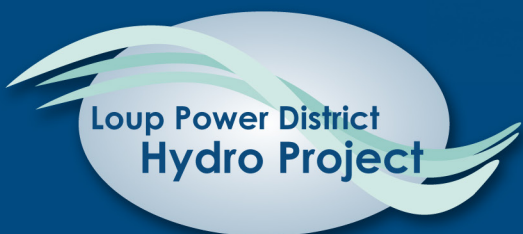


RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

LOUP RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT FERC PROJECT No. 1256

RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



APRIL 13, 2012



**Loup River Hydroelectric Project
FERC Project No. 1256**

Recreation Management Plan

April 13, 2012

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STUDY 8.0 RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The Loup River Hydroelectric Project (Project) is located in Nance and Platte counties, Nebraska, where water is diverted from the Loup River and routed through the 35-mile-long Loup Power Canal, which empties into the Platte River near Columbus, Nebraska. The Project includes various hydraulic structures, two powerhouses, and two regulating reservoirs.

The Loup River Public Power District (Loup Power District or the District) has an established policy of providing public access and recreational opportunities at the Project. This includes the Loup Power Canal, the two regulating reservoirs (Lake Babcock and Lake North), five developed recreation areas, and three multi-use trails. The only areas within the 5,200-acre Project Boundary that are not accessible to the public are those that present safety or security concerns and those that have had significant vandalism issues. District recreation areas are annually open to the public between May 1 and October 31 and at other times, weather permitting.

The District is seeking to obtain a new license for the existing 53.4-megawatt (MW) Loup River Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 1256) using the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) for hydroelectric projects. In association with the ILP, this Recreation Management Plan has been prepared to outline the District's plans for enhancing existing recreation facilities and meeting future recreation demands over the term of the new license. It was developed using data collected from Study 8.0, Recreation Use, including both a recreation use survey and a creel survey. Data was also drawn from Study 10.0, Land Use Inventory. A summary of the recreation use survey findings is provided herein, followed by the planned improvements resulting from the findings. Figures showing the locations of the District's recreation facilities are provided in Attachment A.

Aside from District-planned improvements to Headworks Park, no recreation-specific improvements are planned along the portion of the Loup River from the Diversion Weir to the confluence with the Platte River (the Loup River bypass reach). Apart from Headworks Park, the recreation facilities along the Loup River bypass reach are not owned or managed by the District; therefore, these facilities are outside the purview of this Recreation Management Plan.

2. SUMMARY OF RECREATION USE SURVEY RESULTS

The following summarizes information collected between May 1 and October 31, 2010, by way of the recreation use survey, which was performed in accordance with Study 8.0, Recreation Use.

2.1 Loup Power Canal Survey Responses

Based on collected survey responses, those who recreate along the Loup Power Canal most commonly:

- Live within 25 miles of District facilities
- Use District facilities because they are close to home
- Recreate either alone or with a single guest
- Do not stay overnight¹
- Visit District facilities on a weekly basis
- Visit during the months of May, June, July, and August
- Describe their race/ethnicity as white
- Earn an annual household income between \$26,000 and \$50,000

Notable exceptions to the above list include users of the Headworks OHV Park. This group often travels well over 25 miles to access the unique recreation opportunity afforded by Headworks OHV Park. As these park users reside in areas farther removed from District facilities, their frequency of visitation is less (two to three times per year) and corresponds with the spring and fall Nebraska Off Highway Vehicle Association (NOHVA) jamborees.

Fishing from shore, relaxing/hanging out, camping, and OHV riding were the most commonly cited activities in which respondents participate. Similarly, these activities, along with picnicking and wildlife/scenic viewing, were noted as the most important activities by respondents.

Respondents generally gave District recreation facilities high ratings. District trails and Headworks OHV Park received the highest ratings, whereas restrooms and parking received the lowest.

¹ 2010 survey respondents were most commonly partaking in day trips and were not camping at District facilities. Despite the popularity of District facilities for day use, the District's multiple camping opportunities are also widely used.

2.2 Trail Counts

Collected trail count data suggest the following:

- The most trail use occurs in May; trail traffic is very consistent from June through September and decreases in October.
- Two Lakes Trail receives 59.5 percent of the total trail traffic; Bob Lake Trail receives 25.7 percent; and Robert White Trail receives 14.8 percent.
- Trail traffic is generally consistent throughout the work week and increases slightly on the weekend.
- Two Lakes Trail receives an average of 71.9 trips/day; Bob Lake Trail receives 31.0 trips/day; and Robert White Trail receives 17.9 trips/day.
- Essentially no trail users are present between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Trail use begins at approximately 6:00 a.m. and is moderate and consistent through the morning hours. Trail use increases following the lunch hour and remains consistent through approximately 8:00 p.m., when usage drops off sharply.

3. LOUP POWER CANAL USE, CAPACITY, AND DEMAND

The findings relative to recreational use, capacity, and demand derived from the 2010 recreation use surveys performed along the Loup Power Canal and in accordance with FERC relicensing procedures are provided below.

3.1 Recreation Use Estimates

Based on recreation use estimates derived from 2010 survey results, the following note when and where recreation users are most likely to use District recreation facilities² (see Table 3-1):

- Estimated average weekend day recreation use is roughly three times that of the estimated average weekday use.
- Lake North Park receives the most visitation on weekdays, while Headworks Park receives the most visitation during the weekend, including holiday weekends.
- Overall, Headworks Park is the most frequently visited recreation site, followed by Lake North Park. Conversely, of the District's developed recreation sites, Columbus Powerhouse Park receives the fewest visitors.

² All provided observations are based on use estimates specific to the primary recreation season of May 1 October 31, as determined by survey responses that verify this period as the most popular for recreational activities.

Table 3-1. Recreation Site Average Daily and Average Annual User Visits

Type of Analyzed Day	Headworks Park	Lake Babcock Park (Loup Park)	Lake North Park	Columbus Powerhouse Park	Tailrace Park	Loup Power Canal	Total
Estimated Average Daily User Visits							
Weekday ^a	50	30	70	20	40	50	260
Weekend (All Weekends) ^b	320	60	150	30	70	90	720
Weekend (Non-Holiday Weekend Only) ^c	320	60	130	30	60	90	690
Weekend (Holiday Weekend Only) ^d	300	60	200	40	90	100	790
Memorial Day Weekend ^e	370	90	280	70	130	80	1,020
Independence Day Weekend ^{e,f}	240	10	150	40	120	50	610
Labor Day Weekend ^e	280	70	160	30	30	160	730
Estimated Annual User Visits							
2010	26,600	7,900	19,200	4,300	10,400	13,200	81,600

Notes:

- ^a Includes all Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for the recreation period of May 1 through October 31. Also includes all Mondays not associated with Memorial Day, Independence Day, or Labor Day weekend.
- ^b Includes all Saturdays and Sundays, regardless of whether they are associated with a holiday weekend, for the recreation period of May 1 through October 31.
- ^c Includes all Saturdays and Sundays that are not associated with a holiday weekend for the recreation period of May 1 through October 31.
- ^d Includes the Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays associated with the Memorial Day, Independence Day (observed on Monday, July 5, 2010), and Labor Day weekends.
- ^e Includes the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday of the designated holiday weekend.
- ^f Weather likely limited visitation, as rain was recorded in the area on both July 4 and July 5, 2010 (NeRAIN, December 3, 2010).

3.2 Capacity of District Recreation Sites

In association with the District’s 2010 recreation use survey, the number of observed RVs and tents at the District’s developed recreation areas that contain dedicated camp sites (that is, Headworks Park, Lake Babcock Park, and Lake North Park) were recorded. Camper counts taken on non-holiday weekends (Saturdays and Sundays excluding Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day weekends) between May 1 and October 31 were then analyzed against the noted capacity of the recreation areas to determine the available capacity of the District’s existing recreation facilities. These analyses are detailed in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2. Capacity of Camping Facilities

	Headworks Park ^{a, b}	Lake Babcock Park ^c	Lake North Park ^d
Average Number of RV Sites Used	17.4	5.0	8.5
Average Percent of All Available RV Sites Used (Percent of Capacity)	37.8%	16.5%	34.1%
Average Number of Tent Sites Used	7.1	2.2	1.8
Average Percent of All Available Tent Sites Used (Percent of Capacity)	14.1%	1.8%	1.8%

Notes:

- ^a Headworks Park contains 46 RV camper sites and 50 tent sites.
- ^b Camper data analyzed for Headworks Park (only) did not include the weekend of October 2, 2010, due to the occurrence of the annual NOHVA OHV Jamboree.
- ^c Lake Babcock Park contains 30 RV camper sites and 120 tent sites.
- ^d Lake North Park contains 25 RV camper sites and 100 tent sites.

