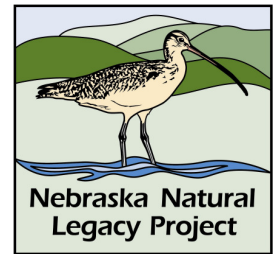




Elkhorn Confluence landscape



includes the land around the confluence of the North Fork and South Fork of the Elkhorn River in Stanton County. The Elkhorn River floodplain is primarily cropland, but also contains cottonwood-dominated woodlands, wet meadows and freshwater marshes. The uplands on the south side of the river are composed of sand dunes originating from river alluvium. Dry-mesic sand prairie, mostly grazed, and bur oak woodlands occupy the dunes. Most of the sandy soils south of the river have been converted to cropland. The uplands north of the rivers contain more loam and are mostly in cropland though some degraded tall-grass prairies remain. Wood Duck Wildlife Management Area is the only protected area in the landscape.

Stresses Affecting Species and Habitats

- ❖ Specific livestock grazing and haying practices that may reduce native plant diversity and promote uniform habitat structure. Heavy grazing has promoted exotic invasion in many grasslands.
- ❖ Conversion of native prairies to cropland
- ❖ Invasive plant species in prairies and woodland, including Siberian elm, eastern red cedar, smooth brome and garlic mustard
- ❖ Housing development
- ❖ Wetland drainage
- ❖ Increased nutrients in the stream
- ❖ Deer over-browsing

Conservation Strategies

- ❖ Implement planned grazing strategies on private and public lands to reduce exotic cool-season grasses and improve native plant diversity and vigor. Spring burning and spring grazing, sometimes used in combination, should be implemented as initial management practices to reduce exotic grass dominance. When exotics are under control, other grazing systems can be implemented.
- ❖ Implement tree-clearing programs on private and public lands; these can be done in combination with the prescribed fire and planned grazing
- ❖ Coordinate with landowners interested in using conservation easements to protect key high-quality prairies
- ❖ Restore wetland hydrology at key sites
- ❖ Stream-quality monitoring
- ❖ Improve access to and harvest of deer

Tier I At-risk Species

Plants:

None

Animals:

Bell's Vireo
Greater Prairie-Chicken
Henslow's Sparrow
Interior Least Tern
Blanding's Turtle
Bucholz Black Dash²
Married Underwing
Whitney Underwing
Regal Fritillary
Plains Harvest Mouse
Plains Pocket Mouse⁴
Plain Pocketbook³

Aquatic Communities:

Mid-order, Warm Water River

Terrestrial Communities:

Eastern Riparian Forest
Cottonwood-Peachleaf Willow Riparian Woodland
Cottonwood-Diamond Willow Woodland
Sandbar Willow Shrubland
Riparian Dogwood-False Indigobush Shrubland
Dry-mesic Bur Oak Forest and Woodland*
Freshwater Seep
Eastern Bulrush Deep Marsh
Cattail Shallow Marsh
Reed Marsh
Eastern Pondweed Aquatic Wetland
Upland Tall-grass Prairie*
Lowland Tall-grass Prairie*
Sandhills Dune Prairie
Perennial Sandbar
Sandbar/Mudflat

* Priority for conservation in this BUL

¹ This is the only BUL where the species is known to occur

² Known to occur in only one other BUL

³ Known to occur in only two other BULs

⁴ Known to occur in only three other BULs