



The Resource Corridors

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Previous page: The center of Beemer in the Lower Elkhorn Resource Corridor.

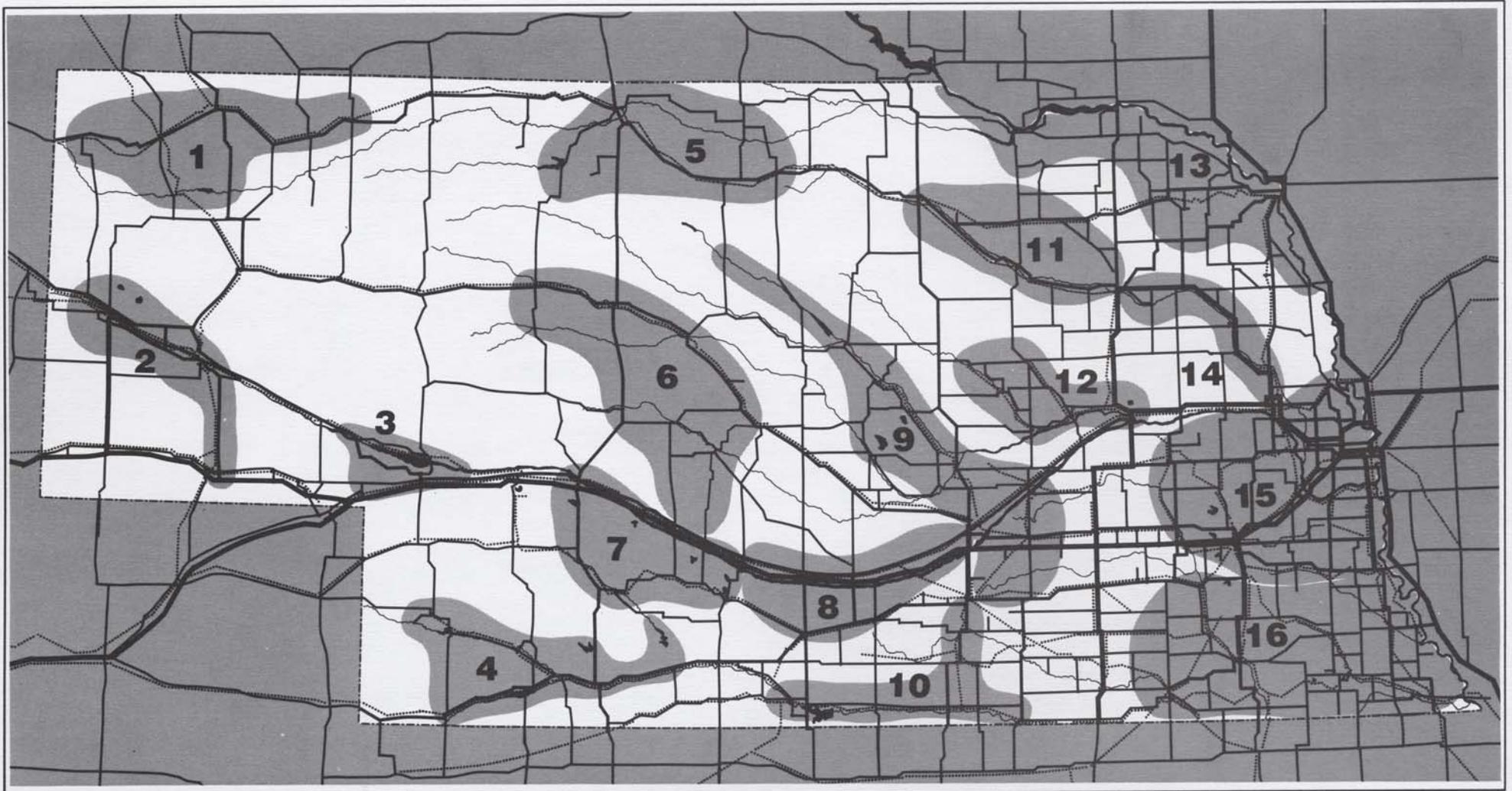
The Resource Corridors

The analysis of resources and opportunities contained in Chapter Three, together with the impressions and information gathered during the focus group meetings, defined the resource corridors. These corridors, based on the relationship of major resources and trail development opportunities, provide a geographic focus for detailed trails planning. These trails in turn become the spines of the resource corridors, linking features into a network for recreation, interpretation, and discovery.

