



Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership

Mission Statement

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership (Partnership) studies and protects endangered Least Terns, threatened Piping Plovers and other birds within the Platte River system, Nebraska, in a manner that minimizes conflicts with private industry, and educates and involves local communities in this effort.

History

The Partnership was initiated in 1999 to utilize a proactive approach to prevent/resolve conflicts between nesting birds and mine operations. It was initiated by Jeanine Lackey and Ron Johnson from University of Nebraska Extension and John Dinan of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to address these challenges. The approach of the Partnership is to work with all interested parties to find sensible proactive approaches to protecting terns, plovers and other components of the Platte River ecosystem, while ensuring that businesses are not unnecessarily delayed.



Program Activities

- Protect colonies from predation and human disturbance using electrified fences, nest enclosure cages, chick barriers, and posted signs.
- Create strong working relationships between gravel mining companies, conservation organizations, and the public.
- Head off and mitigate conflicts between nesting birds and business and landowner activities, using bird deterrents and attractants.
- Increase public awareness and appreciation of conservation issues by participating in events such as the earth wellness festival, International Migratory Bird Day, Groundwater Festival, Rivers and Wildlife Celebrations, and others, educating thousands of people about terns and plovers and Partnership activities.
- Involve students through our “Job Shadowing” program.
- Monitor efforts with community based “Adopt-a-Colony” volunteer program.
- Produce publications such as the poster “A Tale of Two Birds” and companion educator’s packet/CD with original song, biannual newsletter “As the Plover Terns”, “Adopt-a-Colony” brochure, landowner/lot owner fact sheets, and others.



Electric fence

Program Impacts by the Numbers

43 – Conflicts resolved since 1999.
60 – Volunteers per year.
130 – extra piping plovers produced because of implemented management techniques.
430 – extra interior least terns produced because of implemented management techniques.
ZERO – Fines to participating industry partners since 1999.



Deterrent mylar flagging



Structure, Staff, and Funding

Program Coordinator – Oversees all aspects of the Partnership including tern and plover management, grant management, and supervision of Volunteer Coordinator, Regional Coordinator, and seasonal technicians. This position is primarily responsible for conflict resolution on the lower Platte and Elkhorn Rivers. The Program Coordinator is under the supervision of the nongame bird program manager at Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Extension Wildlife Specialist Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This position is year-round, full-time, and grant-funded (Nebraska Environmental Trust).

Volunteer Coordinator – Recruits, trains and supervises volunteers. Responsible for outreach activities. Works under the supervision of the Program Coordinator. This position is year-round, full-time, and grant-funded (Nebraska Environmental Trust).



Seasonal Technician(s) – Primary duties include monitoring tern and plover colonies, using management options for protection of colonies, and collecting and entering data. Works under the supervision of the Program Coordinator. This position is summer seasonal, full-time, and funding is dependent on solicited donations.

Future Directions

- Creation of an Advisory Board to increase communication and representation.
- Initiation of bylaws/Partnership contract.
- Addition of Volunteer Technician to the staff
- Increase tern and plover management activities by sand and gravel mine staff. (deterrents)



Adult Least Tern carrying food

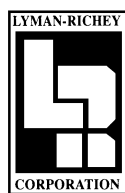


Piping Plover

Partners



Arps Gravel and Concrete



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission



Nongame Conservation Fund



Arps Gravel and Concrete, Girl Scouts-Great Plains Council, Harwest/Preferred Rock of Genoa, Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, Lyman-Richey Corporation, Mallard Sand and Gravel Company, The Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nongame Conservation Fund, Overland Sand and Gravel Company, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Western Sand and Gravel.