa Lakes Festivals

A series of summertime Playa Lakes Festivals are being held across the PLJV region for students entering 3rd through 6th grade. At the 4-day festivals, students learn about High Plains water resources through expert instruction and field experiences combining art, science and history. The festivals are organized by the Ogallala Commons. Contact Darryl Birkenfeld at (806) 938-2529 for more information.

Annual High Plains Lesser Prairie Chicken Festival

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish hosts an annual lesser prairie chicken festival in Milnesand, New Mexico, in early April each year. The festival includes chicken viewing, nature history tours, BBQ and other events. For more information,

contact NMDGF biologist Dawn Davis at (505) 762-5127.

Texas Prairie Panhandle Birding Trail

Developed by the Texas Department of Wildlife and Parks and modeled after the agency's highly successful Texas Coastal Birding Trail, the Texas Prairie Panhandle Birding Trail highlights some of the best bird-viewing sites in the Panhandle region that are accessible by car. TPW has produced a full-color map detailing the driving route, which includes several playa lakes. For more information about the trail, click [here](#).

Great Backyard Bird Count

Bird watchers of all ages can participate in this national bird count program. Observe and count the birds that occur in your backyard, neighborhood park or other natural area and enter the results on the GBBC web site. The next Audubon Society Great Backyard Bird Count will take place Feb. 13 -16, 2004. For details, click [here](#).

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory Field Programs

Students and adults can get up close and personal with birds that occur in the eastern plains of Colorado at one of RMBO's bird banding stations in Brighton, Lamar and Fort Collins. RMBO also operates "On The Wing" a one-week summer camp focused on bird conservation. Participants receive hands-on field training and classroom instruction about Colorado ecosystems, visit an RMBO banding station, work with professional researchers, and observe birds while exploring Colorado's diverse array of habitats. For more information about these and other programs contact RMBO at (303) 659-4348 or click [here](#).

Great Plains Nature Center

The [Great Plains Nature Center](#) is a cooperative partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and the City of Wichita's Department of Park and Recreation. The center provides opportunities for the public to learn about the wildlife and habitats of the Great Plains region, and serves as a resource for environmental education with school districts, youth organizations, colleges and universities, conservation organizations, and other groups and individuals interested in wildlife and the environment.

Christmas Bird Count

From beginning birder to seasoned ornithologist, all are welcome to participate on any [Christmas Bird Count](#) (CBC). The CBC is organized by the Audubon Society each year and results help conservationists detect population trends, declines, increases across the United States, Canada, Mexico and Latin America. More than 50,000 observers participate each year. Counts must take place within a designated 15-mile CBC circle and the given count day during the holiday. Locate a circle [near you](#).

Playas... Gems of the Plains

A traveling exhibit featuring 20 floor-to-ceiling panels describing the natural and cultural history of playa lakes in the Southern Great Plains. The exhibit began its tour of the Texas Panhandle January 2003 and will travel to more than a dozen museums and other

exhibit areas in the PLJV region through 2008. Created and designed by Prehistoric Resources Identification, Assessment and Management (PRIAM), owned by the Northwest Texas Museum Association and funded in part by the PLJV.

Southwest Texas Museum Collection

Children's artwork created during the Playa Lakes Festivals is on display at the Southwest Texas Museum Collection at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Call (806) 742-3749 to find out more about the exhibit and when it can be viewed.

Online Resources:

Nebraska Birding Trails

The [Nebraska Birding Trails web site](#) is a comprehensive guide to all the best birding sites, trails and events in Nebraska, complete traveler and tourist information. Created by the Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation.

Bird IQ

The [BirdIQ website](#) is one-stop shopping for information and educational material about birds. The site connects visitors with conservation groups around the country that have posters, videos, curricula, and educational materials. The site is sponsored by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and ConocoPhillips.

Ask a Biologist: Birds and Their Songs

Listen to the songs of dozens of bird species found throughout the west, from the American Avocet to the Vermillion Flycatcher. The [site](#) is courtesy of the Arizona State University and the Audubon Society of Arizona.

PLJV.ORG

The [Playa Lakes Joint Venture web site](#) features detailed and illustrated descriptions of playa lakes, other prairie habitats and the birds that depend on them. The site includes archives of Playa Country radio series, a weekly show highlighting the people, partnerships and programs that are making a difference in the conservation of wildlife habitat in the playa lakes region.

Discovery for Recovery: An International Pintail Recovery Initiative

A team of waterfowl biologists are using satellite telemetry to track spring migration of [female pintail ducks](#) that winter in the Central Valley of California, and the playa lakes region of New Mexico and Texas. Students can follow the pintails' journey by reading up-to-the-minute reports from biologists, track the birds along a migration map, or interact with researchers in an online forum. The Texas portion of the study was funded in part by the PLJV.

