



The Nebraska Environmental Trust

preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations

2011 PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS

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Dave Heineman, Governor

Mark A. Brohman, Director

October 8, 2010

The Nebraska Environmental Trust entered the 2011 grant cycle receiving 143 applications. Applications were either emailed or postmarked on September 7th to meet the deadline. Requests in this eighteenth year of grants totaled \$54,175,239.00. The Trust will announce recommendations for funding these applications in February, 2011, and will award grants in April, 2011.

A summary overview of each proposal, as composed by the applicant, is provided for you. Very few editorial changes were made in this information, which was submitted in the application form in response to the question, "Provide an overview of the project for which you seek funding." Project names were assigned by the applicants. Project numbers are assigned by the Trust to facilitate record keeping.

The summaries are presented in alphabetical order by project sponsor name. The nearest town is also shown to indicate the approximate location of each project in the state.

The amount requested and the proposed term of each project is also noted in each summary. The Trust is authorized to fund a project for up to three years under one application review. The review group to which the application has been assigned is also noted in each summary.

In 2010, the Trust issued statements of intent to 33 projects, indicating continued funding for these projects on the basis of the 2009 and 2010 applications. Those projects are included in these descriptions. The project numbers of these applications begin "09" or "10" and end with a dash 2 (10-101-2) or dash 3 (09-101-3) to indicate the second or third year request.

An index of applications by project number is also included with the materials presented in this booklet.

Sponsor Name: Audubon Nebraska**Nearest Town:** Gibbon**Project Name:** Protection of Critical Habitat on the Platte River in Buffalo County**Project No:** 11-203**Amount Requested:** \$1,200,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Rural Habitat

This project will protect federally-designated, critical habitat in the Big Bend reach of the Platte River for whooping cranes, piping plovers and least terns and also sandhill cranes, waterfowl and other shorebirds. Additionally, the project will protect native wet meadows critical to many grassland birds. Only ten percent of the wet meadows in the Platte River ecosystem remain. Substantial investments by Audubon, Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET), and many other conservation organizations have protected much of the habitat along the Platte River in Buffalo County. Housing and sand and gravel developments along the river in protected areas threaten this investment. This project will create a contiguous block of protected Platte River habitat including a 900 acre wet meadow in an area that typically hosts the largest concentrations of sandhill crane roosts. Audubon seeks a grant to help fund either fee simple or conservation easement on the proposed section of land. Audubon will pursue additional sources of funding to be a match for the NET funds, including a NAWCA grant. Audubon intends to protect this critical habitat in the most cost-effective means possible while maintaining positive relations with area landowners.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$375,000 IN 2005. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Black Hills Energy**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Fueling Nebraska with Natural Gas**Project No:** 11-197**Amount Requested:** \$997,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Air Quality

"Fueling Nebraska with Natural Gas" will deploy natural gas vehicles (NGV's) into several communities within Nebraska. This project will assist in the development of a regional market for NGV's by constructing compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling stations and assisting fleet operators with the purchase or conversion of natural gas vehicles, thus further enhancing the transportation options for Nebraskans. Natural gas vehicles utilize the cleanest burning alternative fuel available today---a fuel that is abundant, domestic, and affordable. In addition, natural gas vehicles have fewer greenhouse gas emissions, typically 20-29% less than diesel and gasoline fueled vehicles and lower amounts of other emissions. Increasing the usage of natural gas vehicles will reduce the amount of emissions, and will improve the air quality of our state. Black Hills Energy and its community partners seek funding for conversions to natural gas vehicles and several compressed natural gas fueling stations. As regional coordinator, Black Hills Energy will partner with the Nebraska State Patrol, the City of LaVista, the City of Norfolk, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (LPSNRD) and Paul Cammack in his individual capacity. Black Hills Energy will construct a public access, fast-fill CNG fueling station at our Lincoln Service Center. Black Hills Energy will also purchase 10 vehicles that will be converted to CNG. The Nebraska State Patrol and the LPSNRD will each convert two light duty vehicles to CNG. The City of Norfolk plans to purchase one new light duty vehicle for conversion, plus convert an additional vehicle. The City of LaVista plans to participate as well. Paul Cammack (in his individual capacity) will purchase and convert a light duty vehicle, and purchase and install an individual CNG fueling station. This application also seeks funding for training and certification courses as well as marketing and educational outreach plans.

Sponsor Name: Carlton-Sud Industries**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Enhancing Nebraska's Plastics Recycling Capabilities**Project No:** 11-193**Amount Requested:** \$1,726,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Waste Management

Our three-phase project will establish in Omaha an intermediate plastics processing operation (IPPO), the only one of its kind in the state, as well as a manufacturing plant that turns scrap plastics into landscaping and agricultural products. Another unique feature of this project, which will recycle 8.4 million pounds of plastics annually, is that both operations will be housed under the same roof as the state's largest residential recycling operation. This will create operational synergies and transportation efficiencies that will translate into helping all Nebraskans communities start and sustain viable plastic recycling programs. Thus while the project will recycle just 1/100th of the 800 million pounds of plastic wastes Nebraska buries annually, it should serve as a catalyst to foster new community recycling programs and better sustain existing ones. This is because an in-state IPPO will significantly reduce freight costs, a savings to be shared with the communities. Plus, an in-state IPPO turns otherwise wasted resources into suitable manufacturing feedstock; this then can potentially convert some of the state's 60 plastic manufacturers from relying solely on virgin plastic resins to become markets for Nebraska's waste resources. The grant will allow CSI to buy equipment that washes and grinds plastics (phase one) and then pelletizes (phase two) scrap plastics. The clean pellets can then be formed into new products, such as grain elevators' air ventilation tubing, which is one of the end products manufactured in the final phase of this project. We are seeking NET's support of \$988 million for the grinding and washing system (phase one), \$360,000 for the pelletizing equipment (phase two) and \$378,000 for the final manufacturing phase, for a total of \$1.726 million. Cash investments and in-kind contributions made by CSI and our partner Firstar Fiber will total almost \$14 million.

Sponsor Name: Center for Rural Affairs**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Heartland Center for Leadership Development**Project No:** 11-125**Amount Requested:** \$270,747**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Education

This project will help Nebraska communities in six regions develop and implement strategic plans for environmental conservation, create Environmental Stewardship Partnership Councils to lead these efforts and provide a community-based mechanism to address long-term resource conservation and environmental enhancement priorities. This project builds on the Nebraska Sustainability Leadership Workshop (NSLW) project supported by the Trust and is sponsored by the Center for Rural Affairs, an NSLW partner, in cooperation with the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, an NSLW participant.

Through this project, communities and regions will enhance knowledge of environmental conditions and develop and implement strategic action priorities for environmental stewardship that result in long-term and lasting benefits affecting one or more of the Trust Board Funding Categories, such as surface and ground water, waste management and soil management.

Regions will be selected through a competitive process from among communities that participated in NSLW workshops. Over the course of three years, the project will work with communities in six regions to: Learn about key regional natural resource concerns for habitat, surface and ground water, waste management, air quality and soil management; Identify key regional natural resource concerns in one or more of the following areas: habitat, surface and groundwater, waste management, air quality, or soil management; Create Environmental Stewardship Councils to develop leadership capacity for environmental sustainability; Strengthen partnerships with Natural Resource Districts; Develop a regional strategic plan for environmental stewardship; and Implement the regional strategic plan through strategies, projects and activities geared toward impacting the identified natural resource concern(s).

Environmental Stewardship Councils represent a new and innovative ground-up strategy to ensure widespread public participation, stakeholder involvement and pro-active implementation plans to further environmental stewardship objectives developed by the participants themselves, consistent with the holistic principles developed by the Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities.

Sponsor Name: Central Platte Natural Resources District **Nearest Town:** Multiple
Project Name: Platte Basin Habitat Enhancement Project **Project No:** 09-113-3
Amount Requested: \$1,000,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

The Platte Basin Habitat Enhancement Project (PBHEP) will enable the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission) and the Platte Basin natural resources districts (NRDs) to implement the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project in the Platte River Basin from the Colorado and Wyoming state lines to Columbus, Nebraska. The Legacy Program has designated the expansion of grassland habitats and their associated habitats along the length of the North Platte River, the South Platte River and the Platte River as a priority in its state conservation strategy. To enhance the availability of native grasslands and instream flows for fish and wildlife and increase the resilience and sustainability of both agricultural and native habitats in the Platte Basin ecosystem, the PBNHEP will purchase irrigation water rights on a willing seller basis and convert the land irrigated by the right to either native habitat or a dryland farming operation. Currently-used federal programs have achieved some level of temporary retirement of irrigation rights to create habitat and enhance instream flows. More must be done. Using these federal programs as a base, funds from the NET will be combined with local and state dollars to provide added incentives to convert these temporary contracts into permanent contracts that will provide aquifer recharge, and stream flows in perpetuity and native grassland habitat for at least the life of the federal program contracts (10-15 years). The Commission and the NRDs working with other partners will develop individual habitat management plans suitable to each local ecosystem and the landowners' operation. They will provide education opportunities throughout the basin to encourage other landowners to initiate their own habitat enhancement plans. By enhancing native habitats in the Platte Basin, this project will increase the sustainability of both our native and agricultural ecosystems, provide additional hunting, fishing and recreational opportunities, and diversify the income base of people in the Platte Basin and the whole State of Nebraska.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,275,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$725,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$1,000,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Central Platte Natural Resources District **Nearest Town:** Grand Island
Project Name: Cooperative Hydrology Study Phase III **Project No:** 10-182-2
Amount Requested: \$246,720 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

The project will enable the quantities, locations and timing of water added to the Platte River for wildlife and other instream flow uses, by retirement of irrigation and various other methods, to be identified. Information on the quantity and timing of enhancement to flows resulting from each project or retirement, as well as the cumulative effect, is critical to the determination of several issues that are important to wildlife, other instream uses, and social/economic considerations. Many of the species that utilize the Platte River, especially those designated as threatened or endangered, are migratory (whooping crane, least tern, piping plover, sandhill crane, ducks, geese, etc). This makes any flow enhancements to benefit these species dependent upon the locations, quantity, and timing of flows/water added to the stream. Furthermore, this project would help identify the lowest-cost enhancement methods by helping to identify and compare the benefits, in timing, quantities, and location of retirement of irrigation at various locations. This project will develop long-term pumping and recharge data sets for the COHYST Groundwater Model and calibrate the model to identify the volumes, timing, and locations of flow enhancements to the river resulting from groundwater irrigation retirements and switches from surface water irrigation to groundwater irrigation. The additional information provided by this project will help partners identify optimum means of addressing and enhancing the State's ability to provide benefits to threatened and endangered species in a more cost effective and environmentally sound manner. It will add to information provided by the overall COHYST study that was partially funded by earlier Environmental Trust grants, and it will provide for objectives not included in the original study.

THE ORIGINAL PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 1997 BUT NOT FUNDED. THE PROJECT WAS FUNDED FROM 1998-2000 FOR A TOTAL OF \$1,495,000. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$370,080 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$246,720 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Clay Center Spring Wing Ding

Nearest Town: Clay Center

Project Name: Smith Waterfowl Production Area Roundout

Project No: 10-172-2

Amount Requested: \$27,000

Term of Project Request: 2

Review

Statement of Intent

This proposal requests funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to acquire the Morgan Tract. This key 40-acre parcel lies adjacent to the Smith Waterfowl Production Area in Clay County. The property is a drained wetland surrounded on three sides by the federally owned Smith Waterfowl Production Area. The landowner approached Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partners about his interest in selling the property due to difficulties in producing crops within a former wetland that is subjected to frequent flooding events. With the acquisition of this property, wetlands on the site will be restored, providing significant habitat for migratory birds and many other species of wildlife. Ducks Unlimited has agreed to hold title to the property since the Clay Center Spring Wing Ding group is not a 501(c)(3) organization and not structured to hold title to property. The site will be used by the Spring Wing Ding organization as an educational tool, bringing school groups and others to this site to observe and identify birds and other wildlife, and to conduct environmental education efforts. This property has been identified by the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Planning Tools as a high priority tract because of the significant habitat value that could be gained through acquisition and restoration of the site. Funding from NETF will be used to assist with both acquisition and restoration components of the project.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$81,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$27,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Columbus, City of

Nearest Town: Columbus

Project Name: Recycle Center Building

Project No: 11-134

Amount Requested: \$677,743

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Waste Management

To build a new Municipal Recycle Center building co-located with the Columbus Transfer Station located at 570 S. 14 Avenue, Columbus, Nebraska based on the structural specifications and cost estimate provided by HDR Engineering, Inc., 8404 Indian Hills Drive, Omaha, Nebraska. These designs were made to address several outcomes: 1) provide public drop-off site for recyclables, 2) provide loading dock access for loading semi-trailers in an enclosed structure separate from public drop-off areas, 3) add the capability to unload roll-offs and packer trucks containing only recyclable materials, 4) close proximity to Columbus MSW Transfer Station will allow utilization of scales for weighing large quantities of recyclable materials as well as allowing Transfer Station Staff to visually inspect and divert acceptable loads of clean recyclable materials to the Recycle Center, 5) replace current rented facility that has no enclosed loading dock and only one door for truck loading and public drop off, and 6) to provide a safer more efficient recycling process for employees, public, and businesses.

Sponsor Name: Community CROPS **Nearest Town:** Lincoln
Project Name: Growing Farmers Training Program **Project No:** 11-196
Amount Requested: \$64,389 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Education

This project will expand workshop and experiential learning opportunities in organic vegetable production for beginning immigrant, refugee and low-income farmers in southeast Nebraska. Community CROPS has a successful history of managing community gardens throughout Lincoln, and providing appropriate training opportunities for entrepreneurs wanting to start a sustainable farm business. As demand for local food grows, it is important to train beginning farmers in environmentally sustainable methods of production to protect our natural resources. This project will increase the understanding and application of organic vegetable production methods among 60 beginning farmers in southeast Nebraska. To meet increased demand for training in organic production, CROPS will develop a new training site for experiential learning. This 30-50 acre site will be certified organic, and production practices will mitigate soil erosion with cover cropping and conservation tillage, show improved soil fertility from soil testing after applying organic amendments, and increase bird density and diversity through organic management of the training farm site over time (a recognized indicator of change). Additional environmental benefit will be realized by increasing the quantity of local food available to our community. Food currently travels an average of 1300-2000 miles to reach the consumer, and 14% of the energy consumed by our food system is by transportation. Greater local food production has the potential to significantly reduce the number of miles our food travels.

Sponsor Name: Cornhusker Council, Boy Scouts of America **Nearest Town:** Humboldt
Project Name: Development of an Education Center/Storm Shelter at Camp **Project No:** 11-192
Amount Requested: \$429,800 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

The Boy Scouts of America Cornhusker Council seeks to build a combined LEED green building certified environmental and conservation education center and storm shelter at Camp Cornhusker located in Richardson County, south of the town of Humboldt, Nebraska. The camp is owned and operated by the Cornhusker Council. Currently, the camp does not have a building for environmental and conservation education, nor a storm shelter. The need for this building was emphasized by the Little Sioux Scout Camp tornado tragedy on June 28, 2008 that killed four Scouts and injured forty-eight children and adults in Blencoe, Iowa. This brought to light the importance of Scout camps providing a storm shelter to protect participants. Additionally, it is the Cornhusker Council's strategic plan to emphasize environmental and conservation education at the camp, the center will serve as the cornerstone of that effort. This two-level education center and storm shelter facility will provide classrooms to teach merit badges and leadership training, and overnight sleeping quarters. Both levels of the facility will be utilized year-round for educational purposes and leadership trainings. The Cornhusker Council is requesting funding from the NET primarily for the environmental education portion of the project. We will leverage funds from other sources and by in-kind contributions to construct the center. The Cornhusker Council has already received a \$75,000 challenge grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation.

Sponsor Name: Crane Meadows Nature Center **Nearest Town:** Alda
Project Name: Educating a New Generation of Environmentally-Committed **Project No:** 09-114-3
Amount Requested: \$60,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

Crane Meadows Nature Center near Alda, Nebraska is requesting a \$240,000 grant, payable over three years, as part of an overall plan to re-open our Visitor's Center, hire personnel, and offer educational programming, resources, and exhibits for Nebraskans and visitors from throughout the world. Through public/private collaborations with schools, environmental organizations, and ecologically-minded corporations, Crane Meadows will inform and educate the public in potentially all five focus areas of The Nebraska Environmental Trust: habitat, surface and ground water, waste management, air quality, and soil management. We have obtained commitments of matching funds from four partner organizations (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, Hastings College, and Johnson Family Foundation) and have developed a sound and cost-effective business plan to ensure the Center's long-term sustainability. We are seeking funding from The Trust for salaries and various programming, travel, and office expenses.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$100,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$80,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$60,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Crane Trust, The **Nearest Town:** Alda
Project Name: Platte River Wet Meadow Acquisition (Binfield Property) **Project No:** 11-127
Amount Requested: \$1,000,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Rural Habitat

The Crane Trust is requesting funding to acquire the Binfield tract, located in Hall County west of Alda Road (on the north side of the Platte River). Acquisition and conservation of the Binfield tract will improve overall protection of the bridge segment between Alda and Wood River Roads, enhancing and anchoring a significant habitat complex of conservation lands owned by The Crane Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

This segment of river supports the second largest roosting concentration of staging sandhill cranes on the Platte River, as well as endangered whooping cranes, least terns, and piping plovers. This segment of the river: is within the Platte River Biologically Unique Landscape; identified in the Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan; will ensure recreational crane viewing as it is adjacent to one of the bridges where a sandhill crane viewing platform is located; and contains high quality wet meadow habitat, which is becoming more and more rare along the Platte River. It is crucial that this land remain in conservation for the protection of migratory birds and adjacent wetlands, yet part of it will be vulnerable to subdivision if ownership changed.

The current owners have expressed interest in selling the property, and The Crane Trust easement of a portion of the property has a clause of first refusal. The southern portion of the property would remain as Crane Trust property, while the northern portion would become Nebraska Game and Parks Commission property (providing increased recreational opportunities for Nebraskans).

We are requesting \$1,000,000 for the acquisition of the Binfield property. Additional funding support will be provided by: the Crane Trust, \$1,300,000; Ducks Unlimited, \$815,000, via NAWCA grants (one held and one proposed); and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, \$385,000 (via proposed Section 6 grant), for a total cost of \$3,500,000.

Sponsor Name: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Hershey**Project Name:** South Platte River Protection**Project No:** 11-185**Amount Requested:** \$526,815**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Rural Habitat

Wetland resources on the South Platte River watershed have been drastically impacted by extensive water diversions, flood control measures, invasive plant species, and wetland drainage activities. Floodplain wetlands have essentially been eliminated adjacent to the South Platte River, greatly reducing suitable habitat for wetland dependent species. It is imperative to protect key parcels that remain intact and currently provide resources while at the same time, begin to restore functions and values that have already been lost. With greater than 97% of the land base in Nebraska being privately owned, habitat programs must be available to landowners in order to provide the resources to numerous wildlife species. In response to the rapid decline of critical wildlife habitat, Ducks Unlimited is proposing to protect and restore a vital habitat complex in Lincoln County. Located in Southwest District Five, the three targeted properties all fall within one of the priority geographic areas for the Trust. Conservation of these key tracts will result in the protection and restoration of over five miles of river frontage totaling over 2,600 acres of critical contiguous habitat. Wet meadow (a limiting habitat on the South Platte) restoration opportunities exist on the proposed easements and will also greatly increase benefits to Nebraska wildlife. Over a two year period, the properties will be protected through permanent conservation easements and over 150 acres will be restored. The conservation easement will protect the complex from future development, and subdivisions, ensuring the invested conservation dollars by the Trust provide long-term benefits. Grant funds for the partial purchase of conservation easements will be used as leverage to secure additional funds through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. Further, landowners will contribute approximately 2/3 of the value of each easement and provide funds for an endowment defense fund.

Sponsor Name: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Hastings**Project Name:** Rainwater Basin Revolving Habitat and Beginning Farmer Project**Project No:** 11-191**Amount Requested:** \$825,870**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Rural Habitat

The Rainwater Basin Revolving Habitat and Beginning Farmer Project offers a truly innovative approach to wetlands conservation efforts in Nebraska's important Rainwater Basin. This proposal is a modification to DU's highly successful Revolving Habitat Program, which has already restored several hundred acres of wetlands and native grasslands. This proposal, however, offers a unique opportunity to combine the habitat conservation benefits of the Revolving Habitat Program with an agricultural/economic component involving a Beginning Farmer or Rancher. DU proposes to acquire a high priority property with NETF funds. The property must contain significant wetland restoration opportunity and be located in a priority landscape as identified by the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture. DU will donate a conservation easement on the tract to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Wetlands and native grasslands will be restored on the property. Existing cropland located on good soils and not necessary to provide adequate buffer around the wetland will remain cropland. It is estimated that 60 acres of wetlands and 40 acres of native grassland will be restored, while 60 acres remain as cropland. After habitat restoration work is completed and the property permanently protected through the conservation easement, DU will sell the tract at appraised value to someone enrolled in the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program. The property will offer an excellent opportunity for someone in this program. The easement will be designed as a "working lands" easement that allows certain agricultural uses, such as haying and grazing in the wetland/grassland complex, and farming in the remaining cropland. This will retain agricultural production on the property, provide an owner/operator to maintain restored habitats, continue to contribute to the local agricultural economy and keep the tract on the county property tax rolls.

Sponsor Name: Ducks Unlimited, Inc. **Nearest Town:** Hastings
Project Name: Rainwater Basin Waterfowl Production Area Restoration **Project No:** 11-201
Amount Requested: \$104,340 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Rural Habitat

The Rainwater Basin Waterfowl Production Area Restoration proposal seeks funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to restore and enhance approximately 670 acres of shallow water, ephemeral wetland habitat in Nebraska's Rainwater Basin. All five project locations are owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, managed as part of the Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District. The sites are managed for the primary purpose of providing wetland habitat to migratory birds, particularly waterfowl, shorebirds and other wetland dependent migratory birds. The Rainwater Basin provides critical migration habitat to over 10 million ducks, geese and other migratory birds, primarily during the spring. Waterfowl and other birds stop to rest and refuel in the Rainwater Basin's shallow water habitats, replenishing nutrient and energy supplies prior to resuming their northward migration. Many wetland dependent species and other wildlife also use Rainwater Basin habitats for breeding purposes. Resident wildlife species include pheasants, quail, grouse, deer and many other species. Many of the properties owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were not fully restored when acquired years ago. The source of funds used to acquire land was not available to fully restore wetland habitats on these properties. Consequently, many of these sites remain substantially less than 100% functional. NETF dollars are requested to help fully restore five properties, enhancing over 670 acres of shallow water habitat. All of these sites are open to a variety of public uses, including hunting, bird watching, hiking and photography. Wetland restoration activities will include filling drainage pits, plugging drainage ditches, removing trees and excavating accumulated sediment from within the wetlands. Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture are partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this project.

Sponsor Name: Ducks Unlimited, Inc. **Nearest Town:** Bridgeport
Project Name: North Platte River Alkaline Wetlands Acquisition **Project No:** 11-205
Amount Requested: \$460,840 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Rural Habitat

The North Platte River Alkaline Wetlands Acquisition proposal seeks funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to help acquire and restore an alkaline wetlands complex along the North Platte River west of Bridgeport, Nebraska. The 680-acre Anest property offers a rare opportunity to protect and restore a large complex of alkaline wetlands and grasslands in western Nebraska. The wetlands on this property will not only provide habitat to thousands of waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds and other wildlife, but the alkaline wetlands found here are also home to rare and unique plant and animal species, Alkali sacaton, foxtail barley, inland saltgrass, spearscale, proverty weed and sea blite are some of the unique plant species that have evolved to tolerate the high pH levels found in North Platte River alkaline wetlands. These wetlands provide important migration and wintering habitat to a wide variety of water birds. Alkaline wetlands provide exceptionally rich foraging habitat to shorebirds because they produce huge quantities of brine flies and other invertebrates that thrive in these wetlands. Some of the wetlands on the property have been drained with surface ditches. These drains will be plugged and the wetlands restored as part of this proposal. The Platte River Basin Environments, Inc. will provide long-term ownership and management of the site, opening the property to a variety of public uses, including hunting, bird watching, and hiking. This reach of the Platte River has few properties that are open to public use. The acquisition of this property will help address that need. The project will also offer a unique opportunity to study alkaline wetlands, one of the least understood wetland ecosystems in Nebraska. This proposal has the support of a large number of partners and the local community, including the Morrill County Commission.

Sponsor Name: Energize Nebraska - The Hamilton Community**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Solar Clean Air Initiative**Project No:** 11-182**Amount Requested:** \$35,200**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Education

The Solar Clean Air Initiative will educate and establish a new generation of solar instructors, installers and entrepreneurs throughout Nebraska, energizing community demand for solar applications.

