

Whitefront Room

Prescribed Fire Panel

Bill Hiatt - Central Platte NRD
Ed Hubbs - Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center
Mark Alberts - Central Platte Rangeland Alliance
Barry Geweke - Landowner
A panel of experts will discuss prescribed fire, including public perception, why use prescribed fire, burn associations, and future capacity. This panel will cover two timeslots (1:00pm - 2:00 pm)

2:00 - 2:15 p.m.

BREAK

2:20 - 2:45 p.m.

Mallard Room

How do You Bridge the Gap between People and Wetlands?

Grace Gaard - Nebraska Game and Parks
Join Nebraska Game and Parks on our journey to build connection, awareness, and understanding of Nebraska's incredible aquatic ecosystems through our latest Wetlands Education project.

Whitefront Room

Evaluating Avian Response to Eastern Redcedar Removal Treatments in the Sandhills

Rachel Rusten - Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit
Discuss the preliminary results (2024-25) from the grassland bird study that was conducted in the Sandhills and explore the affect that eastern redcedar has on grassland birds.

Pintail Room

Rainwater Basin Playa Hydrology Study

John Hribljan - University of Nebraska-Omaha
Two years of field research data will be presented on that investigated playa wetland hydrology in the Rainwater Basin

2:50 - 3:15 p.m.

Mallard Room

Exploring Positive Synergies Between Water Quality and Wildlife Conservation in Iowa Wetlands.

Michael Rohde- Iowa State University
Nutrient treatment wetlands are built to reduce nitrate pollution in drained landscapes. We will discuss the program and our research on how a diversity of wildlife are using the sites.

Whitefront Room

Development of a Digital Tool for Prioritizing Ring-Necked Pheasant Habitat Conservation

Dan Uden - University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Decisions about when and where to prioritize conservation are important for pheasants and other wildlife. Recent advances combine data from field surveys and satellites into a digital decision support tool.

Pintail Room

Waterfowl Conservation and Management in Nebraska

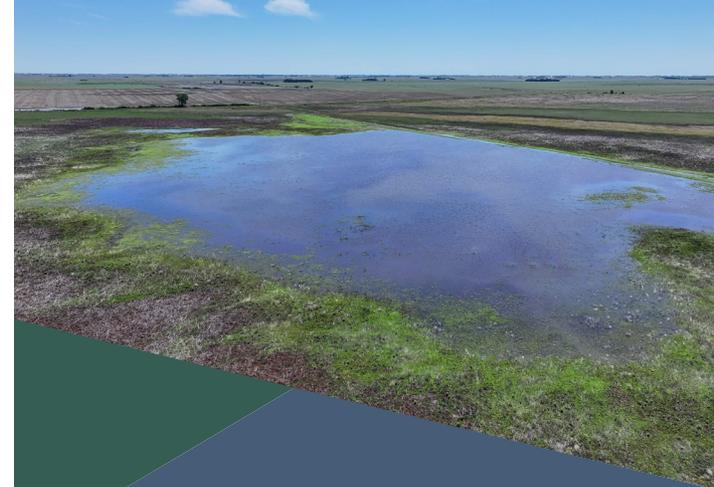
John McKinney - Nebraska Game and Parks
An update from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Migratory Game Bird Program including ongoing research to setting hunting season dates.

3:20 - 3:30 p.m.

Whitefront Room

Closing Remarks
Andy Bishop | RWBJV Coordinator

Please scan the QR code below and fill out the event survey to give us feedback and topic ideas for future Informational Seminars.



RAINWATER BASIN JOINT VENTURE INFORMATIONAL SEMINAR

This event provides agricultural producers, researchers, and natural resource professionals an opportunity to come together to learn about the partnership, conservation opportunities, project updates, and new research.