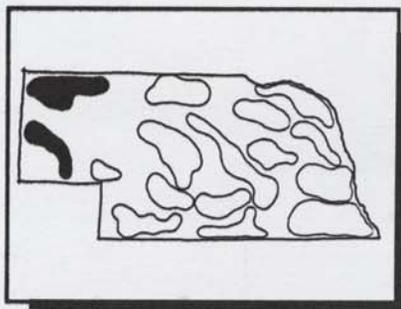
This analysis defines sixteen resource corridors, each of which includes a rich variety of features, environments, and attractions. The following pages present an introduction to the resource corridors. Chapter Six presents each corridor in more detail, presenting maps, a photographic tour of major features, and a list of specific trail opportunities and segments for development.

Resource Corridor Map Key

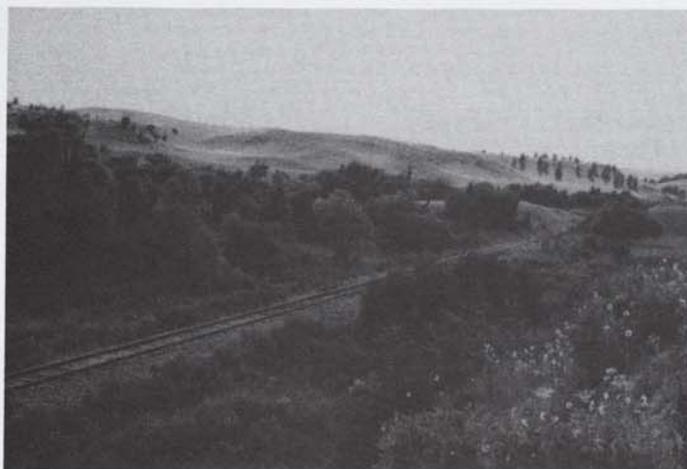
- | | |
|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | ■ PINE RIDGE |
| 2 | ■ MONUMENT VALLEY |
| 3 | ■ OGALLALA |
| 4 | ■ RED WILLOW |
| 5 | ■ NIOBRARA |
| 6 | ■ SANDHILLS |
| 7 | ■ PLATTE CANYONS |
| 8 | ■ BIG BEND |
| 9 | ■ CENTRAL |
| 10 | ■ REPUBLICAN VALLEY |
| 11 | ■ UPPER ELKHORN |
| 12 | ■ LOUP AND CEDAR VALLEY |
| 13 | ■ LEWIS AND CLARK |
| 14 | ■ LOWER ELKHORN |
| 15 | ■ METROPOLITAN |
| 16 | ■ SOUTHEAST |



Resource Corridors Map



Pine Ridge



The Pine Ridge Resource Corridor extends from Harrison to Gordon, including the towns of Crawford, Chadron, Hay Springs, and Rushville. A southward leg of the corridor includes Box Butte Reservoir and the city of Alliance. The corridor includes the beautiful Pine Ridge Country and incorporates Fort Robinson State Park, the Pine Ridge Forest, Chadron State Park, the Mari Sandoz Center, and the Box Butte State Recreation Area. The corridor incorporates the historic Sidney-Deadwood Trail and helps to interpret the history of this still pristine frontier.

The US Forest Service is developing the 50-mile Pine Ridge Trail between Chadron and Crawford through the National Forest and utilizing easements on private land. Trail development along the railbanked Chicago and North Western "Cowboy Line," provides another major opportunity. This development will include joint use with the NEBKOTA Railroad from Chadron east to Merriman. Negotiations for the purchase and railbanking of the White River segment of the Cowboy Line between Harrison and Crawford, passing adjacent to Fort Robinson, are also complete.

Monument Valley



The Monument Valley Resource Corridor extends from Mitchell to Bridgeport along the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails and then proceeds south approximately along the route of the Sidney-Deadwood Trail to Sidney and Interstate 80. The corridor includes the cities of Scottsbluff, Gering, Bayard, and Bridgeport between its endpoints. It includes the history and scenery of Scotts Bluff National Monument, Mitchell Pass, Robidoux Pass, Chimney Rock, and Courthouse and Jail Rocks. The corridor makes it possible for trail users to retrace the steps of the westward pioneers, providing many opportunities for historic interpretation.