A very small minority of the 1,024 participants who responded to the recreation use survey along the Loup Power Canal cited concerns or frustrations related to overcrowding. Of the 1,012 respondents to Survey Question No. 15: “Did anything interfere with your recreation activities today,” only 3 persons (0.3 percent—all surveyed on non-holiday weekends that did not correspond with the NOHVA jamboree) stated that overcrowding had interfered with their recreation.³

Additionally, in responding to Survey Question No. 14: “Please give a general rating for the facilities you have used at this Loup Power District recreation area,” the overwhelming majority of respondents rate the facilities as “Average” or better (“Above Average” or “Excellent”).

³ It should be noted that Project surveys were performed on both weekdays and weekends, including Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day weekends.

3.3 Demand for District Recreation Sites

Nebraska’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for 2011 to 2015 states that “there is no consensus in the field of recreation planning on the best practice in measuring current and future demand for outdoor recreation resource and facilities” (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission [NGPC], 2010). This suggests that the quantification of demand for District recreation facilities is difficult regardless of the amount of recreational survey data collected. The following discussion of demand shows that District facilities adequately provide for both existing and projected future recreation demand.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed guidelines in 1971, 1983, and 1995 that outlined how many acres of park and how many miles of trail there should be in a community based on its population. The 1995 guidelines indicated that there should be 10 acres of park per 1,000 people and 1 mile of trail per 8,000 people. These numbers help define a level of service or minimum park and recreation infrastructure capacity required to satisfy a community’s park and recreation needs. NGPC recognizes this method as commonly used, and many planners and engineering firms focus on these numbers because no other standards exist for recreation facilities (NGPC, 2010).

Considering the NRPA guidelines and the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010 population data for Nance (3,735) and Platte (32,237) counties (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), the population of the combined counties (35,972) would require 360 park acres and 4.5 miles of trail. Table 3-3 displays local population counts from 2000 to 2010 as well as population projections for 2020 and 2030.

Table 3-3. Population Counts and Projections

Location	2000 Census ^a	2010 Census ^b	2020 Projection ^c	2030 Projection ^c	Measured % Change 2000-2010	Projected % Change 2010-2020	Projected % Change 2010-2030
Nance County	4,038	3,735	2,920	2,450	-7.5	-21.8	-34.4
Platte County	31,662	32,237	30,535	29,528	+1.8	-5.3	-8.4
Total	35,700	35,972	33,455	31,978	+0.8	-7.0	-11.1

Notes:

^a Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, “Census 2000 Summary File 1 100-Percent Data,” *American FactFinder*, retrieved on December 2, 2010, <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

^b Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, “2010 Demographic Profile Summary File,” *American FactFinder*, retrieved on June 6, 2011, <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

^c Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development, “Projected County Populations,” retrieved on July 18, 2011, <http://www.neded.org/files/research/stathand/bsect12.htm>.

The sizes of the District’s multiple recreation sites are shown in Table 3-4. With 1,277 acres of land available for public recreation and an additional 800 aquatic acres, District facilities more than exceed the NRPA guideline. Not included in these figures (see Table 3-4) is the consideration that nearly the entire 5,200-acre Project Boundary is publicly accessible for recreation. Also, the City of Columbus has an extensive series of developed public parks, and NGPC maintains several Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in Nance and Platte counties. In summary, available recreation facilities exceed the NRPA guideline for Nance and Platte counties.

Table 3-4. Size of District Recreation Sites

Recreation Site	Area (acres)	Recreation Site	Area (acres)
Developed Terrestrial Recreation Sites		Undeveloped Terrestrial Recreation Sites	
Headworks Park	10	Headworks OHV Park	1,200
Lake Babcock Park	40	Total	1,200
Lake North Park	14		
Columbus Powerhouse Park	4	Aquatic Recreation Sites	
Tailrace Park	9	Lake Babcock	600
Total	77	Lake North	200
		Total	800
Total Recreation Area: 2,077 acres			

The District’s developed trail system exceeds the NRPA guideline for trails. The District’s trail system provides 5.2 miles of developed and maintained pedestrian/bicycle trail: 2.4-mile Two Lakes Trail, 1.3-mile Bob Lake Trail, and 1.5-mile Robert White Trail. Additionally, an estimated 50 miles of OHV trails are publicly accessible at Headworks OHV Park.

Based on the following considerations, projected recreation demand is not anticipated to increase for at least the first 15 years of the applied-for license period:

- U.S. Census Bureau data shows that the populations of Nance and Platte counties have been essentially static over the past decade. State of Nebraska population projections for Nance and Platte counties show notable population decreases through 2030 (see Table 3-3).
- The findings of the NGPC 2009 statewide recreation survey indicate that outdoor recreation is generally decreasing in Nebraska (NGPC, 2010).

4. HEADWORKS PARK

Headworks Park encompasses a number of smaller recreation areas as well as Headworks OHV Park (see Figures A-1 and A-2). Headworks OHV Park is generally recognized as a premier OHV riding area in Nebraska. Additionally, Headworks Park offers a lake for swimming and camping and access to the Loup River bypass reach.

4.1 General Site Information

General site information for Headworks Park is as follows:

- **Location** – Six miles west of Genoa on Nebraska State Highway 22, adjacent to the Diversion Weir
- **Size** – 10 acres, with the associated 1,200-acre Headworks OHV Park
- **Recreation uses** – Camping, picnicking, swimming, fishing, and OHV riding
- **Camping** – Electrical hookups and primitive camping available during the spring, summer, and fall
- **Camping reservations** – No reservations accepted; limit of 7 days per month (30-day period) in the District’s park system
- **Restrooms** – Concrete double-vaulted waterless restroom that meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines; available year-round
- **Trails** – Approximately 50 miles of sandy OHV trails along the Loup River bypass reach
- **Other services** – Playground areas, potable water, picnic tables, and barbeque grills

4.2 Inventory of Amenities

To fully account for available amenities, all inventoried recreation areas in and associated with Headworks Park are presented in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Amenities – Headworks Park

Classification	Specific Amenities	Count
Camping	RV Outlets	23
	RV Sites ^a	46
	Tent Sites ^b	50
	Fire Pit	24
Aquatics	Safety Buoy with Rope	2
	Swimming Beach	1
Playground Equipment	Swing	12
	Slide	2
	Merry-Go-Round	1
	Teeter Totter	2
	Spring Rocker	2
Picnic	Picnic Shelter	2
	Picnic Table	34
	Barbeque Grill	12
Convenience	Restroom	3
	Bench	4
	Trash Receptacle	5
	Hydrant	3

Notes:

- ^a RVs often “double park” around the provided RV outlets, resulting in twice as many RV sites as compared to outlets.
- ^b Estimate of sites adequate and available for tent camping. These sites do not include electrical hookups or designated pads.

4.3 Requested Improvements to Headworks Park

Table 4-2 lists the most notable facility improvements requested by recreation users surveyed at Headworks Park.

Table 4-2. Requested Improvements – Headworks Park

Respondents (Count)	Category	Specific Comment(s)
65	Power	Provide additional outlets; provide power in restrooms
45	Shower	Install showers in restroom and OHV area
17	Water	Provide potable water in restroom and park
16	Restroom	Improve cleanliness; add toilets; provide doors on stalls
11	Fishing	Provide cleaning station
6	Playground	Add and improve equipment

4.4 Planned Improvements to Headworks Park

The District is planning to implement the following recreation improvements during the term of the operating license and in accordance with the implementation schedule noted for each specific improvement. In addition to the following improvements, the District intends to continue its cooperative effort with NOHVA by providing trail riding opportunities at Headworks OHV Park and hosting the biannual NOHVA jamborees.

4.4.1 Upgrade Camper Outlets

In response to comments received during the recreation survey as well as others received by the District, the 23 existing camper outlets at Headworks Park were upgraded to 50 amps in 2011. This outlet upgrade accommodates larger recreational vehicles and their associated power demand. This improvement cost approximately \$8,000.

4.4.2 Permanent Restroom

The District plans to construct a new permanent restroom facility at Headworks OHV Park. The restroom would house men's and women's double-vaulted waterless toilets that meet ADA guidelines. The restroom would not include running water or shower facilities. This improvement is estimated to cost \$40,000 and will be completed in 2016.⁴

⁴ Contemplated construction completion dates assume license issuance and Recreation Management Plan approval on or before April 15, 2014.