Texas Tech University: Playa Education Materials

TTU's Julie Thomas and David Haukos have put together a wealth of [playa-related educational materials](#) and information for teachers geared toward elementary-aged

students.

Ducks Unlimited Greenwings

Games, activities and information about [ducks](#) geared for 1st through 4th grades.

Bird Source

Citizens become scientists on Bird Source - an [online bird survey project](#) created by the Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Birders of all levels can record the species they see in the wild online and contribute to a growing database that is helping biologists document North American birds.

FerruginousHawk.org

New site launched August 2003 by a tri-national conservation partnership between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico dedicated to fostering attention and providing education about the [Ferruginous Hawk](#). Learn about conservation programs aimed at protecting the species and follow on how scientists track Ferruginous Hawks using satellite telemetry.

ENature

The birding section of [ENature](#) is a wealth of information and resources, including a regional database of birding events and local sightings, backyard birding and identification tips, and even downloadable bird songs and calls. Also included on the site are detailed field guides with photos and information on state and national parks and refuges. ENature is provided by the National Wildlife Federation.

Birds of Nebraska

Interactive guide to more than 400 species of [Nebraska birds](#), featuring photographs, sounds and descriptions of each species' habitat, range, appearance, call and more. Produced and hosted by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Professional Resources:

NEW: Playa Lakes Teacher Trainings

Many PLJV partners are involved in and have experience with organizing teacher trainings on playa lakes, including the Ogallala Commons of Texas, the Central Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District in New Mexico, and Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory in Colorado and Nebraska. If you are an educator interested in attending or conducting trainings on playas, contact Debbie Slobe at (303) 926-0777 who can put you in touch with key contacts from these groups.

Playa Lakes Multi-state Facilitator Training

In June 2005, the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) hosted a multi-state facilitator training session on playa lakes. During the two-day course, participants received instruction on how to conduct teacher training workshops on playas, learned playa teaching techniques in the classroom and on the field, and developed agendas and action plans for hosting playa workshops. The resources used and developed during the session were compiled by KACEE and are available to other

educators throughout the region. Contact Beth Carreno at (785) 233-4721 to obtain a copy of the materials.

Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education

Currently, ([KACEE](#)) membership includes nearly 200 agencies, schools, universities, non-profit organizations, and businesses as organizational members, and approximately another 300 individual members dedicated to environmental education. KACEE publishes a quarterly newsletter and hosts a wide range of workshops, including an annual conference for its entire membership held the first Friday and Saturday of November.

Colorado Alliance for Environmental Educators

The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education ([CAEE](#)) is a coalition of environmental educators from around the state. CAEE hosts "Teaching Outside the Box", a learning retreat for educators set in the Rocky Mountains each spring. Recently launched the CAEE Database, an online resource for finding EE programs, events and curricula offered throughout the state. Publishes "InfoLink" newsletter with 575 subscribers and hosts a listserv with 90 active members.

Oklahoma Association for Environmental Education

The Oklahoma Association for Environmental Education ([OKAEE](#)) serves environmental educators throughout Oklahoma through organizing state wide and regional professional development workshops and serves as a clearinghouse for EE events around the state. Hosts the annual EE Expo conference, publishes the "EnvironMentor" newsletter and operates a listserv for members.

Kansas Streamlink

[StreamLink](#) is a network of stream studies teams and watershed educators, and clearing house of stream stewardship projects throughout Kansas. The program provides a variety of support services for these activities - from connecting individuals to helpful resources, to assisting at water related events.

Environmental Education Association of New Mexico

The Environmental Education Association of New Mexico ([EEANM](#)) is a nonprofit organization which provides, promotes, and enhances quality environmental education by offering New Mexicans opportunities for professional development, communication, and partnership. The EEANM's web site offers curricula, a workshop calendar and job listings page. EEANM also publishes EE Connections newsletter and hosts a listserv for educators.

Texas Association for Environmental Education

The Texas Association for Environmental Education ([TAEЕ](#)) is an organization of teachers, administrators, college and university faculty, natural resource managers, public agency employees and private citizens who share a common interest in promoting environmental education in Texas. Provides information on regional, state and national level EE workshops and publishes "The Leaflet" newsletter.

Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education

The Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education ([NACEE](#)) is a network of teachers, youth leaders, naturalists, environmental educators, natural resource professionals and others who care about and are dedicated to bringing about an awareness and appreciation of the environment. As an organization, NACEE sponsors an annual conference, holds workshops, produces a quarterly newsletter and other publications and maintains a continuously updated resource library.

PLJV Partner Programs:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Shorebird Sister School Program (SSSP): The [SSSP](#) is a multi-disciplinary education program for students to learn about shorebirds and connect to other participants along shorebird migration flyways through technology. The primary components of the program include a curriculum for grades 2-12, web site, and an email network. Through the SSSP email network and web site, students can interact with bird experts, participate in shorebird tracking projects, and connect with other classrooms in the program. To learn more and subscribe to the email network, contact the [SSSP Coordinator](#).