The trail corridor also includes a connection north to Lake Minatare and the North Platte National Wildlife Refuge, and south to the Wildcat Hills area. Both features have extensive internal trail systems. The corridor incorporates and extends the Monument Valley Pathways system eastward along the Oregon Trail route.

Ogallala

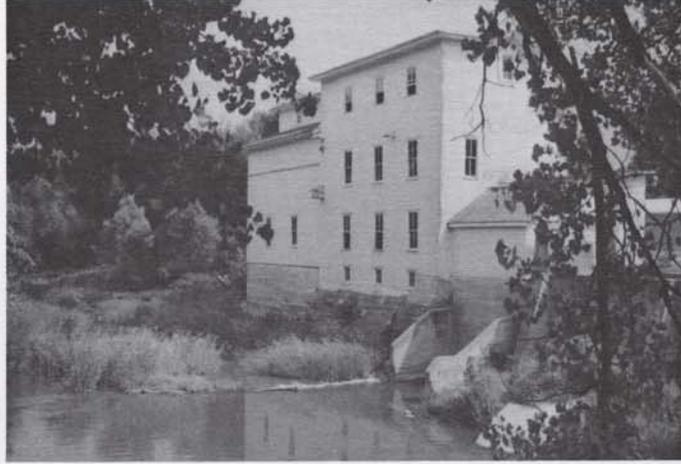


The Ogallala Resource Corridor combines the recreational features of Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala with the history of one of the most important segments of the Oregon Trail - the passage from the South Platte to North Platte Rivers over Windlass Hill. The city of Ogallala is the base for this corridor, which also includes the communities of Lemoyne, Lewellen, Big Springs, and Brule.

The corridor includes the Lake Ogallala and Lake McConaughy State Recreation Areas, and Ash Hollow State Historical Parks, as well as such landmarks of the California/Oregon Trail as California Hill and Windlass Hill. Its relatively small area is ideally suited to day use, providing increased access to one of Nebraska's most popular recreational areas.

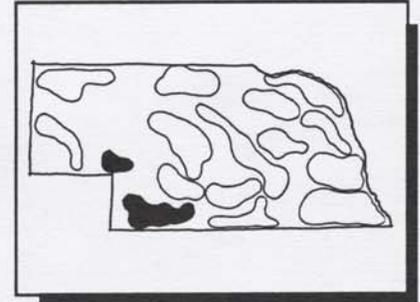
The trail corridor incorporates a current trail project linking Ogallala to Kingsley Dam and Lake McConaughy through a recreation trail north from the city and surfaced shoulders along State Highway 61.

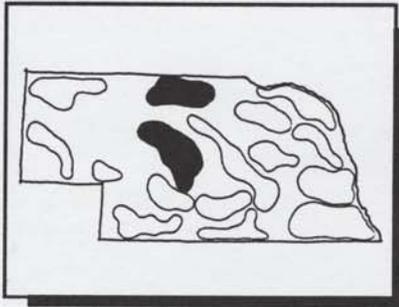
Red Willow



The Red Willow Resource Corridor extends from Cambridge and the Medicine Creek State Recreation Area with two legs extending to Benkelman and Champion. The corridor combines the canyons and subtle hills of the Republican and Frenchman River Valleys with the history of this important part of the state. McCook is the largest city and central point of the corridor, which also includes the towns of Culbertson, Trenton, Stratton, Benkelman, and Imperial. The corridor provides many opportunities for historical interpretation, including such diverse features as Massacre Canyon, the site of a pivotal battle between the Pawnee and Sioux Indians, and the George Norris Home in McCook.

The corridor includes the excellent water recreation resources of southwest Nebraska's reservoirs and Champion Mill State Historic Park, one of Nebraska's loveliest and most tranquil settings. The corridor also enjoys Amtrak rail passenger service at McCook.





Niobrara



The Niobrara Resource Corridor, extending from Merritt Reservoir and the McKelvie Division of the Nebraska National Forest through Valentine and eastward to Bassett, includes some of Nebraska's most extraordinary scenery. Communities linked by the corridor include Norden, Springview, Long Pine, and Ainsworth. The corridor incorporates the unique environment of the Niobrara River, designated as a National Scenic River in 1991, as well as Smith Falls State Park, Nebraska's newest state park, and the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge. Part of the Niobrara corridor is being studied for National Park status. The Niobrara River from Valentine to Norden is Nebraska's most popular canoeing river.