Solar energy has proven since the '80s to be the renewable technology with the highest reliability and return on investment, supplanting more fossil fuel use for Nebraska than any other clean technology. Reducing fossil fuel use improves our air and water quality, health conditions, reduces our overwhelming energy trade imbalance, diversifies our economy, provides jobs, and utilizes one of our greatest free, natural resources - abundant sunlight.

The Solar Clean Air Initiative will provide Nebraska industry and community college faculty with statewide training on solar hot water and solar warm air systems, building competencies for next day applications. Training will be provided at community college sites through a new, portable solar training center used to teach design, installation and maintenance of solar warm air and domestic hot water systems. Instruction will include safety, code compliance, system sizing, and understanding collector performance in a variety of climates and applications. The latest installation techniques and proven practices unique to this region of the country will be demonstrated as well.

Solar installations are applicable to all economic and geographic categories in the state; from low income housing to high, from rural agriculture to commercial buildings, small businesses to industrial and government buildings. Technical training will be followed by two 2 1/2 hour statewide webinars on solar entrepreneurship to support the successful incorporation of solar technologies and services within existing businesses and start-ups. The Environmental Trust grant will provide funding for the seminars and webinars. In-kind contributions from Nebraska's community colleges will provide the facilities. Solar training expertise will be provided by Energize Nebraska and the Nebraska Solar Energy Society.

Sponsor Name: Ericson Lake Corporation**Nearest Town:** Ericson**Project Name:** Aquatic Ecosystem Enhancement**Project No:** 11-140**Amount Requested:** \$533,700**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Lake Rehabilitation

The Aquatic Ecosystem Enhancement project will implement portions of the Ericson Lake Preliminary Restoration Plan developed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers in 2002.. Among Restoration Plan goals are to increase and protect open water area in the 65-acre headwaters wetland to improve aquatic habitat values, enhance waterfowl and other bird habitat, enhance river and reservoir fisheries with spawning and rearing habitat, improve habitat for State endangered river otter. Due to recent flood damage, an additional goal is to repair a diversion structure that was built to preserve water depths in the previously restored 80-acre lake. Key components proposed are: 1) excavate headwater wetland sediments to create six 2-acre "pods" of open water with permanent connecting channels between pods and river, 2) excavate pod and channel depths to 6 feet from existing depth of less than 1 foot; 3) use a portion of the excavated sediment to construct a new diversion structure to deflect river flows from scouring wetlands and keep river borne sediment from re-filling wetlands; 4) use another portion of the excavated sediment to repair a flood damaged diversion structure protecting previously restored lake depths from river borne sediment, and 5) stabilize Cedar River stream bank adjacent to wetlands to reduce erosion and preserve water quality.

Wetland deepening will restore conditions supportive of fish spawning, rearing, and feeding. It could also provide waterfowl brood pairing and breeding ponds, and improve habitat for fish eating birds. Also, semi-aquatic furbearers could benefit, including muskrat and river otter, from increased diversity of wetland and riparian plants and prey species. Otters are potential beneficiaries of habitat that would contain small fish as proposed. Otters have been seen in the area and are a State listed species.

THIS PROJECT WAS PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED IN 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 AND 2008 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. ERICSON LAKE #99-119 WAS FUNDED \$900,000 FROM 1999-2001 FOR LAKE DREDGING AND BANK STABILIZATION.

Sponsor Name: Five Rivers Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. (RC&D)

Nearest Town: Tecumseh

Project Name: Native Grassland Protection Against Invasive Weeds

Project No: 11-133

Amount Requested: \$39,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Rural Habitat

Native prairies are the most threatened ecosystem in North America. With the increase on invasive species present in the area we see its negative impacts on these remaining landscapes and losses to our other productive grazing lands. The lack of control reduces the production and the profitability of grasslands and causes economic hardships. This has resulted in some grasslands being converted to row crop production because of difficulties and costs of controlling invasive weeds. Losing grassland production, plant diversity, and the overall acres of perennial vegetation is resulting in significant impacts to our valuable wildlife habitat, soil quality, water quality, and economic sustainability.

The Five Rivers WMA was formed in 2004 out of the interest in protecting valuable agricultural land from noxious and invasive weed species. Today, weed superintendents from nine counties and 55 representatives from the Natural Resource Districts, Nebraska Game and Parks, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Southeast Flagship, landowners and other conservation partners continue to provide education, management guidelines and alternatives in controlling noxious and invasive weeds to landowners, managers, and other interested organizations.

The WMA is seeking \$30,000 for a cost share program that would assist in making effective weed control affordable for landowners, land managers and other entities. This program would be available on a rating basis; dependent on severity of invasion, type of invasive weed(s), native prairie in an identified Biologically Unique Landscape, and cash match (minimum requirement of 25%). The fees for the chemical and application minus the cash match would be funded through this grant. A ten year maintenance agreement will be required on any entity acquiring grant funds.

An additional \$7,000 is requested to fund three project promotion workshops (speakers, lunch, mailings, building rental, supplies) throughout the WMA area and \$2,000 for project/grant administration.

Sponsor Name: Fontenelle Nature Association

Nearest Town: Bellevue

Project Name: Coffin Springs Watershed Erosion Repair

Project No: 11-117

Amount Requested: \$376,203

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Urban Habitat

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center is a 1400 acre natural area in northern Sarpy County adjacent to the Missouri River and situated between the cities of Omaha and Bellevue. It is owned and managed by the Fontenelle Nature Association (FNA). Half the nature center property is deciduous floodplain forest and half is upland oak-hickory woodland. Within the upland are several drainage basins, or watersheds which drain in an easterly or northeasterly direction toward the river. Some of the watersheds are small and are contained within nature center borders, while three larger watersheds extend well beyond the center's boundaries. Residential development in the upper reaches of these larger watersheds has changed the hydrology from its historic conditions, resulting in erosion and siltation, loss of water quality, damage to wildlife habitat and public safety concerns.

To address these issues we formed the "Bellevue Watershed Task Force" made up of representatives of Fontenelle Nature Association, City of Bellevue, Papio-Missouri River NRD, Sarpy County Roads Department and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). In 2007, FNA and Bellevue co-sponsored a grant request and received an NET grant to match federal dollars to allow the COE to conduct a Watershed Stabilization Study under the Section 22 Planning Assistance to States Program. This study, which is still ongoing, will result in a detailed ground survey of each watershed, an analysis of the historical and post development hydrology of each, and conceptual recommendations for repairing problems. As a first step in the repair process, we asked the COE to complete a hydrologic and stabilization analysis for the smallest watershed, known as Coffin Springs Hollow. Based on the COE report, Schemmer Associates Inc. has prepared anticipated cost estimates for the recommended alternative. The Nebraska Environmental Trust is being asked to fund a portion of the repair cost and the FNA, the NRD and City of Bellevue are pledging monetary and in-kind contributions.

Sponsor Name: Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools

Nearest Town: Lincoln

Project Name: Prescott Park and Outdoor Classroom

Project No: 11-129

Amount Requested: \$81,900

Term of Project Request: 1

Review Education

The Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools is requesting funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to develop the Prescott Park and Outdoor Classroom located adjacent to Prescott Elementary School at 1930 South 20th Street, Lincoln. Funds from the Trust will be used to plant and sustain a variety of indigenous trees, shrubs, perennials and native grasses in the park and outdoor classroom area; construct a bicycle loop and bicycle parking area, which is a key entry feature of the park; and initiate construction on the key educational centerpiece of our program, the Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom.

The vision for the Prescott Park and Outdoor Classroom, a green community gathering space and an outdoor classroom to enhance student health and learning, emerged from the Prescott School Neighborhood Advisory Committee (SNAC), which is a volunteer group of parents and neighbors and a component of Prescott's Community Learning Center. SNAC works with Prescott's Community Learning Center to improve student learning and development, strengthen families, and build safe and healthy neighborhoods. The Foundation is working in collaboration with these organizations to transform the landscape of a large gravel area into an outdoor classroom featuring grass berms, native xeriscape plantings, a rain garden, vegetable gardens, a music area with instruments made from wood, a climbing area, and fields for soccer and baseball. Also, this renovated area will provide a natural space for community gatherings. A walking path will frame numerous educational opportunities such as mathematic and scientific discovery and rich language development.

The Prescott Park and Outdoor Classroom is much more than a simple playground renovation. This multi-faceted outdoor space at the school will positively influence the Lincoln community. Outdoor classrooms are based on the concept that children and adults need sustained contact with nature and that lack of time outdoors can contribute to physical, social and educational problems.

Sponsor Name: Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools

Nearest Town: Lincoln

Project Name: Elliot School Park & Playground Project

Project No: 11-187R

Amount Requested: \$15,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review Education

The Elliott School Park & Playground Project represents a keystone in Lincoln's Antelope Valley Channel redevelopment. Stretching from the Children's Zoo to UNL's emerging Innovation Campus, Antelope Valley revitalization is recognized as one of the ten pillars of the 2015 Vision, a collaborative civic initiative for the Capital City. The Elliott Project represents a strong public-private collaboration involving the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools, the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, YMCA of Lincoln, Rotary Club 14, Community Health Endowment, and numerous community members. The project will transform a barren schoolyard in one of Lincoln's core neighborhoods into a vibrant green space, playground, and athletic field open to the whole community.

Elliott School is located at 24th & N Streets, adjacent to the Antelope Valley Channel and just two blocks from Union Plaza. At present, the rough plot of dirt and gravel used as a playground is harsh landscape devoid of grass or trees. Studied on a map as well as from the ground, the site appears as a glaring gap in the forward-looking development that surrounds it.

We request \$15,000 from the Trust to partially fund landscaping of the park and playground site. Plantings of well-adapted trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses will not only beautify the site but also provide outdoor education opportunities for schoolchildren, improve soil quality, reduce stormwater run-off, attract urban wildlife and revitalize a culturally diverse but limited-resource neighborhood. Improvements will include: a meeting plaza and sheltered drop-off area, providing safety for students; a tree lined, paved main walkway and entrance for the school, adjacent to an outdoor classroom; a new playground, complete with equipment for tots; resurfaced soccer and baseball fields, replacing gravel with sod; beautiful green space planted with trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses; an accessible walking trail within the park area; a new parking lot with double utility, for Elliott staff and also Union Plaza park users; and a trailhead which connects with multiple trails.

When complete, this park and playground will provide a distinctive place of beauty, activity, gathering, and recreation for the whole community. Phase I construction is scheduled to begin this fall, Phase II in June 2011. The 2011-2012 school year will kick off with a dedication ceremony celebrating the completed project.

Sponsor Name: Friends of the Rainwater Basin**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Hydrologic Restoration of Rainwater Basin Wetlands**Project No:** 10-106-2**Amount Requested:** \$109,623**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

The Friends of the Rainwater Basin, in cooperation with the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture (RWBJV), Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and Ducks Unlimited (DU) is applying for Nebraska Environmental Trust grant funding to retire irrigation reuse pits and improve wetland function throughout the Rainwater Basin Region (RWB) of south-central Nebraska. The Friends of the Rainwater Basin is submitting this grant on behalf of the RWBJV. The RWBJV will provide cash and administrative support for the grant. The project goal is to restore and enhance approximately 300 acres of wetland habitat by removing 15-20 irrigation reuse pits to improve water delivery to perpetually protected wetlands. Pits in the watersheds of Rainwater Basin wetlands reduce the water reaching the wetland and have a significant negative impact on how the wetland functions. This project would either remove pits no longer used due to a switch from gravity to pivot irrigation or place water control structures on existing pits. This work will be focused on pits in the watersheds of perpetually protected Rainwater Basin wetlands. Emphasis will be placed on pits closest to the wetlands and pits with a large storage capacity. Filling pits provides a win-win situation for the producer and wetland dependant wildlife. Producers will acquire additional farmable acres and the wetland (e.g., Federal Waterfowl Production Areas, State Wildlife Management Areas, and private Wetlands Reserve Program Easements) will function at a higher level increasing habitat for wetland dependant wildlife. As a result of this project, wetland function will be enhanced on perpetually protected Rainwater Basin wetlands. The RWBJV is a conservation partnership of state, federal, and local agencies, conservation organizations, and landowners who have joined together to direct wetland habitat conservation in Nebraska's 6,100 square mile Rainwater Basin landscape.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$115,679 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$109,623 IN YEAR TWO AND \$109,623 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Gracie Creek Landowner's Association**Nearest Town:** Burwell**Project Name:** Gracie Creek Implementation Project: Restoring Habitat for Priority**Project No:** 11-188**Amount Requested:** \$226,910**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Rural Habitat

The Nebraska Sand Hills serves as one of the last strongholds for Northern grassland birds that have suffered precipitous declines globally. This project will conserve and enhance habitat for key bird and plant species across a large privately-owned landscape for the benefit of these species and the public. The project seeks funding to implement activities identified in an 18 month planning effort: it would improve ecological processes, conserve and protect native species and habitats, engage landowners in management, be livestock-friendly, build local expertise, and provide education and outreach. Because most Sand Hills lands are privately owned and managed for livestock production, conservation must work in partnership with private ranchers and maintain the productivity of their agricultural operations. Ranchers on 50,000 contiguous acres in the Gracie Creek watershed and their partners will implement beneficial management practices over three years, including prescribed grazing, prescribed burning, and cedar tree removal, to enhance habitat for birds and other State of Nebraska priority species; the project will conserve habitat for Prairie Chickens and other species including Long-billed Curlew and Lark Bunting and promote the viability of the federally-endangered Blowout Penstemon. It aims to model a collaborative, habitat-sustainability project that could be replicated elsewhere in the Sand Hills and Nebraska and will provide outreach and public education including a ranch tour, public presentation, and media outreach. The project will begin on three ranches which together have been designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area; it will encourage the participation of other adjacent landowners, with the goal of including over 100,000 acres. This proposal builds on assessment and planning efforts over the previous 18 months funded in part by NABP (NETF) and with input from Nebraska Game and Parks and complements funding for species habitat conservation from the NRCS CCPI program.

A SIMILAR PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: Grand Island Area Clean Community System**Nearest Town:** Grand Island**Project Name:** Household Hazardous Waste Facility**Project No:** 11-136**Amount Requested:** \$250,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Waste Management

The Grand Island Area Clean Community System (CCS) is seeking \$250,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for leasing and modification of a 5,000 square foot Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility for one-stop disposal of household hazardous waste, medications and recyclable products. The existing building has been vacant for two years, meets zoning requirements and leasing-reusing this building is more cost effective than new construction. The building will include a 3,000 square foot bay processing area, a swap shop, education/conference room and office space for the offices of the Grand Island Area CCS. The HHW Facility will be open year round and available to any Nebraska resident. Initially it will benefit approximately 125,000 residents and landfills of five counties in Central Nebraska; Adams, Hamilton, Merrick, Howard and Hall. It will provide a safe location for disposal of household hazardous waste materials and unwanted medications stored in homes, garages, basements, sheds, medicine cabinets and other personal property. The education area will be used to teach children and adults about HHW, the environment and recycling. The swap shop will provide free materials to residents for reuse which will reduce the amount of waste that would otherwise require disposal fees. Computers, lead-acid batteries, televisions and other electronics will also be accepted and recycled.

THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND SUBMITTED SIMILAR PROJECTS IN 2007 AND 2009 THAT WERE NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: Green Recycling Enterprises, LLC dba Second Nature
Public Recycling**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Recycling on the Go!**Project No:** 11-109**Amount Requested:** \$150,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Waste Management

GRE is in the business of providing recycling containers throughout the City of Omaha and at public events statewide. During the past year, we have tested and proven the demand for public recycling containers at events in Omaha and Lincoln, such as the Taste of Omaha, the Special Olympics, the Omaha Home and Garden Expo and the Omaha Farmer's Market, including semi-permanently placed containers in the public right-of-way areas throughout Downtown Omaha. GRE would now like to expand public recycling to other parts of the City of Omaha as well as several other outlying public events around the State of Nebraska.

GRE plans to secure additional funding from private sponsors for the Recycling on the Go campaign by providing a promotional opportunity via a full-color graphical display located on each side of the containers. Our experience has proven that sponsors are more likely to participate once locations and events of interest to them are secured. We are confident that we will be able to find on-going sponsors to continue the expansion of the Recycling on the Go campaign.

We believe that the financial support of the NET will provide the necessary stimulus to ensure the successful commencement of our statewide campaign. For this financial support, GRE plans to incorporate two (2) NET recycling messages via the graphical display on each can. These messages will educate 1,200,000+ event participants on the subject of recycling. The NET can use these displays to further promote their mission and accomplishments.

The Recycling on the Go campaign will require one cargo trailer, one flatbed pick-up truck, one utility vehicle, eighty-five recycling containers, promotional and educational materials and labor for service during the events. The support of the NET will enable GRE to provide a turn-key recycling campaign for the State of Nebraska and its communities.

Sponsor Name: Groundwater Foundation, The**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Growing Groundwater Awareness in Nebraska**Project No:** 10-128-2**Amount Requested:** \$70,811**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

The Groundwater Foundation (GF) is proposing the Growing Groundwater Awareness in Nebraska (GGAN) project as a perfect means to achieve the Trust's goal of ensuring a sound natural environment, which is required for a prosperous future. Recently Nebraska surpassed California as the state with the most irrigated acres, over 85% of Nebraskans rely on groundwater for their source of drinking water, world-renowned irrigation manufacturers are housed in the state of Nebraska, and the groundwater-grown crops of our state feed the world round. Yet there is a general lack of understanding about the role groundwater plays in our lives. Data from a recent survey shows that while 86.1% of Nebraskans consider clean drinking water extremely important, only 57.1% consider clean groundwater extremely important. The question the GF poses is this: How will Nebraskans conserve, enhance and restore the natural environment if they do not understand the role groundwater plays? The answer the GF offers is GGAN, an orchestrated project that leverages strategic partnerships to diffuse compelling messages about groundwater and surface water, their interaction, their role in our livelihood, and ultimately engage individuals, businesses and communities in managing the resource. The project has two overarching goals: to enlighten the general public about this vital resource; and to identify and cultivate communities to participate in proactive protection efforts, such as Wellhead Protection Area Management Planning (WHPAMP), Groundwater Guardian (GG), Groundwater Guardian Green Site (GGGS), etc., which have proven effectiveness in long-term protection efforts. The GF has secured funding for the project from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). Substantial in-kind services have been offered by partnering organizations. The funding requested from NET will enable the GGAN project to be extended, penetrate more communities, and further utilize the tools and resources developed.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2009 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$54,520 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$70,811 IN YEAR TWO AND \$58,881 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Habitat for Humanity of Omaha ReStore**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Material Transportation Equipment**Project No:** 11-207R**Amount Requested:** \$10,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Waste Management

Habitat for Humanity of Omaha requests a grant of \$10,000 to purchase material transportation equipment such as platform trucks, hand trucks, and carts to increase our efficiency at receiving, moving, storing and displaying home improvement material which has been rescued from landfills at the Habitat Omaha ReStore.

Habitat ReStore is a discount home improvement retail outlet that provides a convenient way to recycle surplus, unneeded construction supplies that would otherwise be sent to the landfill. Construction companies, remodelers, handymen, and individuals donate their unneeded items to the ReStore, and receive a tax deduction. The ReStore inspects, organizes, and sells this donated unneeded material to the general public at prices 50-75% below retail cost, "recycling" it to new owners. In 2009, 193 businesses and 2,577 individuals donated their excess items to the ReStore instead of sending them to the landfill. The sale of these donations totaled 1,049 tons of carpet, windows, doors, ceramic tile, paint, cabinets, appliances and other items that were diverted from the waste stream, and reused and recycled by new owners!

Habitat ReStore Omaha, opened in November 2000, and has experienced significant increases in the amount of donated material each and every year. The store and its warehouse areas are filled to overflowing, and desperately need to be better organized to allow a more efficient operation. The movement of material from donations to inspection to storage to display is severely hampered by the lack of sturdy carts and pallets. Additional shelving, dividers, and signage, utilizing all areas of the building, floor to ceiling, would allow for much more effective display of available merchandise. The more effectively and efficiently we can be in collecting, storing, managing, and displaying merchandise means the more donations we can collect and the more material we can rescue from landfills and recycle to new owners.

Sponsor Name: High Plains Weed Management Association **Nearest Town:** Scottsbluff
Project Name: North Platte River Invasive Species Control Project (Phase 2) **Project No:** 11-173
Amount Requested: \$1,884,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Rural Habitat

The High Plains Weed Mangement Association is requesting \$1.884 million dollars for three years towards a \$2,480,000 project in helping to restore the waterways of the North and South Platte Rivers and its tributaries. For the last three years over 4,000 acres of Russian olive, Salt Cedar, and Phragmites have been removed or removed in the watersheds. Over the last 50 years, invasive species have invaded the riparian areas of the Platte Rivers. Our invasive species eradication and control project targets 123 miles along the North Platte River, 9 miles of the South Platte River and all perennial streams that feed the main river channel. This totals more than 100,000 acres.

During the last three years, the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the High Plains Weed Management Association in partnership with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the eight county weed superintendents of Garden, Morrill, Sioux, ScottsBluff, Banner, Kimball, Cheyenne and Deuel, the South Platte NRD and the North Platte NRD have been working to restore habitat along the Platte Rivers and its tributaries. What should be open meandering waterways have become inaccessible to both man and beast due to the congestion of Russian olive, Salt Cedar and Phragmites. With the help of the Nebraska Environmental Trust and our partners, we presently have removed 3,800 acres under contract with removal of Russian olive trees along with a 10 year follow up plan with landowners for spraying Russian olive re-growth on over. In partnership with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the Nebraska Environmental Trust and additional 500 acres of Salt Cedar trees, Phragmites and Russian olive trees were aerial sprayed with habitat.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,800,000 FROM 2008-2009, WITH A FOLLOW-UP PROJECT FUNDED \$700,000 IN 2009-2010, AND SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Keep Alliance Beautiful **Nearest Town:** Alliance
Project Name: 2010-2012 Recycling Center Equipment & Education Programs **Project No:** 10-132-2
Amount Requested: \$23,990 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Statement of Intent

Keep Alliance Beautiful is seeking Trust grant funds to support education program funding and recycling equipment for a three year grant period. Projects requesting funding include: 1) Personnel Salaries (partial funding request only); 2) Education Programs & Events to teach the local communities about Waste Reduction. Proposed programs are Recycling Ambassadors (3 year funding), Students for Recycling (annual) Contest (3 year funding), Reduce-Reuse-Recycle Fair (2 year funding), and Water Bottle Re-Use program (1 year funding); 3) Recycling Equipment for Keep Alliance Beautiful recycling center operations. (partial funding request only)

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$44,990 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$23,990 IN YEAR TWO AND \$27,240 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Keep Nebraska Beautiful

Nearest Town: Multiple

Project Name: Nebraska School Chemical Cleanout Campaign

Project No: 11-158

Amount Requested: \$168,024

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Waste Management

A majority of high schools in Nebraska have chemicals that are outdated, unknown, unnecessary, highly hazardous, potentially explosive and radioactive. Many of the chemicals are quite old having been purchased as early as the 1950s when the federal government provided substantial funds to schools to enhance science curriculum and many of those legacy chemicals remain on school lab shelves. Chemicals have continued accumulating over the decades and have in many cases created serious health and safety problems for students and school staff.

In 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency collaborated with several federal agencies to initiate the Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign. Keep Nebraska Beautiful became aware of the need for a School Chemical Cleanout Program in Nebraska through an incidence of a school seeking help with a couple of chemicals which were later identified as radioactive. We applied for a grant from the U.S. EPA in 2007 to develop the program. Our goals are to: 1) Remove inappropriate, outdated, unknown and unnecessary chemicals from schools; 2) Prevent future chemical mismanagement in schools through training, curriculum and policy change and long-term management solutions; and, 3) Raise awareness of chemical issues in schools and promote sustainable solutions.

KNB partnered with the 17 Educational Service Units (ESUs) to write state grants to help high schools pay for the initial cleanouts. To date, 127 schools in 10 ESUs have been cleaned out resulting in the removal of 7,250 chemicals including 4,764 lbs of high haz, 976 lbs. of mercury removed from 85 schools, radioactives from 21 schools, and potential explosives from 66 schools. This grant proposal is for 41 schools in the remaining 5 ESUs to have assistance with a 1-time cleanout of chemicals.

KNB will work with all Nebraska schools to provide sustainable management solutions and to prevent future chemical mismanagement.

Sponsor Name: Keep Omaha Beautiful, Inc.

