

Goal 5: When possible, pursue projects that not only benefit water supplies and uses, but also create benefits for fish, wildlife, conveyance, and recreation within the Republican River Basin	
Objectives	Action Items
5.1. Where feasible and beneficial, protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat along with and public outdoor recreational opportunities	5.1.1. Partner with wildlife-focused organizations on projects that benefit the organizations' habitat and wildlife interests while also helping to fulfill other goals of this Plan <del>Where feasible and beneficial, partner with various groups such as (Game and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, Crane Trust, etc.) to share costs to establish new or utilize existing infrastructure for, for example, imported water from interbasin transfers during periods of high flows to benefit the group's habitat and wildlife interests, while also providing aquifer recharge</del>
	5.1.2. Promote public recreation recreational floating on the river (tubing, kayaking, and canoeing), when doing so can also help to fulfill other goals of this Plan
	5.1.3. riparian wetland assessment and restoration Cooperate in projects to assess and restore riparian wetlands while also helping to fulfill other goals of this Plan
5.2. Where feasible and beneficial, reduce the effects of <del>remove</del> undesirable vegetation impacting on water conveyance	5.2.1. Cooperate in removing undesirable vegetation impacting water conveyance and managing reinfestation

**Comment [CJMF1]:** Moved many of these details to the description section

**Comment [CJMF2]:** Moved to the description section as examples

**Goal 5:** When possible, pursue projects that not only benefit water supplies and uses, but also create benefits for fish, wildlife, conveyance, and recreation within the Republican River Basin

During the development of this Plan, stakeholders expressed that it was important to them that this Plan provide benefits to fish, wildlife, conveyance, and recreation within the Basin. While these potential areas of benefit do not directly relate to integrated management of the Basin's

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water supplies and uses, there are likely to be opportunities for projects that can benefit fish, wildlife, or recreation while also benefiting water supplies and uses according to the Plan's other goals and their associated objectives and action items. The objectives and action items that fall under Goal 5 outline ways in which projects to manage water supplies and uses can provide additional benefits to the Basin's fish, wildlife, conveyance, and recreation.

It is important to note that for any action taken in fulfillment of any objective or action item under Goal 5 to benefit fish, wildlife, conveyance, or recreation, the action must also benefit water supplies and uses in fulfillment of one or more of the Plan's other goals, objectives, or action items. Actions that only benefit fish, wildlife, conveyance, or recreation without also benefiting hydrologically connected water supplies fall outside of the statutory authority of this Plan.

**Objective 5.1:** Where feasible and beneficial, protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat ~~along with and~~ outdoor recreational opportunities

NeDNR and the NRDs will pursue opportunities to protect and enhance wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities, if it is feasible and beneficial do to so as part of projects that also benefit water supply and use. Further details are given in the action items below.

**Action Item 5.1.1:** Partner with wildlife-focused organizations on projects that benefit the organizations' habitat and wildlife interests while also helping to fulfill other goals of this Plan

If it is feasible and beneficial to do so as part of actions taken to benefit water supply and use in fulfillment of this Plan's other goals, NeDNR and the NRDs will partner with wildlife-focused organizations on projects that benefit wildlife and their habitat. Some examples of wildlife and habitat-focused groups operating in Nebraska include the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Audubon Nebraska, the Nature Conservancy, and the Crane Trust. The level of involvement of partner organizations may vary according to the needs and circumstances of each individual project, ranging from, for example, consultation on questions related to their area of expertise, to collaboration on project planning and design, to sharing project costs for projects that benefit the groups' wildlife and habitat-related interests.

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Projects undertaken to fulfill this objective may involve establishing new or utilizing existing infrastructure. One example of a type of project that could benefit both the Basin's water supplies and wildlife habitat would be to use water diverted through an interbasin transfer project during periods of high flows to enhance wildlife habitat.

**Action Item 5.1.2:** Promote public recreation ~~recreational floating~~ on the river ~~(tubing, kayaking, and canoeing)~~, when doing so can also help to fulfill other goals of this Plan

If it is feasible and beneficial to do so as part of actions taken to benefit water supply and use in fulfillment of this Plan's other goals, NeDNR and the NRDs will promote public recreation on the river. Some examples of recreational floating include recreational floating such as tubing, kayaking, and canoeing.

For promotion of public recreation, it may be beneficial for NeDNR and the NRDs to partner with organizations with an interest in public recreation, such as the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission or local river outfitters.

**Action Item 5.1.3:** Cooperate in projects to assess and restore riparian wetlands while also helping to fulfill other goals of this Plan

NeDNR and the NRDs will participate in projects to assess and restore riparian wetlands if it is feasible and beneficial to do so as part of actions taken to benefit water supply and use in fulfillment of this Plan's other goals, such as for aquifer recharge (Objective *[placeholder for cross-reference to the relevant objective, currently 3.2]*). As appropriate, they will do so in cooperation with organizations with interest and expertise in wetland restoration. Because of the wide-range of benefits wetlands provide, such as groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, flood control, and water quality, the primary focus of potential partner organizations for mutually beneficial wetland assessment and restoration projects also varies widely.

Action Item 5.1.3 includes two parts: wetland assessment and wetland restoration. Wetland assessment involves evaluating wetland condition and function. This may be done for many purposes, such as to identify and inventory existing wetlands, to compare and prioritize wetlands for development and mitigation purposes, or to establish a baseline condition and then monitor changes in

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condition and function over time. Wetland restoration involves rehabilitating the hydrology, plants, and soils of a degraded wetland or reestablishing a wetland that has been destroyed.

**Objective 5.2:** Where feasible and beneficial, reduce the effects of ~~remove~~ undesirable vegetation ~~impacting on~~ water conveyance

NeDNR and the NRDs will pursue opportunities to reduce the effects of undesirable vegetation on water conveyance, if it is feasible and beneficial do to so as part of projects that also benefit water supply and use. Conveyance is the transport of water from one location to another. Further details are given in the action item below.

**Action Item 5.2.1:** Cooperate in removing undesirable vegetation ~~impacting~~ water conveyance and managing reinfestation

NeDNR and the NRDs will participate in projects to remove undesirable vegetation impacting water conveyance, if it is feasible and beneficial to do so as part of actions taken to benefit water supply and use in fulfillment of this Plan's other goals.

A summary providing background information about the relationship between removal of invasive vegetation and evapotranspiration is included as Appendix [X]. This information should be taken to consideration when considering projects involving riparian vegetation removal and management.

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