4.4.3 Improve Playground Equipment

The District allocates \$20,000 annually for playground maintenance and upgrades at recreation facilities. Portions of this budget will be allocated to upgrades at Headworks Park for approximately the first 10 years of the new license period.

4.4.4 Sand Volleyball Court

The District plans to install a sand volleyball court on the north side of Park (Raitt) Lake. This improvement is estimated to cost \$1,000 and will be completed in 2015.

4.5 Requested Improvements Not Planned

Many of the most frequently requested recreation improvements noted during the 2010 recreation use survey are planned for accommodation by the measures listed in Section 4.4. For those requested improvements not planned for accommodation, the District provides the following justification:

- **Provide Additional Camper Outlets** – Outside of NOHVA’s twice annual jamboree weekends, electric camper capacity is sufficient to meet demand.
- **Install Shower Facilities** – Shower facilities cannot be provided at Headworks Park because there is no access to city sewer infrastructure and, due to the proximity to the Loup River and Power Canal, no opportunity for on-site water treatment.
- **Provide Potable Water** – Due to water infrastructure limitations, the District is unable to provide a potable water source at any Headworks Park location other than the existing source at Weir Park Camp.
- **Improve Restrooms** – The District understands the importance of providing sufficient, clean restroom facilities to the recreating public. The District cleans the restroom facilities every Friday and Monday and also cleans the facilities as needed when a complaint is received. To that end, the District notes that the existing restroom facilities and established cleaning and maintenance schedules are sufficient without modification. The District is unable to provide flushing restroom facilities because there is no access to municipal sewer infrastructure and because a shallow groundwater table deters leach field installation. The District cites its inability to improve facilities as well as continued vandalism and abuse by the recreating public as the reasons for not implementing the requested restroom improvements. The District may entertain future enhancements and will continue to monitor the need for additional facilities or modified maintenance throughout the license period.
- **Provide Fish Cleaning Station** – The District is concerned with the maintenance that would be required with this amenity. Because infrastructure is not present to support a “full-service” cleaning station that

includes running water and a fish grinder, a more primitive station would be needed and would involve collection of fish waste in a trash receptacle or disposal within the adjacent waterbody. Neither alternative is desirable and would involve intensive maintenance to prevent odor and deter pests.

5. LAKE BABCOCK PARK (LOUP PARK)

Loup Park overlooks Lake Babcock (see Figure A-3). The east portion of the park includes a camping area with electrical hookups and a large picnic shelter. On the northwest portion of Lake Babcock, near Castner's Crossing, there is a small access area that includes a limestone cobble parking lot and a wheelchair-accessible bridge. Anglers congregate at a fishing area on the Loup Power Canal where it enters Lake Babcock. An informational kiosk presents maps and ecological posters. A small dirt boat ramp is also present.

5.1 General Site Information

General site information for Loup Park is as follows:

- **Location** – Along the north and west shores of Lake Babcock, approximately 3 miles north of Columbus
- **Size** – 40 acres
- **Recreation uses** – Camping, picnicking, biking, running, and walking
- **Camping** – Electrical hookups and primitive camping available during the spring, summer, and fall
- **Camping reservations** – No reservations accepted; limit of 7 days per month (30-day period) in the District's park system
- **Restrooms** – Concrete double-vaulted waterless restroom that meets ADA guidelines; available year-round
- **Trails** – Two Lakes Trail, a paved pedestrian/bike trail, traverses the park area and connects Loup Park and Lake North Park. Castner's Crossing Bridge, at the west end of the park, connects Two Lakes Trail with Bob Lake Trail and Robert White Trail, which skirt the west and south sides of Lake Babcock, respectively. Free parking is provided at trailheads.
- **Other services** – Playground areas, potable water, picnic tables, and barbeque grills

5.2 Inventory of Amenities

Table 5-1 provides an inventory of recreation amenities at all inventoried recreation areas of Loup Park.

Table 5-1. Amenities – Lake Babcock Park (Loup Park)

Classification	Specific Amenities	Count	Classification	Specific Amenities	Count
Camping	RV Outlets	15	Picnic	Picnic Shelter	1
	RV Sites ^a	30		Picnic Table	47
	Tent Sites ^b	120		Barbeque Grill	23
	Fire Pit	9	Convenience	Restroom (Wheelchair accessible)	1
Aquatics	Boat Ramp	1		Bench	10
	Safety Buoy with Rope	1		Trash Receptacle	23
Playground Equipment	Swing	16	Miscellaneous	Hydrant	6
	Slide	2		Informational Kiosk	1
	Merry-Go-Round	2	<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>		
	Teeter Totter	4			
	Horse Totter	2			
	Hanging Equipment (rings, bar)	2			
	Spring Rocker	2			

Notes:

- ^a RVs often “double park” around the provided RV outlets, resulting in twice as many RV sites as compared to outlets.
- ^b Estimate of sites adequate and available for primitive camping. These sites do not include electrical hookups or designated pads.

5.3 Requested Improvements to Lake Babcock Park (Loup Park)

Table 5-2 lists the most notable facility improvements requested by recreation users surveyed at Lake Babcock Park (Loup Park).

Table 5-2. Requested Improvements – Lake Babcock Park (Loup Park)

Respondents (Count)	Category	Specific Comment(s)
8	Restrooms	Improve cleanliness; install at Castner's Crossing
5	Showers	Install in restroom
2	Playground	Improve equipment

5.4 Planned Improvements to Lake Babcock Park (Loup Park)

The District allocates \$20,000 annually for playground maintenance and upgrades at recreation facilities. Portions of this budget will be allocated to upgrades at Lake Babcock Park for approximately the first 10 years of the new license period.

5.5 Requested Improvements Not Planned

The District understands the importance of providing sufficient, clean restroom facilities to the recreating public. The District cleans the restroom facilities every Friday and Monday and also cleans the facilities as needed when a complaint is received. To that end, the District notes that the existing restroom facilities and established cleaning and maintenance schedules are sufficient without modification. The District is unable to provide flushing restroom facilities because there is no access to municipal sewer infrastructure and because a shallow groundwater table deters leach field installation. The District cites its inability to improve facilities as well as continued vandalism and abuse by the recreating public as the reasons for not implementing the requested restroom improvements. The District may entertain future enhancements and will continue to monitor the need for additional facilities or modified maintenance throughout the license period.

6. LAKE NORTH PARK

Lake North Park is located directly south of 83rd Street between 18th and 33rd Avenues, north of Columbus (see Figure A-3). The park is situated on level ground along the north shore of Lake North and contains a campground, picnic shelter, and large parking lot. An accessible blacktop road completely encircles Lake North.

6.1 General Site Information

General site information for Lake North Park is as follows:

- **Location** – Along the north bank of Lake North, off 83rd Street
- **Size** – 14-acre park adjoining 200-acre Lake North

- **Recreation uses** – Boating, water skiing, camping, swimming, picnicking, and fishing
- **Camping** – Electrical hookups and primitive camping available during the spring, summer, and fall
- **Camping reservations** – No reservations accepted; limit of 7 days per month (30-day period) in the District’s park system
- **Restrooms** – Concrete double-vaulted waterless restroom that meets ADA guidelines; available year-round
- **Trails** – Maintained pedestrian/bicycle trails available year round
- **Other services** – Playground areas, potable water, picnic tables, barbeque grills, swimming beaches, and boat ramps and docks

6.2 Inventory of Amenities

Table 6-1 provides an inventory of recreation facilities at Lake North Park.

Table 6-1. Amenities – Lake North Park

Classification	Specific Amenities	Count	Classification	Specific Amenities	Count
Camping	RV Outlets	12	Picnic	Picnic Shelter	1
	RV Sites ^a	25		Picnic Table	23
	Tent Outlet	4		Barbeque Grill	11
	Tent Sites ^b	100	Convenience	Restroom (Wheelchair accessible)	2
	Fire Pit	7		Bench	2
Aquatics	Boat Ramp	2		Trash Receptacle	10
	Swimming Beach	2 miles	Miscellaneous	Informational Kiosk	1
Playground Equipment	Swing	8	<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>		
	Slide	2			
	Teeter Totter	3			
	Horse Totter	2			
	Hanging Equipment (rings, bar)	2			

Notes:

^a RVs often “double park” around the provided RV outlets, resulting in twice as many RV sites as compared to outlets.

^b Estimate of sites adequate and available for tent camping. These sites do not include electrical hookups or designated pads.

6.3 Requested Improvements to Lake North Park

Table 6-2 lists the most notable facility improvements requested by recreation users surveyed at Lake North Park.