Nearest Town: Omaha

Project Name: Native Grass Restoration

Project No: 11-105

Amount Requested: \$27,600

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Urban Habitat

Keep Omaha Beautiful planted native grasses at the interchanges of 72nd and Center and I-680 and Center in 2006 and 2008. We had a maintenance agreement that finalized in 2009. At that time we asked Blue Cross/Blue Shield to maintain as the plantings were next to their facility. They agreed. Now, they are moving and cannot maintain the area. The area at I-680 and Center was to be maintained through a sponsorship of Rockbrook Village. They helped but did a poor job. For the increased and acceptable image of the area and the health of the beautiful grasses we need to apply for Trust funds to be able to maintain this area that, prior to planting, was an interchange of weeds, litter, and mud.

Sponsor Name: Key Sanitation LLC**Nearest Town:** Creighton**Project Name:** Establish and Expand Area Recycling to Reduce Landfill**Project No:** 11-189**Amount Requested:** \$138,400**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Waste Management

Key Sanitation proposes building and equipping a recycling facility and additional equipment that would be needed to facilitate collection and transportation of recycling material. This would meet the needs of the 12 towns and surrounding rural areas we currently provide garbage collection services to. This would expand on current recycling efforts in Creighton and provide needed new services to other communities. To date most recycling efforts have been limited to cardboard or plastic bottles. This facility would allow us to expand this and encompass nearly all recyclable products which would reduce refuse going to our landfill by 75% greatly reducing the need for trucks to transport this waste. We are seeking funds to offset part of the cost of the land and to purchase equipment.

Sponsor Name: Lincoln Parks Foundation**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Revitalizing Nebraska's Centennial Mall**Project No:** 11-143**Amount Requested:** \$754,500**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Urban Habitat

Located in the heart of downtown Lincoln, Nebraska, Centennial Mall was installed in 1967 to honor the State's 100th birthday. The mall was designed to be an urban oasis where people could relax and meet in a park-like setting. Over the years, Centennial Mall has served as the State Capitol's "welcome corridor" for visitors. The mall is a unifying structure tying State government, the City of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska together. Over the last decade, Centennial Mall, which is maintained and managed by the Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department, has started to crumble. Its infrastructure is made primarily of cement, which cannot hold up under the onslaught of Nebraska's tough winters. Trees were placed in planters. Growth has caused tree roots to bust apart the planters and make the sidewalks unsafe. Most of the fountains gracing Centennial Mall have been filled in with sod due to safety concerns. Centennial Mall, once the pride of Nebraska, is now an eyesore. Additionally, the mall does not conform to modern accessibility requirements.

The proposed project will raise a total of \$10.0 million (includes \$1.5 million for a maintenance endowment, \$8,419,488 million for demolition, design, construction and contingencies, and \$180,512 in campaign expenses) to renovate Centennial Mall. The City of Lincoln has committed \$3 million toward the project with the University of Nebraska Foundation providing another \$2,000,000, the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners providing \$100,000, and State Energy Program providing \$97,500 for a total of \$5,197,500 in committed funds.

This leaves \$4,802,500 to raise. Our request to NET is for \$754,500. A capital campaign led by Lincoln Parks Foundation will raise the remainder. We plan to announce the public portion of campaign in second quarter of 2011 and complete fund raising by second quarter of 2012. Construction will begin third quarter of 2012 and be completed in 2014.

Sponsor Name: Lower Loup Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Irrigation Monitoring Program**Project No:** 10-111-2**Amount Requested:** \$40,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

Funding is being sought from the Environmental Trust Fund to cost-share flowmeters for irrigators in order to increase understanding of groundwater irrigation occurring in the Lower Loup Natural Resource District (LLNRD). A flowmeter, depending on model, costs around \$1,500. The LLNRD would match the Trust funds with NRD funds to purchase flowmeters to a maximum of \$1,500 per approved site. Installation of purchased flowmeters would be paid for by the cooperating landowners. The LLNRD would also use received Trust funds to assist with the purchasing for pressure transducers and data loggers for deployment at 10% of the cost-shared flowmeter sites. Pressure transducers would be used to determine the long-term impact of pumping on the water level in each of the well casings. Data loggers would be used to further clarify exact irrigation amounts throughout the season. The District has certified 1,211,158 acres in active irrigation from the use of 9,789 high capacity wells. There is limited information available regarding the total amounts of irrigation taking place across the District. Data is needed on a variety of factors that affect irrigation amounts. Since January 1, 2008, the LLNRD has been in a ground and surface water moratorium and has certified nearly all the irrigated acres. The LLNRD is one of the lead agencies involved in the Elkhorn Loup Modeling (ELM) Project. The ELM project heavily relies on irrigation pumping figures and having accurate, spatially diverse data is absolutely imperative to ensuring the accuracy and replicability of the numerical groundwater model. Better information on the amount of water withdrawn from the aquifer used in combination with changes in static water levels will provide the LLNRD Board of Directors and other management entities with a key piece of information when developing groundwater management policy.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$60,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$40,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$50,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Irrigation Water Management Monitoring Program**Project No:** 09-102-3**Amount Requested:** \$20,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Statement of Intent

Funding is being sought from the Environmental Trust to provide flowmeters for interested landowners participating in any monitoring programs within the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District (LNNRD). A flowmeter, depending on model and brand costs roughly \$1,400 with installation. The LNNRD would be using the Trust funds to purchase a flowmeter and cover the installation cost with NRD funds to a maximum of \$1700 per approved site. The LNNRD includes parts of five counties in northern Nebraska, and encompasses approximately 1,699,200 acres consisting primarily of agricultural land. Around 200,000 acres are irrigated by 1,700 high capacity wells with an average well irrigating 133 acres. Each of the thirteen communities and all rural residents in the District depend on groundwater for their water supply. Groundwater levels in the LNNRD have fluctuated between two to five feet on average during the last five years. Drier than "normal" conditions in combination with a newly developed water law, LB962, has prompted a large amount of new irrigation well development. The LNNRD estimates nearly 40,000 new acres have been developed for irrigation since January of 2000. Quantifying the amount of groundwater utilized for irrigation is essential for water and nitrate management. Having a better understanding of total amount of water irrigated along with pumping rates gives the landowners an ability to keep up with crop water requirements. Better information on the amount of water withdrawn from the aquifer used in combination with changes in static water levels will provide the LNNRD board of directors and other policy makers with a key piece of information when updating a quantity management section to the Groundwater Management Plan (GWMP). Information from this project will also be submitted for use in the Elkhorn-Loup Modeling (ELM) Project of which the LNNRD is an active participant.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$20,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$20,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$20,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Real-Time Contaminant Prediction in the Lower Platte River Basin**Project No:** 11-145**Amount Requested:** \$123,240**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review** Water

The Lower Platte River and its tributaries are important resources for Nebraskans that provide a variety of uses to an increasingly large portion of the state's populace. Understanding the quality of these resources will assist decision makers managing this valuable resource for the citizens of Nebraska. Having rapid access to water-quality data will help protect the public and the environment. Therefore, this project seeks to predict contaminant concentrations such as E.coli or suspended sediment at select locations in the lower Platte River basin and provide those predictions in near real-time to inform and educate via the internet. These predictions will be made by: (1) Continuously measuring data such as stream flow or turbidity that have the potential to predict contaminant concentration, (Objective 1); (2) relate those predictive data to measured contaminant concentrations (Objective 2); and (3) Predict those contaminant concentrations and make them available from any internet-accessible device (Objective 3). To maximize the impact of NET funds, this project proposes to leverage monitoring activities already funded for the next 2 years to accomplish the first objective. This would be associated with multiple monitoring programs and several partners. Therefore, Trust funds would be combined with federal funding to accomplish objectives two and three. Thank you for your consideration.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: Lower Platte South Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Groundwater Recharge Analysis and Geologic Mapping**Project No:** 11-104**Amount Requested:** \$114,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Water

The purpose of this project is three-fold: 1) estimate groundwater recharge rates from existing data collected in three different geologic settings in eastern Nebraska, 2) install a new recharge and weather station in the vicinity of a proposed new production well for the Cedar Knox Rural Water Project, 3) generate maps of water-bearing units at an NRD scale using registered well data.

Groundwater recharge rate is an important component of water budgets. Accurate water budgets, in turn, are needed to determine if water resources are being used sustainably, and if not, the projected duration of the resources. Recharge rates depend on a variety of factors including soil type, topography, land use, geology, and weather patterns. The number of variables involved requires that recharge be measured in a variety of settings. A unique geologic feature of eastern Nebraska is the fractured Niobrara chalk Formation in Cedar County. Portions of this formation supply economic amounts of potable water in an area where groundwater quality and quantity is a challenge. The Cedar Knox Rural Water Project has proposed drilling a production well in or near this unit to improve the water quality in their system. The addition of a recharge and weather station in the vicinity of the proposed well will help insure that this resource is managed sustainably.

The geologic variability in eastern Nebraska means that many NRD staff and directors have a general idea of which geologic units are important and their distribution, but do not know which units are present at specific locations. In the case of unconsolidated sand and gravel deposits, the occurrence can be very non-uniform, making maps necessary to depict the information. The mapping aspect of this project will provide those maps to NRD staff and directors so that sound, scientifically based groundwater management decisions can be made.

Sponsor Name: Lower Republican NRD

Nearest Town: Alma

Project Name: Lower Republican Sustainability Initiative

Project No: 11-101

Amount Requested: \$785,070

Term of Project Request: 2

Review Water

The NRD will be paying supplemental incentives to permanently convert 2,496 of the above currently irrigated acres to dryland farming and is requesting the Trust pay supplemental incentives to permanently convert the remaining 1,804 acres, in conjunction with a proactive and highly visible campaign to educate, encourage and enable farmers throughout the district to convert to alternative, lower-water use crops suitable for dryland farming.

The campaign will include research of alternative crops, development of public/private partnerships to enable producers to link to alternative crop markets, development and distribution of informational materials on lower water-use crops, and implementation of educational conferences & meetings.

Sponsor Name: Lower Republican NRD

Nearest Town: Alma

Project Name: Lower Republican Wildlife Habitat Restoration

Project No: 11-102

Amount Requested: \$38,200

Term of Project Request: 1

Review Equipment

The LRNRD seeks to work in partnership with district landowners who will provide labor to restore degraded habitat and create new habitat for wildlife within but not limited to acres formally enrolled in voluntarily contracted conservation programs. The project will utilize native and ecologically appropriate plantings to provide food and shelter for wildlife, will contribute to restoration of soil and water health, and will reduce soil erosion and sediment-loading to tributaries and feeder streams of the Republican River. The LRNRD is requesting the Trust share equally with the NRD in the cost of purchasing two no-till grass drills to enable this effort to be implemented.

Sponsor Name: Metropolitan Area Planning Agency **Nearest Town:** Omaha
Project Name: Integrated Solid Waste Management Study and Plan Update **Project No:** 11-151
Amount Requested: \$250,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Waste Management

In 1994, in compliance with the Nebraska Integrated Solid Waste Management Act, the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) adopted a 20-year, Regional Plan for the 5-county area (Cass, Douglas, Pottawattamie, Sarpy and Washington). The Plan was intended to: reflect the State's landfill diversion hierarchy, identify source reduction and recycling strategies to achieve specific diversion goals over time, provide assurances of adequate disposal capacities for 20 years. In January of 2003, a Plan Update was released for the Douglas County and Sarpy County service areas. The Update included a review of the following: waste generation in the 2-county area; status of the 1994 Plan and waste diversion goals; planned program improvements (notably UnderTheSink, the new household hazardous waste facility). With the window of the Plan sun setting in 2015, it is time to begin reassessing the status of solid waste management in the MAPA region. This grant will be used to fund a consultant to assist in a study and new plan update to: gather and review waste generation and diversion and disposal data for the MAPA region; develop an ongoing system to efficiently track waste generation, diversion and disposal; engage regional stakeholders (including the general public) to identify priorities to develop end markets for recyclables and increase landfill diversion; develop an implementation plan that includes community involvement and education; evaluate opportunities to expand the service area for UnderTheSink (for which the NET was a substantial funding source); improve the overall sustainability of the Plan under current and future conditions. While MAPA is the lead agency in this effort, Douglas County, Omaha, and Sarpy County have entered into a Interlocal Agreement to support MAPA and plan provide in-kind contributions to help prepare the updated Plan.

A SIMILAR PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 1994 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: Metropolitan Utilities District **Nearest Town:** Omaha
Project Name: Natural Gas Vehicles for Nebraska **Project No:** 10-114-2
Amount Requested: \$200,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

Natural Gas Vehicles for Nebraska will create a viable market for Natural Gas Vehicles (NGV's) in Nebraska. NGV's utilize the cleanest burning alternative fuel commercially available today. This project will stimulate the development of a regional market for NGV's by providing public-access fueling stations, assisting fleet operators with the purchase or conversion of natural gas vehicles, and educating fleet operators and the general public on the environmental, economic and energy independence benefits of NGV's. It will demonstrate the viability of natural gas as a transportation fuel, facilitate further development of NGV's across the state and have a substantial impact in improving air quality in Nebraska's future. The increased use of NGV's in Nebraska will directly affect air quality in our state by dramatically reducing carbon monoxide emissions as well as a wide variety of other harmful vehicle emissions. Compared with conventional gasoline and diesel vehicles, NGV's produce significantly lower amounts of harmful emissions such as nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and toxic and carcinogenic pollutants. Natural gas vehicles reduce overall toxics by over 90% and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25%. The Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha (District) will be the regional coordinator for this project. The District will design and build two public-access, fast-fill Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations. Both of the proposed new public fueling stations will be located within a mile of Interstate 80, providing convenient access to CNG for a large amount of local and inter-city traffic. The Omaha stations will add a strategic link that significantly improves connectivity in the growing regional and national network of CNG stations. The District will assist local fleet operators with the purchase and/or conversions of NGV's and develop a program to educate fleet vehicle operators and others across the state on the sound environmental benefits of using NGV's.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$447,500 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$200,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Missouri River Relief

Nearest Town: Multiple

Project Name: Big, Muddy Clean Ups

Project No: 11-200

Amount Requested: \$23,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Waste Management

Missouri River Relief celebrates it's tenth anniversary in 2011. MRR will continue to take action on the Lower Missouri River by inventorying and mapping trash, making a clean-up plan, and engaging communities along the river in removing trash as we move downstream in our Operation Clean Sweep clean-up.

We request the Nebraska Environmental trust assist this project by funding three community clean ups in spring of 2011.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Academy of Sciences, Inc., The

Nearest Town: Statewide

Project Name: Nebraska Environmental Public Information and Education MiniGrant Program

Project No: 11-108

Amount Requested: \$169,800

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Education

The Nebraska Environmental Trust Public Information and Education MiniGrant Program will award a total of \$51,000 each year for the next three years, in MinGrants of up to \$3,000 each, to support the presentation and dissemination of information and perspectives that will stimulate enhanced environmental stewardship in any category eligible for Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) funding. These categories are habitat, surface and ground water, waste management, air quality, and soil management. The grants seek to expand dialogue on important current conservation topics and to provide information on emerging or highly useful conservation methods. All Nebraska individuals, private organizations, and public entities are eligible to apply for these funds.

This program will be administered by the Nebraska Academy of Sciences.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$55,997 IN 2009. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Agricultural Education Educators**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Nebraska Agricultural Education Soils Project**Project No:** 11-128**Amount Requested:** \$200,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Education

Nebraska Agricultural Education Soils Project (Soil Project) is a focused but broad-based soil/soil quality initiative to educate Nebraska Agriculture Education (Ag Ed) teachers, Ag Ed students and Nebraskans. Those individuals will then have the resources and skills to be actively involved in soil quality projects.

Nebraska Ag Education (Ag Ed) is offered in 137 Nebraska High Schools to 6,000 students. Ag Ed Educators, (teachers) advise and instruct students in classroom, laboratories and field experiences about soil science.

Nebraska Ag Education lacks soil-science based information and resources to improve Nebraska soil.

We, the Nebraska Agricultural Education Educators, are soil educators as teachers, soil researchers, environmentalists, conservationists, land users and property owners. Our backgrounds, occupations and careers have a common passion, "HEALTHY NEBRASKA SOILS". OUR PASSION AND DESIRE IS TO PRESERVE, CONSERVE AND/OR RESTORE NEBRASKA SOILS. The Soils Project will educate Nebraska Agricultural Educators (Ag Ed teachers), Ag Ed students and Nebraskans so they can learn to improve Nebraska Soils and Land Health. Having the knowledge base about soil quality, teachers and students will have the confidence and abilities, with appropriate tools, to collect soil data, monitor soil quality and manage Nebraska's landscape.

The "Soils Project" will develop and provide "action plans" for and to Ag Ed teachers and students with educational soil material, soil testing equipment and soil science resources.

This "Soils Project" will prepare Nebraska's students, as future leaders, with the skills to sustain Nebraska's land productivity and our soil health.

Preserving soil health has a direct bearing on soil productivity and crop production producing abundant food, feed, fuel and fiber while not damaging Nebraska's environment. Soil quality has a direct bearing on the quality of life for all Nebraskans. Therefore, funding for "Nebraska Agricultural Education Soils Project" is important to provide a foundation for prosperity of future generations.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Building Capacity for Environmental Education in Nebraska**Project No:** 11-177**Amount Requested:** \$198,600**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Education

Nebraska's citizens are more frequently being called upon to understand complex environmental issues, assess environmental risk, evaluate proposed environmental plans and understand how individual decisions affect our environment, our communities, and our economy.

Nebraska's current environmental education resources and opportunities are many, but they are widely dispersed, often scarce in partnerships, and lacking coordination. Consequently, many people are unaware of their existence. Additionally, more Nebraska-specific resources, events, and opportunities need to be created or implemented.

The Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education seeks funding to establish a sustainable state office of environmental education and hire a full-time state environmental education coordinator.

This state office of environmental education and accompanying full-time state environmental educational coordinator, will build capacity for EE across Nebraska by:

1. Providing Nebraska with a much needed clearinghouse for environmental resources and opportunities. This office will serve Nebraskan's statewide and provide resources and information relating to Nebraska's natural resources, wildlife, conservation, and habitat management strategies.

This office and accompanying coordinator will also provide Nebraska with a dedicated position working to strengthen existing EE partnerships and seek new partnerships. This position will also increase capacity for EE in Nebraska through promoting resources and opportunities.

2. Working with teachers, communities, and conservation organizations to build a network of service learning opportunities across Nebraska. The EE coordinator will serve as a facilitator between communities or environmental organizations seeking help with service projects and teachers seeking service learning opportunities for their students.

3. Leading three "Discover Nebraska's Ecosystems" Tours for educators across the state. These week-long tours will help provide educators the background knowledge about Nebraska's ecosystems and the confidence to incorporate this knowledge into their curriculum.

4. Leading workshops to educate teachers how to teach about the environment and how to incorporate EE into their curriculum. These workshops will provide teachers with basic ecological knowledge and skills needed to

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Association of Resources Districts **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Conservation Trees for Nebraska **Project No:** 11-152
Amount Requested: \$900,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Rural Habitat

Conservation trees are defined as tree and shrub seedlings planted on rural lands for wildlife habitat, soil and water conservation, crop and livestock protection, energy conservation, carbon sequestration, and other conservation purposes.

Annual conservation tree planting has declined in Nebraska from a peak of over three million trees/shrubs per year in the early 1990s to about one million trees/shrubs per year today. To address this issue, a "Conservation Trees Work Group" (CTWG) composed of representatives from NRCS, NRDs, NARD, US Forest Service (USFS), and Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) was organized in 2008. This work group created a "Conservation Trees for Nebraska Initiative" which developed a strategy to reverse this declining trend. The goal of the CTWG's initiative is to plant 1.7 million conservation trees/shrubs total each year in Nebraska (equivalent to one tree/shrub for each Nebraska citizen) which will be an increase of a minimum of 700,000 trees/shrubs each year from 2009 planting numbers.

A Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) grant would provide additional funding needed to enhance financial incentives to landowners and increase conservation tree planting by 2.1 million trees/shrubs (700,000/year) for a three-year project period. By project's end at least 5.1 million trees/shrubs total (1.7 million/year) will have been planted.

Specifically, the NET grant will be used to supplement cost-share funding from federal programs, e.g. EQIP, WHIP, WRP, CCPI and others, from state programs, e.g. NSWCP, and from local NRD cost-share programs to increase the cost-share funding rate to landowners from 50% to 75% for qualifying tree/shrub planting practices. This added incentive to landowners will be coupled with robust promotional efforts by all project partners. The NET grant will be administered by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD). NET funding will leverage existing conservation tree cost-share programs provided by 23 NRDs across the state and the NRCS.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2009 AND 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Bird Partnership **Nearest Town:** Grand Island
Project Name: Statewide Water Quality and Grassland Recovery Program **Project No:** 10-198-2
Amount Requested: \$222,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Statement of Intent

This project being sponsored by the Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation (NPABC) aims to address the loss of environmental benefits associated with the Conservation Reserve Program as acres expire across Nebraska.

To accomplish this task, NPABC has garnered the support of key partners: Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), Pheasants Forever (PF) and Quail Forever (QF). As well over a half-million CRP acres are due to expire in Nebraska over the next three years, these partners will take a two-pronged approach to maintain targeted tracts in grass. This will help preserve the water quality, wildlife habitat and other ecological benefits provided over the past decades.

The two-pronged approach consists of; 1) providing incentives for the infrastructure needed by private landowners to engage in grassland-based agriculture on these tracts; and 2) supporting a delivery mechanism for the technical assistance needed by private landowners to implement the conservation plan. Lands expiring from CRP often lack the fencing and water required for livestock grazing. Management practices to enhance the herbaceous cover including prescribed burning and interseeding are also difficult and costly to implement. This project will leverage state and federal funding and supply added incentives where needed to complete the entire plan. The ability to combine multiple conservation programs and tailor the options of each to a given landowner and tract of land is not readily available. Farm Bill Wildlife Biologists are conservation professionals employed by multiple partners to deliver "one-stop-shopping" conservation planning to landowners. These biologists would be located in target areas where existing CRP lands are complimented by adjacent grasslands and provide habitat for important declining bird species. These same target areas also have water quality issues that would degrade if more acres were converted to cropland.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$290,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$222,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Bird Partnership **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Building Capacity for Successful Local and Regional Conservation **Project No:** 11-121
Amount Requested: \$178,500 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Rural Habitat

Local conservation efforts are responsible for some of the most effective and efficient conservation achievements in Nebraska, and are uniquely able to find and implement win-win solutions that meet the needs of area wildlife and local people. However, such local groups often struggle with capacity issues that limit what they can achieve. Since 2003, the Nebraska Bird Partnership (NBP) has garnered funding from various sources including the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) to implement our Capacity Building Grant Program to assist local conservation partnerships. To date, 25 projects have received \$275,000 total funding assistance from our Capacity Building Grant Program. NET funding remains a critical component enabling us to continue to support this valuable conservation capacity building effort statewide.

The NBP Grant Committee annually releases a request for proposals (RFP) from conservation partnerships with current capacity building needs consistent with established NBP goals and criteria. Two proposals were selected for funding in the most recent grant round. These projects will yield tremendous benefits in the areas of biological planning, development of conservation program delivery tools, conservation implementation, education and outreach, and monitoring. Each project will build capacity for ongoing conservation efforts. Selected projects for 2011 include: 1) Northern Prairies Prescribed Fire Capacity Building, 2) A Conservation Strategies Assessment to Guide Conservation Delivery to Achieve RWBJV Wetland Conservation Objectives. In addition to these 2011 projects, these NET funds will support future projects which we will select through our annual grant proposal and review process in 2012 and 2013. Future projects will be similar in nature to the 27 projects approved in the past and will also meet NBP established goals and criteria.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$40,000 IN 2008, \$40,000 IN 2009 AND \$43,500 IN 2010. A SIMILAR PROJECT WAS NOT FUNDED IN 2007. THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Cattlemen **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Leopold Conservation Award Video Project **Project No:** 09-168-3
Amount Requested: \$6,575 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

Since 2006, Nebraska Cattlemen has partnered with Wisconsin-based Sand County Foundation to present the prestigious Leopold Conservation Award to a Nebraska landowner. These Leopold Conservation Awards recognize outstanding landowner achievement in conservation and land stewardship and showcase their achievements among their peers. The awards are designed as part of an overall conservation strategy to raise overall conservation literacy among landowners and the general public. After only two years, we can already see impact in the winners' immediate neighborhoods in the form of increased interest in putting conservation practices in place on the land. This is a proposal to leverage the awards even further by creating several video products of the winners' ranch and using the products to foster environmental education. The project involves a full day of crew time interviewing the landowner/winner and taping the conservation features s/he has put in place. The video will be professionally produced first as a stand-alone piece, shown at the Nebraska Cattlemen Convention and available elsewhere, and second as a series of 60-90 second pieces placed on YouTube.com, Google video, and so on.

