

Republican River

CANOE TRAIL



NEBRASKA GAME AND
PARKS COMMISSION

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Republican River begins at Haigler in extreme southwestern Nebraska where the North Fork Republican and the Arikaree rivers from Colorado converge. It is also fed by another Colorado river, the South Fork Republican, converging near Benkelman. From Benkelman, the Republican flows more than 200 miles east to near Superior, before entering Kansas, and eventually flowing into Milford Lake northwest of Junction City, Kansas.

In 1935, there were four devastating floods, over 20 days, which necessitated the construction of two dams in Nebraska, Swanson Reservoir near Trenton and Harlan County Lake Dam near Republican City. Today these reservoirs provide water to thousands of acres of cropland through a series of canals.

SECTION DESCRIBED

Harlan County Lake Dam to Red Cloud — 49 miles.

CHARACTERISTICS

Hot, dry weather, intensive irrigation practices and about 19 inches of annual rainfall significantly affect the water levels of the Republican River and its tributaries. The best times to canoe are July and August, when the Corps of Engineers releases large quantities of water from Harlan County Lake. Water releases are usually adequate for canoeing during this period, however, we recommend that you inquire with **Corps of Engineers at Republican City or stop at the office at the dam site before to launching.** Water discharges of 350 cubic feet per second (cfs) are the minimum needed, while flows of 500 cfs are excellent for floating the river.

The Republican is a slow-flowing river, approximately 2 mph, and is extremely braided. Canoeing the braided channel will vary greatly within the river banks, making it a winding and interesting trip. The vertical river banks stand about three feet or more above the water along most of the Republican, and the many islands are covered with willows. The river becomes noticeably shallower after the bridge at **Inavale.**

Recommendation: Please read the General Canoeing Introduction pages before your trip. They are good review for the avid canoeist and a quick lesson for the novice

canoeist, which they might be the difference between an adventure and a nightmare.

ACCESS SITES AND POINTS OF INTEREST

Republican City is located along U.S. 136, between U.S. 183 and Nebraska 10. The trip begins south of Republican City at either **North Outlet Park or South Outlet Park** (below the dam of Harlan County Lake), which are operated by the Corps of Engineers. Take **Berrigan Road** at the east end of Republican City, turn south and follow the park signs to either park. Both parks have camping, picnic and restroom facilities along with a launch site. The North Outlet Park launch site is along a one-lane road leading east from the main parking area, about 200 yards to the water. The South Outlet Park has a good launch site with a canoe parking lot east of the dam. You must portage out 50 yards through a wooded area to the point of entry.

Both launch sites have standing waves for several yards from rapidly flowing current; you will need to have control of the canoe as soon as you launch. A short distance from the launch sites, the river smooths and the current slows. Watch for areas of swift current caused by changes in rate of water discharged from the dam.

To follow the general course of the river by road, you can take **U.S. 136** on the north side of the river, or the graveled county road on the south side of the river as shown on the map. From the outlet parks to **Naponee Bridge** is 4.7 river miles (2½ hours). You can launch on the southwest or right upstream side of the bridge.

From the Naponee bridge to **Bloomington Bridge** is 8.1 river miles (4 hours). Access and parking is on the south-east or right downstream side of the bridge.

The first campsite (primitive) is 4.1 river miles (2+ hours) from the Bloomington bridge, on the north or left hand side. The water is deep near this landing, use caution.

From the first primitive campsite to **Bislow's Landing** is 3.2 river miles (2 hours). On the south or right side of the river is a pull off area with limited parking.

A nice launch area is located approximately 3 miles downstream from **Riverton.** To get to this area from U.S. 136, turn right or south at the first road east of town. A sign indicates Campbell is north on this

road. Drive approximately 3 miles to where there are two bridges about 20 yards apart. A new bridge is just upstream from an abandoned bridge. Turn left or east onto a graveled road immediately south of the bridge and you can access the river between the two bridges.

From **Bislow's Landing** to the second campsite (primitive), is 13.2 river miles (6-7 hours). The camp is about 200 yards east of the two bridges, on the right or south side of the river. Watch for the irrigation pump which is about 20 yards above the camp, also on the right side of the river.

The river becomes noticeably shallower downstream from **Inavale.**

From the second primitive campsite to the third campsite (primitive), south of **Red Cloud** is 15.6 river miles (8 hours). This is the **Indian Creek State Wildlife Management Area** and the final access site. Parking is available on the southwest or right upstream side of the U.S. 281 bridge. **Trip ends.**

SCENERY

The river is flanked by hills with moderate to steep loess slopes and sharp ridge crests. The valley is one to two miles wide and is primarily farmland. Wildlife is abundant. Among the willow and cottonwood trees are deer, turkeys, beavers, herons, coyotes, and foxes. Channel catfish are found in the river.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION:

Corps of Engineers (at Harlan County Dam site) (308) 799-2105
Harlan County Sheriff (Alma)
Non-Emergency (308) 928-2147
Franklin County Sheriff (Franklin)
Non-Emergency (308) 425-6231
Webster County Sheriff (Red Cloud)
Non-Emergency (402) 746-2722