In addition to its scenic environment, the Niobrara Resource Corridor provides distinctive opportunities for trails development. The Cowboy Trail will become a spine for the corridor. This segment of the route includes two breathtaking railroad bridges: the Niobrara bridge east of Valentine and the Long Pine Creek crossing at Long Pine. The Ainsworth Canal provides another trail opportunity, as does the Minnechadua Creek corridor.

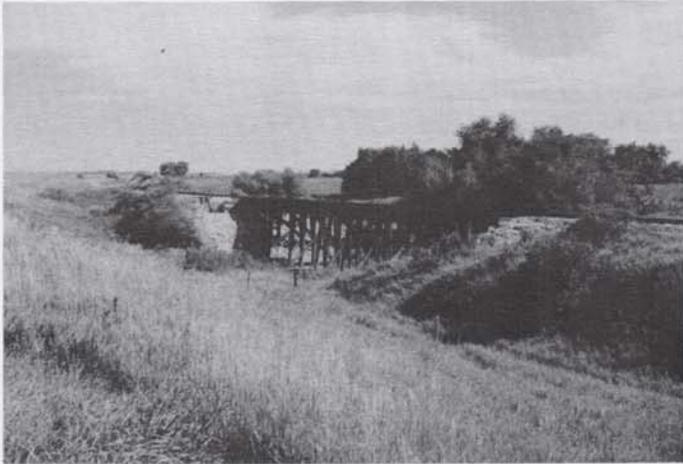
Sandhills



The Sandhills Resource Corridor provides adventures in the unique Sandhills region. It extends from the three Platte Valley cities of Gothenburg, Cozad, and Lexington into the subtle and beautiful Sandhills. On its way, it passes through the Seven Valleys region, featuring some of Nebraska's most inspiring scenery. The Corridor extends north and west to Mullen, and includes the communities of Callaway, Arnold, Broken Bow, Dunning, Halsey, and Thedford. It connects with the Platte Canyons Resource Corridor to the south. In addition to its scenic beauty, the Corridor incorporates such major environmental features as the Nebraska National Forest, the Platte River's Big Bend, and Victoria Springs State Recreation Area.

The Corridor includes a portion of the Union Pacific's historic Kearney and Black Hills line between Callaway and Arnold. This abandoned but still intact right-of-way provides an attractive route along the South Loup River. In addition, the Corridor incorporates the Dismal and North Loup Rivers. The Dismal is one of the state's most challenging and beautiful canoe trails. A new golf course, designed for the Sandhills environment, is being developed at the western end of the Corridor.

Platte Canyons



The Platte Canyons Resource Corridor forms a loop that begins in the unique environment of the Big Bend region of the Platte River and extends through the canyons formed by tributary streams flowing north into the Platte. The corridor is defined by Lexington on the east and North Platte on the west. On the southern leg of its loop, as it crosses the tributary canyons, the corridor includes the communities of Eustis, Farnam, Maywood, and Wellfleet. The Platte Canyons Corridor connects with the Sandhills Resource Corridor to the north and the Big Bend Resource Corridor to the east. It incorporates popular Johnson Lake State Recreation Area as well as an important segment of the Oregon Trail and other Platte River Road trails.

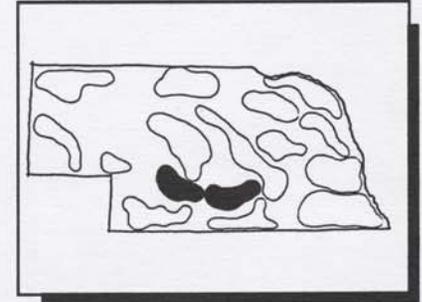
A major part of the corridor incorporates the Central Public Power and Irrigation District's Tri-County Supply Canal, a water corridor that now accommodates boating and could supply a parallel land route. Together with the Sandhills and Big Bend Corridors, this cluster of resources provides a cross-section of some of Nebraska's most beautiful and distinctive environments, along with major historical and cultural resources.