SIMILAR PROJECTS WERE SUBMITTED IN 2007 AND 2008 BUT NOT FUNDED. THIS PROJECT REQUESTS FUNDING FOR DIFFERENT COMPONENTS THAN PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$6,575 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$6,575 IN YEAR TWO AND \$6,575 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Department of Agriculture **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Nebraska Noxious Weed and Invasive Weed Initiative **Project No:** 09-151-3
Amount Requested: \$65,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

Invasive weeds are not native to Nebraska or the United States. They have no natural enemies to keep them in check. These plants compete for water and nutrients in grain crops and native grasslands throughout the state. Invasive weeds also compete with native plants, reducing the diversity of wildlife habitat. These invasive weeds are detrimental to Nebraska's agriculture, water quality, wildlife, and recreation. Invasive weeds can and will infest any type of land throughout Nebraska regardless of the land's use or value. Coordinated control measures across a large geographical area would alleviate some of the financial burden on private landowners in a control area. This concept would require participation from private and public landowners and managers. This would also allow participants to pool their resources and proceed in a coordinated manner in a large control area. Controlling invasive weeds over a large area would dramatically reduce the available seed bank, thus providing long-term control. Project funding would allow several counties or Weed Management Areas (WMA's) to work towards a common goal and outcome. All 93 counties would have the potential to participate and benefit from this project.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$250,000 IN 2005-2007. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$65,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$65,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$65,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Department of Natural Resources **Nearest Town:** N/A
Project Name: Republican River Basin Water Management Options Study **Project No:** 11-135
Amount Requested: \$125,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Water

The purpose of this proposed study is to develop the economic tools necessary to identify and evaluate the feasibility of various water management strategies for the Republican River Basin. The Republican River, located in the southern portion of Nebraska, and its underlying aquifer are the main water supply for water users within the basin. At various times, the Republican River Basin has imbalances between water supply and demands, necessitating proactive water management strategies. The Republican River Conjunctive Management Study will proceed in two phases. Phase I is the development of hydrologic tools, such as surface water operations and runoff models. Phase II of the study focuses on the development of conjunctive management scenarios, evaluating those scenarios to assess the hydrologic and economic implications, and developing a plan for implementation. This proposed project is only seeking funding for Phase II.

Partners of the study, the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and the Republican River Management Districts Association, have identified the need to develop and evaluate management strategies that optimize sustainable water use within the basin while minimizing potential negative economic impacts. The partners would meet several times throughout the course of the project to discuss project progress and results. The project will assess the economic impacts of both surface and groundwater management strategies, as proper water management relies upon strategies that integrate surface and groundwater management options. The tools developed through this project would include economic cost-benefit analyses that can be used in conjunction with the hydrologic tools developed in Phase 1. The economic tools would be used to guide water management recommendations and an implementation plan. In addition to the development of the tools and implementation plan, educational meetings would be held throughout the basin to inform stakeholders of the results and recommendations that result from the project.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Ethanol Board

Nearest Town: Lincoln, Omaha

Project Name: Ethanol Awareness Clean Air Program

Project No: 11-113R

Amount Requested: \$15,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Air Quality

Improve air quality in Nebraska through the promotion of ethanol as an alternative transportation fuel to gasoline. Increased ethanol use reduces emissions of cancer-causing agents such as benzene, toluene, xylene, and ethyl benzene. Ethanol has also been proven to create lower lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions than gasoline. Project will promote ethanol use through direct marketing efforts to Flex Fuel Vehicle (FFV) drivers; increased signage on state highways directing drivers to E85 pumps; create a digital database of e-mail contacts for FFV drivers, promote the proliferation of E85 pumps throughout Nebraska by providing reimbursement of infrastructure costs to retailers; development and maintenance of online "E85 locator" tools; promotion of ethanol use through E10 in non-FFVs with a public information campaign. Program will be in collaboration with other national biofuel advocacy groups and has the commitment of matching cash funds and in-kind contributions.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Nearest Town: Crofton

Project Name: Lewis and Clark State Recreation Area Shoreline Stabilization

Project No: 09-136-3

Amount Requested: \$110,000

Term of Project Request: 2

Review

Statement of Intent

There has been significant wave related shoreline erosion and filling of the channel with shale and sediment at the Miller Creek access point and at the South Shore access point at the Lewis and Clark Recreation Area on Lewis and Clark Lake. Both of these areas are highly popular with visitors to the lake. This erosion results in 1) increased water turbidity, 2) reduction to the lake's overall mean depth, 3) elimination of emergent and submergent vegetation, 4) decreased fish habitat, and 5) encroachment of riparian wetlands and upland habitat adjacent to the areas. The grant funds requested would solve these environmental issues in three different phases. The Miller Creek access point requires rock jetties on both the east and west sides and the South Shore access point requires one rock jetty. This will decrease the rate of erosion, provide fish habitat and spawning substrate and ensure proper bank stabilization.

THE TRUST HAS FUNDED OTHER PROJECTS AT LEWIS & CLARK SRA FOR \$582,000 IN 1995-1998 SPONSORED BY U.S. ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$500,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$300,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$110,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Initiative **Project No:** 10-103-2
Amount Requested: \$400,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Statement of Intent

The goal of the Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Initiative is to conserve, restore and enhance water quality of aquatic ecosystems across the state using environmentally sound rehabilitation techniques. The Initiative goal will be accomplished through an ongoing program of project design, technical assistance and funding administration by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission while working and cost sharing with private partners, local political subdivisions and municipalities. A major objective of this Initiative is to facilitate completion of the aquatic rehabilitation projects that were submitted to and approved first by the Legislature as part of the original Aquatic Habitat Plan, and second by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as part of the second Aquatic Habitat Plan. The core of the Initiative's \$2,250,000 funding will be used to design, engineer and construct these water quality projects over a three year period. NGPC will match Initiative funds with Aquatic Habitat Stamp, Sport Fish Restoration, EPA Section 319, Bureau of Reclamation Title 28, Game Cash, Parks Cash and private monies to complete the projects. Potential project techniques include sediment/nutrient dikes, dredging, excavation, bank stabilization, offshore breakwaters, jetties, aeration, sediment by-passes, water level management, islands, submerged islands, riparian buffer zones, alum treatments, fringe wetland development and fish renovations. The Initiative will address the Trust's priorities for improving water quality and conserving water by rehabilitating lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams in order to provide diverse, stable and productive habitats that support a greater diversity of flora and fauna. Associated human benefits would include high quality recreation and aesthetics.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$4,141,750 FROM 1997-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$850,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$400,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$300,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Lincoln
Project Name: Nebraska Natural Legacy Project - Phase III Implementation **Project No:** 10-152-2
Amount Requested: \$360,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Statement of Intent

In 2005, the US Fish and Wildlife Service approved the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project (Legacy Project), the state's first comprehensive Wildlife Action Plan. The habitat-based plan identified at-risk species, threats to those species, conservation actions to address threats, and identified 40 Biological Unique Landscapes (BULs) for effectively conserving Nebraska's biological diversity. The primary goals of Legacy Project-Phase III are to expand implementation to new BULs, focus on new opportunities with existing partnerships, and continue established Legacy Project implementation. Conservation actions on both private lands and conservation lands will improve the ecological condition of native prairies, woodlands and wetlands for the benefit of at-risk species. Habitat projects are delivered collaboratively with partners, using voluntary, incentive-based strategies when working with private landowners. Project ranking, monitoring, and evaluation procedures are established. This project will also implement education and outreach activities that address biodiversity education and sustainable land and water management, and will encourage nature-based recreational opportunities. Legacy Project implementation has been supported since 2005 from two past NETF grants and several million dollars from other sources. Legacy partners have implemented conservation in 12 BULs enhancing over a hundred thousand acres of at-risk species habitat by working with conservation partners and hundreds of private landowners. The primary Legacy partners involved in this grant include the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission), US Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Northern Prairies Land Trust, Pheasants Forever, Audubon Nebraska, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Sandhills Taskforce, Nebraska Forest Service and US Forest Service. We request \$1,200,000 of NET funds for this three-year project. Partners and the Commission will provide \$2,400,000 cash match. Participating private landowners will typically provide cash or in-kind match. We believe this project qualifies for the Feature Program Bonus Points for the reasons listed in the narrative section.

A REQUEST FOR PHASE I ACTIVITIES WAS SUBMITTED IN 2003 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. A REQUEST FOR ACTIVITY ON THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2006 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,100,000 FROM 2005 THROUGH 2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$480,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$360,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$360,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission**Nearest Town:** Valentine**Project Name:** Smith Falls State Park Forest Enhancement Project**Project No:** 10-165-2**Amount Requested:** \$30,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Statement of Intent

A 76-mile stretch of the middle Niobrara River, which includes Smith Falls State Park, is designated as a National Scenic River. This reach of the river is referred to as the biological crossroads of the Midwest as the river's deeply incised valley is the intersection of a diverse mix of plant communities including several forest and prairie types. In recent decades eastern red cedar and ponderosa pine densities have increased substantially in the middle Niobrara River due to fire suppression. On the south bluff of Smith Falls State park, the cedars and pines have reached extreme densities in the sub canopy of strands of eastern deciduous forest, paper birch forest and pine forest. Phase 1 of the project, for which we are requesting funds, will involve thinning cedars and young ponderosa pines from the forests. Phase 2, which will begin after thinning is completed, involves prescribed burning in the forests to prevent reinvasion. The proposed project's specific objectives include: 1) enhance the native forests at Smith Falls SP by controlling invasive cedars and young pine through thinning, 2) conserve rare plant species found in the Smith Falls SP woodlands, 3) provide a demonstration site for sound forest management that can be viewed by park visitors (55,000 annually), 4) maintain recreational opportunities for Smith Falls SP visitors, and 5) prevent catastrophic wildfire at the park. The primary environmental benefits of this project will be conservation of the diverse forests at Smith Falls State Park and the native plants and wildlife inhabiting them. Without proper forest management practices, the now diverse forests will convert to low density cedar and pine strands in the near future, resulting in several ecological problems. Project partners include the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the National Park Service, Nebraska Forest Service and Nebraska Western Resource Council.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$30,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$30,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission**Nearest Town:** Valentine**Project Name:** Snake Falls Ranch Acquisition**Project No:** 11-130**Amount Requested:** \$2,417,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Rural Habitat

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission) and its partners are working to preserve the cultural and natural resources on an approximately 3,100-acre tract of land located along the Snake River below Merritt Reservoir in Cherry County. As part of this project, the Commission is requesting Trust funds to acquire approximately 1,300 acres of land that includes nearly three miles of the Snake River and the iconic 54-foot wide Snake River Falls. This important fee acquisition will establish high quality public fishing access to self-sustaining trout populations unequalled in quality anywhere in Nebraska or neighboring states. It will also establish permanent public access to the Snake River Falls, an important regional tourist attraction. Our private partners in the project, the Snake Falls Sportsman's Club (Club) will acquire the adjacent approximately 1,800 acres and donate a conservation easement and first-right-of-purchase to the Commission further protecting the pine-cloaked canyon downstream of the falls. The property supports a variety of wildlife including turkeys, grouse, ducks, deer, wintering bald eagles, and rattle snakes. According to the National Park Service the Snake River has high potential for cultural resources of National Register quality. Artifacts found on the property include Clovis points made by the first inhabitants of North America over 13,000 years ago. Paleontological findings are also common. Portions of the property contain canyons up to 300 feet deep and could be used for a Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep introduction site.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Lincoln
Project Name: WILD Nebraska Program **Project No:** 11-155
Amount Requested: \$300,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Rural Habitat

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and its' partners have been implementing the WILD Nebraska program on private lands in the state since 2000. This habitat based program has been widely accepted and received by ranchers and farmers throughout the state as a means of encouraging conservation and wildlife habitat on private lands. Currently, the agency allocates approximately \$100,000 towards WILD Nebraska and requests for these funds far exceed the annual allocation. With approval of this this NETF grant, more funds will be available to private landowners fostering better stewardship on the landscape, creating better wildlife habitat, and increasing public use opportunities.

The main goal of WILD Nebraska is to increase and improve wildlife habitat on private land and public land not owned or controlled by the Commission to optimize recreational access opportunities. The program accomplishes its goal through 2 main objectives: 1) To increase quantity and quality of wildlife habitat in Nebraska to meet program and doctrine goals of the agency's strategic plan; and 2) To evaluate current Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and non-Commission habitat programs and their impacts on regional habitat needs in Nebraska.

The NET grant request of \$300,000 (\$100,000 per year) will be distributed among habitat projects in approximately the following proportions: 40% to grassland/prairie projects; 50% to wetland projects; and 10% to woodland projects. Specific projects are not identified in this grant application so some latitude in project type will be necessary to maximize the grant outcomes. Acres resulting directly from NET funding are estimated at 750 - 1200 grassland acres, 300 - 420 wetland acres, and 75 - 150 woodland acres. With partner contributions, the noted acreage estimates should be considered as minimum habitat benefits.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$300,000 FROM 2004-2006 AND \$300,000 FROM 2008-2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Balancing Wind Energy with Wildlife Sensitivity to Optimize Siting of Energy Projects **Project No:** 11-179
Amount Requested: \$226,085 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

Recent changes in Nebraska's energy policy are encouraging the development of wind energy infrastructure, but despite the apparent "clean" image of wind energy, concerns over the ecological impact of wind farms have led to conflict over siting decisions. Of particular concern, are the direct (collision mortality) and indirect (habitat loss) impacts of wind farms on birds. To maximize the benefits of wind energy necessitates proactive siting strategies that reduce ecological impacts and corresponding mitigation costs. Here we propose to develop a series of predictive siting maps that consider the ecological impacts and corresponding financial costs of wind energy development. Specifically, we propose to conduct a large-scale grassland bird field study of current and future wind energy farms to identify: 1) behavioral sensitivity to wind farm structures, 2) population and community impacts, 3) habitat alteration due to invasive species and 4) the variability of impacts across spatial context. We will use these data in combination with data on avian breeding distributions, priority migratory stopover locations, wind energy potential, and local landcover to produce a holistic spatial model of wind energy potential. Using this model as baseline we will develop a series of scenarios, where alternative values are prioritized to assess the overall sensitivity of siting decisions to changing social and ecological values. From these analyses we will develop alternative siting maps to facilitate the decision process and ensure the economic and ecological viability of future wind energy infrastructure in Nebraska.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition**Nearest Town:** None**Project Name:** Grazing Lands Monitoring Program for Plant Health and Soil Quality**Project No:** 09-182-3**Amount Requested:** \$90,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Statement of Intent

The Rancher Steward Rangeland Monitoring Project is a cooperative program among local rancher working groups and agriculture students that will provide Nebraska landowners with technical assistance and equipment to effectively monitor plant communities and soil resources on their land.

Most landowners are aware of existing systems designed to monitor land health. However, the application of these programs is often unpractical, cost-prohibitive and complicated, and they are not utilized. The Rancher Steward Rangeland Monitoring Project provides the next step for ranchers - on-site technical assistance and data analysis -so they can implement a scientific monitoring program.

The innovative and unique approach of this project is in the design of a simple range and soil quality monitoring program that ranchers can replicate and utilize to make informed grazing management decisions, which will improve ecosystem processes as well as economic stability of their enterprises.

Based on the theory of "Teach a man to fish," the program will provide, for a reasonable fee, an initial training session and assistance in establishing one monitoring site. This session will include: complete monitoring equipment kit, on-site assistance of a trained university student, potential assistance from local high school students, potential assistance from a local rancher working group, and scientific data analysis of plant and soil samples.

The goal of this training session is to provide the landowner with the equipment and skills to replicate monitoring on additional sites, and eventually train other landowners through their local working group. The only additional cost to the landowner per monitoring site will be for data analysis.

This is a three-year project, with the goal of conducting 100 training sessions each year. However, the scope of the Rancher Steward Rangeland Monitoring Project is exponential - with potential for establishing continual, practical plant and soil monitoring programs throughout Nebraska through simplification and sharing.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$90,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$90,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$90,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Youth & Land Manager Outreach Project**Project No:** 11-149**Amount Requested:** \$249,249**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Education

The youth of today represent the next generation of owners/operators of the grazing lands resource of the state of Nebraska and beyond. Succeeding generations find themselves increasingly raised away from the farm/ranch environment preventing a viable understanding of the importance of sustaining productive grazing resources. Educational opportunities exist to enhance the awareness of this important resource to the next generation through the public education system and summer camp opportunities. The Youth and Land Manager Outreach Project will target the 139 Nebraska Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters with a hands-on educational exercise. The Youth and Land Manager Outreach Project will also target the Society of Range Management, Nebraska Section Youth Range Management Camp with financial support to incentivize attendance and increase the knowledge base of capable youth with future leadership potential throughout grazing regions of the state. In addition, the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) is requesting Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) financial support for objectives targeting grazing land manager education along with public awareness of NGLC activities. Increased visibility of NGLC efforts coupled with land owner/operator participation in educational events will lead to enhanced plant community biodiversity, superior wildlife habitat and improved soil health through increased organic matter due to better mineral recycling. This will be achieved through on-ranch demonstrations, grazing manager workshops, tours, news releases, radio ads, magazine articles, exhibits and web site development targeting both current and future generations.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center

Nearest Town: Multiple

Project Name: Educating Nebraskans and the World About the Platte River and Rainwater Basin

Project No: 11-183

Amount Requested: \$77,600

Term of Project Request: 2

Review Education

The Board of Directors of the Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center located near Alda, Nebraska in partnership with the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture located in Grand Island, Nebraska respectfully request your consideration of a \$77,600 grant, payable over two years, to assist in providing regular guided bus tours of Nebraska's natural areas, in particular the Rainwater Basin and surrounding areas. Offering educational programming and resources for Nebraskans and visitors from throughout the world is vital both socially and economically for the region. Through public/private collaborations and in cooperation with the Rainwater Basin Venture, the Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center will increase our capacity to inform and educate the public in potentially all five focus areas of The Nebraska Environmental Trust: habitat, surface and ground water, waste management, air quality, and soil management through the course of the proposed tours.

Critical Needs Addressed: Promoting Environmental Stewardship Through Tours and Education. Through this partnership, we are offering a unique opportunity to reintroduce Nebraskans and our visitors to their natural surroundings through education and hands-on environmental experiences. Year-round, visitors to the Center will participate in workshops and citizen science, as well as lectures, tours and programs addressing natural resource issues. K-12 students will learn to appreciate the natural world through access to surrounding habitats that would become more accessible because of the availability of transportation.

In addition to these on-site experiences, Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center and Rainwater Basin Joint Venture staff will engage in intensive outreach by making numerous tours that will provide opportunities for schools, community groups, service clubs, and other organizations, advancing both our mission and those of our partners.

In all of our programming, we will communicate the importance of preserving Nebraska's natural resources and highlight successful efforts in the area of habitat restoration and management.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska One Box Foundation

Nearest Town: Broken Bow

Project Name: Nebraska One Box Habitat Regeneration

Project No: 11-206

Amount Requested: \$20,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review Equipment

The Nebraska One Box Pheasant Hunt is a non-profit organization that is seeking funding to assist with the purchase of a new Great Plains 10' No-till Habitat Drill. The organization currently works with land owners and Nebraska Game and Parks to establish nesting habitat, grass cover and food plots for pheasants, quail, and other wild game birds. The One Box organization needs to purchase a new no-till habitat drill to plant new larger plots. There will be many larger habitat projects in the very near future and there is a real need for a larger drill.

Custer County Implement in Broken Bow, NE will store and maintain this new drill. The goal of the NE One Box is to improve nesting habitat, grass cover, CRP cover and winter food plots to significantly increase the wild game bird population in central Nebraska.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Renewable Energy Systems

Nearest Town: Lyons

Project Name: Algae Energy Recovery System

Project No: 11-186

Amount Requested: \$179,450

Term of Project Request: 2

Review Air Quality

Large amounts of waste heat and old carbon emissions are emitted by commercial, agricultural and industrial operations across the nation. This demonstration project will show how existing technologies can be utilized to generate algae biomass while reducing greenhouse gas emissions in a wide variety of existing commercial, industrial and agricultural environments.

Nebraska Renewable Energy Systems and Nebraska Screw Press will construct an Algae Energy Recovery System (AERS) that will grow a fast growing algae species that creates oil which can be used to increase the available non-food feedstock pool for second generation biofuels, while the residual biomass that remains after oil removal provides a high protein material that can be used for human food, animal feed or energy.

The tremendous opportunity presented by fast growing algae species has been clearly documented. Algae can grow in space unusable for agriculture, can be fed on waste products and produces 50 times more oil per acre than soybeans. Algae is the only renewable feedstock that can be characterized as a "silver bullet" that can replace 100% of the petroleum diesel the nation uses, while making no impact on current land uses. Producing algae on a large scale, however, creates logistical issues that have yet to be resolved. Massive expenditures will be required to build these large, centralized facilities. While this infrastructure will be created in time, the opportunity to install decentralized algae energy recycling systems that will serve to reduce emissions and improve air quality, while creating clean energy and jobs in the short term will be shown with this project. This demonstration project will create a pattern that can be overlaid onto a wide variety of applications in the extensive built environment. These rooftop ponds will capture sunlight, waste heat and CO2 from exhaust streams while reducing building energy requirements.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation

Nearest Town: Bayard

Project Name: Grasslands at Chimney Rock: Acquisition of Conservation Easement

Project No: 11-159

Amount Requested: \$200,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review Rural Habitat

The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation (NSHSF) in conjunction with The Conservation Fund and the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS), requests Nebraska Environmental Trust support for purchasing a conservation easement on 551.7 acres of agricultural land described as N ½; SE ¼; E ½; SW ¼ of Section 17, T20N, R52W in Morrill County Nebraska.

This request is for funds in addition to those committed by NET for the Chimney Rock project in 2010. The project intent has been changed in conjunction with the landowners from outright purchase of the land to purchase of a conservation easement.

Once the purchase of the easement - preliminarily estimated at \$700,000—if funded, the easement will be held by the NSHS, which manages the 88 acres of state owned land there including Chimney Rock itself and the Abbott Visitors Center. The NSHS holds other preservation easements.

The project supports the Nebraska Environmental Trust Habitat and Soil Management priority issues. In terms of habitat, it is adjacent to the Wildcat Hills Biologically Unique Area. Consulting ecologist Dr. Patrick Reece sees it as, "critical habitat for numerous at-risk plant and animal species." Ecological highlights include sand, sagebrush, and at-risk plant community. The land supports a diversity of native grass and forb species. Fauna include raptors, the swift fox, and prairie dogs.

About two-thirds of the land is never-plowed grazing acres and the remainder flood irrigated acres. The management plan to be developed will take into account soil and agricultural/grazing management with the intent of preserving the ecology with its native plant and animal species.

This land is a single parcel with willing and conservation-motivated owners. The appraiser has indicated that the highest and best economic use of this parcel would be mini-ranches. Therefore, the project offers what might well be a once in a lifetime opportunity to protect this historic land.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$300,000 IN 2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska State Irrigation Association**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Water Futures Partnership/Future Leaders Academy**Project No:** 11-120**Amount Requested:** \$126,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Education

The Nebraska State Irrigation Association has initiated a project entitled The Water Futures Partnership-Nebraska Future Leaders Academy. The Academy will identify and empower Nebraskans interested in water resources and educate them about water issues and proven leadership skills. The project prepares men and women as fellows to take active, cooperative approaches to decision making about water resources issues. The project provides an opportunity to broaden the fellows' knowledge about Nebraska water law, the political structures with responsibility to manage water resources and the beneficial uses of water, including domestic, agriculture, industrial, fish, wildlife and recreation. Cooperation and collegiality among all water interests will be emphasized in project leadership training and class involvement.

Year One of the Academy is in the planning and development stages at the time of this request for support from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. The first year program is scheduled to commence in March, 2011. The Year One program will include 10-15 participants. Year Two and beyond will increase participation to up to 25 persons annually. The curriculum for the Academy consists of fellows attending six 1.5 day sessions to be located across the State and will include two field tours of water resources facilities, on the ground project work, established projects, many of which have involved previous NET grant assistance. Sessions will be scheduled generally every two months. Each fellow will be required to produce and present an initial program about himself or herself and their interests in water as well as a final program about water related topics developed from experiences and the Academy programs. The Academy program will encourage and assist graduating fellows in becoming actively involved in water related organizations and will provide persons with water resources knowledge and leadership skills to be involved in future water programs for Nebraska.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska State Recycling Association**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Small Recycling Equipment Grant**Project No:** 11-110**Amount Requested:** \$204,300**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review** Equipment

Our grant proposal expresses our willingness to serve as a subcontractor to NET, to help recruit and administer grant requests so as to enhance the State's recycling infrastructure. Since the Nebraska State Recycling Association is a coalition of public and private sector recycling providers, we also see it as an opportunity for NET to provide, via our Association, what is possibly of equal importance to the Trust's funding: information and advice from the experienced peers of our potential grant seekers.