Table 6-2. Requested Improvements – Lake North Park

Respondents (Count)	Category	Specific Comment(s)
24	Fishing	Provide cleaning station; restock lake; provide fish structure
14	Restrooms	Improve cleanliness; install lights and electrical outlets
11	Showers	Install showers in campgrounds, in restrooms, and near the beach
10	Beach	Provide more sand on the beach
9	Outlets	Install additional outlets
3	Camping	Provide more spots

6.4 Planned Improvements to Lake North Park

The District is planning to implement the following recreation improvements during the term of the operating license and in accordance with the implementation schedule noted for each specific improvement.

6.4.1 Wheelchair-Accessible Fishing Pier

The District plans to construct a wheelchair-accessible fishing pier, which would meet ADA guidelines, along the north shore of Lake North. Preliminary design plans, which are subject to change, consist of a 12-foot by 24-foot covered structure with railing that would be accessible from Two Lakes Trail via ADA-compliant paths. This improvement is estimated to cost \$30,000 and will be completed in 2015.

6.4.2 Lake North No-Wake Zone

The District plans to designate a no-wake zone in the southeast corner of Lake North. This measure is planned to enhance the recognized fishing opportunities that exist in this portion of the lake. The no-wake zone would be designated by marker buoys and would occupy approximately 5 acres of Lake North. This improvement is estimated to cost \$1,000 and will be completed in 2015.

6.4.3 Upgrade Camper Outlets

In response to comments received during the recreation survey as well as others received by the District, the 12 existing camper outlets at Lake North Park were upgraded to 50 amps in 2011. This outlet upgrade accommodates larger recreational vehicles and their associated power demand. This improvement cost approximately \$4,000.

6.4.4 Improve Playground Equipment

The District allocates \$20,000 annually for playground maintenance and upgrades at recreation facilities. Portions of this budget will be allocated to upgrades at Lake North Park for approximately the first 10 years of the new license period.

6.4.5 Zebra Mussel Outreach

In 2011, the District implemented zebra mussel awareness measures in an effort to minimize the chance of infestation at Lake North and to ensure that the existing recreational opportunities afforded by Lake North continue. Specifically, the District posted signs, developed in association with NGPC, that outline the threat posed by zebra mussels and measures that can be taken to minimize risk (see Photo 1).



Photo 1. New Invasive Species Signage: photographed August 17, 2011.

6.5 Requested Improvements Not Planned

Many of the most frequently requested recreation improvements noted during the 2010 recreation use survey are planned for accommodation by the measures listed in Section 6.4. For those requested improvements not planned for accommodation, the District provides the following justification:

- **Provide Fish Cleaning Station** – The District is concerned with the maintenance that would be required with this amenity. Because infrastructure is not present to support a “full-service” cleaning station that includes running water and a fish grinder, a more primitive station would be needed and would involve collection of fish waste in a trash receptacle or disposal within the adjacent waterbody. Neither alternative is desirable and would involve intensive maintenance to prevent odor and deter pests.
- **Restock Lake North** – Lake North is a public water of the State of Nebraska; therefore, many activities associated with fisheries management of Lake North, including fish stocking, fall under the legal authority of NGPC and cannot be accommodated by the District (163 Nebraska Administrative Code [NAC] 2-002.01). NGPC stocked Lake North with sauger as recently as June 2011 (NGPC, July 22, 2011).
- **Provide Fish Structure** – The District already provides man-made, benthic fish structure in the south portion of Lake North and believes that the no-wake zone planned for this area (see Section 6.4.2) will elevate the already recognized fishing opportunities associated with the lake.
- **Improve Restrooms** – The District understands the importance of providing sufficient, clean restroom facilities to the recreating public. The District cleans the restroom facilities every Friday and Monday and also cleans the facilities as needed when a complaint is received. To that end, the District notes that the existing restroom facilities and established cleaning and maintenance schedules are sufficient without modification. The District is unable to provide flushing restroom facilities because there is no access to municipal sewer infrastructure and because a shallow groundwater table deters leach field installation. The District cites its inability to improve facilities as well as continued vandalism and abuse by the recreating public as the reasons for not implementing the requested restroom improvements. The District may entertain future enhancements and will continue to monitor the need for additional facilities or modified maintenance throughout the license period.
- **Install Shower Facilities** – Shower facilities cannot be provided at Lake North because there is no access to city sewer infrastructure and, due to the proximity to the lake, no opportunity for on-site water treatment.

- **Provide More Sand on Beach** – The District has previously attempted to improve or increase the amount of desirable material at the swimming beach. In each instance, high winds have blown away the newly placed fine sand after placement, leaving the coarser, less desirable material.
- **Install Additional Camper Capacity and Outlets** – The District has estimated the cost of providing 10 additional camper pads including installation of 10 new 50-amp outlets, an area light, an access road, and a water hydrant to be \$50,000. At this time, the District does not believe that demand warrants this expenditure because camper exceedances typically occur only on holiday weekends. In fact, capacity at Lake North was not exceeded during the 2010 Recreation Use Survey.

7. COLUMBUS POWERHOUSE PARK

Columbus Powerhouse Park is located immediately south of the Columbus Powerhouse on the west side of the Loup Power Canal (see Figure A-4). Fishing and casual day use are common. The developed park area is level, has maintained grass, and is surrounded by a maintained access road.

7.1 General Site Information

General site information for Columbus Powerhouse Park is as follows:

- **Location** – Along the west bank of the Loup Power Canal, immediately downstream of the Columbus Powerhouse and on 3rd Avenue approximately 3 miles north of Columbus
- **Size** – 4 acres
- **Recreation uses** – Picnicking, fishing, and camping
- **Camping** – A limited number of primitive camping sites available on weekends during the spring, summer, and fall
- **Camping reservations** – No reservations accepted; limit of 7 days per month (30-day period) in the District’s park system
- **Restrooms** – Concrete double-vaulted waterless restroom that meets ADA guidelines; available year-round
- **Trails** – Graveled paths for short walks around the park
- **Other services** – Playground, picnic tables, and barbeque grills (Swimming in the Loup Power Canal is not permitted and is posted as such.)

7.2 Inventory of Amenities

Table 7-1 provides an inventory of recreation facilities at Columbus Powerhouse Park. The park contains no hydrants or electrical hookups.

Table 7-1. Amenities – Columbus Powerhouse Park

Classification	Specific Amenities	Count
Camping	Primitive Camp Sites	Space-Available Basis ^a
Playground Equipment	Swing	2
	Slide	1
	Merry-Go-Round	1
	Teeter Totter	1
Picnic	Picnic Table	5
	Barbeque Grill	2
Convenience	Restroom (Wheelchair accessible)	1
	Trash Receptacle	8

Note:

^a Primitive camping sites are available during the summer as space allows. These sites do not include electrical hookups or designated pads.

7.3 Requested Improvements to Columbus Powerhouse Park

Table 7-2 lists the most notable facility improvements requested by recreation users surveyed at Columbus Powerhouse Park.

Table 7-2. Requested Improvements – Columbus Powerhouse Park

Respondents (Count)	Category	Specific Comment(s)
3	Restrooms	Provide a restroom on the north end of the park
3	Fishing	Provide a cleaning station
2	Lighting	Improve lighting

7.4 Planned Improvements to Columbus Powerhouse Park

The District allocates \$20,000 annually for playground maintenance and upgrades at recreation facilities. Portions of this budget will be allocated to upgrades at Columbus Powerhouse Park for approximately the first 10 years of the new license period.

7.5 Requested Improvements Not Planned

Findings of the 2010 recreation use survey, performed along the 35-mile length of the Loup Power Canal, determined that Columbus Powerhouse Park receives the least recreational use of the District's developed recreation areas (approximately 5 percent of the total estimated use – see Table 3-1). Considering the amount of use and the existing facilities at Columbus Powerhouse Park, the District plans no additional recreation improvements at Columbus Powerhouse Park. The District will continue to monitor the need for improved or additional facilities throughout the license period.

Specific to the requested improvements listed in Table 7-2, the District provides the following responses:

- **Provide Additional Restroom** – The restroom facility currently provided is sufficient for the minimal recreation use at this location.
- **Provide Fish Cleaning Station** – The District is concerned with the maintenance that would be required with this amenity. Because infrastructure is not present to support a “full-service” cleaning station that includes running water and a fish grinder, a more primitive station would be needed and would involve collection of fish waste in a trash receptacle or disposal within the adjacent waterbody. Neither alternative is desirable and would involve intensive maintenance to prevent odor and deter pests.
- **Improve Lighting** – The District has evaluated the existing lighting and determined it to be sufficient for the size of the area.

