

Nebraska Playa Wetland Information

- Compiled by:

Ritch Nelson – State Wildlife Biologist

USDA – NRCS Nebraska

Federal Building, Room 152

100 Centennial Mall North

Lincoln, NE 68508-3866

402-437-4100

ritch.nelson@ne.usda.gov

Playa Wetland

Resource Concerns in Nebraska

- Hydrological Modifications – including concentration pits, ditches, sedimentation, diversion within watershed and supplemental hydrology in mid-summer (irrigation runoff).
- Invasive Plants – including reed canarygrass, hybrid cattails, purple loosestrife, trees, etc.
- Poor Water Quality resulting from crop production in uplands, lack of filter strip - type vegetation, and reduced water levels in wetland.

Playa Wetland Restoration Activities

- Wetland Restoration to restore hydrology – including fill pit, plug ditch, remove sediment, eliminate causes of diversion (roads, terraces, etc.), irrigation water management (center pivot or quick cycle tailwater recovery systems).
- Plant Community Restoration and Management – including vegetation control measures such as tillage, herbicides, prescribed burning, and haying or grazing as well as a few upland seedings of local harvest, high-diversity mixes.

Playa Wetland Management Activities

- Annual monitoring of WRP sites to assess need.
- Haying or Grazing as appropriate on wetlands and uplands to manage plant composition via Compatible Use Authorization in WRP.
- Herbicide Application or Prescribed Burning on wetlands/ uplands to manage plant composition via gov't on WRP.
- Periodic aerial monitoring of Rainwater Basin wetlands to assess water/plant conditions.
- Occasional status reviews on CRP sites to assess need.
- Tillage, Prescribed Burning, and Herbicide Use (wetland and upland), Forb/Legume Interseeding (only on uplands) via Mid-Contract Management in CRP.

USDA Wetland Programs in Nebraska

- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**
 - Approximately 15,000 acres of playa wetlands/associated buffer enrolled
- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**
 - Over 19,000 acres enrolled into CP-23, 23A, 27, 28, and 30 collectively
- **Central Basins Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**
 - Authorized for 20,000 Acres of CP-23 – less than 500 acres enrolled
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**
 - Wetlands are one of five priorities in WHIP plan but often used only if site conditions or landowner objectives do not fit WRP or CRP.
- **Conservation Security Program (CSP)**
 - One Habitat Enhancement available for wetland management plan and wetland criteria incorporated into Tier III Riparian qualifications.