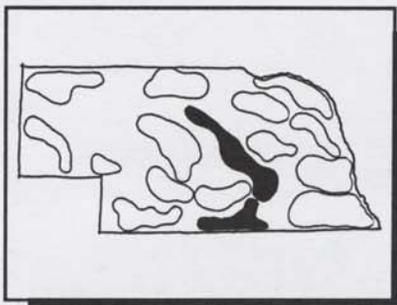
Big Bend



The Big Bend Resource Corridor is one of the nation's most ecologically and historically distinctive regions. The Big Bend region of the Platte is the intersection of the east-west movement of people and the north-south migration routes of birds and other animals. The corridor includes the confluence of the western emigrant trails near Ft. Kearny State Historical Park. The corridor parallels the Platte from Lexington, where it links with the Platte Canyons and Sandhills corridors, to Grand Island, with its connection to the Central Resource Corridor. In between, it includes the cities of Overton, Elm Creek, Odessa, Kearney, Gibbon, Shelton, and Wood River.

The Big Bend Resource Corridor includes prime areas for viewing the migration of sandhills cranes and other wildlife. It also includes the Ft. Kearny Hike/Bike Trail, Nebraska's oldest multi-use rail-trail, connecting Interstate 80 with Ft. Kearny State Recreation Area. The corridor also incorporates a network of county roads south of the Platte, frequently used by equestrians. Finally, the corridor has excellent access to Interstate 80 and boasts excellent opportunities for future recreational and interpretive development.





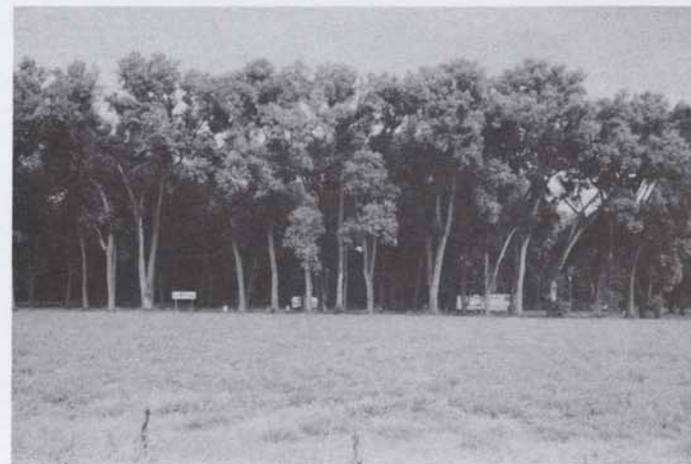
Central



The Central Resource Corridor is made up of many environments, extending from Hastings and its agricultural surroundings to the austere beauty of the Calamus River and Reservoir in the north. Between these endpoints, the corridor features the beautiful North Loup Valley and the rolling hills of Central Nebraska north of the Platte Valley. Communities within the corridor include Hansen, Trumbull, Aurora, Grand Island, Central City, Dannebrog, St. Paul, Ashton, Loup City, North Loup, Ord, and Burwell. The corridor's features include some of Nebraska's finest interpretive museums and state historical parks, the Platte River environment, the state's most famous rodeo, and superb community architecture. The corridor also includes two major lakes, the Calamus and Sherman Reservoirs, and the unique ecology of the Calamus River north of the reservoir.

Some communities in the corridor have active trails development programs. In addition, one of the state's best new trail opportunities, the abandoned Burlington Northern between Ord and Burwell, is located here.

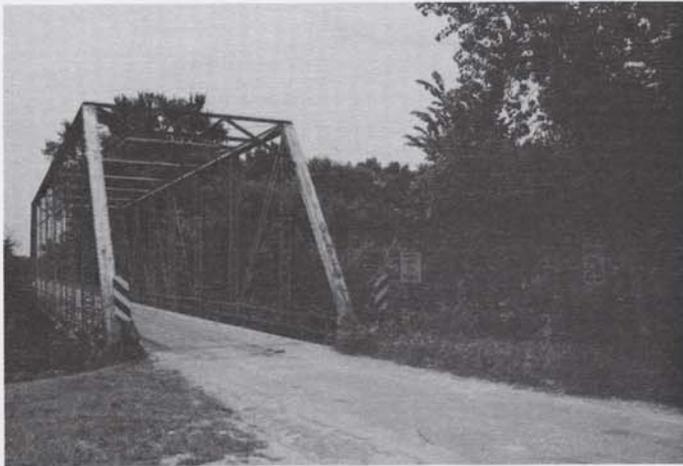
Republican Valley



The Republican Valley Resource Corridor extends from Alma and Harlan County Lake to Superior, a community with notable Victorian architecture. The corridor tells of Nebraska's pioneer and cultural heritage, introducing users to the land that Willa Cather wrote about in her books of pioneer life. The corridor combines the rolling prairie with the scenic beauty of the Republican River. Its communities include Republican City, Bloomington, Franklin, Riverside, Red Cloud, Amboy, and Guide Rock. Its many features include the Willa Cather Thematic Group of 26 sites and four historic districts in Webster County, one of Nebraska's largest centers for water-based recreation at the Corps of Engineers' Harlan County Lake, canoeing opportunities along the Republican River, and the Victorian districts of Superior.