8. TAILRACE PARK

Tailrace Park is located where the Loup Power Canal enters the Platte River (see Figure A-5). The park contains two areas that are divided by the Loup Power Canal but are connected by a vehicle-accessible bridge north of the park. Its primary recreational emphasis is on fishing below the Tailrace Weir.

8.1 General Site Information

General site information for Tailrace Park is as follows:

- **Location** – The Loup Power Canal confluence with the Platte River, 3 miles east of Columbus on 8th Street and 1 mile south of U.S. Highway 30
- **Size** – 9 acres⁵
- **Recreation uses** – Fishing and casual recreation
- **Camping** – A limited number of primitive camping sites available during the spring, summer, and fall
- **Camping reservations** – No reservations accepted; limit of 7 days per month (30-day period) in the District’s park system
- **Restrooms** – None
- **Trails** – None
- **Other services** – Playground area with views of both the Loup Power Canal and Platte River; swimming not permitted (posted) due to rapid, turbulent water in the Tailrace Canal

8.2 Inventory of Amenities

Table 8-1 provides an inventory of recreation facilities at Tailrace Park.

Table 8-1. Amenities – Tailrace Park

Classification	Specific Amenities	Count
Camping	Primitive Camp Sites	Space-Available Basis ^a
Playground Equipment	Swing	1
	Slide	1
	Merry-Go-Round	1
Aquatics	Safety Buoy with Rope	2
Convenience	Trash Receptacle	7

Note:

^a Primitive camping sites are available during the summer as space allows. These sites do not include electrical hookups or designated pads.

⁵ PAD Figure 5-8 (Sheet 5 of 5) did not accurately depict the actual size of Tailrace Park. In the PAD, the bounds of Tailrace Park were shown to be west of actual. Attachment A of this plan accurately displays park boundaries.

8.3 Requested Improvements to Tailrace Park

Table 8-2 lists the most notable facility improvements requested by recreation users surveyed at Tailrace Park.

Table 8-2. Requested Improvements – Tailrace Park

Respondents (Count)	Category	Specific Comment(s)
39	Restrooms	Provide restroom/shower facilities
15	Litter	Clean up litter; provide trash cans
12	Fishing	Provide cleaning station; add fish habitat; construct a fishing pier; expand shoreline
5	Water	Provide running water/fountain

8.4 Planned Improvements to Tailrace Park

Tailrace Park has been subject to considerable vandalism and public safety concerns for a number of years (see Photo 2). Its location is such that it is near enough to Columbus to be easily accessible, while also remote enough to provide some sense of isolation to persons engaging in undesirable or illegal activities. Based on these considerations, the District has no plans to improve Tailrace Park.

The District recognizes the area's unique landscape, Platte River access, and favorable fishing opportunities. However, as a result of years of removing graffiti, collecting substantial litter, repairing damaged property, and fielding associated complaints from the adjacent property owner, the District closed both the east and west sides of Tailrace Park to vehicular access in February 2012. Gates and barriers were installed north of park facilities, in the vicinity of the railroad crossings of park access roads (see Photo 3). Accommodations for foot traffic have been maintained.



Photo 2. Vandalism at Tailrace Park: photographed April 5, 2011.



Photo 3. Gate along east Tailrace Park access road.

8.5 Requested Improvements Not Planned

As stated in Section 8.4, the District is planning no capital improvements to Tailrace Park due to the park's history of excessive vandalism (see Photo 2). None of the requested improvements, listed in Table 8-2, are planned for District implementation.

9. TRAILS

The District has historically enjoyed a successful partnership with Columbus Area Recreational Trails, Inc. (CART). During the term of the new license and with the continued cooperation with CART, the District intends to continue this partnership via its ownership and maintenance of its public trail network within the Project Boundary.

Beyond the continued maintenance of its existing public trail system, the District intends to construct a new 2,000-foot trail segment along the southeast shore of Lake Babcock and within the Project Boundary. The planned trail segment is consistent with CART's Master Plan (CART, No Date) and would parallel 18th Avenue from the Intake Canal, north to the dike that separates Lake North from Lake Babcock (see Figure A-3). The planned trail would expand the existing public trail network by connecting to both the Robert White Trail and the Monastery Trail, both of which were formally dedicated during a CART ribbon-cutting on June 4, 2011. The District estimates trail construction at \$40,000 and plans to complete the trail in 2016 or 2017.

10. SUMMARY OF PLANNED RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

The improvements planned at the District's developed recreation sites and along its public trail network are summarized in Table 10-1. All proposed improvements would be implemented during the District's current Form 80 period (2009 – 2014) or the first Form 80 period following relicensing (2014 – 2019). The District will develop a plan for continued recreation improvements in conjunction with the 2019 and subsequent Form 80 submittals.

Table 10-1. Planned Recreation Improvements

Budgeted Year	Location	Improvement	Implementation Cost (2011 dollars)	Annual O&M Cost (2011 dollars)
2011	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Headworks Park	Upgrade camper outlets	\$8,000	\$900
	Lake North Park	Upgrade camper outlets	\$4,000	\$900
	Total		\$32,000	\$2,550
2012	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Tailrace Park	Restrict vehicle access	\$5,000	\$1,000
	Total		\$25,000	\$1,750
2013	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Total		\$20,000	\$750
2014	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Total		\$20,000	\$750
2015	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Headworks Park	Install sand volleyball court	\$1,000	\$1,000
	Lake North Park	Construct wheelchair-accessible fishing pier	\$30,000	\$4,500
		Create no-wake zone in the southeast corner of Lake North to facilitate improved fishing opportunities	\$1,000	\$500
	Total		\$52,000	\$6,750

Budgeted Year	Location	Improvement	Implementation Cost (2011 dollars)	Annual O&M Cost (2011 dollars)
2016	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Headworks Park	Install new permanent restroom facility	\$40,000	\$6,000
	Total		\$60,000	\$6,750
2017	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Trail Network	Complete construction of a new 2,000-foot trail along southeast shore of Lake Babcock	\$40,000	\$2,750
	Total		\$60,000	\$3,500
2018	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Total		\$20,000	\$750
2019	Developed Recreation Areas ^a	Improve playground equipment	\$20,000	\$750
	Total		\$20,000	\$750

Note:

^a The District allocates \$20,000 annually for playground maintenance and upgrades at all developed recreation areas with the exception of Tailrace Park. Portions of this budget will be allocated to upgrades at each playground facility as needed.

11. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC RECREATION ACCESS

In addition to the developed recreation sites and trails, noted above, the following facilities are also located within the Project Boundary and provide recreational opportunities to the public. No improvements are planned at these facilities, as explained below.

11.1 Loup Power Canal

The Loup Power Canal is approximately 35 miles long, has approximately 70 miles of shoreline (not including the 10 miles of shoreline surrounding Lake Babcock and Lake North), and is mostly accessible to the public via vehicular access roads. Recreational activities common along the canal include primitive camping, hiking, biking, and bird watching/eagle viewing. In addition, fishing for carp, channel and flathead catfish, and freshwater drum in the canal is popular.

During the upcoming license period, the District intends to maintain public access along the majority of the canal, including the ongoing maintenance of the adjacent access roads. Access restrictions will continue at locations that present concerns to public safety or Project operation. No capital improvements are planned for recreation areas along the Loup Power Canal or outside the developed recreational areas.

11.2 Siphons

Siphons are structures that convey Loup River tributaries across the Loup Power Canal. While not designated as developed recreation areas, they are commonly known to be good fishing locations and receive relatively high levels of angling pressure. Because the siphons are not promoted as recreational areas, the District is planning no improvements to public access or recreational opportunities at these locations.

11.3 Lake Babcock Waterfowl Refuge

The Lake Babcock Waterfowl Refuge is partially located within the Project Boundary and consists of Lake Babcock, Lake North, and adjoining lands (see Figure A-3). The refuge was established in the 1940s and is regulated by NGPC. Due to state oversight of the area, no improvements specific to the refuge are planned; however, more general recreational improvements to Lake Babcock and Lake North are planned and detailed in Sections 5.4 and 6.4, respectively. Approved and restricted recreation activities at the Lake Babcock Waterfowl Refuge will continue in accordance with Nebraska law (163 NAC 4-019) until said law is rebuked or modified:

- All hunting is prohibited in the posted area.
- The operation of all vessels is prohibited upon the waters of the refuge during the open waterfowl season (with the exception of District vessels)

necessary for Project operation and maintenance), except that portion of the refuge known as Lake North, where vessels may be operated at any time during the year for the purpose of pleasure or fishing.

- Fish may be taken by any otherwise legal means during the entire year in Lake North but shall be prohibited in Lake Babcock during an open waterfowl season.

