

**Science** Whitefront Room

*Assessing Wet Meadow Habitat in the Central Platte River Valley*

Abe Kanz - Crane Trust

*Discussion of using soil, macroinvertebrate, and vegetation data to assess the quality of wet meadows in the Central Platte River Valley*

**2:00 - 2:15 p.m.**

BREAK

**2:20 - 2:45 p.m.**

**Private Lands** Mallard Room

*Prescribed Fire Opportunities*

Bill Hiatt - Central Platte NRD

*A comprehensive look at prescribed fire in the state.*

*Including the process for assisting landowners with prescribed fire, permit needs, conditions for a safe prescribed burn, limitations and challenges, landowner programs, and capacity needs.*

**Public Lands** Pintail Room

*Ayr Lake WMA- Design and Implementation of Small Improvements*

Casey Campbell - Ducks Unlimited

Justin Haahr - Nebraska Game and Parks

*Creating a pumping pool presented several design challenges. Shallow soils and limited topography were determining factors in this restoration. In conjunction with habitat management, this project provides additional recreational opportunities.*

**Science - Covers two timeslots** Whitefront Room

*Water Quality Panel - Nitrates and Conservation*

Courtney Widup - Central Platte NRD

Jeremiah Schulz - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Connor McFayden - Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy

Jesse Bell - University of Nebraska Medical Center

*A panel of experts will discuss groundwater quality, including the potential effects of nitrates on human health. Possible solutions will be discussed, including the role wetlands and other conservation measures could play. **This panel will cover two timeslots (2:20 pm - 3:15 pm)***

**2:50 - 3:15 p.m.**

**Private Lands** Mallard Room

*WRE and WREP Opportunities*

Kaycee Zuschlag - Natural Resources Conservation Service

*Discussing Compatible Use Agreement opportunities on easements along with opportunities for funding on additional management practices within the easement boundaries.*

**Public Lands** Pintail Room

*Atlanta WPA Partnership Work*

Jeff Drahota - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Laurel Badura - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*A comprehensive approach to wetland restoration for migratory waterbirds, by addressing the watershed, public and private wetland, and adding infrastructure to supplement ponding during spring and fall migration.*

**Science - Cont'd** Whitefront Room

*Water Quality Panel - Nitrates and Conservation*

Courtney Widup - Central Platte NRD

Jeremiah Schulz - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Connor McFayden - Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy

Jesse Bell - University of Nebraska Medical Center

*A panel of experts will discuss groundwater quality, including the potential effects of nitrates on human health. Possible solutions will be discussed, including the role wetlands and other conservation measures could play.*

**3:20 - 3:30 p.m.**

Closing Remarks

Andy Bishop | RWBJV Coordinator

Whitefront Room



# RAINWATER BASIN JOINT VENTURE INFORMATIONAL SEMINAR

This event allows agriculture producers, researchers, and natural resource professionals an opportunity to come together to learn about the partnership, conservation opportunities, and new research findings.



2025

## 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



## Seminar Agenda

**8:30 - 9:30 a.m.**

Registration Opens

**9:30 - 9:45 a.m.**

Whitefront Room

Welcome - Andy Bishop | RWBJV Coordinator

**9:45 - 10:45 a.m.**

**Plenary Speaker**

Whitefront Room

[Update on New RWBJV Initiatives](#)  
[Overview of the Sandhills Taskforce](#)

Andy Bishop - RWBJV Coordinator  
Tevyn Baldwin - Sandhills Taskforce

*This plenary session includes two presentations. The first will focus on an update of new RWBJV partner initiatives. The second includes an overview of the Sandhills Taskforce and a discussion on recent projects and initiatives.*

**10:45 - 11:00 a.m.**

BREAK

**11:00 - 11:25 a.m.**

**Private Lands**

Mallard Room

[Communication In Conservation](#)

Brody Vorderstrasse - Rainwater Basin Joint Venture  
*Discuss opportunities and ways partner organizations are using targeted and non targeted communications to promote conservation programs.*

**Public Lands**

Pintail Room

[Working Together to Implement Large-scale Invasive Species Removal from a Native Landscape](#)

Juan Carlos Giese - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Greg Wright - U.S. Forest Service  
Shelly Steffl - Nebraska Game and Parks  
*Successful large-scale conservation relies on a shared vision and close coordination. Multiple conservation entities and private landowners are uniting behind a grassland core vision in the north-central sandhills, increasing the likelihood for long-term grassland persistence in this area of the state.*

**Science**

Whitefront Room

[Guidance and Resources for Playa Wetland Restoration in Nebraska](#)

RWB JV Tech Committee  
*Update on an effort to compile and document the available guidance, planning processes, and resources for current and future conservation professionals working to restore playa wetlands in Nebraska.*

**11:30 - 11:55 a.m.**

**Private Lands**

Mallard Room

[Economics of Playa Wetland Conservation Programs: A Case Study](#)

Ron Seymour - Nebraska Extension  
Jordan Rodriguez - Natural Resources Conservation Service  
*This presentation will highlight how social science can be used to improve conservation outcomes by sharing examples and recommendations on how to integrate social science into conservation delivery efforts.*

**Public Lands**

Pintail Room

[Nebraska National Forest - Halsey Restoration](#)

Greg Wright - U.S. Forest Service  
*Halsey provides a glimpse of the future: a conversation about outcomes and opportunities in one of the earliest cedar infestations in the Nebraska sandhills.*

**Science**

Whitefront Room

[An Integrated Hydrologic Model for the Northern High Plains Aquifer](#)

JP Traylor - United States Geological Survey  
*Development of a model of the Northern High Plains aquifer region will provide cooperators with a tool to understand the impacts that management will have on groundwater resources and wildlife habitat.*

**12:00 - 1:00 p.m.**

LUNCH and AWARDS

Whitefront Room

**1:00 - 1:25 p.m.**

**Private Lands**

Mallard Room

[Sandhills Stream Restoration and Native Prairie Fishes](#)

Cassidy Wessel - Nebraska Game and Parks  
Chad Christiansen - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Tevyn Pieper - Sandhills Taskforce  
*An overview of some restoration techniques used for restoring hydrology of Sandhills streams, and some of the associated benefits for enhancing habitat of native prairie fishes.*

**Public Lands**

Pintail Room

[Teal View Through Time](#)

Kaycee Zuschlag - Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Chrystal Houston - Upper Big Blue NRD  
*Teal View Wetland Education Area is a restored wetland that is now managed for public use. This presentation looks at the property over the last 25 years.*

**Science**

Whitefront Room

[Species Distribution Models to Increase the Impacts of Cedar Management in the Sandhills](#)

Roger Grosse - Rainwater Basin Joint Venture  
*Incorporating priority bird models into the Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) framework to compare management scenarios and demonstrate how maintaining grassland cores can improve cost efficiency and species impact.*

**1:30 - 1:55 p.m.**

**Private Lands**

Mallard Room

[Using Social Science Insights to Improve Conservation Outcomes](#)

Ashley Gramza - Playa Lakes Joint Venture  
*This presentation will highlight how social science can be used to improve conservation outcomes by sharing examples and providing brief recommendations on how to integrate social science into conservation delivery efforts.*

**Public Lands**

Pintail Room

[White-front WMA | A summary of the Recent Wetland Project](#)

Justin Haahr - Nebraska Game and Parks  
Jessi Tapp - Nebraska Game and Parks  
*A land trade, sediment removal, pit fills, and burying pipeline. We'll discuss the most recent wetland restorations project and current habitat management activities on White-front WMA*