2026

Info Seminar Planning Team

Laurel Badura - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Andy Bishop - Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
Dakota Heikkila - Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
Brody Vorderstrasse - Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
Brad Thornton - Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
Ted LaGrange - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Jessi Tapp - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Kaycee Zuschlag - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Ben Wheeler - Pheasants Forever
Jordan Haubold - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Aden Shorney - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Chris Roe - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Anni Poetzi - University of Nebraska-Lincoln



Seminar Agenda

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Registration Opens

9:30 - 9:45 a.m.

DWEE Updates

Jesse Bradley - DWEE

Alexa Davis - DWEE

Update on programs, water quality task force, funding updates, and collaboration activities.

9:45 - 10:45 a.m.

Plenary Speaker

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Film Project

Ted LaGrange - Nebraska Game and Parks

This plenary session will focus on the two Wetland Reserve Easement video projects completed by the Platte Basin Timelapse and in partnership with NRCS. The videos provide an overview of the program, a look into the people that make the programs successful, and landowner stories.

10:45 - 11:00 a.m.

BREAK

11:00 - 11:25 a.m.

Socio-Economics of Grassland Conservation

Simanti Banerjee - University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Socio-economic analysis of rancher preferences and barriers for participation in the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program and implementation of rotational and winter grazing practices for grassland conservation.

Whitefront Room

Playa Wetland Conservation in Kansas

Abe Lollar - Ducks Unlimited

Western Kansas Playas play a vital role in supporting both migratory waterfowl and local communities. Past experience, both successes and failures, shape current conservation delivery strategies in this ecologically vital landscape.

Pintail Room

A History of RWB Wetland Restoration Projects on WMA's and an Update on the Most Recent Project at Redhead WMA

Jessi Tapp - Nebraska Game and Parks

Ted LaGrange - Nebraska Game and Parks

We will discuss the 30-year history of wetland restorations on 29 NGPC Wildlife Management Areas in the Rainwater Basin. A recently completed project at Redhead WMA will also be highlighted.

11:30 - 11:55 a.m.

Mallard Room

Working Together for Nebraska's Grasslands

Laura Nelson - Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

An introduction to the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, its role connecting grassland partners statewide, current initiatives supporting working lands, and emerging opportunities for collaboration and engagement.

Whitefront Room

Step Into Your Future Farm: Using Virtual Reality to Plan Conservation Practices

Andy Little - University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The development of a Virtual Reality (VR) platform offers a new conservation outreach tool allowing producers to visualize the long-term outcomes of conservation practice adoption through time.

Pintail Room

Rainwater Basin Habitat Specialist Update

Jordan Haubold - Nebraska Game and Parks

Brief overview of RWBJV projects and a detailed look at large scale management with an emphasis on the benefits of bundling projects into single contracts to increase acres and decrease the cost per acre.

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

LUNCH and AWARDS

Whitefront Room

1:00 - 1:25 p.m.

Mallard Room

Integrating Ecological and Social Dimensions for Long-Term Playa Wetland Conservation

Megan Podolinsky - Colorado State University

We examined water and land cover in playa wetlands through field and satellite data. We shared results with landowners to connect ecological understanding with community support for lasting wetland conservation.

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Inundation Mapping for Nebraska's Conservation Lands

Zhenghong Tang - University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Development of a near real-time information platform to map inundation conditions across Nebraska's conservation lands, enhancing monitoring and evaluation capacity for conservation land.

1:30 - 1:55 p.m.

Mallard Room

Building Highways and Restoring Wetlands: NDOT's Wetland Mitigation Program

Benjamin Trenne - Nebraska Department of Transportation

Covers the history of NDOT's 30+ year old wetland mitigation program, current wetland mitigation program, and future of restoring wetlands for NDOT. It also covers the balance of transportation needs and being a good steward for Nebraska Resources.

Pintail Room

Ecological assessment of Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) in the Rainwater Basin (RWB)

Jayne Jonas-Bratten - University of Nebraska-Kearney

This talk will summarize key patterns from collaborative work on plants, soils, grasshoppers, and birds to understand their benefits to the landscape, as well as management implications and future directions.