12. FUTURE RECREATION SITES

The District is planning no development of new recreation sites within the Project Boundary and no expansion of the Project Boundary to accommodate future recreational development. As detailed in Section 3.3, the existing Project facilities contribute adequate recreation area and trail length to accommodate both existing and projected recreation demand of Platte and Nance counties.

13. PUBLIC SAFETY

The District considers public safety essential to the successful operation of the Project and maintains a Recreational and Public Safety Plan per applicable FERC regulations. The Recreational and Public Safety Plan documents public safety considerations and the measures taken by the District to minimize accident potential. The Recreational and Public Safety Plan is updated as necessitated by alterations to facilities or operations or, at a minimum, every five years. The following considerations are documented and graphically located in the Recreational and Public Safety Plan:

- **Personal Flotation Devices** – Buoyant throwable with attached rope in labeled housing
- **Fencing, Boat Barriers, and Buoys** – Warning devices and physical restraints from potentially hazardous areas
- **Signage (English and Spanish)** – Appropriate warning for potentially dangerous conditions (e.g., Dangerous Undertow; No Boating or Swimming; Keep Off of Structure)

The FERC Regional Office conducts an on-site safety inspection approximately every five years and the District's insurance carrier conducts a yearly inspection that focuses on public safety. The District also employs a full-time Supervisor of Safety and Training. This person oversees all aspects of public safety.

Nebraska Revised Statutes 37-729 to 37-736 cover Recreation Liability and specify the Landowner's Duty of Care. The District abides by these statutes and operates all Project components accordingly.

Each employee of the District is instructed to report any public safety deficiencies. The procedure for reporting a non-emergency issue requires employees to use a standard District form to notify the Supervisor of Safety and Training. The

Supervisor of Safety and Training then files the deficiency notice and rectifies the problem. If the issue is urgent or an imminent danger to the public, the employee is to contact his or her supervisor immediately. The supervisor then coordinates appropriate staff to resolve the problem.

14. REFERENCES

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Nebraska Revised Statute 37-733. Land leased to state; duty of landowner.

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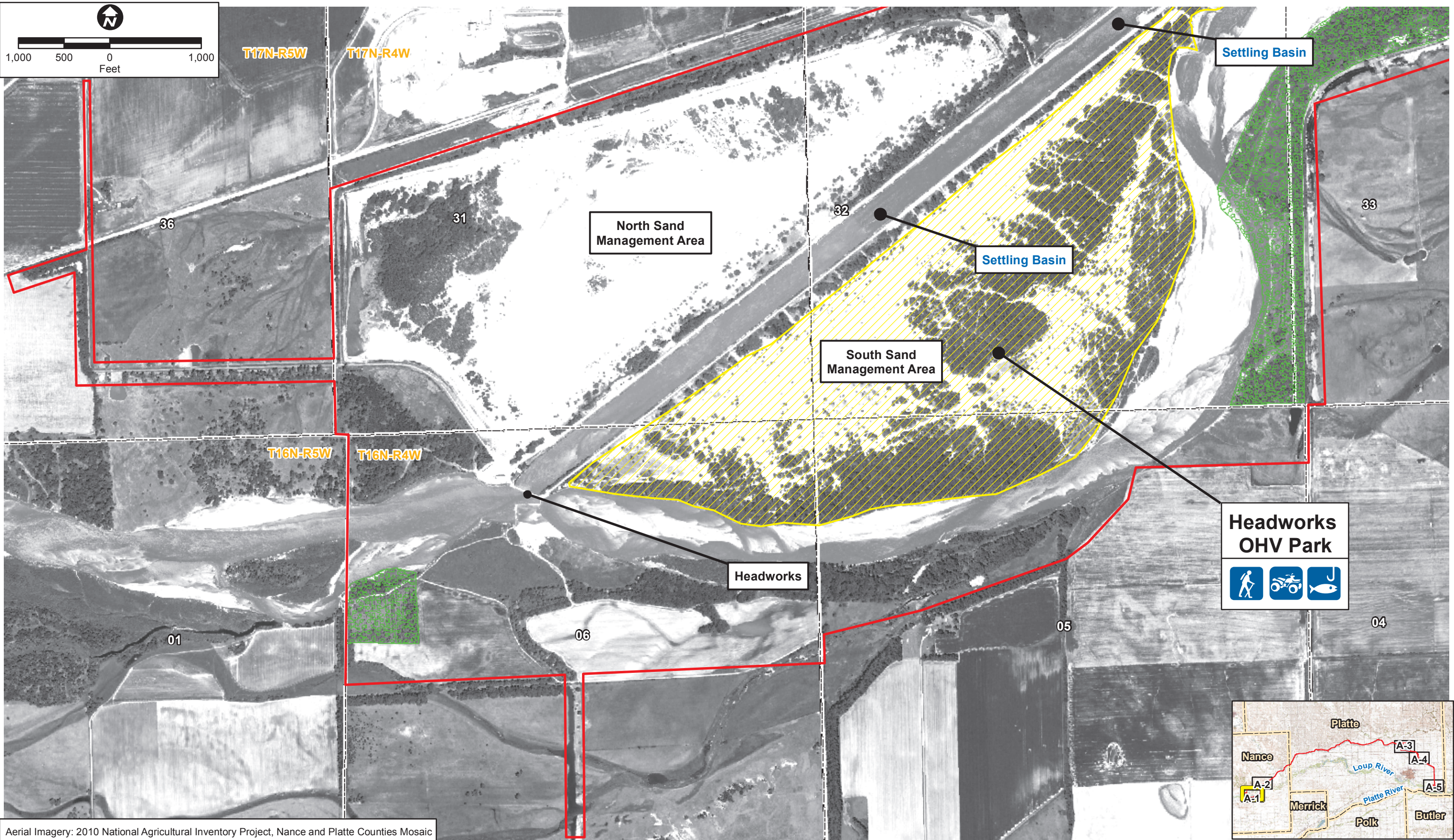
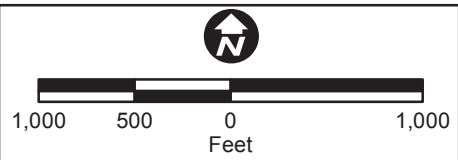
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ATTACHMENT A

RECREATIONAL FACILITY LOCATION SHEETS

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Aerial Imagery: 2010 National Agricultural Inventory Project, Nance and Platte Counties Mosaic

**Headworks
OHV Park**



Legend

Project Boundary	Swimming	Restrooms	Potable Water	Off-Road Vehicle	Hiking
Section Line	Park / Recreation	Bicycle	Wheel Chair Accessible Restroom	RV Hookup	Camping
Corporate Limits	Loup Lands Wildlife Management Area	Picnic	Parking	Playground	Grill
County Line	Boat Ramp	Fishing			