For 10 years we've done the Small Recycling Equipment Grant Program with NET, and our Association proposes to capitalize on the extensive recycling knowledge of our members with an enhanced, more formal process that solicits insights and suggestions from colleagues of our grant applicants on how to enhance their programs. The end results may be the same as in years past, i.e., either approval or denial, but with these important exceptions; proposals are likely to be strengthened by the input from other recyclers. As explained herein, the process will protect the applicants' identities and proprietary information, but the ultimate aim is to increase information sharing so as to ensure greater efficiencies and to enhance the applicants' programs. These objectives will be achieved by: 1) Asking for more details on the equipments' intended uses and the programs' overall needs; 2) Posting these details on a NSRA web server list to invite comments and suggestions from other list serve members; 3) With the applicants' permission and where appropriate, NSRA will connect the applicants with the list members offering to help better meet applicants' needs.

Since the maxim, "None of us is as smart as all of us" guides this effort, it is easy to imagine how asking for and receiving input from others will benefit grant seekers.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,828,350 FROM 1999-2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum **Nearest Town:** Lincoln
Project Name: Water Wise Landscapes Initiative **Project No:** 10-163-2
Amount Requested: \$259,091 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Statement of Intent

The Water Wise Landscapes Initiative is a multi-partner, statewide initiative that will make Nebraska's community green spaces more sustainable through water-wise stewardship practices. The evidence is clear: landscape sustainability, especially as it relates to water, is a looming environmental issue with potentially overwhelming financial implications for communities. Actions must be taken to reduce the use of potable drinking water in the landscape. It's also important to begin treating stormwater as a resource to be utilized rather than something to be flushed away. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Inc. (NSA, Inc.) is requesting NET funds to create a three-year program that will develop model sustainable landscapes and enable partnering communities to develop the plans, tools and incentives to transition away from water-wasting landscape practices to those that make sustainable use of natural resources. The goal is to create a new landscape ideal that is not only aesthetically acceptable but which is environmentally beneficial and sustainable. The initiative will advance the Trust's priority of Surface and Ground Water by demonstrating and promoting horticultural practices that conserve water, reduce stormwater runoff and which help keep lawn and landscape pollutants out of local water supplies. The initiative also advances the NET's priority of Habitat by greatly expanding the use of native and ecologically appropriate plantings that provide food and shelter for community wildlife.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$206,570 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$259,091 IN YEAR TWO AND \$258,692 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT) **Project No:** 11-132
Amount Requested: \$955,775 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Urban Habitat

Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT) is a statewide, three-year initiative aimed at reversing the decline of Nebraska's community forests by promoting and investing in intensive tree planting, sound resource management, community capacity building and public education. Inventories reveal that Nebraska has lost up to 50% of its community tree resource in recent decades due to weather events, diseases, insects and human neglect. Replanting has not kept up with the loss and now a near-perfect storm of emerging diseases and insects, including emerald ash borer, threatens to decimate the resource even further if actions are not taken soon. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Inc. (NSA) is requesting \$955,775 to fund the Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT) Initiative. TNT will provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting, public education and sustainable community forest management practices in participating communities. Specifically, the program will enable at least 100 different projects; plant up to 15,000 large-maturing trees (with eventual annual benefits of up to \$1,140,000); educate at least 5,000 Nebraskans about proper tree planting and management practices; and engage and empower at least 1,000 volunteers and resource professionals in proper planting. Ultimately the program will establish the groundwork for increased sustainability of Nebraska's community forests. The program will be a multi-partner collaborative including NSA, the Nebraska Forest Service, the Nebraska Community Forestry Council, natural resources districts, Nebraska's green industry and participating communities statewide. If funded, the program will leverage up to \$1,500,000 in matching funds from a wide-variety of sources and partners. The program will advance each of the Trust's funding priorities with a special emphasis on Surface and Ground Water and Air Quality.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$332,717 IN 2006 AS A PILOT PROJECT AND \$1,000,000 FROM 2008 THROUGH 2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Nebraska Weed Control Association **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Nebraska Weed Management Mapping System **Project No:** 11-141
Amount Requested: \$150,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

The Nebraska Weed Control Association (NWCA) is seeking funding for the development of a new statewide online weed management GIS application, to build upon the foundation of the existing system-Nebraska Weed Mapper (www.neweedmapper.org). The NWCA intends to design, develop, and implement an enhanced weed management mapping system, leveraging new ArcGIS server technology from ESRI inc. The new Nebraska Weed Management Mapping System (NWMMS) will further enhance the coordinated efforts for the surveying and monitoring of state noxious and invasive weeds. NWMMS will provide comprehensive, easy-to-use tools that will enable agencies to quickly and accurately import or update information. Users will be able to import field data (GPS/GIS), sketch infestation areas, and upload documents and photos. The new interface will include robust, web based editing and reporting tools. Weed management information can be instantly viewed, analyzed or reported upon, by weed control officers and/or the public, creating a more effective method for early detection and rapid response. The public will have the unique ability to use NWMMS for reporting areas of potential invasive outbreaks utilizing drawing tools and built in invasive species documentation. NWMMS will empower County Weed Superintendents, Nebraska Weed Management personnel, and other state and local agencies to more efficiently assess and analyze short and long-term impacts of invasive species statewide.

Sponsor Name: Nemaha Natural Resources District **Nearest Town:** Peru
Project Name: Duck and Buck Creek Watershed Management Plan: Implementation **Project No:** 09-128-3
of Best Management Practices
Amount Requested: \$50,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

The Nemaha Natural Resources District (NNRD), along with landowners from within the District, will be working to develop a Watershed Management Plan to protect and reduce the amount of sediment entering the soon to be constructed Duck and Buck Creek Lakes. The watersheds are currently considered special emphasis areas by the NRCS which makes them a priority area for EQIP funding, as well as EPA Section 319 funds. This application is being made due to the large amount of interest already expressed by landowners in implementing Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce the amount of sediment that would enter these structures. This plan will improve surface water quality, reduce the amount of sediment loading, and reduce non-point source pollution in both streams leading to the proposed lakes, and the lakes themselves. The plan centers around the implementation of BMP's, which will include the construction of flood/grade control structures, tile terraces, etc. Additional components of the plan include an information and education program to increase awareness and interest among watershed residents, lake users, and area youth. Another component of the plan would be the construction of a sediment basin in the tail-waters of each structure. The NNRD is seeking a 3-year NETF grant for \$250,000 to assist in the implementation of BMP's, as well as to use the funds as a match to receive additional funds from other sources. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) will provide \$360,000, with the possibility of additional funds if needed, along with engineering and technical assistance. The Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide technical assistance, and EQIP funding for practices (\$785,000). Landowners will provide the remaining amount of funding for the BMP's not covered by the cost-share program. The Nemaha NRD will contribute funds for project administration, technical assistance, monitoring, and engineering (\$151,000).

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$100,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$100,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$50,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: NET Foundation for Television, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Great Plains: America's Lingerin Wild**Project No:** 11-114**Amount Requested:** \$100,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Education

The project, Great Plains: America's Lingerin Wild, is an hour-plus long documentary with accompanying educational components. The film will capture the essence of photographer Michael Forsberg's award-winning book, Great Plains, America's Lingerin Wild, teaching the people of Nebraska and beyond of the interconnections between species and place. Great Plains will tell how a contemporary pioneer in nature and wildlife photography, Michael Forsberg, captures stunning and original images of elusive Plains life; using innovative techniques designed not to disturb these native species. From using infrared night-time camera traps to devices triggered by an animal's body heat, Forsberg enters a world of Prairie fauna seldom or never seen. Throughout, his intent is to hold a lens to wildlife in Nebraska as well as the larger region, awakening Nebraskans to the fragile connection between these unique species and the special ecosystems that exist here. In each location the program will also focus on wildlife biologists, concerned citizens and landowners who are working to preserve habitat and species within the Great Plains. Working with these people has been an important key to the success Forsberg has had in capturing the compelling images that form the heart of his book.

The documentary will be produced by veteran filmmaker Michael Farrell, an award-winning producer with more than 38 years of production experience in Nebraska public television. He will weave live action production and engaging interviews, while retaining and adapting the qualities that distinguish Forsberg's book. These include an emphasis on the photography itself, with its ability to capture species and places under duress; insights and interviews with people who know these challenges first-hand; and interactive maps that show the interplay of species, place, and the environment.

The film will be enhanced with the addition of web-delivered educational components and teacher workshop(s), developed in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education and with the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center (SCPAC) located in Denton, Nebraska and the Lillian Annette Rowe Audubon Sanctuary, located in Gibbon, Nebraska.

Sponsor Name: Niobrara Council**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Niobrara Council's Niobrara National Scenic River Conservation Easement Project 2010**Project No:** 11-202**Amount Requested:** \$7,706,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Rural Habitat

The Niobrara Council is seeking funding through the Nebraska Environmental Trust's competitive grant process to assist in the acquisition of conservation easement projects in and along the Niobrara National Scenic River Corridor. The Council receives funds from both the National Park Service and the State of Nebraska that cover many of the details required prior to completion of a conservation easement, like appraisals, survey work and the gathering of baseline data information. However, none of those dollars can be used for the actual purchase of the conservation easement. The Council has an established scoring and ranking system for selection of easement projects. This is a necessary piece to their successful program as the number of interested landowners far exceeds the funding that is available to complete projects. The Council has two successfully completed projects along the Niobrara, and both utilized NETF grant dollars. The Council is closing on their third project this fall, also utilizing NETF grant dollars for completion. The Niobrara Council's Conservation Easement program is a successful and visible use for these grant dollars in north central Nebraska and is a proven way to conserve, enhance and restore the natural environment of the private landscape along the Niobrara River corridor in Nebraska.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$50,000 IN 2001, \$250,000 IN 2005 AND \$400,000 IN 2006. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Niobrara Council

Nearest Town: Valentine

Project Name: Niobrara Council Camp Enhancement

Project No: 11-208R

Amount Requested: \$15,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Education

For eight years, the Niobrara Council has provided outdoor education opportunities for youth in a four-county region (Cherry, Brown, Rock, Keya Paha) in the form of summer day camps. These camps have been offered free of charge and have incorporated multiple partners including the National Park Service, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, the Northern Prairies Land Trust, local outfitters and other local businesses. Always well-received by the community, requests have been received to expand the camp offerings. According to surveys distributed this summer, families would like to see camp tours extended, as well as the number of days increased. More interest has been received from families in different parts of the state. There are also currently underserved populations in the area that could be recruited including Native American and low income. And additional weekend and after-school opportunities throughout the school year are of interest to the public. Currently camping programs operate off of a \$3,000 budget. In order to expand program offerings, additional equipment and supplies will need to be acquired. Items such as additional canoes and accessories as well as overnight camping equipment would be needed, especially as we expand to accommodate non-local families. While some of our partners have some of these materials available and have donated them for camp use in the past, we cannot always be assured that the equipment will be available and some of the equipment is aging (especially canoes) and is in need of replacement. Summer is a very busy time for all of our partners with much of their equipment being used on a weekly, if not daily basis. Having additional equipment would ensure that we are able to offer quality, hands-on programs at any time and to more participants.

Sponsor Name: Norfolk, City of

Nearest Town: Norfolk

Project Name: Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Facility

Project No: 11-103

Amount Requested: \$157,600

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Waste Management

This is a permanent Household Hazardous Waste collection point operated by the City of Norfolk Transfer Station staff. It will be open to all customers of the Transfer Station approximately 45 hours per week for disposal of Household Hazardous waste.

Sponsor Name: North Central Nebraska Resources Conservation & Development Council

Nearest Town: Bassett

Project Name: Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol for the Middle Niobrara River Corridor

Project No: 10-124-2

Amount Requested: \$10,925

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Statement of Intent

This project addresses the mission of the Nebraska Environmental Trust's "Habitat" funding category. The goal is to restore riparian habitat along the middle segment of the Niobrara River that has become choked over the years with purple loosestrife, an invasive noxious weed. Restoration is a priority activity because the area contains critical habitat for several federally endangered and threatened species, and because it is both a state-designated "biologically-unique landscape" and a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River. Funding is being sought to significantly expand the use of native insect enemies of purple loosestrife (biocontrol), such that the environmental burden of herbicide applications can be significantly reduced. The Middle Niobrara Weed Awareness Group (MNWAG) will use those funds to purchase purple loosestrife-specific flea beetles that will be placed at strategic infestation sites throughout the corridor. MNWAG will be aided by the staff of the National Park Service (NPS) in the placement, mapping, and long-term monitoring of the beetles. Funding is being requested to place additional beetles during the second and third project years. It is hoped that the initial populations will grow to the point of allowing transplantation to untreated infestation sites by the third project year. The primary objective is to achieve a downward trend in the purple loosestrife population that parallels a reduction in the ratio of herbicide-based to biocontrol treatment methods. The secondary objectives are to increase public 1) awareness of the ecosystem threats posed by invasive plants; 2) awareness of the benefits of non-chemical control methods; and 3) appreciation of the rare species potentially in harm's way of this threat.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$16,150 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$10,925 IN YEAR TWO AND \$10,925 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: North Platte Natural Resources District

Nearest Town: Multiple

Project Name: Analyzing Western Nebraska Hydrogeology

Project No: 11-123

Amount Requested: \$1,900,000

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Water

The NRDs are requesting assistance to continue development of innovative analysis of recently collected data to create aquifer maps in three dimensions. This information will be used by the NRDs for groundwater management decisions and evaluating the feasibility of alternatives for their individual Integrated Management Plans and the Platte River Overappropriated Basin Plan. Areas affected by these plans lie within the fully and overappropriated boundaries of the Platte River Basin. Intentional groundwater recharge and groundwater controls are examples of the different management scenarios being used by the NRDs. NRDs need to forecast changes in water supply through groundwater modeling. Management decisions for water resources in western Nebraska are based on the results of regional and local groundwater models, which are currently based upon limited amounts of data from test-holes versus the continuous data from this work. The reliability of the results from these models is improved thru the collection of additional data describing the hydrogeologic frame work, which reduces model uncertainty. Recent innovative work using airborne and surface geophysics in concert with traditional geologic methods is producing substantially more accurate data interpretation. The NRDs have obtained data in critical areas of their districts that require analysis for characterizing aquifer size, extent and properties for modeling. Magnetic resonance soundings used with previously collected airborne geophysical data will provide three dimensional aquifer property maps.

The improved data interpretation provided to the models will strengthen assessments of impacts and socioeconomics of water management scenarios. It is vital to have accurate, affordable information about the hydrogeology affecting water supplies. The NRDs are working together through an interlocal agreement and are supported by USGS and UNL-CSD.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$800,000 IN 2008-2009. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: North Platte, City of **Nearest Town:** North Platte
Project Name: City of North Platte Curbside Recycling **Project No:** 11-111
Amount Requested: \$246,810 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Waste Management

The City of North Platte, in partnership with Keep North Platte and Lincoln County Beautiful and Regional Recycling, is proposing a project that will benefit Nebraska's environment and economic through increased recycling resulting in a reduction of generated waste. The purpose of the curbside recycling program is to increase collection of recyclables by encouraging residential and business recycling and reducing waste through enhanced recycling services. Initially, the City of North Platte will distribute 2,785 recycling carts to residential customers who currently receive city sanitation services. These carts will be used to collect paper, cardboard, plastics 1 and 2, steel, tin, aluminum, and newsprint. It is anticipated that the city will collect approximately 1,040 tons of recyclable materials during the first year of the program with additional quantities in the years to follow.

Sponsor Name: Northern Prairies Land Trust **Nearest Town:** Multiple
Project Name: Tallgrass Prairie Conservation on Private Lands III **Project No:** 09-134-3
Amount Requested: \$216,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

Tallgrass prairie is one of the most threatened ecosystems in North America. Over 98% of Nebraska's tallgrass prairie has been lost. Most remaining prairies are on private lands, making cooperation between landowners and conservationists essential. In 2003 an affiliation of public and private conservation groups formed the Nebraska Tallgrass Prairie Partnership (Tallgrass Partnership). The Tallgrass Partnership has received two Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund (NETF) grants over four years to implement tallgrass prairie habitat management projects on private lands and coordinate prairie management seminars. In 2007, the Tallgrass Partnership determined not to apply for additional grants and to gradually turn over their project implementation role to the Nebraska Natural Legacy Flagship Initiatives and their partners. The Southeast Flagship Initiative (SE Flagship) overlaps the Tallgrass Prairie NETF grants in the region served (southeast Nebraska) and conservation practices implemented. Also, within both partnership organizations, Northern Prairies Land Trust (NPLT) serves to coordinate and implement all habitat management projects and prairie management seminars. Together these two partnerships improved 15,534 acres of tallgrass prairie and oak woodland in cooperation with 71 landowners and 14 renters. They also implemented the Nebraska Tallgrass Prairie Management Seminar for four years with 320 attendees. This work is being completed through Tallgrass Partnership NETF grants which are in their final year of funding. Through this application, NPLT is applying for \$650,000 over three years to increase capacity to meet increased demand for new and existing conservation projects. These funds will be used primarily for conservation projects on 4,000 acres of private lands (\$504,000), such as invasive tree clearing and conservation easements, and a three year private lands biologist position (\$143,706), which will place special emphasis on habitat management and easement projects on high quality native hay meadows. Project partners will provide approximately \$309,300 in cash and in-kind match. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will be the grant managers as with the previous Tallgrass Partnership proposals.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$900,000 UNDER THE NEBRASKA TALLGRASS PRAIRIE PARTNERSHIP IN 2005-2008. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$217,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$217,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$216,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Omaha Paper Stock**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Omaha Shredding Program**Project No:** 11-116**Amount Requested:** \$81,085**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Waste Management

We are seeking funding for half of our free shredding program, that we offer to businesses in Omaha. Our program keeps information confidential throughout the shredding and recycle process. Paper is shredded and recycled for free to keep millions of pounds out of our landfills.

Sponsor Name: Omaha, City of**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Carter Lake Restoration and Rehabilitation Project**Project No:** 11-174**Amount Requested:** \$899,899**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Lake Rehabilitation

Carter Lake is an urban oxbow lake located along the Missouri River and is bordered by the cities of Omaha, NE and Carter Lake, IA. The 320-acre lake is shallow (mean depth = 7.2 ft), hypereutrophic (mean summer TP = 177 ppb; mean summer Secchi Disk depth = 13 in; mean summer chl a = 124 ppb) and has a history of toxic algal blooms of *Cylindrospermopsis* sp. that has closed the lake to primary contact recreation for 24 weeks since 2004. In 2002, the lake was placed on Nebraska's Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters due to elevated concentrations of nutrients. In 2007, a joint TMDL from Iowa and Nebraska for TP, TN, algae, pH and turbidity was submitted to and approved by EPA. Watershed and lake water quality models were developed and calibrated with stormwater sampling and internal loading estimates derived from lake sediment P-fractionation analyses. These efforts showed that 70% of the P load was internal and 30% was watershed/stormwater loading.

A variety of watershed and in-lake management approaches were developed to reduce P loading by 69% and meet the water quality goals defined in the TMDL and by the local watershed group. Specifically, these management approaches include two whole lake alum treatments, shoreline stabilization, stormwater detention basins and forebays, establishment of 100-acres of no-wake boating, targeted dredging, wetland creation, renovation of existing stormwater detention cells, conversion of existing drainages to biofilters, and a watershed education program targeting fertilizers and pet waste. This application seeks funding to support the Nebraska shoreline stabilization and alum treatment components of this innovative project. The project is unique to its significant community involvement, multiple project partners across two states, and high probability of large environmental, economic, social and public health benefits.

Sponsor Name: Omaha, City of**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** City of Omaha Green Fleet Project**Project No:** 11-198**Amount Requested:** \$342,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Air Quality

Funding is being sought from the Environmental Trust Fund for the City of Omaha Green Fleet Project to cost-share the implementation of eighteen (18) compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles into the City of Omaha fleet. The associated goals of this project include: (1) reduce greenhouse gas emissions through deployment of CNG vehicles; (2) reduce petroleum use in the transportation sector; (3) stimulate investment in CNG vehicles; and (4) create clean energy jobs. The project will entail the retrofit of a dedicated CNG fuel system on seven (7) new vehicles and eleven (11) current vehicles. The vehicles will be both light duty and heavy duty vehicles from different departments within the City of Omaha. The City of Omaha will purchase the vehicles and cover any costs associated with the transportation of these vehicles to an installer's location.

According to the Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition, there are currently 150,000 Natural Gas Vehicles (NGVs) on the road in the United States today, and more than 6 million NGVs worldwide. By introducing CNG vehicles to the fleet, the City of Omaha estimates eliminating the use of 18,800 gallons of gas and diesel and reducing the amount of greenhouse gasses produced by the fleet by 30 percent per year. Currently, the cost per gallon of CNG is approximately 50 percent lower than gasoline. This has the potential to save the City over \$20,000 the first year of the project and reduce the City's reliance on oil.

Replacing aged vehicles with low emission CNG vehicles will improve air quality in the metro area, lower greenhouse gas emissions, promote alternative fuels and pave the way for other fleets to follow.

Sponsor Name: Omaha, City of - Environmental Quality Control**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Latex Paint Can Crusher at Under the Sink HHW Facility**Project No:** 11-176R**Amount Requested:** \$11,424**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Waste Management

UnderTheSink, the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for Douglas and Sarpy County residents, is the largest permanent facility in Nebraska and has been in operation since June 2005. The facility receives approximately 2,000 containers of latex paint each week. In 2009 this was more than 51,000 pounds and nearly 60% of the waste received at UnderTheSink.

Paint is messy and heavy. To process it is labor intensive and requires special equipment to bulk this volume of paint. Latex paint is processed every day the facility is open using the three mechanical paint can crushers UnderTheSink currently owns. There is a considerable amount of expense involved in maintaining the machinery. The oldest machine which we are requesting funds to replace is 15 years old, and has been rebuilt three times with on-going maintenance costs that are increasing. Parts are no longer available for this machine.

The paint can crusher was inherited from the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency that used it in conjunction with paint collections in Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

At UnderTheSink, latex paint is sorted based on its quality to be either recycled or re-purposed. Recycled paint is paint that is still in good shape and can be offered to the public in our ReStore. Paint that isn't in good shape is bulked using the paint can crusher and re-purposed as an alternative daily cover at the Sarpy County Landfill. The metal paint cans are recycled.

Since UnderTheSink opened over 108,000 gallons of latex paint have been processed through the paint can crushers and supplied to the Sarpy County Landfill. We provide an integral part of their operation extending the life of the landfill and preventing litter better than other daily covers. Likewise the Sarpy County Landfill is integral to UnderTheSink's operation saving on other methods of paint disposal.

Sponsor Name: Omaha, City of - Public Works Department**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Rockbrook Tributary Rehabilitation Project**Project No:** 11-148**Amount Requested:** \$300,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Bank Stabilization

The Rockbrook Tributary Rehabilitation project involves the removal of an existing concrete liner and replacement with natural materials along a 1,100 foot reach. The City seeks Trust funding for portions of the project design and construction. The project is eligible for Feature Program Bonus points because it: 1. Is designed using the following approaches: a. Eco-system: uses natural channel design concepts focused on improving channel stability, in-stream habitat, and water quality, b. Resource-based: maximizes the use of natural materials (vegetation, biodegradable geotextiles, and soil/rock mixtures) and reuse of materials on site (recycling existing concrete liner), c. Regional: supports the goals of the NDEQ-approved Papillion Creek Watershed Management Plan Stormwater Management Policies and the City's Master Plan Environmental Element. Stormwater Management Policies this project supports: Water Quality Improvement, Peak Flow Reduction, Landscape Preservation, Restoration, and Conservation, and Erosion and Sediment Control and Other BMPs. Environmental Element goals this project supports: Water, Nature Habitats, Urban Landscapes, and Visual Resources. 2. Includes components to inform and educate the public (project promotion and permanent educational signage), including students (outdoor classroom activities) about watershed protection and stewardship of natural resources. Stakeholder input on the project will be gathered at public meetings. 3. Includes representatives of public and private stakeholders (City of Omaha, Papio-Missouri River NRD, Keep Omaha Beautiful, Omaha by Design, and neighborhood and school groups) in comprehensive planning, design, and evaluation activities. 4. Recognizes community and economic values by providing an enhanced natural environment to the community that meets the goals of the regional management plans listed above, while maximizing resources through the reuse of materials and seeking available grant funding. 5. Creates efficiencies of delivery and maximizes available resources through an existing inter-local agreement between the City and Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership and project-specific partnerships with Keep Omaha Beautiful and Omaha by Design.

