



Legend

- City
- ~ River
- Major Highway
- Powerline
- Canal
- Watershed
- Reservoir
- Major Irrigation Project Lead

Central Platte River, Nebraska

- 0 10 20 Miles
- Projection: UTM Zone 14, NAD 83
 Sources: EPA Basin Data 1998, Census Tiger Data 1995,
 Nebraska Natural Resources Commission,
 Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District.

• The CA also seeks to create roughly 30,000 acres of new habitat for the plovers, terns and cranes. Creating more habitat will likely attract more migrating waterfowl in the central Platte area. Already, 8-10 million waterfowl stop over in the central Platte valley during the spring migration. Wild birds are the natural host of the Avian Flu virus. The public health threat posed by migrating waterfowl is real. From this standpoint alone, the CA program should be axed.

• The linchpin of the CA is the whooping crane and its critical habitat designated back in 1978 which covers a 60-mile stretch of the Platte River between Lexington and Chapman. The whooping crane itself was designated endangered over thirty years ago and is what the USFWS characterizes as a "charismatic" species, which essentially means the general public likes whoopers and reacts favorably to any program designed to protect them. However, the truth is this: The migrating flock of whoopers number 220. Back in 1970, there were only 56. Without the crazy CA program, whooping cranes are doing well. Also, the critical habitat designation is

completely bogus. The fact is, on average, less than 1% of the population of whoopers is ever confirmed as using the designated critical habitat. Simply put, there may be "suitable" habitat in the central Platte corridor between Lexington and Chapman, but, in fact, it is not critical habitat no matter what USFWS says.

• If the CA program is adopted, irrigated agriculture in the Platte valley will be hit hard, and the local economies of the communities which were built and are now sustained by the dollars generated by irrigated agriculture, will suffer. In fact, the hit statewide could be in the hundreds of millions of dollars as Phases II and III kick in. If the CA becomes law, the USFWS will gain ultimate control of the Platte valley and use what they call "adaptive management" to keep extending their control. There is no end game under the CA. It will just grow and become more onerous and intrusive over time. Activities including sand and gravel operations, dam maintenance, road construction, and off road vehicle activities, to name just a few, will be monitored and reined in by the USFWS as the CA program expands its regulatory reach.