Educating for Conservation: The USFWS hosts this [web site for educators](#) with access to the conservation library, nature videos and photos for classroom use.

Junior Duck Stamp Program:

The USFWS sponsors a [Junior Duck Stamp Program](#) as a resource for teachers and students to learn about waterfowl and wetlands. There is also an associated curriculum.

Colorado Division of Wildlife

CDOW offers teacher training workshops in Project WILD, Project WET, Project Learning Tree and Project Food, Land and People throughout the year. For a schedule of courses, click [here](#). The Division also runs a Wildlife Watch program for schools, other groups and the general public. Contact Linda Groat at (719) 336-6608 for information about teacher workshops and CDOW educational programs in Southeast Colorado.

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Students can learn about [Nebraska's birds](#) online on the NGPC's "Birds of Nebraska Interactive Guide". Schedules of Project WILD/WET and Project Learning Tree workshops are listed. Find out about the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, recreational trail and more.

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

[KDWP](#) has created education service materials for preschool all the way to high school students including teachers' guides, On TRACKS and Nature's Notebook. KDWP also operates four nature education centers and conducts teacher training workshops.

New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish

[NMDGF](#) offers teacher training in Project WILD and aquatic resources, and hosts a number of natural history weekends for educators and students.

Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation

[ODWC](#) offers teacher training in Project WILD and aquatic resources and also sponsors a youth writing contest and wildlife camp in Ponca City. Soon to open is the Oklahoma Aquarium, a 62,000-square foot facility that will hold 200 exhibits showcasing Oklahoma's 177 native fish species.

Pheasants Forever's Leopold Education Project

The Leopold Education Project ([LEP](#)) is an innovative, interdisciplinary, critical thinking, conservation and environmental education curriculum based on the classic writings of the renowned conservationist, Aldo Leopold. The LEP teaches the public about humanity's ties to the natural environment in the effort to conserve and protect the earth's natural resources.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

The [TPWD](#) provides lesson plans, education grant information, locations of interpretive centers and more on its web site. Find information on Project WILD and Aquatic WILD workshops, sign up your class to participate in a webcast on environmental subjects or order posters and fact sheets. TPW also loans out Texas Wetlands Education Trunks and other [materials for teachers](#). The trunks include suggestions and equipment for classroom and field activities tailored to different grade levels.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The [NRCS](#) offers conservation education material for teachers K - 12, focusing on soil and wetland lessons.

Partners In Flight: International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)

[IMBD](#) is celebrated the second Saturday of May throughout North and Central America. IMBD was initiated in 1993 by bird conservationists from the Smithsonian Institute and Partners in Flight (PIF). PIF is a cooperative effort involving partnerships among federal, state and local government agencies, private citizens, conservation groups, philanthropic foundations and others, to coordinate conservation for land birds. IMBD has now become the hallmark outreach event for PIF.

ConocoPhillips Teaching Tools

[ConocoPhillips](#) has sponsored the creation of several teaching guides and videos covering playas, water, biodiversity, birds and other scientific subjects.

Ducks Unlimited

DU enables educators to create engaging curriculum about wetland habitat and animals, offering complete lessons, teachers' guide and magazine just for kids - *Puddler*. For details, click [here](#).

Publicly-Accessible Playa Lakes:

Oklahoma

Lunceford Playa:

Owned and managed by the Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) with financial support from the PLJV. Site donated to the PLJV by landowners Dennis and Jan Lunceford in 1992. The 18-acre basin is located eight miles west of Turpin on Hwy 64 in northwest Oklahoma. Wildlife watching opportunities include: waders, shorebirds, geese, waterfowl, teal, pintail, mallard, pheasants, raptors, coyote, deer, short-eared owl, and more. Contact Danny Watson, ODWC area wildlife manager at (806) 339-5175.

Hooker:

Several playas around the town of Hooker, including McKinley Lake, Wild Horse Lake, Balzar Lake. For more information, contact Aymee Hofferber at (580)652-2488.

Gage Playa:

Owned and operated by the town of Gage. Contact (580) 923-7727.

Colorado

Queens State Wildlife Management Area: Located in Kiowa County 15 miles south of Eads. Queens SWA is home to Lake Nee Noshe, Nee So Pah, Nee Grande, Upper and Lower Queens reservoirs which offer great wildlife viewing opportunities.

Contact Colorado Division of Wildlife Education Specialist [Linda Groat](#) by email or phone (719) 336-6608 for information on additional publicly-accessible playa lakes in southeast Colorado. Groat has led educational workshops on the Great Plains Reservoirs (modified playas) in Kiowa County and on a privately-owned playa lake in Holly.