Sponsor Name: Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Hubbard**Project Name:** Pigeon/Jones Creek Site 15**Project No:** 10-133-2**Amount Requested:** \$660,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Statement of Intent

Site 15 is a component of the "Pigeon/Jones Creek Watershed Special Erosion and Sediment Control Project," a watershed-wide project prepared in cooperation with Papio-Missouri River NRD and NRCS in 2002. This watershed project worked with multiple agencies and individuals to optimize available resources including inter-local agreements, multiple funding sources and private property donations. The watershed plan calls for 20 flood control/grade stabilization structures to control approximately 68% of the watershed area. Site 15 is the only multi-purpose (grade stabilization, sediment control, flood control and recreation) site included in the plan. In addition to flood, sediment and grade control benefits, the Site 15 project will result in the creation of wildlife habitat, wetlands, water-based habitat, and soil conservation improvements. Public education elements will also be included in the public recreation area surrounding the lake, including a Wetland Study Area, a Savanna Study Area, and a Prairie Study Area, all of which will provide handicapped accessibility. To date, the Site 15 project planning and design process has included representatives from Dakota County, the City of Hubbard, NDEQ, NGPC, Drainage District #5, the NRC, UN-L and Nebraska Loess Hills Resource Conservation and Development Group. A Watershed Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Team was established to provide input and recommendations for a Community-Based Watershed Management Plan. The Community-Based Watershed Management Plan is a collaborative document developed to recognize the values and goals of the community throughout the watershed, which will ultimately contribute to the attainment and sustainability of long term environmental objectives. A majority of the estimated costs associated with the project are based on the land rights acquisition and construction for the dam, reservoir, roadways, recreation and aquatic habitat improvements. The components for which funding is requested for in this application include the dam, reservoir, and roadways.

THIS PROJECT WAS PARTIALLY FUNDED IN 2009 FOR \$977,000. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$823,650 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$660,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Pheasants Forever - Four Seasons

Nearest Town: Hebron

Project Name: No-Till Grass Drill

Project No: 11-170

Amount Requested: \$22,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review Equipment

This grant application seeks funding from the NET to purchase a no-till grass drill to be used by landowners to establish wildlife habitat. Currently, there are few no-till drills available in the area and those that are available are owned and rented out by private businesses. A no-till grass drill made available to interested landowners would increase both the quantity and the quality of wildlife habitat established. Significant increases in wildlife habitat plantings in the area through programs like: Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, Corners For Wildlife, CRP-MAP, etc. have greatly increased the need for this type of specialized equipment. Matching NET monies with that of the Four Seasons Pheasants Forever chapter would purchase the no-till drill. The purchase price of a no-till grass drill is approximately \$30,000 to \$32,000. Oregon Trail Equipment, LLC. of Hebron, NE will oversee the operation, maintenance and rental of the drill. A fund will be set up to pay for routine maintenance of the drill as well as any repairs needed to keep the drill in top operating condition. The drill will be available for any landowner in the area to use at a nominal fee. A no-till grass drill is needed to handle the fluffy seeds associated with many warm-season grasses, wildflowers and legumes. These fluffy seeds are not effectively or efficiently planted with conservation drills. By establishing more wildlife habitat to a higher quality habitat provided by these seed mixtures, wildlife will benefit.

Sponsor Name: Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Nearest Town: St. Paul

Project Name: Corners for Wildlife

Project No: 11-190

Amount Requested: \$900,000

Term of Project Request: 3

Review Rural Habitat

This application continues a partnership funded by the Trust from 1995 to 2009. The program successfully partners money from the Trust, Pheasants Forever, Inc., Pheasants Forever (PF) and Quail forever (QF) chapters, Natural Resources Districts, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and landowners throughout the state to establish permanent wildlife habitat. In the 15 years the program has been offered, Trust funds have been partnered with over \$1,094,800+ for materials from 45 Pheasants Forever chapters, 16 Natural Resource Districts, the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and private landowners on 1,283 projects throughout the state. With "in-kind" contributions included, the level of partnership in the program exceeds \$4,158,390. Landowners receive a rental payment for a five-year contract to establish and maintain high diversity wildlife habitat on center pivot irrigation field corners. Materials to establish cover practices are cost-shared 75% by PF and QF chapters with landowners responsible for 25% of the material costs. In some cases, the cover practices are established with a 100% cost share by the participating Natural Resource Districts. This program is very successful at establishing permanent wildlife habitat as landowners have averaged over 319 wildlife shrubs and/or trees per corner in the program. Every year the program has been offered, there has been more interest in enrollment than the program can fund. Projects are established to cover practices that promote high quality nesting, brood-rearing and/or pollinator habitat for native wildlife species of concern. The habitat established on projects is specifically designed to meet the goals of the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project and many of the species and habitat types of concern identified in the statewide wildlife plan. By establishing and managing for highly diverse native habitat, the needs of native wildlife that are imperiled by the loss of diverse and undisturbed grasslands can begin to be addressed.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 1997 AND 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$2,645,000 FROM 1994-2009. THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Platte River Basin Environments, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Gering, Scottsbluff**Project Name:** Wildcat Hills Wildlands Initiative (WHWI) - Cox Ranch**Project No:** 11-164**Amount Requested:** \$950,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review**

Rural Habitat

The request is to add two key land parcels (Cox tracts) to the Wildcat Hills Wildlands Initiative's (WHWI) holdings, with a lesser amount of funding for interpretive hiking trail development. Acquisition of these tracts is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the WHWI and essential to fulfilling our biodiversity conservation goals within the Wildcat Hills Biologically Unique Landscape (BUL). These additions to our conservation lands portfolio would connect three now discontinuous tracts within our western core area (Attachment A and Attachment A-1) forming a 16,000 acre contiguous block of habitat. Acquisition of the tracts will conserve pine woodlands, western mixed grass prairie and rock outcrops and several at-risk species which utilize these habitats. The lands will also be used for conservation education and public recreation. If these lands are not acquired for conservation, there is great risk that they will be developed for housing or ranchettes, thus fragmenting already established conservation lands. The Cox family approached the Platte River Basins Environments, Inc. (PRBE) to purchase their properties. The Wildcat Hills are marginal gazing land due to steep, rocky, and partially tree-covered terrain. Combine the marginal grazing with the region's high property taxes and ranching profit margins are tight in the Wildcat Hills. Several longtime, local ranching families are getting out of the business and would rather see their property become conservation lands and continued to be grazed than developed.

We are requesting \$950,000 in NETF funds for this two-year project. The project partners, including, but not limited to, PRBE, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Park Service (NPS), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Pheasants Forever (PF) and Oregon Trail Community Foundation (OTCF) are contributing \$779,276 in cash and in-kind match.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: PrairieLand RC&D Council**Nearest Town:** Madison**Project Name:** Nebraska Continuous No-Till Project Phase II**Project No:** 10-146-2**Amount Requested:** \$100,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

This state-wide educational project will build on and expand existing efforts to increase the adoption and sustainable use of Continuous No-till (CNT) by one million acres. More than three public and eight private partners will combine and coordinate their efforts to deliver educational programs to inform producers and the public about the benefits of CNT and help producers develop and manage no-till production systems on their farms. CNT is the single best practice for producers to reduce risks to the environment and improve profitability. Improved crop rotations and biological diversity reduce pest problems and improve the soil system, greatly reducing pesticide use. CNT will provide economic benefits to individual farmers, \$50/acre or more. This project will be extremely cost-effective, about \$0.79/acre for the million acre goal, or about \$30/producer if half of Nebraska's producers adopt or increase their use of CNT. The practice works across Nebraska, conserving soil and water while improving productivity. Five to 12 inches of water can be saved per acre, reducing irrigation needs and greatly improving dryland yields. Fuel and labor requirements can be cut by 50% or more. Soil erosion by wind and water can be reduced by an average of 4 to 14 tons/acre, reducing blowing dirt and surface water pollution, bringing erosion down far below the allowable soil loss level. CNT can sequester large amounts of carbon, especially when used with cover crops and livestock manure management. CNT and residue cover increases wildlife habitat, number, and diversity. NET funds will be used to fund all or part of the following: an Extension No-till Specialist, a Western Nebraska No-till Specialist, a project administrator, a CNT website, many educational programs, networking activities, opportunities for producers to attend key out-of-state no-till events, and development and distribution of Information & Education materials.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$330,000 FROM 2007-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$168,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$100,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$100,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: PrairieLand RC&D Council**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Project, Phase 3**Project No:** 10-161-2**Amount Requested:** \$150,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

The Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Project's (SCWIP) goal is to increase the use of resource conservation practices and to restore a conservation ethic within the Shell Creek Watershed. A very dedicated volunteer watershed board, which received a World Herald Master Conservationist award in 2005, partners with public and private entities to educate land users and the public about conservation practices and to offer incentives for implementing best practices. Renewed funding of this aggressive informational/educational and conservation-practice-incentive program has and will continue to generate significant positive contribution to surface and groundwater quality, waste management, soil management, wildlife habitat, and air quality, both within and beyond the Shell Creek Watershed. The education component of the SCWIP consists of land user and public education on soil health and water quality. NET funds, in conjunction with grant funds from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, support educational meetings and field tours, led by UNL Extension and Natural Resource Conservation Service personnel, to educate landowners about the watershed project. Over 2000 land users and partners receive the popular quarterly SCWIP Newsletter. Water Quality Teams, students at Newman Grove and Schuyler High Schools, complete comprehensive water testing throughout Shell Creek and report findings to project stakeholders. The Newman Grove Water Quality Team has received the World Herald Master Conservationist Award and recognition from the Nebraska State and the Western RC&D Association. The monitoring program encourages community buy-in for the project and commitment to environmental issues. In combination with support from other sources, NET funds provide conservation incentives to stimulate increased landowner participation in several conservation programs on thousands of acres in the Shell Creek watershed. Increased no-till crop management will decrease soil erosion and stream contamination by nutrients and pesticides. Newly established vegetative buffers will provide filtering of sediment and pollutants and increase wildlife habitat.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED FROM 2004-2009 FOR A TOTAL OF \$705,000. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$150,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$150,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$150,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Quail Forever**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Mobile Prescribed Burn Unit & Education Outreach**Project No:** 11-171**Amount Requested:** \$90,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Equipment

This application seeks funding to continue the process of building Mobile Prescribed Burn Units (MPBU), forming prescribed burn associations, hosting landowner education outreach events and increasing the use of prescribed burning on the landscape. Nearly every wildlife partnership and management plan in the state calls for increased prescribed burning and expanded educational outreach events to reach their management and partnership goals. Despite those management plans, prescribed burning continues to be a difficult management option to apply.

Quail Forever is working closely with the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project (NNLP) to implement its management goals and employs 17 Biologists in the state with Pheasants Forever that are working directly with the plan. The creation of MPBU's and expanded educational outreach is directly benefiting the NNLP by creating a set of tools and events that can quickly be focused on any NNLP Biologically Unique Landscape. The unique aspect of a MPBU is that the necessary prescribed burn equipment can now be available in any region of the state in just a few hours.

Quail Forever has begun the process of identifying four prescribed burning limitations and is working to overcome them. Six different scenarios are outlined in this application that are specifically working to expand outreach education and increase the use of prescribed burning on the landscape. The requested NET funds will be matched with those of Quail Forever, Pheasants Forever, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to purchase, maintain and administer MPBU's and educational outreach equipment in strategic locations throughout the state, develop prescribed burn associations and provide expanded and improved landowner educational events across the state.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$150,000 IN 2009-2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Rainwater Basin Joint Venture**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Rainwater Basin Wetland Management for Improved Migratory Bird**Project No:** 10-113-2**Amount Requested:** \$78,750**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

This project will address the management of aggressive and invasive vegetation negatively effecting wetlands in the Rainwater Basin region of south-central Nebraska. Waterfowl and shorebird habitat is negatively impacted by dense, monotypic stands of vegetation including reed canary grass, river bulrush, hybrid cattail, phragmites, and purple loosestrife. In addition, wetland invasion by woody species like cottonwood, willow, and green ash is also negatively impacting habitat. A shortage of funds to pay for needed materials and equipment and to hire contractors for management such as disking, herbicide spraying, prescribed burning, mechanical tree removal, installation of fences, and roto-tilling are limiting these actions on both private and public wetlands resulting in a significant degradation of migratory bird habitat. A portion of this grant will also be used to buy a field, or finish disk, that is needed to further treat wetlands that have been plowed with a construction disk. Finish disks are 4 times wider than construction disks. This piece of equipment provides current land managers a new tool that under certain situations will dramatically increase the acres that can be treated.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$105,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$78,750 IN YEAR TWO AND \$89,250 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Rainwater Basin Joint Venture**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Wetland Habitat Restoration, Protection, Enhancement**Project No:** 11-194**Amount Requested:** \$1,250,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Rural Habitat

The "Wetland Habitat Protection Restoration and Mangement Project" will restore, enhance, and protect wetland and associated upland habitat within the Rainwater Basin landscape in south-central Nebraska. The project entails wetland restoration on lands owned by private individuals, acquired from willing sellers, or covered by purchased easements. The project will increase the amount and quality of habitat through restoration of hydrology, management of vegetation, and restoration of wetland function. Incentive programs will assist landowners in water and vegetation management in wetlands they own. Partnerships with federal, state and local government and non-governmental conservation organizations will facilitate long term protection & restoration of wetland resources. Ten-year land use and transition payments will assure sustainable changes in the use of the land. Lands acquired for wetland restoration and protection will be restored and managed for wildlife habitat and recreational activities associated with upland and wetland dependant birds. The Joint Venture Management Board will allocate grant funds between the private lands and public lands programs.

THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF WORK DONE BY THE RAINWATER BASIN OVER THE LAST 16 YEARS - THEY HAVE BEEN FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$5,685,000 FROM 1994-2010. THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Rainwater Basin Joint Venture **Nearest Town:** Multiple
Project Name: The Rainwater Basin Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program **Project No:** 11-195
 Special Initiative

Amount Requested: \$315,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Rural Habitat

This grant will help restore wetlands and reduce groundwater use, while being compatible with landowners' agriculture operations. Grant funds will provide critical non-federal match to support a Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program Special Initiative for south-central Nebraska's Rainwater Basin Wetland Complex. Annually the Natural Resources Conservation Service requests proposals to develop WREP Special Initiatives. The goal of these Special Initiatives is to identify innovative approaches that enhance the Wetlands Reserve Program's ability to provide conservation in local landscapes. This year the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture was awarded one of five Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program special Initiatives nationwide. The goal of this Special Initiative is to increase Wetland Reserve Program enrollment by allowing pivots to cross wetlands as a reserved right of the Wetlands Reserve Program easement. In the past, landowners were hesitant to enroll in the Wetlands Reserve Program because it would inhibit their ability to fully use their pivot irrigation system. The \$315,000 in Nebraska Environmental Trust dollars would be used for restoration, enhancement activities and non-traditional practices to ensure agriculturally compatible ecologically functional restorations of the tracts enrolled in this Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program. This Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program will protect, restore, and enhance 960 acres of flood-prone cropland and associated upland buffer.

Sponsor Name: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory **Nearest Town:** Kimball
Project Name: Mountain Plover Habitat Conservation, Land Stewardship and **Project No:** 10-206-2
 Landowner Education/Outreach in the Kimball Grasslands BUL

Amount Requested: \$150,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

The current challenge for wildlife habitat conservation in the western Great Plains is conserving the remaining key habitats and biodiversity that now exists in a mosaic of privately-owned, agricultural lands. This requires innovative approaches that work proactively and cooperatively with private landowners to both conserve wildlife resources and maintain profitable farming operations. The Nebraska Prairie Partners (NPP) has been successful at achieving wildlife and habitat conservation on private lands in Kimball County, Nebraska for the past nine years. The Kimball Grasslands area of western Nebraska is identified as a Biologically Unique Landscape in the Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan, because it possesses a rich array of unique habitats and an equally rich diversity of rare, declining, and high priority plant and animal species. NPP has cooperatively built relationships with local landowners in the Kimball Grasslands to address the most pressing conservation challenges in this area. This includes development of an effective solution to resolve the conflict between agricultural practices and the Mountain Plover, a state "threatened" species. NPP proposes to build on its habitat conservation success by continuing to develop and implement habitat focused conservation programs throughout the Kimball Grasslands. Specifically, NPP proposes to 1) promote the recovery of Mountain Plover in Nebraska through nest marking while empowering and educating landowners to locate nests themselves, 2) increase cooperation and number of acres enhanced through wildlife habitat projects by continuing meetings of the Kimball County Conservation Cooperative, 3) build capacity to implement habitat projects through the installation of wildlife escape ladders on ranches in Kimball County, 4) increase awareness of common and at-risk birds in Nebraska by printing and distributing a "Pocket Guide to Birds." NPP is in the unique position to facilitate these projects and continue advancing common sense conservation that preserves Nebraska's natural legacy and habitat for future generations.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$396,166 FROM 2002-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$150,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$150,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

Nearest Town: Scottsbluff

Project Name: Using Education as a Management Tool for Habitat Conservation in the Panhandle of Nebraska

Project No: 10-208-2

Amount Requested: \$99,167

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Statement of Intent

Nebraska Prairie Partners (NPP), a cooperative partnership of Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) have outlined conservation and educational activities that will assist in addressing threats to at-risk species in addition to informing and educating students, teachers, landowners, and resource professionals about the shortgrass prairie and ponderosa pine habitats of the Nebraska panhandle. NPP will support a full time Wildlife Education Coordinator to design, implement and coordinate education and outreach activities that will focus on wildlife habitat and water conservation needs critical for long-term viability of panhandle communities and at-risk species. We will use successful education models from Colorado (existing RMBO Education and Bird Banding Station programs) Nebraska Panhandle Eco-Extravaganza about Prairies (PEEP), Project WILD, to assist students of all ages in developing awareness, appreciation, and decision making skills regarding the unique biological communities and habitats in western Nebraska. Our programs will provide experiential and place-based education for all learners. We will also build on the successful NPP's effort to outreach to landowners and resource professionals by organizing conservation and education workshops and integrating these with youth education to reach all members of the community within the region. With support from the Nebraska Environmental Trust we anticipate reaching at least 10,000 students and an additional 500 landowners, resource professionals, and educators in western Nebraska. We propose to conduct pre-service, in-service, landowner and Flying WILD workshops, educational bird banding stations, PEEP, nature clubs, and family nature nights to reach our audiences. Proposed actions will make significant strides towards priority strategies outlined in the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project, and the Nebraska Environmental Education Master Plan.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$213,653 FROM 2007-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$99,634 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$99,167 IN YEAR TWO AND \$101,255 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Sandhills Task Force

Nearest Town: Hyannis

Project Name: Egan Lake Restoration and Easement

Project No: 11-147

Amount Requested: \$192,210

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Lake Rehabilitation

The project involves the restoration and protection of the natural hydrology of a 420-acre lake located in Grant County. A drainage ditch runs through the center of the lake and a pump is used to pump water from the lake so the lakebed and surrounding wet meadow can be hayed. The lake is currently in split ownership with both owners willing to restore the lake and sell a conservation easement.

Funding from this grant and other partners will be used to fill the drainage ditch, remove berms, remove the existing pump station, and purchase a perpetual easement. The terms of the easement will prohibit the use of the property for any purpose other than those normally associated with natural sandhill lakes. It would allow the landowner to continue to use the lake in natural ranching operations, including grazing and haying when water levels allow.

Once restoration is complete, the lake will be assessed for its fishery potential. Partners will work with the owners to obtain controlled public fishing.

Sponsor Name: Sortasoft LLC**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Meriwether: Engaging Today's Youth in History and the Environment**Project No:** 11-181R**Amount Requested:** \$13,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Education

We are developing an engaging single-player computer role-playing game which will introduce a new generation to Lewis and Clark's nation-defining expedition across the North American continent. The game encourages players to think like Meriwether Lewis: as a leader, a naturalist, a diplomat, and an explorer. In the spirit of the game's protagonist, the game itself will help to pioneer the use of computer role-playing games to teach history by playing an historical figure. Meriwether will provide an immersive learning environment that is different from yet complimentary to what is typically presented through other media or in the classroom. Players will alternately have to negotiate with Native American tribes, travel over uncharted landscapes, defend themselves from wild animals, search for new flora and fauna, and discipline and/or sustain the corps. Furthermore, they can experiment with alternate histories and see how their choices compare to those made by Lewis and Clark.

We are specifically seeking funding for research on and development of components of the game that reflect Nebraska's natural environment as it was observed by Lewis and Clark. We plan to create accurate 3D models of plants and animals they encountered, as well as written descriptions of each. Players of the game will explore this environment, searching for animals and plants that are new to science. The game also explores the relationship between American Indian cultures and the environment (for this portion of the game, specifically the Otoe-Missouria). Because their survival depended so directly on their connection with the environment, they paid great reverence to the land, plants and animals. Through play, we hope that players will gain an appreciation for the pristine wilderness and learn to honor the land in a similar way.

Sponsor Name: South Platte Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Sidney**Project Name:** Expanding the Hydrogeological Framework for Selected Areas of the South Platte Natural Resources District**Project No:** 10-134-2**Amount Requested:** \$168,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

The South Platte NRD is requesting funds in the amount of \$529,190 to install monitoring wells with related geophysical surveys to gather information on aquifer properties and to provide long term groundwater monitoring facilities in crucial areas within our district. The South Platte NRD is unique to Nebraska as we manage three separate aquifer formations, the Brule, Ogallala, and Alluvium respectively. Data on water level and water quality changes need to be gathered from all formations for future management needs as the aquifers have different properties and geology. The aquifer systems within the district are fragile environments and concern about changes in surface-groundwater relationships, groundwater recharge, and ground water quantity and quality have prompted the District to expand its efforts in collection and analysis of groundwater data for its water management programs. The SPNRD is currently using the Cooperative Hydrology Study (COHYST) groundwater model and currently participating in Helicopter Electromagnetic (HEM) Surveys as tools to aid in management decisions. Although these are helpful, we are still missing crucial water level data in the majority of our district. Water quality data is just as scarce. With the help of this grant, the SPNRD plans to begin an improved program for water quality sampling and a more representative picture of water level data. Dedicated monitoring wells can provide unaltered samples and levels from distinct zones within the aquifer(s). Monitoring well installation and water level-water quality information will be a large part of the districts foundation for setting future management needs as well as protecting water resources.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$168,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$168,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$193,190 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: South Platte Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Sidney**Project Name:** Preserving CRP Grassland Benefits in Western Nebraska**Project No:** 10-138-2**Amount Requested:** \$300,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Statement of Intent

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has provided millions of acres of conservation benefits since its inception in 1985. CRP has been highly successful in western Nebraska where approximately 382,000 acres are enrolled. These grassland acres provide critical habitat for wildlife, prevent soil erosion, improve soil health, prevent air and water pollution, and play an important role in sequestering carbon. Western Nebraska's CRP grasslands - and their invaluable conservation values - are in jeopardy. Beginning in 2009, thousands of acres will expire from the program. It is unclear whether the federal government will extend these contracts or hold a program sign-up to re-enroll acres. Due to this uncertainty, producers are faced with hard economic decisions for their land and operations, and their decisions have widespread implications for natural resources. One of their options, and a very real threat to natural resources, is to convert their CRP grasslands to cropland. A second option for producers, and a more desirable option for conservation, is to maintain their lands in grass and use them for livestock grazing. This project's goal is to maintain CRP's benefits to air, water, soil and wildlife resources by providing producers with options to maintain these acres in grassland through the use of livestock grazing. The partners will do this by 1) providing cost-share incentives for installing and implementing well-managed grazing systems on CRP grasslands, 2) providing information and education on the importance of CRP grasslands and their conservation value, 3) using demonstration sites to showcase the benefits of livestock grazing on CRP grasslands, and 4) increasing the partner's capacity to delivery high-value conservation assistance through the addition of a wildlife biologist position. The project has widespread support, and partners include local, state, and federal government, non-profit organizations, and landowners in addition to this 3-year request from the NET.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$300,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$300,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$200,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: South Sioux City, City of**Nearest Town:** South Sioux City**Project Name:** Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant Biogas Energy Recovery**Project No:** 11-119**Amount Requested:** \$580,900**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Equipment

As concerns grow regarding global warming and the depletion of fossil fuels, the supply and demand for recyclable/renewable energy systems that are environmentally sound continues to grow. In South Sioux City and throughout Nebraska, communities are increasingly demanding renewable and alternative energy systems to assist in offsetting the rising energy costs. When the need arose for a new industrial wastewater treatment facility in South Sioux City, the opportunity to capitalize upon a usable renewable energy source was discovered. Research has indicated that biogas; a byproduct of wastewater treatment, comprised of methane, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, water and other trace gases, can be recycled and methane can be extracted for use as a renewable and sustainable energy source. Although methane is one of the most dangerous greenhouse gases emitted, it is also one of the most readily available sources of renewable energy. As a result, the city of South Sioux City, Nebraska is seeking funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to purchase two engine generator sets for the city's energy recovery and power generation facility to utilize methane for electricity and building/process heat for the plant, with future plans to produce enough electricity to supply to the local grid for consumer use. Additionally, these funds will help support the city's goal to reduce the environmental impact of the new industrial wastewater treatment plant, decrease its reliance upon fossil fuels, assure clean air for its residents, and allow the city to harness the benefits of a renewable alternative energy source for this community.

