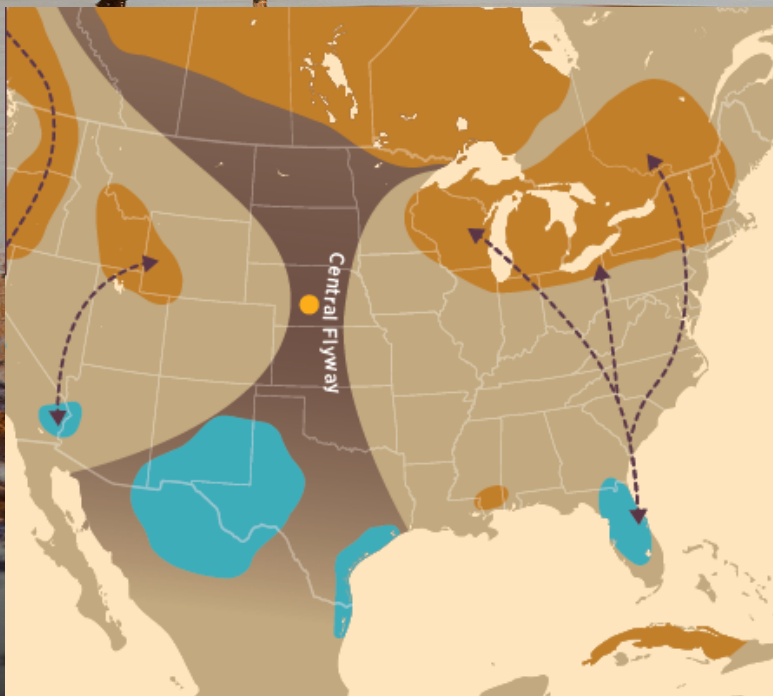


Rowe Sanctuary Strategic Plan

2025-2030



Rowe Sanctuary Mission:

To conserve and restore the Platte River ecosystem, focusing on cranes, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.



Audubon

Iain Nicolson
Audubon Center
at Rowe Sanctuary



Charting Our Course

The Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary is one of 32 Centers across the Audubon network, working in alignment in support of Audubon's Flight Plan.

Rowe Sanctuary's Strategic Plan is an expression of our local efforts; carefully aligned with Flight Plan metrics across four strategic areas, as shown below.

	MILESTONE	METRIC
 Habitat Conservation	A connected network of climate resilient lands and waters across the Americas	300 million acres (121M ha) of quality, connected, and climate- resilient bird habitat conserved
 Climate Action	Swift and responsible deployment of renewable energy Natural climate solutions as a win-win for birds and climate	100 gigawatts of new renewable generation and transmission sited 100 gigawatts of new renewable generation and transmission sited
 Policy	Government action and funding for birds and the planet	The Healthy Birds, Healthy Planet Policy Agenda passed
 Community Building	Community members working together to advance our shared vision that enhance the resilience of our communities	Audubon membership doubled Influential coalitions activated

HABITAT CONSERVATION



THE PLATTE RIVER AND BEYOND

Situated within the Central Flyway, we protect 3,000 acres along the Platte River and surrounding wet meadows and prairie ecosystems.

STRATEGY #1

Facilitate management activities to maintain or create unvegetated wetted river channel widths of at least 275 meters across our 5-mile segment of the Platte River.

STRATEGY #2

Increase the availability of quality grassland habitat at Rowe Sanctuary and the broader Platte River Valley to facilitate population connectivity of flora and fauna and provide at least minimum area requirements for priority bird nesting and loafing habitat.

STRATEGY #3

Increase the extent and resilience of wide and ecologically functional braided river habitats and advocate for best river management practices across the Platte River watershed through the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) & strategic partnerships such as Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River (VESPR).

STRATEGY #4

Manage and restore plant communities that maximize native plant biodiversity and function at Rowe Sanctuary.

STRATEGY #5

Monitor aspects of plant communities, bird communities, and grazing management to assess attainment of goals, generate a better understanding of priority bird use of land on Rowe Sanctuary, and inform changes in management.

STRATEGY #6

Provide guidance and assistance to neighboring landowners, lessees, and local communities on how to support native wildlife in agricultural fields, grasslands, and public/private property.

STRATEGY #7

Increase capacity of habitat management team to support Habitat Management Plan goals.



CLIMATE ACTION



WORKING FOR SOLUTIONS

Our great plains ecosystems are vulnerable to a changing climate. We take action to provide positive contributions to this biggest threat to birds.

STRATEGY #1

Integrate local stories to provide ongoing education/awareness on relevant climate topics. Leverage data and information about our region.

STRATEGY #2

Continue direct steps related to reducing emissions.

STRATEGY #3

Serve as a demonstration site for Natural Climate Solutions (e.g. grasslands as carbon storage). Expand restoration projects as possible.

STRATEGY #4

Use the Platte River as a way to talk about climate change

POLICY



SPEAKING FOR BIRDS

As an Audubon Center and Sanctuary, we are ideally situated to highlight relevant policy issues, making them come to life through a local context.

STRATEGY #1

Support the Platte River Initiative, including actions as appropriate on relevant emergent issues (ex: dam relicensing, Perkins Canal, etc).

STRATEGY #2

Serve as host site for engaging stakeholders on policy-related topics (Ex: lawmakers and beyond), using our on-site context to make issues real.

STRATEGY #3

Provide ongoing education & awareness on relevant topics. As appropriate, leverage our network with action alerts.