The Republican Valley corridor provides the potential for parallel water and overland trails. The probable abandonment of the Red Cloud to Franklin segment of the Burlington Northern Railroad provides an opportunity for an exceptional rail-trail, combining scenic beauty with historic interpretation and knitting together the communities and land represented by this rich corridor.

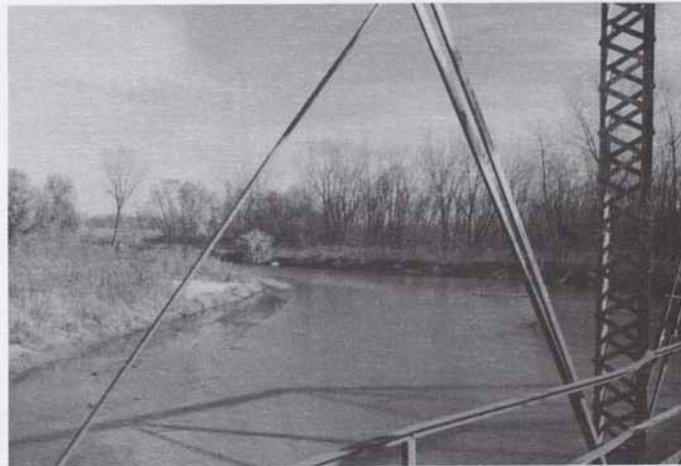
Upper Elkhorn



The Upper Elkhorn Resource Corridor is defined by the eastern end of the Chicago and North Western's Cowboy Line between Norfolk and O'Neill through Neligh. The eastern part of this corridor between Norfolk and Neligh follows the Elkhorn River through the towns of Battle Creek, Meadow Grove, Tilden, and Oakdale. To the west, the corridor continues in the valley through the communities of Clearwater, Ewing, Stafford, and Inman. The corridor marks the transition from eastern to western Nebraska ecologies. It links urban attractions in Norfolk, interpretive historical features such as Neligh Mills, historic and unique town centers, and the Irish heritage of O'Neill and its surrounding region. The corridor also incorporates such important and unusual resources as the Northeast Nebraska Zoo near Royal, and Ashfall State Historical Park near Orchard.

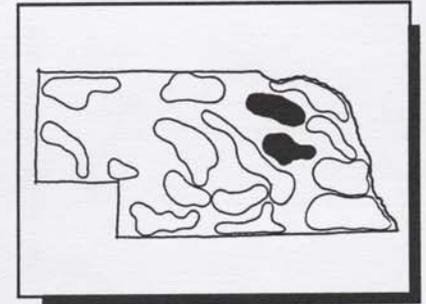
The spine of this corridor is the ex-C&NW Cowboy Line. The Burlington Northern line east of O'Neill provides a second potential spine through a rail-with-trail development. These two links, integrated into other resource corridors, provides a potential cross-state trail.

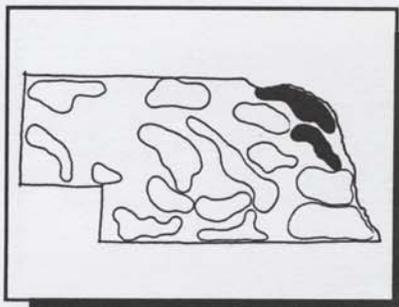
Loup and Cedar Valleys



The Loup and Cedar Valleys Resource Corridor combines peaceful beauty and historical importance into a major opportunity for trails development. The corridor follows the Loup River Valley between Columbus to Fullerton through Genoa, continuing along the Cedar River Valley through the communities of Belgrade, Cedar Rapids, and Primrose on the way to Spalding, and along Beaver Creek to Albion. The corridor follows a portion of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, inviting exploration of the industrial heritage of Columbus and its unique power system, the Native American experience at Genoa, and one of the state's most beautiful and least-known rivers, the Cedar.