Sponsor Name: Southwest Weed Management Area **Nearest Town:** Multiple
Project Name: Republican River Channel Restoration Project **Project No:** 11-209
Amount Requested: \$143,170 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Rural Habitat

For the past four years, Southwest Weed Management Area have been removing large trees and brush within the channel and within the channel and within a 100' corrdor of the Republican River. This has opened up coverage of the river and has given us aerial access to the river itself.

The islands on the Republican River are infested with patches of phragmites and other vegetation allowing for silt and debris in the river to deposit and cause the islands to increase in size. This grant would enable Southwest Weed Management to fly the channel of the Republican River and spray the islands, dramatically decreasing the vegetation. Southwest Weed Management would also deep disk eight miles of islands in the river to allow the root mass to scour naturally during high water events.

Southwest Weed Management Area was formed in 2006 and includes as members: county weed superintendents, Southwest Nebraska RC & D Inc., the Upper and Middle Republican Natural Resource Districts, NRCS field office personnel, and other agencies and private land owners. The group coordinates and assists efforts to identify and control noxious weeds and invasive plants.

Sponsor Name: Southwest Weed Management Area **Nearest Town:** Multiple
Project Name: Western Republican River Riparian Improvement Project V **Project No:** 11-210
Amount Requested: \$461,440 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Rural Habitat

This project will maintain the current work of the Western Republican Riparian Improvement Project. It will also continue to compliment the eastern half of the Republican River work completed by Twin Valleys Weed Management Area.

Mechanical Tree Removal has been an integral part of the removal of the invasive species on the Republican River. The initial program only removed invasive species within the 100' of the bank of the river. In 2009, the boundary was extended to the flood plain, increasing the amount of area needing treatment. Because of this there is still work to be completed on the Republican River.

Southwest Weed Management plans to continue removing these invasive species from the channel of the Republican River to the flood plain. It is our belief that removing this excess vegetation aids in increased water flows and a healthier stream bed.

Southwest Weed Management Area was formed in 2006 and includes as members: county weed superintendents, Southwest Nebraska RC& D Inc., the Upper and Middle Republican NRDs, NRCS field office personnel, and other agencies and private land owners. The group coordinates and assists efforts to identify and control noxious weeds and invasive plants. The primary targets of this project are saltcedar and phragmites within the river channel and red cedar and Russian olives within the 100 foot corridor on the stream banks up to the high flood plain. Field days will be held in each affected county to educate the public and encourage land owners to maintain the control efforts.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$784,988 IN 2009 AND 2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: Star City Recycling

Nearest Town: Lincoln

Project Name: Market Growth

Project No: 11-106R

Amount Requested: \$15,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Waste Management

Star City Recycling is a family owned business in our 8th year. We have gone from running the routes ourselves with one truck to having multiple employees and trucks running routes daily. We specialize in curbside, residential recycling and small commercial accounts.

Our focus has always been on providing the best customer service possible. We hand separate everything curbside from bin sized totes. This method allows us the availability to recycle more items than any other company in the state. We recycle the common recyclables, as well as many non-traditional items like prescription glasses, golf balls, electronics and even crayons!

As we continue to expand our customer base and scope of items, we have noticed the need to evolve to better meet the needs of current and potential customers. We are asking for the grant funding to help us in ordering new larger bin sized totes and wheel attachments that can be added to any of our bins. These new bins will allow our customers to hold 24 gallons of recycling and with the wheel attachments be far more easy to manage.

This will allow us to better serve our current customer base, as well as reach new customers that need some assistance in getting their bin to the curb.

Sponsor Name: The Groundwater Foundation

Nearest Town: Statewide

Project Name: Bridging the Gap in Source Water Protection

Project No: 11-131

Amount Requested: \$224,891

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Education

The quality of our drinking water is largely dependent on our actions; while some contamination occurs naturally the majority of source water pollution is due to human actions. Water exists in a finite amount and the demand for it is expected to grow exponentially over the next decades. The Groundwater Foundation (GF) recognizes this as a call to action with the ultimate goal of ensuring everyone understands how their actions impact their drinking water and as such acts responsibly and responsively, The GF proposes the "Bridging the Gap in Source Water Protection" project as a means towards this goal. The project is designed to share and replicate best management practices. More specifically, it will share the pollution prevention and conservation practices of Groundwater Guardian Green Sites (GG Green Sites). It will also provide resources, tools and incentives for citizens to replicate the actions in their practices at home. GG Green Sites represent a diverse cross-section of business, both in type of organization and location. Participating sites include golf courses, educational and corporate campuses, parks, camps and churches in communities across the state. These sites have been designated at GG Green Sites based on their innovative management practices. Through activities at sites and online resources the estimated number of people directly impacted by the project is 20-25,000; indirectly the number is far greater. Annual visitors to GG Green Sites in Nebraska are estimated to be over 600,000. Therefore this project will harness the opportunity to involve a diverse audience in educational experiences at GG Green Sites. Most importantly the project will give the visitors take home lessons and incentives to do their part in protecting and conserving water. As such, the return on investment is significant and is supplemented by the fact that the GF has also secured in-kind services.

Sponsor Name: The Nature Conservancy**Nearest Town:** Taylor**Project Name:** Switzer Ranch Horseshoe Bend Conservation Easement**Project No:** 11-139**Amount Requested:** \$292,800**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Rural Habitat

The Nature Conservancy requests a \$292,800 award to complete the acquisition of a conservation easement on the 1,742.4-acre Horseshoe Bend parcel of the Switzer Ranch in north central Nebraska. The parcel lies along the Calamus River, within the Upper Loup River and Tributaries Biologically Unique Landscape (BUL) designated by the Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan. BULs are defined as "relatively intact landscapes that support biological diversity, including those species in the greatest need of conservation". It is imperative to protect key, intact parcels such as this one. The Horseshoe Bend parcel includes a mile-long stretch of river at the upper end of the Reservoir that is utilized by breeding grassland birds, over-wintering bald eagles, migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, river otters, ferruginous hawks and other rare and unique species.

Agricultural land surrounding the Calamus River and Reservoir is being subdivided and sold to recreational buyers; highway frontage and the parcel's proximity to the Calamus River and Reservoir make it a highly likely candidate for further subdivision and development. This easement will protect 1,742.4 acres in perpetuity. This will also be the first easement acquired in a landscape where the Conservancy, Sandhills Task Force, local landowners, and the NRCS would like to eventually protect 40,000 - 50,000 acres from development. In this way, an easement purchased from the Switzers will produce conservation gains beyond the boundaries of the 1,742.4-acre parcel. The NRCS has already committed \$244,000 through a Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program grant to this easement.

The Switzer Ranch has become a destination for many in the wildlife and bird conservation community. It serves as a leader in educating the public about Sandhills grasslands and wetlands, while also serving as a model for other landowners of beneficial management practices for wildlife as well as sustainability of multigenerational stewardship.

Sponsor Name: The Nebraska Land Trust Incorporated**Nearest Town:** Crawford**Project Name:** Pine Ridge Bighorn Preservation Project**Project No:** 11-178**Amount Requested:** \$769,600**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Rural Habitat

In 1884, while hunting bighorn sheep in North Dakota, Theodore Roosevelt became enamored by their "marvelous agility...and wonderful command over iron sinews and muscles." By the time of his Presidency, market hunting, habitat loss, and disease had erased this regal animal from much of its historic range, including the rocky buttes of Nebraska's Pine Ridge.

In a rare reversal of extirpation, bighorns are roaming the Pine Ridge once again, thanks to the reintroduction of two herds on public lands. But bighorns need a lot of habitat to thrive, so long-term success will also depend on the future of surrounding private lands. With \$638,000 from the NET and \$20,000 from other partners, the Nebraska Land Trust will match \$658,000 committed by the NRCS/FRPP, to purchase conservation easements on two properties that provide critical habitat for bighorns in the Pine Ridge. An additional \$131,600 is needed to satisfy the requirement for a 10% defense fund, unless this policy is changed.

One property encompasses 1,121 acres bordered by Fort Robinson State Park on two sides and the Petersen WMA on a third. It includes critical lambing habitat for bighorns, a locally rare wetland, historical/cultural significance, and picturesque views from Highway 20 and Fort Robinson. The landowner, a small Native American college, would place \$55,000 of easement proceeds into an escrow account, for improvements in grazing and habitat management. The second property includes 558 acres of ranchland, bordered by the Ponderosa WMA to the west and the Nebraska National Forest to the east. With buttes, meadows, pines, a pond, West Ash Creek, and years of good stewardship, this ranch provides habitat and a critical migration bridge between large blocks of public land used by bighorns, elk, and other wildlife. The chance to preserve both properties, at once, is a rare conservation opportunity indeed.

Sponsor Name: Twin Valley Weed Management Area **Nearest Town:** Multiple
Project Name: Eastern Republican Riparian Improvement Project **Project No:** 11-118
Amount Requested: \$650,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Rural Habitat

The Eastern Republican Riparian Improvement Project continues ongoing efforts to control invasive riparian plants along the Republican River and its tributaries within the eight counties of the Twin Valley Weed Management Area (TVWMA). Control efforts are conducted in a holistic manner, utilizing a full range of mechanical, biological and chemical tools to eradicate invasive species and control vegetation in stream channels. TVWMA has undertaken this project over the past several years to improve stream flow along the Republican River, maintain a health river system, and increase public awareness of the best management practices that can be used to properly manage riparian lands. In addition, TVWMA will begin to implement a plan, with input from landowners adjoining the river, for future river maintenance. TVWMA members include county weed superintendents, Trailblazer RC&D, Lower Republican NRD, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, other public agencies, and private landowners. The group coordinates and assists with efforts to identify, contain and control the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants. In the first phases of the Eastern Republican Riparian Improvement Project, TVWMA worked to eradicate reed canary grass, salt cedar and phragmites populations along the Republican River and around Harlan County Reservoir. The project has now moved toward restoring the natural river channel to reduce potential flooding, and promote more efficient water conveyance to the Nebraska-Kansas state line. Mechanical removal of debris (i.e. logjams), and deep disking of islands will be used to enhance stream flow on the Republican River from the Cambridge Diversion to the Nebraska-Kansas state line. Previous funding has allowed TVWMA to implement these management practices in areas of the channel with marked success.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$545,500 IN 2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - B K R Extension Office **Nearest Town:** Ainsworth
Project Name: No-Till Drill **Project No:** 11-107
Amount Requested: \$30,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Equipment

The demand for the use of no-till drills far exceeds the availability of drills to inter-seed perennial grasses and legumes. The cost of a medium sized no-till drill is over \$30,000 which makes it impossible for operations to own a drill to seed a limited amount of acres in any given year. If funded, this no-till drill will be used in north central Nebraska, mainly in the counties of Brown, Rock, Keya Paha, Cherry, Holt and Blaine Counties. The drill will be headquartered out of the UNL Extension office in Ainsworth. If this grant is successful a drill will also be stationed in Buffalo County. Its use will be coordinated with the UNL office in that County, mainly serving Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Sherman and surrounding counties. Past history has proven that having access to no-till drills that can be used by the public is very successful. Two no-till drills have been operated out of the UNL Extension office since 1999 and 2000, with over 16,000 acres being seeded with each drill for a total of over 32,000 acres. The number of ranches, farms, wildlife groups like Pheasants Forever, golf courses, city parks and recreational departments have totaled over 400 that have used these drills with the demand still growing.

THIS APPLICANT HAS RECEIVED 2 PRIOR GRASS DRILLS IN 1999 FOR A TOTAL OF \$29,000.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Multiple
Project Name: Implementing A Science-Based Adaptive Management Plan for Interior Least Tern and Piping Plovers Along the Lower Platte River, **Project No:** 11-122
Amount Requested: \$293,523 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership is nationally and internationally recognized as the model for addressing and resolving threatened and endangered species controversies. We work proactively and cooperatively with a diverse group of partners to produce satisfactory solutions for all parties, bird and human. Our partners include industry, business, local governments, property owners, NGOs, state and federal agencies, policy makers and state and federal representatives (both in Congress and the Nebraska Legislature). We are ready to implement the key recommendations of our newly developed adaptive management plan for the Lower Platte River - increase the amount of available sandbar nesting and migratory stopover habitat, integrate the Lower Platte River into the meta-population and range-wide efforts to protect terns and plovers and improve the Lower Platte River hydrograph through restoration and renovation of the ecosystem. This science-based plan is based on results from our research program that we initiated in 2008.

The USFWS identified Interior Least Terns and Piping Plovers as two of the species that will be critically impacted by the 2010 BP-Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and will warrant additional protections in their nesting areas. The TPCP is uniquely positioned to provide these additional protections here in Nebraska; our efforts will benefit other species, primarily migratory shorebirds, impacted by the oil spill. Our outreach program is improving the public's and policy makers' environmental literacy and commitment to conservation - providing benefits beyond terns and plovers. People can observe our birds via TernCam (web link available worldwide) and learn about our efforts via our KZUM radio program, annual Nebraska Tern and Plover meeting, webpage, presentations, publications and direct personal contacts.

There is a clear need for the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership to continue expanding its mission to protect terns, plovers and their habitats in Nebraska and beyond.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$166,000 FROM 1999-2001 FOR THE NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS COMMISSION; \$105,000 FROM 2002-2004, \$222,513 FROM 2005-2007 AND \$270,000 FROM 2008-2010 UNDER THE TERN AND PLOVER CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Demonstration Network (NAWMDN) **Project No:** 11-137
Amount Requested: \$476,177 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

In 2005, the Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Demonstration Network (NAWMDN or Network) was formed from an interdisciplinary team of partners including the Natural Resources Districts (NRD); USDA-NRCS; farmers from south central, northeast, west central and western Nebraska; crop consultants; and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Faculty. The main goal of the Network is to enable the transfer of high quality research-based information to Nebraskans through a series of demonstration projects established in farmers' fields and implement newer tools and technologies to address and enhance crop water use efficiency, water conservation, and reduce energy consumption for irrigation. The Network was formed with only 15 farmers as collaborators in only one of the 23 NRDs in 2005. As of 2010, the number of active collaborators has increased to over 400 in 14 NRDs and 45 of 93 counties. The Network is having significant impacts on both water and energy conservation. For example, surveys of 300 NAWMDN participants in 2008 estimated water conservation at an average of 2.6 inches for corn and 2.2 inches for soybeans on 282,000 acres. With 2008 diesel fuel prices, this water conservation was an equivalent of \$2,814,000 and \$2,270,000 for corn and soybeans, respectively, in energy costs saved for the land area represented. The average water and savings have been consistent and similar from 2005 to 2009. Since the beginning of the NAWMDN, over 8,650 producers, crop consultants, and agricultural industry personnel have been reached and educated at over 300 meetings/educational programs. This proposal is seeking funding from the NET to continue with the research, demonstration, and educational functions of the NAWMDN and continue to expand it to the rest of the counties and NRDs in Nebraska. The funds will also be used to implement a significant youth educational curriculum component to the Network to educate and train future water managers, irrigators, farmers about new technologies. The curriculum, activities and website will teach youth about resources and technologies available in agricultural production.

[App Summary]

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Conserving Water Through Informed Irrigation Management **Project No:** 11-150
Amount Requested: \$111,348 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

Conserving water through irrigator education is the focus of this proposed project. Conservation will be accomplished through a water management educational program by providing irrigators and water managers with the knowledge and skills needed to obtain maximum benefit from water applied to crops. Ongoing programs that have reached a limited audience have demonstrated that irrigation applications can be reduced by at least two inches annually when the irrigator uses scientific methods for managing irrigation applications. If a similar average savings can be realized across all irrigated acres in Nebraska, the total water applied (and volume pumped) could be reduced by more than 1.4 million acre-feet annually; for comparison this potential savings is equal to 82% of the total capacity of Lake McConaughy. However, these ongoing programs have reached a limited number of irrigators; ways to reach a broader audience are needed. A partnership of the University of Nebraska Extension in the Biological Systems Engineering Department and the Nebraska center pivot manufacturers, Lindsay Corporation, Reinke Manufacturing Company, Inc., T-L Irrigation Company, and Valmont Industries, Inc., provides access to a larger audience of irrigators through the manufacturers' dealer networks. Further, by holding an irrigation school at Husker Harvest Days the partnership will also have access to an audience not previously reached, and the manufacturers will be able to reinforce the learning by providing supplemental information at their exhibits. Additionally, four, two-day irrigation short courses providing more in-depth management education will be offered each year at selected locations across Nebraska. Areas with ongoing water management challenges, e.g., the Republican River Basin and the Platte River Basin upstream of Kearney, will receive special attention. This project will rely heavily on input from the industry partners, the center pivot manufacturers, to determine the correct level of technical content and to reach previously unreached irrigators.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$215,000 IN 2008. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Ogallala
Project Name: Eastern Redcedar Removal for Habitat Restoration and Maintenance **Project No:** 11-156
 at Cedar Point Biological Station
Amount Requested: \$35,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Equipment

We request funding to enhance our current efforts at controlling the eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) population on the Cedar Point Biological Station (CPBS) property. The product will be improved grassland habitat diversity and stewardship by UNL. Since our leasing of the site in 1976 and final purchase in 1996 through NET we have not had sufficient resources to consistently control the cedar growth, and so we are requesting funding to supplement our equipment and labor costs. This modest proposal includes funds for a tree shear and chipper attachment for our existing tractor, 2 additional chainsaws (total <\$10,000), as well as \$25,000 to pay for local vendors and students hired to assist in removal of eastern redcedar from the CPBS property. We believe it would be most effective to spread this initial work over a 3 year period, and the equipment will be serviceable for many years after that. The primary purpose of this project is to enhance and restore the quality and diversity of the grassland habitat on the CPBS property by reducing the redcedar population. Secondary end products include enhanced fire protection, it will facilitate implementation of a storm water management plan that will improve soil retention and water infiltration in the areas surrounding the campus, and provide funding for students on workstudy which will support improved undergraduate student access to CPBS. For more on CPBS see: <http://cedarpoint.unl.edu>

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Statewide
Project Name: Forest, Water, and Environmental Education for Nebraska's Educators and Youth **Project No:** 11-157

Amount Requested: \$371,830 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

The Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) seeks funding to 1) increase the capacity for environmental-based education in Nebraska by providing hands-on training to educators so they can better integrate environmental-based lessons into their classrooms and programs; 2) Develop and distribute a new Nebraska-specific environmental education curriculum that will incorporate water, trees, plants and the environment into existing curricula; and 3) Develop and pilot a Schoolyard Stewardship Program, connecting the classroom and the outdoors. These objectives will be accomplished by using the successful Project WET and Project Learning Tree (PLT) programs and their award-winning activity guides. During the next three years, 2,090 educators and students in pre-service education will be trained in PLT and WET and learn about water conservation, forests, wildlife habitat and other environmental topics. Participants will learn how to integrate environmental topics into their classroom curricula and nonformal programs in a fun and experiential way. Two rural schools will pilot the new PLT Green Schools program that will deepen the environmental engagement of the school community through a series of investigations and service-learning projects. In partnership with UNL Extension 4-H after-school and camp programs, staff training will be done on how to utilize environmental based activities in their programming. An on-line publication will be developed adapting key PLT preK-8 activities to Nebraska-specific habitats, resources and issues. A two-hour online training module will be developed to train educators in an advanced environmental topic focused on our communities and sustainability. NFS will also pilot a new Sustainable Schoolyards Program at 3 school sites. By utilizing environmental curricula, PLT/WET, and an on-the-ground project we will improve the green infrastructure and the learning environment.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Republican River
Project Name: Measuring Water Use and Plant Development of Invasive Tree Species, Riparian Grasses and Rainfed Cropping Systems in the Republican River Basin **Project No:** 11-161

Amount Requested: \$1,169,639 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Water

We are seeking funding to continue a project that was initially funded by the Department of Natural Resources and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to understand the environmental impact of invasive species removal on water availability and species diversity in riparian zones along the Republican River Basin for better resources management. Working with past partners we have developed and instrumented research sites near Bartley and Benkelman. We have approximately two years of reliable data but the project needs to be extended to account for the annual variability that occurs in this region (the past two years have been wetter than normal) and to monitor the long term impact as understory grasses and shrubs become established in cleared areas. Results from the study will be used to: 1) determine if removal of invasive tree species reduces long-term evapotranspiration (ET) from riparian systems and therefore increase water yields critical for Nebraska, 2) develop methods to estimate monthly and annual riparian vegetation ET throughout the Basin, 3) quantify the species diversity of understory vegetation, 4) develop remote sensing techniques to characterize species and map ET in the Riparian Basin. ET from riparian systems will be related to groundwater levels and water supplies to improve ground water modeling. This project will coincide with work conducted by conservation groups in the Basin. We will coordinate research and educational outreach programs with them.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents**Nearest Town:** York**Project Name:** Automated Irrigation Water Use Monitoring Program**Project No:** 11-162**Amount Requested:** \$460,942**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Water

The increasing demand of water for irrigation in Nebraska is a growing problem that challenges the state to manage its long-term water usage in a sustainable and equitable way. Effective irrigation water management begins with accurate water measurements. Currently less than 30% of irrigation wells in the state record and report the total amounts of water used for irrigation. The data is manually recorded by farmers resulting in irregular reporting and is subject to human errors. In addition, the irrigation records do not show how water is used during the crop growing season in relation to crop water requirements. For effective irrigation water management, Nebraska needs a more accurate and efficient method for continuous monitoring and reporting of irrigation water use. This project is requesting funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (\$460,942) and NDEQ (\$248,035) to implement a three-year pilot program on automated irrigation water use monitoring and data collection system at the Upper Big Blue NRD. The project proposes to use satellite telemetry system for delivering accurate and up-to-date irrigation flow data via the Internet. Environmental benefits of this project will be significant. When accurate and timely irrigation flow measurement is correlated with crop water requirement, water usage by farmers can be reduced by as much as 20-40%. Ground water quality in the project area will be improved through the reduction of deep percolation of irrigation water that carries agricultural chemicals out of the root zone into the groundwater. Surface water quality will also benefit from this project as better water management will reduce irrigation water runoff that would impact streams and lakes with sediments laden with agricultural chemicals. These benefits will be achieved with training the farmers in irrigation best management practices (BMPs) supported by data from this project.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** The WATER Machine: A Water Education Program for Adults and**Project No:** 11-166**Amount Requested:** \$330,431**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Education

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a well-designed and accurate physical model is worth a million. A physical model that moves in response to questions about specific phenomena is worth millions more. Understanding and managing groundwater and surface water interactions is critical to Nebraska's future; yet because this interaction is often "invisible" in the natural landscape and varies considerably from region to region, it is not well understood. The WATER (Water Teaching, Extension and Research) Machine Mobile Educational System utilizes a large, physically-based, ground and surface water model to make these invisible and varied interactions more visible and understood. The eye-catching wonder of the model is paired with knowledgeable and engaging educators trained to help make what individuals see relevant and meaningful to them while also broadening their scope of understanding. Additional educational displays and interactive demonstrations are used to supplement the model and to engage learners and tailor the educational experience to the audience. The WATER Machine works well for high traffic events, such as Nebraska Game and Parks Expos, Husker football games and the state fair, as well as venues that target specific water users, such as Husker Harvest Days and water conferences; and science education, especially in settings such as museums and nature-focused visitor centers. The WATER Machine has the potential to be utilized across Nebraska to enhance water education for youth and adults, NRD staff/boards, legislators, agency/organization staff members and others. A steering committee of Extension and partner educators and agency representatives guide deployment of the model. A team of Extension faculty and educators coordinate more immediate project demands. Measuring and evaluating the WATER Machine's impact informs the steering committee's work. Funding is requested for an educator/technician and travel support to supplement the UNL and partner investment, to maximize the impact of the educational system.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents**Nearest Town:** Alma, Ogallala,**Project Name:** Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program**Project No:** 11-172**Amount Requested:** \$578,430**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Education

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are a current and growing threat to Nebraska's ecology and economy, and can have widespread impacts for a variety of water users, including: power plants, municipalities, irrigation systems, fisheries, hatcheries, and recreationalists, to name a few. Species such as zebra mussels, Asian carp, and common reed (Phragmites) are devastating ecosystems in Nebraska and in neighboring states. Because recreational water users are a main pathway of AIS introductions, prevention of many species is possible through a collaborative effort that targets users. Using AIS prevention program models developed by neighboring states, the proposed aquatic invasive species prevention program will: 1) Decrease the risk of aquatic invasive species introduction into Nebraska by implementing a boat inspection and decontamination program at high-risk waters, 2) Increase public awareness of AIS through an integrated outreach/education program, 3) Continue AIS monitoring efforts to help focus prevention efforts 4) Increase local and regional collaboration in the prevention of AIS, and 5) Evaluate the economic impacts of aquatic invasive species in Nebraska by examining the cost-effectiveness of prevention programs compared to AIS control and eradication or "do nothing" strategies. This program will increase momentum towards preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species into and across Nebraska. We are initiating a multi-institutional program that will, in the long run, save millions of dollars and help to preserve Nebraska's waters. This proposal will be achieved through the collaborative efforts of various agencies and organizations (federal, state, and local). Through this three-year program, we estimate that nearly 500,000 boats will be inspected for aquatic invasive species, educating over a million people about the impacts of aquatic invasive species, and providing a tremendous effort towards keeping Nebraska's waters healthy.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents**Nearest Town:** Wood River**Project Name:** Developing Adaptive Prairie Management Using Monitoring Data**Project No:** 11-175**Amount Requested:** \$55,699**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Rural Habitat