STRATEGY #4

Increase staff knowledge and capacity for policy and advocacy work.

COMMUNITY BUILDING



CONNECTING PEOPLE

We seek to provide transformative experiences to the public through immersive programs and experiences. Our Center connects audiences to Audubon's hemispheric goals

STRATEGY #1

Serve as an Audubon Conservation Action Center, leveraging Crane Season, connecting visitors with Audubon and our conservation efforts through Flight Plan

STRATEGY #2

Conduct robust year-round programming that reaches audiences of all ages. Engage key stakeholder groups and connect them with local environmental resources and issues. Maintain excellent standards for educational programs.

STRATEGY #3

Strive for deep Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) and accessibility in our offerings. Identify key audiences, and implement accessible practices across all our programs

STRATEGY #4

Build Volunteerism as a mechanism for stakeholder engagement and capacity building across all focus areas. Develop local volunteerism and build ownership opportunities.

STRATEGY #5

Invest in and maintain key partnerships, including academia, conservation, and cultural partners among others.





WORKPLACE EXCELLENCE

STRIVING TO SUCCEED

Strong foundations within our team and systems will position us for ongoing success.

STRATEGY #1

Cultivate and maintain a supportive work atmosphere that supports staff in finding success and fulfillment

STRATEGY #2

Leverage our team, facility and programs to be a strong and authentic 'natural partner' within Audubon structures. Collaborate with development and other teams to advance Audubon initiatives.

STRATEGY #3

Establish a comprehensive Operations Plan that models efficiency and establishes our work as a 'smooth operating machine'!

STRATEGY #4

Establish and expand earned income, including space rentals and gift shop revenue opportunities.



A LIVING DOCUMENT: COMPONENTS

STRATEGIC PLAN

This document!

A readable, externally-facing document that gives insight into our strategies and their connection to Audubon's Flight Plan

TIMEFRAME: 2025-2030

"Full Strategies" Doc

An internal document to be used by Rowe Staff to elaborate on the strategies outlined in the strategic plan.

More thorough and robust, this includes all the sub-points identified by the Rowe team during planning

TIMEFRAME: 2025-2030

Rowe Strategic Planning: Full Strategies
Created Nov 2025 by Rowe Sanctuary Staff

Habitat Conservation

1. Facilitate management activities to maintain or create unvegetated wetted river channel widths of at least 275 meters across our 5-mile segment of the Platte River
2. Increase the availability of quality grassland habitat at Rowe Sanctuary and the broader Platte River Valley to facilitate population connectivity of flora and fauna and provide at least minimum area requirements for priority bird nesting and loafing habitat
 - a. Coordinate with states, counties, and municipalities to promote zoning policies that limit development in the floodplain
 - b. Protect undeveloped tracts adjacent to the Platte River through easement, purchase, and coordination with local landowners (prioritize herbaceous habitats)
 - c. Develop a coordinated plan with partners to protect remnant lowland tallgrass prairies via land acquisitions and conservation easements

...and ecologically functional braided river management practices across the Platte River (e.g. waterfalls (VESPR), ... through hydrocycling, ... around dams/diversions using bypass systems include sediment bypass systems. River water ... ment of water resources to increase ecosystem reserve more water in reservoirs near the releases to maintain summer base flows in the ... and gravel mining operations in the Platte River / boards of supervisors, municipalities, and the social use permits for mining in lands zoned as ... management of in-channel vegetation and herbicide treatments. Help to garner a ... after proposals from the mainstem Platte River ... and science and legal means if necessary, ... actions to permanently or temporarily transfer ... location purposes ... en appropriate to maintain a flat channel bed.

(Validates)

(Elaborates on)

(Informs)

Theory of Change

An exercise undertaken to justify why we pursue our strategies, and articulate how they contribute towards our intended long-term goal

TIMEFRAME: Indefinite!

Theory of Change: Habitat Conservation				
Starting Conditions	Best practice approach and strategies	Outcomes (How much did we do? How well did we do it?)		Goal(s) (Is anyone better off?)
Assets / Resources / Problem(s) / Root Causes	If we...	Then...	Resulting in...	And creating...
Assets / Resources - Human capital and expertise - Strong partnerships and collaboration - Resources and tools (e.g. ...)	1. Facilitate management activities at Rowe Sanctuary to maintain or create unvegetated wetted river channel widths of at least 275	Habitat requirements of migrating crane populations will be supported	Cranes & other river-dependent wildlife will use and benefit from our section of the river	A protected refugia that supports the broader Platte River ecosystem functioning More Platte River & crane conservation advocates

Implementation Calendar

An annual expression of 'how we do this work' in the coming year. Action steps move us towards our overall goals and strategies.

TIMEFRAME: Annual

Community Building: Key Milestones Implementation Calendar (2026)				
Best Practice Approach / Strategy	Quarter 1 (January - March)	Quarter 2 (April - June)	Quarter 3 (July - September)	Quarter 4 (October - December)
1. Serve as an Audubon 'Conservation Action Center' a. Drive visitation and provide resources to visitors that inspire action & ownership of natural resources b. Implement crane season as our signature suite of programs/ seasonal	Crane tours and crane season programming Partnerships with tourism agencies Participate in national Audubon community of practice meetings (share ...)	Continue to highlight the work Rowe is already doing, national content, and include local action opportunities (website / onsite)	Continue to highlight the work Rowe is already doing, national content, and include local action opportunities (website / onsite) Continue to learn ...	Crane season planning Continue to highlight work Rowe is already doing, national content, local action opportunities (website / onsite)