Recreational Facilities

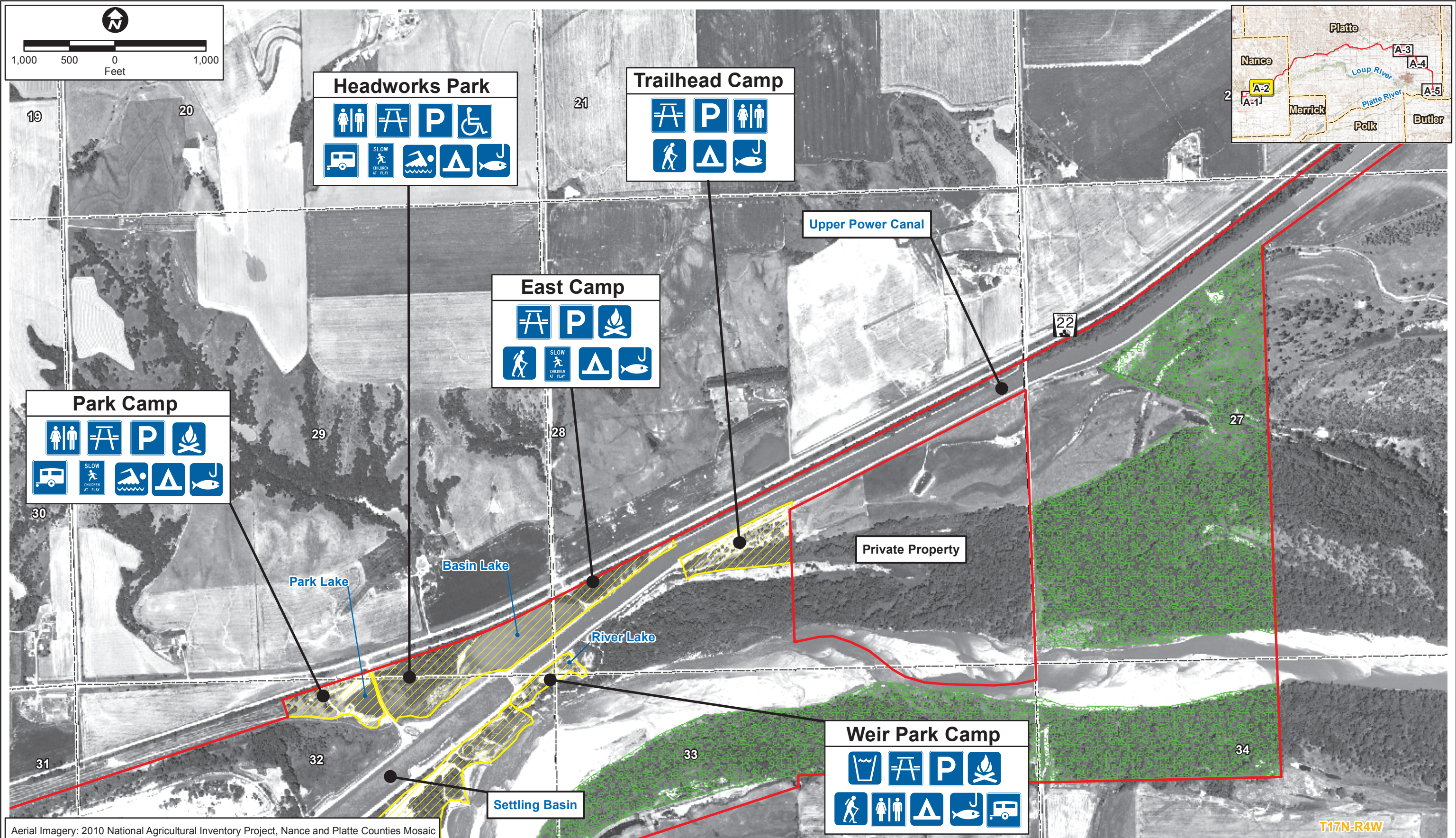
Loup River Hydroelectric Project
FERC Project No. 1256
Recreation Management Plan

DATE: April 2012

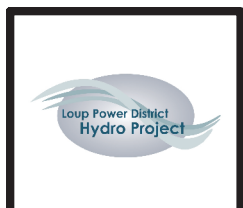
FIGURE: A-1

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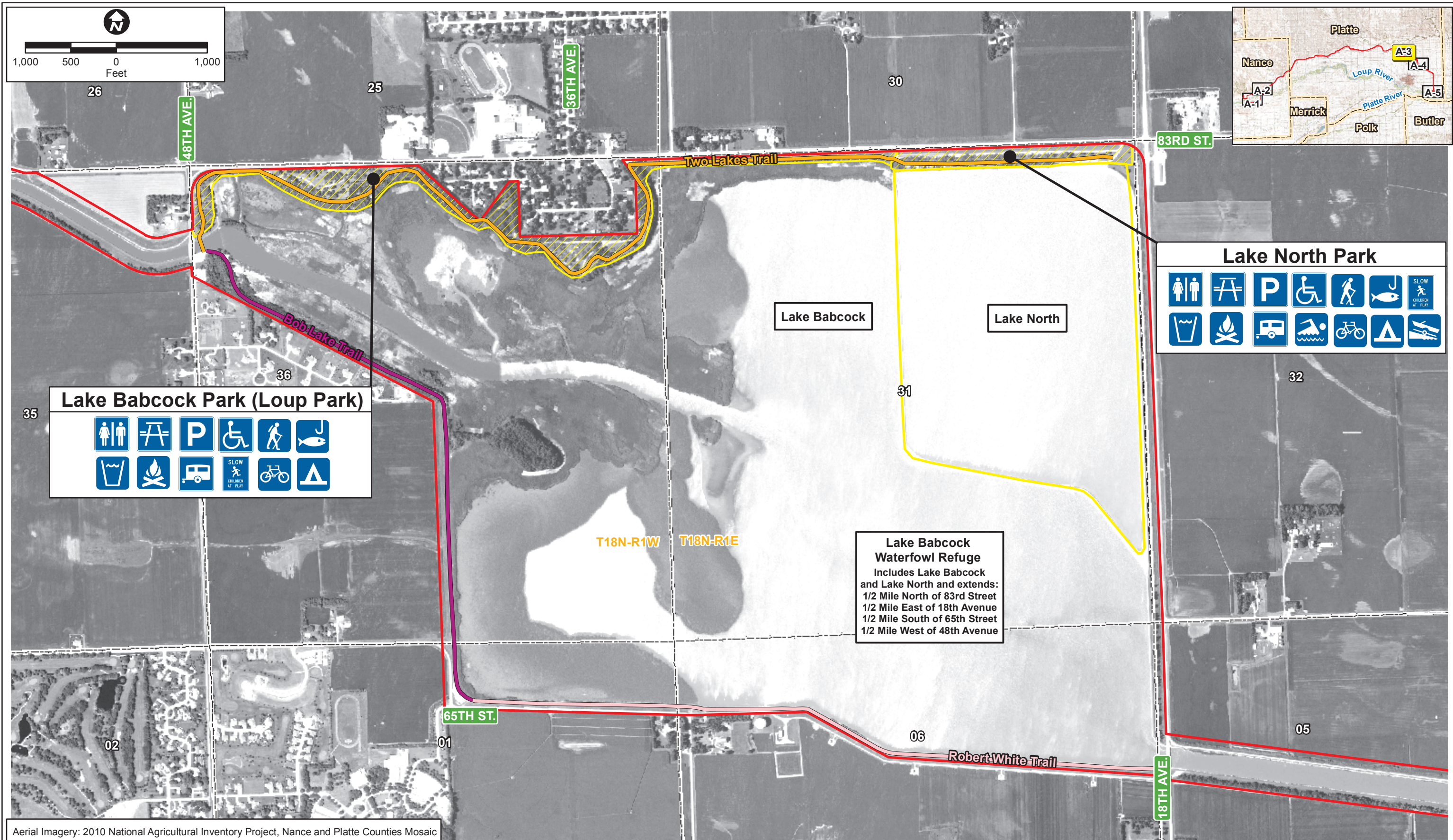


Legend	
	Project Boundary
	Section Line
	Corporate Limits
	County Line
	Park / Recreation
	Loup Lands Wildlife Management Area
	Swimming
	Bicycle
	Boat Ramp
	Restrooms
	Picnic
	Wheel Chair Accessible Restroom
	Parking
	Fishing
	Off-Road Vehicle
	RV Hookup
	Playground
	Hiking
	Camping
	Grill



<h3>Recreational Facilities</h3> <p>Loup River Hydroelectric Project FERC Project No. 1256 Recreation Management Plan</p>	<p>DATE April 2012</p>
	<p>FIGURE A-2</p>
	<p>© 2012 Loup River Public Power District</p>

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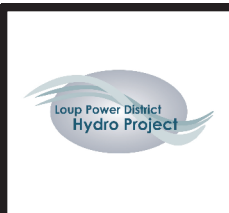
Lake Babcock Park (Loup Park)

Lake North Park

Lake Babcock Waterfowl Refuge
 Includes Lake Babcock and Lake North and extends:
 1/2 Mile North of 83rd Street
 1/2 Mile East of 18th Avenue
 1/2 Mile South of 65th Street
 1/2 Mile West of 48th Avenue

Aerial Imagery: 2010 National Agricultural Inventory Project, Nance and Platte Counties Mosaic

