Platte River Recovery Implemenation Program (PRRIP)
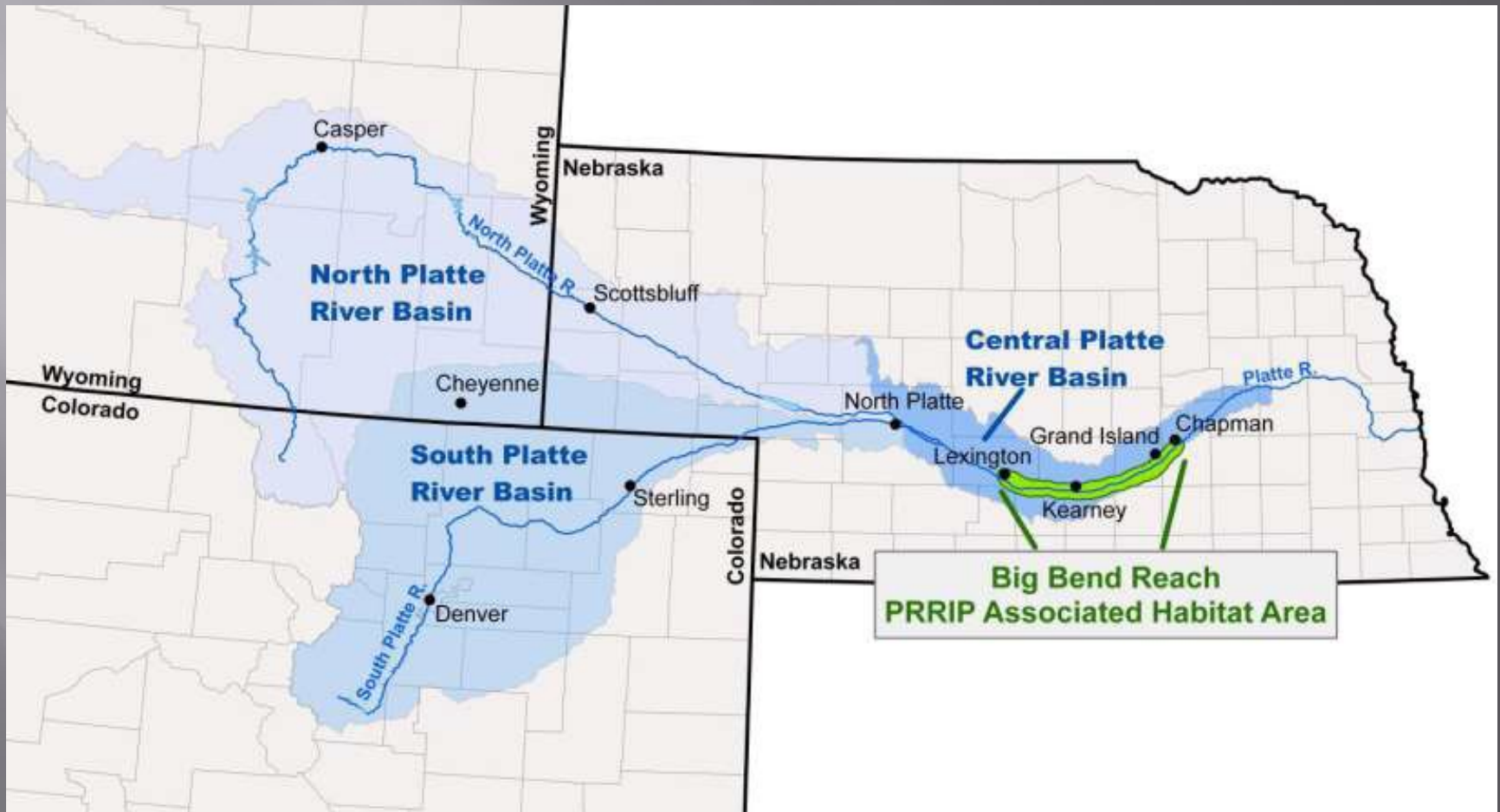
Background

