

# Platte River CANOE TRAIL

NEBRASKA GAME AND  
PARKS COMMISSION

PO Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503  
402-471-0641 • www.outdoornebraska.org

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Snowmelt from the Colorado Rockies at the Continental Divide is the initial water source for both the North and South Platte rivers. They converge at the city of North Platte forming the Platte River proper, and end at the Missouri River near Plattsmouth. From the Colorado Rocky Mountains to Plattsmouth, the combined rivers flow a total of 900 miles; more than 580 miles within Nebraska.

The Platte River was first named by the related languages of the Omaha and Oto Indians as the "flat water." Later the river was named "Platte," a French word meaning "flat." This river was a source of water for wildlife, and food for the Indians who hunted near the river's edge. French trappers sought fur-bearing mammals along the river. Lewis and Clark camped near the confluence of the Platte and Missouri rivers, now known as Plattsmouth. They explored the mouth of the Platte on their journey northwest. In 1830, the Platte River Valley route quickly replaced the Missouri River route to the Pacific Northwest. Many overland trails, including the Oregon and Mormon trails, converged in the valley and followed the river, which became known as The Great Platte River Road. As many as 350,000 immigrants made the journey to settle in the West. The lower Platte River, receives most of its summer flow from the Loup River, as it converges into the lower Platte River, southeast of Columbus.

## SECTION DESCRIBED

North Bend to the Shilling State Wildlife Management Area (just west of the Missouri River) — 71.3 miles.

## CHARACTERISTICS

The Platte River channel is broad, reaching from a few hundred feet to over a thousand feet in places with many sandbars used by waterfowl and shorebirds. From above, the river appears braided with shallow rivulets and usually one deeper, darker channel, suitable for canoeing. Except at its lowest levels, the Platte's flow is gentle, varying from 3-5 miles per hour. The water is fairly clear but does carry sediment. With controlled discharges from upstream reservoirs, the river's water flow is continuous, but hot, summer weather can reduce water levels and narrow the navigable channel.

**Recommendation:** Please read the General Canoeing Introduction pages before beginning. They are a good review for the avid canoeist and a quick lesson for the novice, and may make the difference between an adventure and a nightmare.

## ACCESS SITES AND POINTS OF INTEREST

Launch from the bridge south of **North Bend** along Nebraska 79, from the west or upstream side of the bridge on either the north or south side of the river. On the north side you can drive down a dirt road to the river's edge. On the south side you must portage a short distance to the water.

From the Nebraska 79 bridge to **Hormel Park** in Fremont is 15 river miles (3-5 hours). Hormel Park is a good launch site with a concrete boat ramp. The park boundary starts approximately one mile west of the U.S. 77 bridge, on the north or left side of the river. Watch for the U.S. 77 bridge; when in view, cross to the north side. Primitive camping, restroom facilities and two parking lots are available. Fees vary according to facilities used.

From Hormel Park to **Platte River Landing**, is 9 river miles (2-4 hours). The landing is on the southeast or downstream corner of the Nebraska 64 bridge. Facilities include pit toilets, picnic areas and an access ramp. The city of Valley is 4 miles east on Nebraska 64.

From the Nebraska 64 bridge, (Platte River Landing) to **Two Rivers State Recreation Area (SRA)** is 7.4 river miles (3-4 hours). Here two campsites are available by the river. Watch for the sand and gravel operation on the east side of the river just before the Nebraska 92 bridge. When in view, cross to the east side before venturing under the Nebraska 92 bridge. Two Rivers SRA has modern restrooms, showers, and caboose cabins.

From Two Rivers SRA to **Schramm Park SRA** is 19 river miles (6-7 hours). This is a day-use area with restrooms and a picnic area. This is an interesting place to stop for a break with the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium and Outdoor Education Center located at this site.

The **Lied Platte River Bridge Hike/Bike Trail** formerly known as the Rock Island Railroad Bridge is 15 minutes downstream from Schramm Park SRA. Plan ahead as you approach this bridge. The upstream current may be running perpendicular to your

desired course and strong corrective action may be necessary.

From Schramm to **Louisville SRA** is 4.9 river miles (1 hour). It has nice modern and primitive camping facilities. Fees vary according to the facilities used.

An access site is at the Nebraska 50 bridge, about 10-20 minutes downstream from Louisville SRA. There is easy access with a concrete boat ramp on the northwest, upstream, left side of the bridge.

From Louisville SRA to the **Shilling State Wildlife Management Area** is 16 river miles (3-6 hours). Exit on the south, right side of the river **before** converging with the Missouri River. A road leads from this access area to Plattsmouth. Primitive camping is permitted. **Open fires are not allowed.**

## SCENERY

The Platte River Valley from Fremont cuts through rolling hills consisting of glacial till mantled by loess slopes. The hills have rounded ridge crests with moderate to steep slopes ending abruptly in the river. From Fremont to the I-80 bridge, riparian woodlands consist of cottonwoods and willows while on the ridge crests between North Bend and the Shilling State Wildlife Management Area are upland deciduous forests consisting of oak and hickory trees.



## COMMUNITY INFORMATION:

Fremont Park Offices (402) 727-3290,  
Mahoney State Park (402) 944-2523  
Two Rivers SRA (402) 359-5165  
Schramm Park SRA (402) 332-3901  
Platte River State Park (402) 234-2217,  
Louisville SRA (402) 234-6855

Cass County Sheriff (Plattsmouth)  
Non-Emergency (402) 296-9370  
Sarpy County Sheriff (Papillion)  
Non-Emergency (402) 593-4111  
Douglas County Sheriff (Omaha)  
Non-Emergency (402) 444-6641









## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE:

Memorial Hospital (Fremont)  
(402) 721-1610

Numerous hospital facilities are in the Omaha metro area. For directions to the closest facility, call a Sheriff's Dept., as listed above for further information.

**Dial 911 to reach emergency personnel in the area.**

# Platte River

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|---|--------------------|---|-----------|
|  | Canoe Access Sites |  | Restrooms |
|  | Camping Sites      |  | Boat Ramp |
|  | Parking Area       |  | Water     |
|  | Picnic Area        |   |           |
|  | Hospital           |   |           |