Remnant and restored prairies are a key habitat upon which a diverse collection of native plants and animals depend. A variety of techniques by a variety of agencies and private land owners have been used in Nebraska to protect remnant native prairies and to restore abandoned fields; a number of these efforts have been funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust. However, very little effort has been made to evaluate the success and cost-effectiveness of different management techniques. Thus we don't know if our restorations efforts are maximizing the potential of these sites. In addition, sites differ strongly in productivity, species composition, history and soil and we do not know the importance of these factors in determining grassland quality. Protecting and restoring grasslands is essential as these are key habitats for endangered species and a sustainable resource for livestock operations. To that end we must evaluate our restoration efforts so that Nebraskans can adopt economical and effective management techniques. We will monitor vegetation dynamics using a simple, cost-effective protocol in order to evaluate management techniques in use on prairies in critical wildlife habitats along the Platte River valley. Our recommendations will be disseminated to governmental agencies, non-profits, and private ranchers and farmers managing prairies in Nebraska.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Board of Regents**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Professional Application of Manure in Nebraska**Project No:** 11-199**Amount Requested:** \$111,087**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review** Education

Land application of livestock manures is still one of the largest potential sources of water quality contamination of pollutants (pathogens and nutrients) to the surface and ground waters of Nebraska. Improper application of animal manures has the potential to impact sensitive ecosystems and habitat. Proper handling, application, observation of setbacks from waters, operational safety are prudent to this laborious activity to ensure it is done safely for the operator and protects the environment. Professional Manure Applicators are those individuals who apply manure "for-hire" (Custom Manure Applicators) and medium to large livestock operators who apply significant amounts of manure that is self-generated. In Nebraska Land Application Training is required for permit holders, which are typically owners and operators, but no requirement exists for those that apply manure. Recent meetings with CMA's NDEQ and Extension has made clear that routine communication (possibly in the form of an association), training for crews, and a manure expo educational training field day is warranted in Nebraska. An on-line training program is also proposed to be developed for new crew members and those not able to attend workshops. This proposal will locate PMAs in Nebraska, use a focus group of PMAs to direct training needs, deliver training workshops and an educationally focused manure expo, and establish an on-line training program and resources for those that apply manure in Nebraska.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Kearney**Nearest Town:** Kearney**Project Name:** Creating Local Environmental Assessment, Recording, and Notification (LEARN) Clubs in Nebraska Schools**Project No:** 11-138**Amount Requested:** \$117,075**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review** Education

The purpose of this project is to establish, in Nebraska school districts, permanent, extracurricular science clubs created for Local Environment Assessment, Recording, and Notification (LEARN), with the long-term outcome of giving students the tools and knowledge to take action regarding environmental issues, becoming active citizens in the political community. The charter of these clubs will be a commitment to studying environmental science, investigating the quality of their local environment, generating suggestions for improving the environment, and communicating their understanding, observations, and ideas to the public at large. These clubs will provide the opportunity for interested students to actively study environmental science in greater depth, and to participate in discussions about conservation and stewardship issues immediately relevant to their community. Students will evaluate the status of their own environment by conducting a number of investigations, including analyses of water and soil quality, and surveys of local flora and fauna (with a focus on invasive organisms and species indicative of environmental quality). Finally, they will be responsible for producing quarterly reports which will be presented to the proper authorities and distributed as inserts in local newspapers or newsletters as is relevant for each project. It is a primary goal for this project to increase student understanding of environmental conservation issues in Nebraska. It is also the intent of this project to increase the amount of environmental monitoring throughout the state. These data are expected to better inform policy makers and citizens of the state to assist them in making environmentally sound policies and decisions regarding the state's natural resources.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Kearney **Nearest Town:** Kearney
Project Name: Habitat Classification for Reptiles and Amphibians of the Platte River **Project No:** 11-163
Amount Requested: \$96,365 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Education

The Platte River Valley in central Nebraska is utilized by the endangered Whooping Crane during spring and fall migrations. Frogs and snakes are components of its diet on breeding grounds and probably are important during migratory stopovers in wetland habitats. Historical abundances and use of this prey base are unknown because most Whooping Cranes were extirpated prior to detailed studies of diet and habitat.

We hypothesize that large-scale changes in land cover along the Platte River have significantly altered availability of important habitats for amphibians and reptiles and therefore reduced availability of prey for the Whooping Crane. Such changes to prey may have impacted foraging use along the Platte River. Our approach involves combining detailed recent surveys of amphibians and reptiles and remotely sensed data to determine which landscape features predict distributions and abundances of amphibians and reptiles over a 4-mile length of river. We will then classify major habitat types through time over a 70-yr period and describe how key habitat features utilized by this prey base have changed over an 80-mile length of the river.

Outcomes of the project will include maps that show locations and data that quantify total percentage coverage of important habitats for 10 species of amphibians and reptiles in 2010, 1970 and 1938. Further analyses will permit us to quantify possible increases or decreases in extent of habitats for prey and where greatest changes have occurred along the river. It also will allow us to map habitats utilized by the invasive American Bullfrog, as well as at-risk species, such as the Redbelly Snake.

Results will be shared with students, public and private land managers, scientists, and the general public through presentations, printed graphics, technical reports and peer-reviewed publications. Our project involves partnerships among the University of Nebraska Kearney, University of Montana and the Crane Trust.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Lincoln **Nearest Town:** Lincoln
Project Name: Nebraska Master Naturalist Program: Recruitment, Training, and Management of Conservation Volunteers **Project No:** 09-164-3
Amount Requested: \$55,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program (NMNP) is a public/private partnership that will recruit, train, manage, and provide incentives for volunteers participating in habitat conservation, environmental education, citizen science, and ecotourism in Nebraska. The program will be modeled after Master Naturalist Programs that have been successful in over 25 states since 1998. A task force of representatives from natural resource organizations in Nebraska determined that the need for a program to train and coordinate conservation volunteers is high. An Advisory Committee will provide guidance and oversight of statewide activities and a full-time coordinator will develop and facilitate the program. Natural resource professionals will provide a curriculum that includes training modules on 17 program areas, including: ecological principles, geology, botany, mammalogy, herpetology, conservation biology, interpretation and communication, and scientific methodology. Volunteers must participate in 20 hours of professional training and conduct at least 20 hours of approved volunteer work annually. The objective of the program is to certify a minimum of 100 volunteers and accrue at least 4,500 hours of volunteer time annually within three years. A database will be developed to track volunteer training and hours, and used to match the needs of conservation agencies and organizations with the skills and availability of trained volunteers. The NMNP will be most closely associated with the "Habitat" Funding Category (conservation, enhancement, and restoration of natural environments in Nebraska), but volunteers will also be informed and educated on other Categories, including air, soil, and water. The NMNP will become an essential source of volunteers for the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project. Trained volunteers will become valuable members of the natural resources community and in time, will provide millions of dollars in salary savings. We anticipate that the program will be long-term and self-sustaining through user fees, external grants, contributions, and volunteer support.

UNL-COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AND NE GAME & PARKS COMMISSION PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED A PIE APPLICATION FOR A FORUM TO LEARN ABOUT THE PROGRAM, BUT IT WAS NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$65,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$50,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$55,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Nearest Town: Lincoln

Project Name: Use Social Media to Promote Nebraska's Waste Recycling Programs

Project No: 11-112R

Amount Requested: \$13,941

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Education

The objective of this proposed project is to effectively fill the existing public education gaps through promoting the use of Web 2.0-based new social media in Nebraska's litter reduction and recycling education. This project aims to explore and optimize the power of new social media to increase public awareness, build positive attitudes, and cause behavior changes that will, in the long term, reduce litter and increase recycling in Nebraska. Three specific tasks will be completed in this project: 1) Task 1: Refine Nebraska litter reduction and recycling messages, documents, information for new social media; 2) Task 2: Construct the RE4.org website and build linkages with the new social media; 3) Task 3: Monitor the effectiveness of RE4.org and information in the new social media. The project impacts can be statistically measured by the users' view times in each social media (such as YouTube, Facebook, etc.). In addition, the program impacts can be monitored by direct and demonstrable positive feedback from the readers of the posts in these new media. In the long-term, the project will provide an effective education tool and promote people's behavior changes in the future.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Nearest Town: North Platte

Project Name: Integrated Strategies for Controlling Invasive Plant Species in the Platte River System

Project No: 11-124

Amount Requested: \$240,896

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Rural Habitat

The overall goal of our project is to use an integrated technique to reduce invasive plant species (IPS) in riparian areas of the Platte River system, while having minimal impact on human and environmental health and creating opportunities for reestablishment of desirable plant species. By combining mowing and spraying into one operation, a more cost effective method can be employed for IPM programs that have a long-term strategy of vegetation conversion in IPS-dominated areas. Through our research, we will achieve a reduction of pesticide residues in waters used for human consumption or for recreational purposes, as well as minimizing the effects of pesticides on non-target species.

Our research project has been formulated as a direct response to the needs and priorities of stakeholders who are closely associated with riparian areas throughout Nebraska and the US. For a period of three years, our project will demonstrate implementable results and the potential for reestablishment of native or desirable plants into an IPS management plan. This proposal has three specific objectives: 1.) Determine the suitability of mower-sprayer combination technology for controlling IPS. 2.) Quantify control of IPS with several herbicides and timings using the mow-spray system. 3.) Establish desirable or native plant species after using the mow-spray system. We anticipate the use of a combined mow-spray system for control of non-native IPS, as evaluated in this research, will demonstrate the need for further commercialization of this currently available technology. The development of newer pest management techniques is being employed in this study to address the critical problem of IPS establishment and the detrimental effects on riparian ecosystems. Land managers at local, regional and national levels have strongly advocated for IPS management plans that are efficient, effective and can be implemented in a sustainable manner.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Omaha - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Omaha
Project Name: The Davis Prairie Data Shack **Project No:** 11-115
Amount Requested: \$115,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Education

Funding from NET will defray expenses for the construction of the Davis Prairie Data Shack (DPDS), an innovative data acquisition station being built on the Elkhorn River near the intersection between 245th and Q Streets. The DPDS will be involved in research, teaching and outreach programs. With respect to research, the DPDS will provide a permanent station from which water quality in the lower Elkhorn River can be continuously chemically and biologically assessed throughout the 8-month ice-free season from April until November. Fish and other aquatic organisms will be maintained at the DPDS where they will be exposed in real-time to flowing Elkhorn River water. With respect to teaching and outreach, the DPDS will be the masthead for a virtual environmental laboratory. The virtual laboratory will contain a library of research and educational videos that have been produced by University of Nebraska faculty and students. A DPDS High School Student Research Competition is also scheduled to commence in Summer 2011. Videos produced by the students from metropolitan Omaha and the upper reaches of the watershed will be added to the archived information on the website.

The total DPDS project is being completed in three phases: architectural and brick and mortar phase I, brick and mortar phase II, and program development phase III. Phase I is currently under way and is being funded from sources other than NET. NET funding is being requested for phase II, which will occur during Spring 2011. In phase II, all of the necessary pumps and bio-assessment facilities will be added to the pre-existing DPDS structure. Phase III will be initiated upon completion of phase II, with support from existing funding sources other than NET.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2009 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

Sponsor Name: University of Nebraska - Omaha - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Omaha
Project Name: Climate Master Training for Businesses **Project No:** 11-169
Amount Requested: \$322,829 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review** Education

The Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha will deliver and provide a certification for the Climate Master at Work (CMW) training to businesses throughout the state of Nebraska, and will help them track environmental outcomes from projects they undertake. The goal of this project is to change the culture in businesses so they consider and act upon life-cycle costs and environmental impacts of their decisions. The environmental impact of the project will be shown by measuring implementation of money-saving projects which reduce air emissions, water consumption and contamination, and toxic emissions.

Our primary impact will be in the areas of Air Quality (reduction of greenhouse gasses and toxic air emissions), Waste Management (implementation of source reduction projects in businesses and reduction of their use of toxics), and Water Conservation.

The training was originally developed at the University of Oregon and is based on "Master" training programs, such as Master Gardener. Thus it requires participants to pledge implementation hours as part of their cost of training. In addition, we will charge \$300/business. In the course of the three-year grant, training will be delivered twice in Omaha, Norfolk, Lincoln and Nebraska City, and once in Kearney and in Scottsbluff. We will deliver the training again in Kearney and Scottsbluff after the end of project, based upon revenue from businesses during the initial ten training sessions.

We plan significant efforts in marketing, including individual outreach to businesses and will work with each participating business one-on-one. We will keep businesses networked via an on-line forum, which will help motivate them to complete projects and establish a "norm" of conservation among the businesses. This significant "hands-on" effort will help assure the most implementation of environmental projects as possible.

Sponsor Name: Upper Loup Natural Resources District

Nearest Town: Multiple

Project Name: Upper Loup NRD Recycling Program

Project No: 10-177-2

Amount Requested: \$21,424

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Statement of Intent

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District (ULNRD) is a governmental agency that is dedicated to conserving and protecting our natural resources. To promote conservation, water quality, and waste reduction in the Upper Loup District, the ULNRD is requesting funds in the amount of \$54,977 to implement and expand recycling efforts in the ULNRD. A survey had been done by the ULNRD, with the villages of the District, to determine interest and a need for recycling efforts. The results of the survey, in general, found that the villages understand the importance and benefits of recycling, but stated that without the help from a partner it is not feasible. The three year project is designed to place a total of five, 6-bin recycling trailers throughout the district and to provide regular transport of these trailers to the end market. The overall goal is to establish a sustainable recycling program District-wide. By the end of the 3 year grant period our target goal is to reduce the amount of municipal and rural solid waste disposed of by 608 tons (25%).

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$21,424 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$21,424 IN YEAR TWO AND \$12,129 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: Upper Loup Natural Resources District

Nearest Town: Thedford

Project Name: Upper Loup NRD Real-Time Hydrologic Monitoring Network

Project No: 11-146

Amount Requested: \$139,590

Term of Project Request: 3

Review

Water

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District (ULNRD) is requesting funds in the amount of \$139,590 to instrument 12 monitoring wells at 6 sites to collect real-time groundwater level information and link existing real-time groundwater and streamgaging stations. The ULNRD is located in the Sand Hills at the upper reaches of the Loup River basin and overlies the thickest portion of the nationally important High Plains aquifer. The ULNRD instrumented a subset of monitoring wells with continuous recorders to capture trends in the record missed by seasonal groundwater measurements. The ULNRD wishes to make these data publicly available and served to the World Wide Web. All real-time groundwater and streamgaging data will be served publicly through the USGS National Water Information System web (NWISweb) interface and linked to the ULNRD website. The website will feature a clickable map of the groundwater-level and streamgages to disseminate the real-time hydrologic data. The purpose of the website is to educate the public about current surface-water and groundwater conditions and provide both local and state managers with improved tools to manage water resources. Monitoring water-quality is also an important part of the ULNRD's groundwater management plan. Groundwater quality, though generally presumed good in the Sand Hills, needs data to support that assumption. The establishment of baseline groundwater quality conditions is needed in the ULNRD where deep groundwater resources have not been developed in the High Plains aquifer. Proposed funding will cover instrumentation of existing monitoring wells, data collection, record computation, data archiving and publishing. All data would be maintained permanently in the publicly accessible USGS NWIS database and served real-time to NWIS Web.

Sponsor Name: US Recycling Company

Nearest Town: Multiple

Project Name: Recycling Household Materials in Western Nebraska

Project No: 11-167R

Amount Requested: \$13,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Waste Management

US Recycling is seeking funding to put household recyclable roll off collection containers in rural communities in Keith, Perkins and Garden County. USR is seeking partial funding for this project. The capital cost is such that USR cannot afford to fund the capital expenses of the project or the additional cash match required for most grant programs. The economic and environmental impact of this project will be ongoing and will divert thousands of pounds of cardboard, plastics, papers, junk mail, newspaper, aluminum and tin cans and steel from the landfills and illegal dumpsites, while allowing USR to put money back into the economy.

Sponsor Name: US Recycling Company

Nearest Town: Multiple

Project Name: Soft Metals Recycling in Western Nebraska

Project No: 11-168

Amount Requested: \$25,000

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Waste Management

US Recycling is seeking funding to put a soft metals baler in Sidney, Nebraska. The addition of the baler will allow USR to process the soft metals to make the product more marketable. Currently USR does not have a baler at the Sidney location, so metals have to be hauled to Ogallala for processing. A baler in Sidney would allow the Sidney location to purchase the metals at a better price from the public and other businesses that would prefer to recycle the aluminum, copper, brass, etc. instead of putting those metals into the land fill. Many people currently haul their metals to Denver, Scottsbluff or other larger markets to get a better price. This is not cost effective for the individual who wants to clean-up the home remodel job, nor for the HVAC, Plumber, or appliance repair shop that is looking to recoup the expenses of clean up from repair jobs. USR is seeking partial funding for this project. The capital cost is such that USR-Sidney cannot afford to fund the entire project or add the cash match required for most grant programs. USR will seek debt financing for any portion of the project not funded. The economic and environmental impact of this project will be ongoing diverting thousands of pounds of copper, brass, aluminum from landfills, garages, alleys and illegal dumpsites each year, while allowing USR to put money back into the economy.

Sponsor Name: Valentine, City of**Nearest Town:** Valentine**Project Name:** Valentine Mill Pond Hydro Suction Sediment Removal System**Project No:** 11-144**Amount Requested:** \$117,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review**

Lake Rehabilitation

The City of Valentine is seeking at least \$117,000 in overall project costs to make improvements to the hydrosuction sediment removal system (HSRS) installed as part of the rehabilitation of the Valentine Mill Pond in 2001. The HSRS is an innovative/experimental sediment by-pass system supported by the NDEQ and EPA as a novel approach to sediment management. The proposed project would be a continuation of the 2001 Mill Pond Rehabilitation Project and is intended to not only protect and enhance the pond's beneficial uses, but also protect investments, a large portion of which came from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, made toward the 2001 rehabilitation project. Proposed HSRS improvements will focus on raising the inlet structure two feet and installing a pump and pump house near the structure to increase the velocity of the water flowing through the system to prevent sediment buildup in the pipeline. Modifications will be designed and constructed to further minimize the potential for restriction of flow in the pipeline by intake of trash, excess sediment load, or other obstructions. Other modifications will include providing a better access to the first several hundred feet of the pipeline to facilitate pipeline flushing should it become plugged with sand.

Tens of thousands of cubic yards of sediment have been deposited in the Mill Pond since the rehabilitation project was completed in 2001. Of which, 6,000 cubic yards has filled the capacity of the sediment basin and the remainder has deposited in the upper reaches of the pond just downstream of the sediment basin. The proposed project would include the removal of 6,000 cubic yards from the sediment basin and between 4,000 to 8,000 cubic yards from the upper reaches of the pond.

THIS PROJECT WAS PREVIOUSLY FUNDED THROUGH PROJECT NUMBER 01-136 THROUGH 01-136-3, COMMUNITY LAKES ENHANCEMENT AND RESTORATION.

Sponsor Name: WasteCap Nebraska**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Nebraska Product Stewardship Initiative**Project No:** 11-204**Amount Requested:** \$456,415**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review**

Waste Management

The purpose of this project is to build the capacity and infrastructure for product stewardship in Nebraska through education and market development activities. Product stewardship is a new way of doing business that shares the responsibility for minimizing environmental and health impacts from consumer products and shifts the financial burden that has been placed solely on government and taxpayers. This innovative approach is exemplified by manufactures and retailers taking responsibility for the collection and recycling or safe disposal of their products at the end of their useful life. This project will build on the accomplishments of two related projects of WasteCap Nebraska: (1) the Nebraska Product Stewardship Initiative, launched with funding from the NDEQ in 2010 to begin building capacity for product stewardship in Nebraska, and (2) an NET-funded project, on-going until June 2012, to set up CFL and fluorescent lamp recycling locations throughout the state and implement small Escrap collection events. WasteCap Nebraska proposes to contract with the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) to assist WasteCap and its partners in expanding product stewardship initiatives in Nebraska.

WE FUNDED \$120,000 IN 2005-2007 FOR COLLECTION EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND OUTREACH. WE FUNDED YEAR 1 OF A 2008 SUBMISSION TO DEVELOP MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR ELECTRONICS RECYCLERS. WE FUNDED \$439,842 IN 2009-2010 FOR CFL AND FLUORESCENT LAMP RECYCLING AND ESCRAP COLLECTION EVENTS. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

Sponsor Name: West Central Weed Management Area **Nearest Town:** Kearney
Project Name: Invasive Species Control Along the Platte River **Project No:** 09-118-3
Amount Requested: \$200,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review** Statement of Intent

The Platte River of south central Nebraska is known for its wildlife habitat and for a diverse range of flora and fauna. Historic and present water development on the Platte River and its tributaries has altered the river's hydrology, reducing flows and changing flow chronology. These changes have had a detrimental effect on wildlife habitat available and the vegetation community that is present. Within the Platte River valley invasive species such as phragmites, salt cedar, reed canary grass, Russian olive, and purple loosestrife are present and have out-competed native vegetation. These species have reduced biodiversity by out-competing native vegetation and forming monoculture stands.

The PVWMA and WCWMA are proposing a three year plan on removing dead phragmites that were chemically treated in 2008 by NDA funds and controlling invasive species throughout the rest of the project area. The project will incorporate an integrated weed management philosophy and an applied research approach that is supported by the state's Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force.

The primary goal of this project is to improve native wildlife habitat and river channel flow conveyance through the eradication and clearing of invasive vegetation species. Long Term management will be done by working with the landowners to implement grazing systems focusing on maintaining native wildlife habitat. A secondary goal is to develop a long-term set of "best management practices" for phragmites based on efficacy of treatments, cost effectiveness and wildlife habitat benefits. A "Best Management Guide for Invasive Species" will be published and given to landowners that will explain management options while also maximizing wildlife habitat and forage quality for grazing.

By combining these objectives in a regional watershed approach the project will help restore water conveyance and critical wildlife habitat for game and non-game animals along the Platte River in Nebraska.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$400,000 IN 2009 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$400,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$200,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

Sponsor Name: West Haymarket Arena Joint Public Agency **Nearest Town:** Lincoln
Project Name: Concept Design to Green Arena Parking Lot **Project No:** 11-142
Amount Requested: \$74,760 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review** Water

The West Haymarket Integrated Development Plan for the new Lincoln Arena was developed by John Sinclair working in conjunction with the City of Lincoln. The IDP was reviewed by the City's Urban Design Committee and the Historic Preservation Committee in the fall of 2009. The IDPs Parking Study indicated a parking stall demand of 5,120 arena stalls, 975 mixed-use development stalls, and 300 ice rink stalls.

This funding request focuses on a proposed surface parking lot to be located west of Lincoln's new Arena. The surface lot would have 1,505 parking stalls. The West Haymarket Arena JPA, which provides leadership for the Arena Project, wants to "green" this proposed parking lot, while keeping it open to possible use as a festival area.

This proposal is requesting \$74,760 in NET funds to cover feasibility study and concept design costs associated with "greening" the indicated parking lot.

Sponsor Name: Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska

Nearest Town: Winnebago

Project Name: Winnebago Prairie Restoration

Project No: 11-126

Amount Requested: \$66,700

Term of Project Request: 1

Review

Rural Habitat

The North American prairie, valued for its diverse plant life, abundance of animal species, and healthy soil, is considered to be an endangered habitat. On the tribe's land there is approximately 100 acres of prairie that has become degraded and overrun with invasive species. The Winnebago Tribe of the Great Plains has a history of environmental stewardship. A partnership between the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and the Drake University Environmental Science and Policy Department has been established to restore this site. Prairie Plains Research Institute is also collaborating with the project by providing a diverse and authentic prairie seed mix as well as the necessary training needed for the maintenance of the site. The proposed project has environmental, economic, and social components. Environmentally, the goal is to restore habitat and niches for native species. An economic goal of the proposal is the creation of restoration and management jobs within the tribe. Restoration of this area would engage a variety of community groups and enhance the overall social synergy of the surrounding inhabitants. An outline of the future of the Winnebago Prairie Rehabilitation Project includes a prescribed burn this fall followed by native seed mixture planting in the spring. An estimated four jobs will be created to maintain the site. We are asking the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to supply funding for the seed and part of the labor costs. The total amount requested is \$66,700.