- Comprehensive, basin-wide program involving the Department of the Interior, Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming

- Goal is to enhance recovery of four federally listed species, the whooping crane, interior least tern, the piping plover, and the pallid sturgeon

- Accommodate continued water development in the Platte Basin

- Program began July 1, 2007; first increment lasts 13 years

Platte River Basin and Key Habitat Reach

3 Main Elements

- Increasing stream flows in the central Platte River during relevant time periods
- Enhancing, restoring, and protecting habitat lands for the target bird species
- Accommodating existing and certain new water-related activities in conformance with the Endangered Species Act

First 13-Year Increment Goals

- Reregulation of flows

- Adding to flows through conservation and acquisition

- Acquisition from willing sellers and restoration of 10,000 acres of Central Platte River habitat

- Development of an Adaptive Management component to learn more about species recovery needs

Before,
during, and
after
restoration
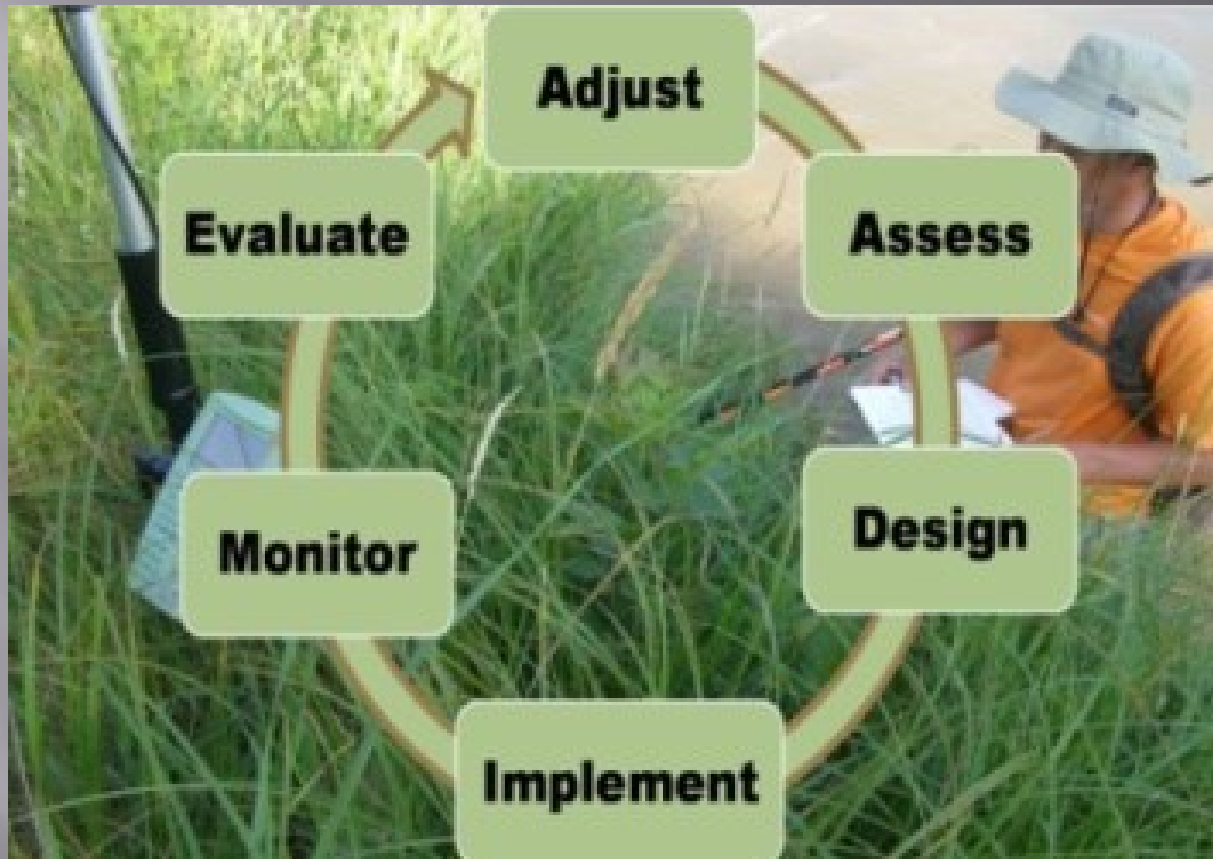
Before and
after
restoration