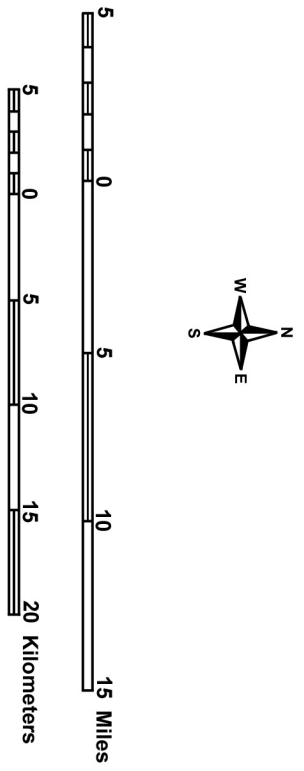
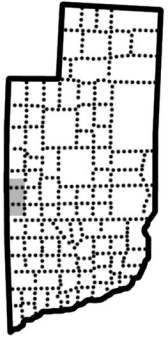
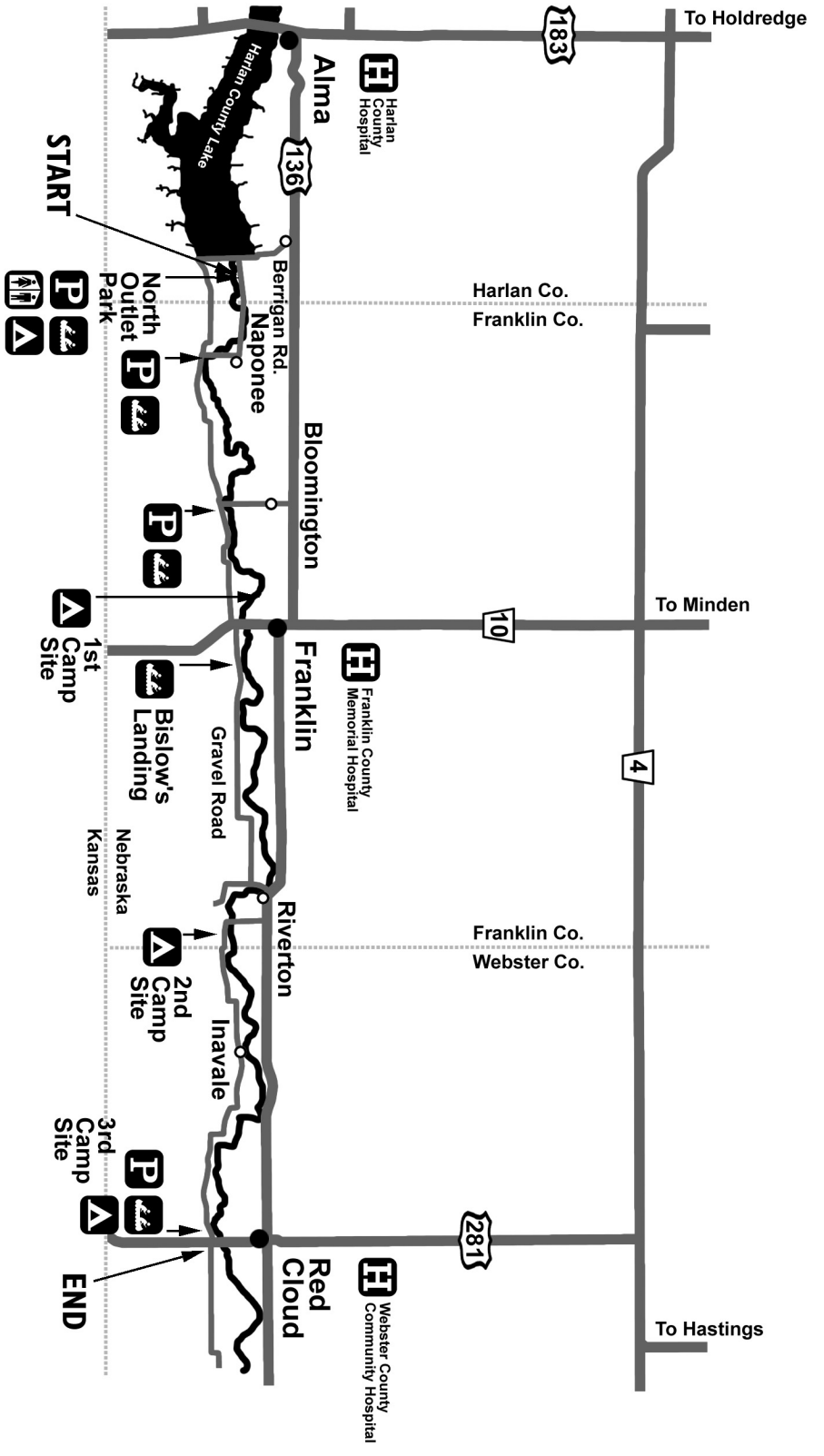
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE:

Harlan County Hospital (Alma)
(308) 928-2151
Franklin County Memorial Hospital
(Franklin) (308) 425-6221
Webster County Community Hospital
(Red Cloud) (402) 746-2291

Dial 911 to reach emergency personnel in the area.



Republican River



Legend

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| | Canoe Access Sites |
| | Camping Sites |
| | Parking Area |
| | Restrooms |
| | Hospital |