The Loup River Power Canal is the spine of the eastern part of the corridor, providing public access to a scenic and historically fascinating man-made waterway. A lightly used Union Pacific branch follows the Loup River to Fullerton, and divides into the Cedar Valley line to Spalding and the Beaver Creek line to Albion. This system provides opportunities for trail-with-rail development.





Lewis and Clark



The Lewis and Clark Resource Corridor

follows the historic exploration route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition along the Missouri River, integrating the history of exploration, the experiences of Native Americans, and unparalleled opportunities for recreation and environment education. The corridor extends from the Omaha Indian Reservation at Macy to Niobrara State Park and along Verdigre Creek to Verdigre. It includes a network of potential routes, providing links to Iowa and South Dakota, and connecting such communities as Winnebago, Homer, South Sioux City, Wayne, Wakefield, Ponca, Bow Valley, St. Helena, Crofton, and Santee. The corridor provides access to the Missouri River, recreating some of the experiences of the first explorers of the area. In addition, it offers access to the state's three Indian Reservations and includes two major state parks, Ponca and Niobrara. The corridor incorporates Lewis and Clark Lake and National Recreation River segments along the Missouri and Niobrara Rivers and Verdigre Creek. The trail corridor reinforces the efforts of the Indian Reservations to increase tourism.

Lower Elkhorn



The Lower Elkhorn Resource Corridor opens the scenic Elkhorn Valley and provides an entrance to the metropolitan eastern part of the state. The corridor includes the valley between Norfolk and Fremont, connecting the towns of Stanton, Wisner, Beemer, West Point, Scribner, Hooper, and Nickerson. It includes some of the state's richest agricultural land and parallels the Elkhorn River canoe trail from West Point to Fremont. In addition, it incorporates an operating heritage passenger rail service, the Fremont and Elkhorn Valley Railroad, which operates between Fremont and Hooper.

The corridor provides for expanded recreational use and access to the Elkhorn River, while increasing trail users' familiarity with some of the state's most interesting and historic towns. The development of the resource corridor may be associated with the upgrading of the heavily travelled US Highway 275. This road, which will be upgraded to expressway standards, can become a model joint-use corridor, incorporating recreational trail uses into its overall design.

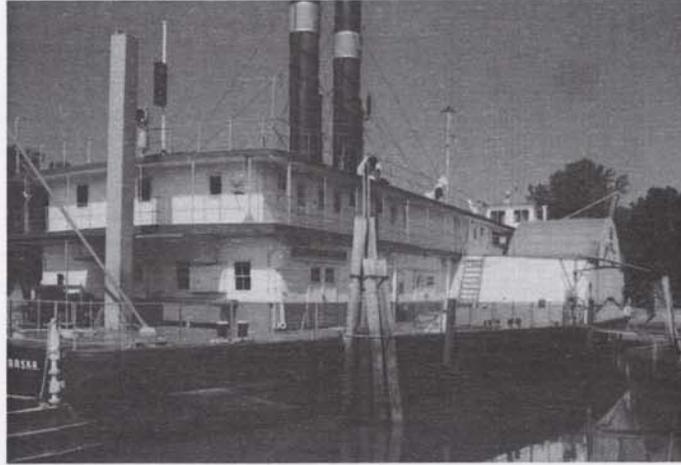
Metropolitan



The Metropolitan Resource Corridor is a network of facilities and resources that links and extends the large and growing trails systems of the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas. The Omaha system will utilize the Missouri River and Papio Creek corridors, along with suburban parkways, city boulevards, and abandoned railroad rights-of-way to develop an 80-mile trail system. Lincoln leads the state in trail development and will continue its program to develop over 100 miles of trails. The Mo Pac East Trail extends Lincoln's system east to Wabash, where other routings can connect northward to Omaha. The corridor includes many communities, along with such major resources as Mahoney and Platte River State Parks. Branches of the corridor will extend north to Blair, northwest to Fremont, west to Wahoo, and south to Nebraska City and Syracuse.

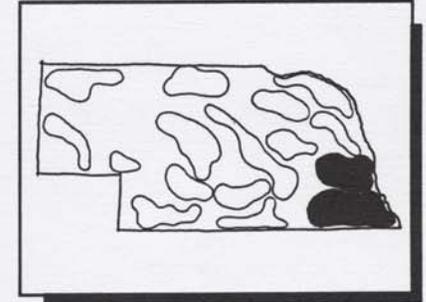
The Metropolitan Resource Corridor could also extend to the west along the Stromsburg Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad between Lincoln and Central City. One segment of this branch, between Valparaiso and Brainard, is eligible for railbanking. Other segments of this line offer rail-with-trail development opportunities.