First Increment Water Plan

- Re-timing and improving flows to reduce target flow shortages by an average of 130,000 to 150,000 acre-feet per year

- Small pulse flows in the spring are to create vegetation-free sand bars suitable for plover and tern nesting

Land Acquistion

- First increment - protect, restore and maintain 10,000 acres of habitat

- Long-term objective to acquire land interests, restore where appropriate, and maintain and manage approximately 29,000 acres of suitable habitat along the central Platte River between Lexington and Chapman

- Land will not be held by Federal Government; will be held by environmental organizations, irrigation districts, utilities, etc.

Adaptive Management Plan

- Provides a systematic process to test hypotheses and apply the information learned to improve management decisions
- Collaboration between program partners and cooperators under the guidance of experts
- Used to evaluate how well hypotheses that reflect different interpretations of how river processes work to meet program goals
- Integrated Monitoring and Research Plan (IMRP) guides implementation of monitoring and research protocols

Four Main Management Objectives

1.Improve production of interior least terns and piping plovers from the central Platte River
 2.Improve survival of whooping cranes during migration
 3.Avoid adverse impacts from Program actions on Pallid Sturgeon populations
 4.Provide benefits to other species that use the Platte River and reduce the likelihood of listing those species.

Safe Harbor Agreements

- A voluntary agreement involving private or other non-Federal property owners whose actions contribute to the recovery of species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Agreement is between cooperating non-Federal property owners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- Participating property owners receive formal assurances that if they fulfill the conditions of the SHA, no additional or different management activities will be required without their consent

- At the end of the agreement period, participants may return the enrolled property to the baseline conditions that existed at the beginning of the SHA

Habitat Conservation Plans

- Planning Document required as for an incidental take permit
- Can apply to both listed and non-listed species
- Allow the permit-holder to legally proceed with an activity that would otherwise result in the unlawful take of a listed species
- "No Surprises" regulation – unforeseen circumstances will not require commitment of additional resources or result in additional restrictions

HCP Five Points Policy

- MUST include:
- Biological goals and objectives for each species
- Adaptive management
- Monitoring for compliance, effectiveness, and effects
- Permit duration – time needed to address biological objectives
- Public participation in accordance with NEPA

Southwest Willow Flycatcher

Candidate Conservation Agreements

- Voluntary agreements between the Service and one or more private or public entities

- Service works with partners to identify threats to candidate species, plan measures needed to address the threats, identify willing landowners, develop agreements, design and implement conservation measures, monitor success

Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances

- Expand on the success of traditional CCAs
- Provide non-federal landowners additional incentives for engaging in voluntary proactive conservation through assurances that limit future conservation obligations

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

- Restores, improves, and protects fish and wildlife habitat on private lands through alliances between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other organizations, and individuals, while leaving the land in private ownership

- Over two-thirds of our nations land is privately owned and contains some of the most important fish and wildlife habitat in the United States

- Three-quarters of the wetlands remaining in the United States are privately owned; millions of birds, mammals, and other animals depend on wetlands for food, spawning, and nursery areas

- Nearly one-third of Americas endangered and threatened plants and animals need wetlands for survival

- Wetlands also benefit people by providing natural flood water storage, recreational opportunities, recharging ground water supplies, filtering pollutants, and providing irrigation water

Fish Ladder

What Can Partners Do For YOU?

- Technical Assistance:
  - Wetland restoration and protection
  - Nest structures or nesting islands
  - Food and shelter for fish and wildlife
  - Soil and water quality improvement
  - Pesticide use reduction
  - Native plant restoration
  - Moist-soil management

Questions?