

## Four-day tour gives closeup look at Platte

Written by Gothenburg Times  
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A four-day tour of the Platte River will focus on the relevance and importance of Nebraska's most significant river in mid-May.

"Understanding the Platte River" is sponsored by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The tour is May 10 to 13, beginning and ending in Lincoln.

The OLLI Platte River water tour will explore the river basin from Grand Island west to the Wyoming border and will examine how the river has played pivotal roles in Nebraska's natural formation and development, how it has shaped its irrigated agricultural economy and water laws, and will look at its environmental and ecological significance.

The tour is being organized and taught by associate professor emeritus Bob Kuzelka of UNL's School of Natural Resources.

On Monday, May 10, the tour leaves Lincoln for Ogallala where it will visit the Lake McConaughy visitors center and UNL's Cedar Point Biological Station, down river from Lake Ogallala for a presentation by UNL biologist John Janovy.

On May 11, the tour proceeds to the headwaters of White Tail or Spring Creek and a presentation by UNL hydrogeologist Jim Goeke, then a stop at Bridgeport for lunch and a presentation on Nebraska's water management issues on the Platte by UNL geoscientist Steve Sibray and Tom Hayden, supervisor of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources' Bridgeport field office.

That afternoon, the tour visits Pumpkin Creek, Chimney Rock State Park, habitat restoration efforts on nearby Nine-Mile Creek and Lake Minatare near Scottsbluff before returning to Ogallala.

Surface irrigation features of the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, the state's largest irrigation district, will be the main focus on May 12 with planned stops at Sutton

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Reservoir, Jeffrey Lodge and Johnson Lake near Lexington, as well as Nebraska Public Power District's Gerald Gentleman power plant.

Wednesday night lodging is in Kearney before a May 13 stop at the Lian Nicolson Audubon Center, Rowe Sanctuary Center near Gibbon, then lunch in York before returning to Lincoln.

Tour registration is \$470 per person, which includes motor coach expenses, double-occupancy lodging, most meals and admissions. Registration is open to the public. For questions and registration details, contact Lee Rockwell, Valden Tours, (402) 486-0900.

The tour is cosponsored by the UNL Water Center.

"The tour is an educational complement to an OLLI course being taught this spring at UNL on the significance of the Platte River basin, but enrollment in that course isn't required to be a participant on the May tour," Kuzelka said.