Texas

Playa de Entereza (Integrity Playa): Located one-half mile south of Nazareth, TX just off of Texas Farm-to-Market Road 168. This is a native grass playa on private land that can be visited with permission. Contact [Darryl Birkenfeld](#) for more information (806) 938-2529.

Texas Tech University: TTU in Lubbock has a playa in 160 acres of native rangeland on the campus. Guided educational tours can be arranged. Contact David Haukos (David_Haukos@fws.gov) or [Julie Thomas \(julie.thomas@ttu.edu\)](mailto:julie.thomas@ttu.edu); tel: (806) 742-1997 ext. 304.

Cactus Lake: Operated by the town of Cactus in the Texas Panhandle, Cactus Lake a significant playa in the region, used by hundreds of thousands of waterfowl, wading birds, songbirds, upland game birds and bald eagles. 800 acres of the site was donated by ConocoPhillips in March 1998 as part of a North American Wildlife Conservation Act grant organized by the PLJV.

Playa Lakes Wildlife Management Areas, Texas Parks and Wildlife: Owned and operated by TPW, the Taylor lakes unit (http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wma/find_a_wma/list/?id=19) is 530 acres located in Donley County. It was acquired by TPW with the help of the PLJV to preserve playa lakes wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. Outstanding opportunities for wildlife viewing from the observation blind. Restroom facilities and potable water are not available on the Area.

Other playa lakes under TPW management include Armstrong and Dimmitt. Contact Waterfowl Biologist Bill Johnson with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at (806) 655-3782 for information on these playas, and possible opportunities to visit playas on private land.

New Mexico

Green Acres Playa:

Located in the city of Clovis within walking distance of four schools. There is also a playa on private land that can be visited with an experienced guide. Contact Tish McDaniel for more information (505) 762-6997.

Playas on private land:

To inquire about landowners willing to allow students on their land, contact the local Natural Resources Conservation Service offices in Clovis (505) 763-7412-ext.3, Portales (505) 356-4465 ext.3, and Lovington (505) 396-5857 and ask if they could connect you willing landowners to conduct a playa field trip.

Roosevelt County

Landowner Don Clifton is willing to have students and educators on his two playa lakes. Contact Don at 1224 SRR33, Pep, NM 88126 (505) 675-2360.

Kansas

Stein, Wild Turkey and Herron Playas: Owned and operated by the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP). Stein playa is located on 120 acres of land in Ford County about seven miles northeast of Dodge City. The land was obtained in 1995 and 1996 with funding from PLJV partners. Wild Turkey playa is located 7.5 miles west and one mile south of Dodge City. The land was obtained in 1992 with funding from PLJV partners. The area is 157 acres with 50 of those are playa wetland and the remainder farmland. Contact KDWP Dodge city office at (316) 227-8609 for access information to all three sites.

Nebraska

There are a number of Rainwater Basin playas under public ownership by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The NGPC is currently revising its Guide to Wetlands of Nebraska which lists all accessible sites. Below are a few recommended areas:

1. Cottonwood Waterfowl Production Area (WPA), 2 mi. W., 1 mi. N. of Bertrand, Phelps Co.
2. 2Sacramento Wildlife Management Area (WMA), 2 mi. W. of Wilcox, Phelps Co.
3. Lake Seldom, ½ miles south of Holdrege, Phelps Co.
4. Funk WPA, 1 mi. N. of Funk, Phelps Co.
5. Gleason WPA, 4 mi. S., 4 mi. W. of Minden, Kearney Co.
6. Jensen WPA, 6 mi. N. of Campbell, Kearney Co.
7. Harvard WPA, 3 mi. W. of Harvard, Clay Co.
8. Springer WPA, 2 mi. S., 7 mi. W. of Aurora, Hamilton Co.
9. Kissinger WMA, 1 mi. N. of Fairfield, Clay Co.

10. Massie WPA, 3 mi. S. of Clay Center, Clay Co.
11. Pintail WMA, 5 mi. S., 2 mi. E. of Aurora, Hamilton Co.
12. Hultine WPA, 6 mi. E. of Harvard, Clay Co.
13. Eckhardt WPA, 4 mi. N., 3 mi. W. of Ong, Clay Co.
14. Mallard Haven WPA, 2 mi. N of Shickley, Fillmore Co.
15. Rauscher 1 mi. S., 4 mi. E. of Sutton, Fillmore, Co.
16. Kirkpatrick Basin North WMA, 4 mi. W., 2 mi. S. of York, York Co.
17. Sinninger WPA, 2 mi. S., 3 mi. E. of McCool Junction, York Co.
18. Father Hupp WMA, 2 mi. W. of Bruning, Thayer Co.
19. North Lake Basin WMA, 1 mi. N. of Utica, Seward Co.