Legend



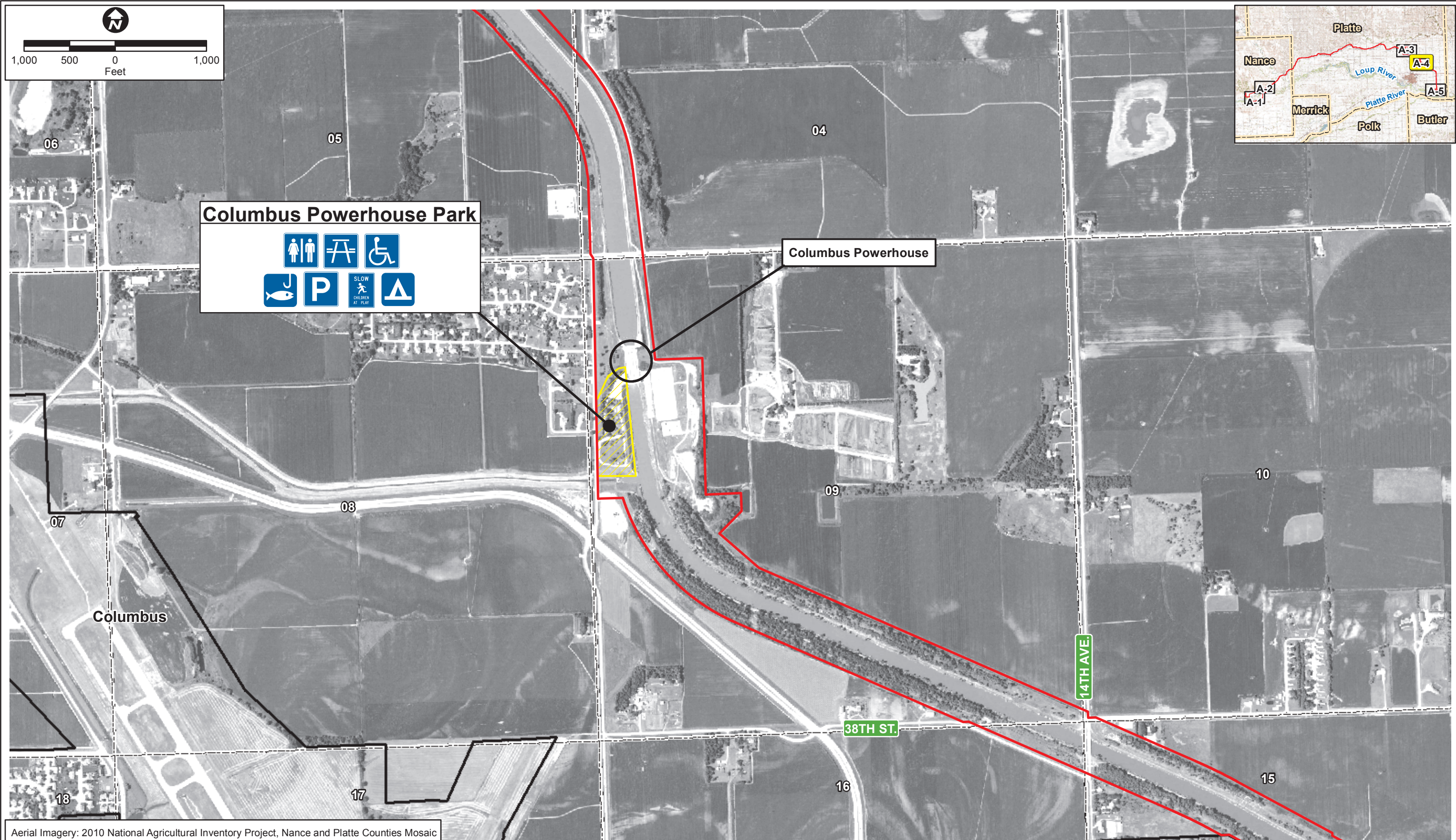
Recreational Facilities

Loup River Hydroelectric Project
 FERC Project No. 1256
 Recreation Management Plan

DATE: April 2012
 FIGURE: A-3

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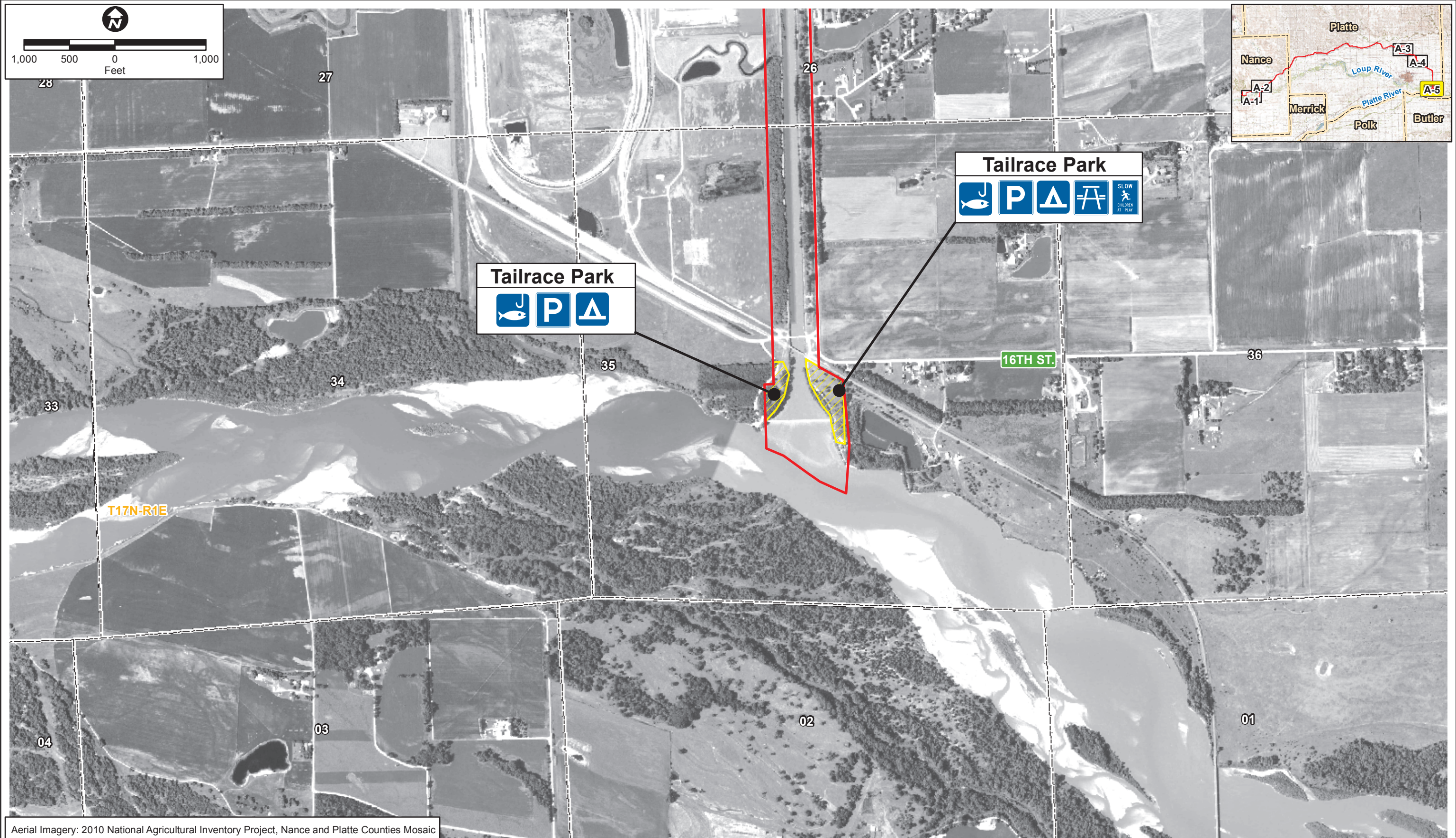
Aerial Imagery: 2010 National Agricultural Inventory Project, Nance and Platte Counties Mosaic

Legend	
Project Boundary	Swimming
Section Line	Restrooms
Corporate Limits	Picnic
County Line	Wheel Chair Accessible Restroom
Park / Recreation	Fishing
Loup Lands Wildlife Management Area	Off-Road Vehicle
Boat Ramp	Bicycle
Parking	RV Hookup
Potable Water	Playground
Wheel Chair Accessible Restroom	Hiking
Fishing	Camping
Wheel Chair Accessible Restroom	Grill



<h3>Recreational Facilities</h3> <p>Loup River Hydroelectric Project FERC Project No. 1256 Recreation Management Plan</p>	<p>DATE April 2012</p>
	<p>FIGURE A-4</p>
	<p>© 2012 Loup River Public Power District</p>

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Aerial Imagery: 2010 National Agricultural Inventory Project, Nance and Platte Counties Mosaic

Legend	
Project Boundary	Swimming
Section Line	Restrooms
Corporate Limits	Potable Water
County Line	Off-Road Vehicle
Park / Recreation	Bicycle
Loup Lands Wildlife Management Area	Boat Ramp
Picnic	Wheel Chair Accessible Restroom
Parking	Fishing
Camping	RV Hookup
Grill	Playground
Hiking	



<h3>Recreational Facilities</h3> <p>Loup River Hydroelectric Project FERC Project No. 1256 Recreation Management Plan</p>	<p>DATE April 2012</p>
	<p>FIGURE A-5</p>
	<p>© 2012 Loup River Public Power District</p>