Southeast



The Southeast Resource Corridor includes a network of potential routes that extend south from Nebraska City and Syracuse to Falls City and Fairbury. The corridor incorporates a wide variety of community, historic, scenic, and recreational resources. These features include Indian Cave State Park, Homestead National Monument near Beatrice, the site of one of the earliest homesteads in the nation, Rock Creek State Historical Park, near the point of entry of the Pony express and Oregon Trails into the state, and the reconstructed historic river town of Brownville. The natural and historic importance of the Southeast Corridor is strengthened by its many historic and architecturally beautiful communities, including Nebraska City, Shubert, Falls City, Humboldt, Table Rock, Pawnee City, Burchard, Beatrice, Wymore, Steele City, and Fairbury.

Potential trails follow abandoned and light use railroad corridors, roads, and wilderness routes. A planned heritage passenger rail service along a riverfront route between Nebraska City and Brownville offers possible integration between tourist rail and trail activities.



Interpretive Themes

The corridors may be interpreted according to distinct themes that define their role and importance in the trails system. These themes help to provide common threads, blending recreation, education, and environmental experience into a multi-faceted vision of a Nebraska trails network. In addition, thematic interpretation is linked with the creation of economic development opportunities, providing the basis for regional or heritage tourism promotional efforts. The themes may be indicated graphically through color-coding or symbols displayed on uniform interpretive signs and through published guides to individual corridors.

The themes of the resource corridors may include the following:

- **Recreation**
 - Land Recreation
 - Water Recreation
- **History**
 - Pre-history and Paleontology
 - The Native American Experience
 - Pioneer History
 - Town-Building and the Railroad Era
 - Ethnic History
 - Industrial and Economic History
 - Contemporary History
 - Architectural and Engineering History

- **Environment and Nature**

- Geography and Geology
- Plant, Fish, and Wildlife Habitat

- **Art, Literature, and Culture**

- **Regional Culture and History**

Each of the resource corridors has a unique personality and, to some degree, exhibits features of each theme. However, each corridor also has special focuses for interpretive research and development of supporting materials. The chart on the facing page helps to match thematic concentrations with the resource corridors. Primary themes for each corridor include subjects that are most relevant and unique to the corridor; secondary themes indicate other important areas for interpretation.

In a way, the concept of thematic interpretation for the resource corridors is like a book that will be written by others. The corridors and their focus themes provide the "titles" and "chapter headings", but the research and development of the narrative will be done gradually over time by subsequent interpreters. Just as the trail corridors will be physically implemented over a period of years, so will their thematic interpretation develop. The result will reflect the involvement and imprint of many people, working together with a palette of tools, to tell the story of our state through the trails network.

Resource Corridors and Interpretive Themes

- Primary Theme
- Secondary Theme

	Recreation		History						Nature		Arts		Region	
	Land Recreation	Water Recreation	Pre-History/ Paleontology	Native-American History	Pioneers and Settlement	Town-Building and Railroads	Ethnic History	Industrial and Economic History	Contemporary	Geography and Geology	Wildlife and Plant Habitat	Architecture and Engineering	Arts, Literature, Culture	Regional Culture and Preservation
Pine Ridge	●		●	●	●	○				●	●	○	○	○
North Platte	●	○		○	●	●		○	●	●				○
Ogallala	●	●			●	○			○	●	●			●
Red Willow	○	●		●	●	○		○	○	○	○	●		○
Niobrara	●	●	○	○	○				●	●	○			
Sandhills	●	○	○		●				●	○				○
Platte Canyons	○	○			●	●		●	●	●				
Big Bend	●	●		○	●	●		○	○	●	○	○	○	●
Central	○	○		○	●	●	○		○	○	●	○	○	○
Republican Valley	○	●		○	●	●	○		○		●	●		●
Upper Elkhorn	○		●		●	○	●			○	○			
Loup/ Cedar Valleys	○	○		●	●	●	○		●		○			
Lewis and Clark	●	●		●	●	○			●	○	○			●
Lower Elkhorn	○	○			○	●	●	●	○		○			○
Metropolitan	●	○		○	○	●	●	●		●	●	●		○
Southeast	●		○	○	●	●	●			●	●	●		●

