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# RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

**March 2017**

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**Executive Director Corner**

The Legislature has completed over one half of the 90 day session. The Trust is monitoring several bills including three bills (LB 452, 312 and 563) because they pertain to repealing the tax exemption to lottery tickets. If any one of these three bills would pass in its current form, the Trust could lose \$1.4 to \$5M annually because the taxes would come out of the beneficiaries' proceeds. Senator McCollister has amended the lottery sales out of his bill, LB 563 at this point.

Another bill impacting the Trust is LB 331 was introduced by Speaker Scheer at the request of the Governor. LB 331 would transfer \$3.3M a year for the next three years to the Water Resources Cash Fund. This represents about 18% of the funds the Trust has available for grants, so it would have a significant impact on the Trust. We are hoping that the Appropriations Committee at least reduces the take to two years instead of three, as the Legislature is only securing matching General Funds for two years. These transfers were a negotiated settlement six years ago and were to sunset this year with the Trust not funding the Water Cash Fund after 2017.

We are preparing for the April 6th Trust board meeting where the Board Recommendations for Funding Placed in Rank Order will be finalized and then we will host three



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**Pete Ricketts, Governor**  
**Board of Trustees**

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Vacant - TBA

James Hellbusch - Columbus

Kevin Peterson - Osceola

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**District II**

Gerry Lauritzen - Omaha

Paul Dunn - Omaha

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**District III**

Sherry Vinton - Whitman

Rodney Christen - Steinauer

Gloria Erickson - Holdrege

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**Agency Directors**

Grantee Seminars (two in Lincoln and one in Grand Island) to discuss the grant reporting requirements with the successful grantees. We have invited the Senators to join us at one of the three seminars for lunch and we have a couple that have RSVP'd to attend.

On the Husker front, the men's and women's basketball seasons were disappointing, but baseball has some promise and we can hope for good things for the softball team. We always have the women's bowling team and you can root for the sand volleyball team until the fall volleyball season rolls around. The spring game is coming up quickly (April 15), and I think football fans will be watching the new coaches as much as the players.

Get out and enjoy the great weather, but don't think we have seen the last of the snow this winter. I have heard the only month in Nebraska that has never had any snow is August, but I can't verify that. I did find that the earliest measurable snow for Lincoln was 0.8 inches on Sept. 29, 1985 and the latest was 3.0 inches on May 3-4, 1967. Another interesting fact, the latest, first measurable snow in Lincoln was Dec. 31, 2006, but it was a 7.5 inch snow.

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

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### **Grantee Seminars Are Coming Up!**

The Grantee Seminars this year will be on April 10, 12 & 14th. The seminars on April 10 & 12th will be in Lincoln at the Ferguson House and the last one held on the 14th, will be at the Central Platte Natural Resources District, Grand

Jim Douglas, Nebraska Game  
and Parks Commission

Greg Ibach, Nebraska  
Department of Agriculture

Jim Macy, Nebraska  
Department of Environmental  
Quality

Jeff Fassett, P.E., Nebraska  
Department of Natural  
Resources

Dr. Tom Williams, Nebraska  
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### **Trust Staff**

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Environmental Trust  
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Island. Grantees should have received their invitations to the seminar in mid February and RSVPs are due on March 24th. Please call or email Allison La Duke to reserve a seat for the seminar. She can be reached at 402-471-5417 or [allison.laduke@nebraska.gov](mailto:allison.laduke@nebraska.gov)

For information on the agenda for the day, click below:

[Agenda - Grantee Seminar 2017](#)

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### **Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary - Integrating New Core Habitat**

The Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary is known around the world for hosting a spectacular natural event each Spring; the annual migration of Sandhill Cranes.

During this time more than 500,000 Sandhill Cranes, endangered Whooping Cranes and millions of other waterfowl and shorebirds converge on the Platte River in central Nebraska and the Sanctuary offers people a front row seat.

For more than 40 years, Rowe Sanctuary has protected habitat along the Platte River for the benefit of migratory birds in the Central Flyway. While their mission is to conserve a globally important bird resource, the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center's unique outdoor, experienced-based education is the heart of what they do. Conservation and education are both highlighted in a current project funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

With funding and support from the Trust and other conservation partners, Rowe Sanctuary is improving

Lincoln, NE 68509-4913

web site:

[environmentaltrust.org](http://environmentaltrust.org)

habitat for cranes and other wildlife on a recent expansion at the core of the contiguous, protected habitat complex. The project centers on the restoration of upland prairie and wet meadow habitat, increasing native plant diversity, and will include reducing habitat fragmentation and removing hazards to at-risk species. On-the-ground work will include reseeded, tree removal and the development of grazing management infrastructure. One unique aspect of the project is the removal of nearly one mile of above-ground power line bisecting the grasslands. The line represents a significant threat of bird collisions due to its proximity to one of the largest crane roosts in the world.

Perhaps the most exciting piece to the project is a new opportunity for outreach and education related to this and other work being completed at the Sanctuary. A new vehicle pull-out will be constructed where visitors can learn more about the species and habitats that Rowe Sanctuary protects and take in views of one of the largest, intact wet meadows remaining in the Platte River valley and a significant day-time feeding and loafing location for migrating Sandhill Cranes.

This project represents early steps toward the realization of a new, long-term vision of a biologically rich and diverse Platte River, buoyed by the work and resources at Rowe Sanctuary, where people locally and globally can connect with nature and the power to protect it.

For those interested in making a visit to the Annual Crane Migration this year, click on the link below for more details:

[Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary](#)



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*Migration of the Sandhill Cranes pictured above with one Whooping Crane (white)*

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#### **A Charging Station for Ashland**



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*Pictured above is the Director of the Trust, Mark Brohman at the launching of the charge station.*

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*(Picture and information courtesy of Suzi Nelson, The Ashland Gazette)*

Just a few yards from the spot where pioneers crossed the Salt Creek on their way west, the latest in transportation technology was welcomed to Ashland recently.

A small ceremony was held March 2 to formally dedicate the charging station, which includes the state's first ChargePoint Express station that will charge an electric car in about 30 minutes.

Ashland became eligible for a matching 50-50 grant when the city joined the Nebraska Community Energy Alliance. City Administrator Jessica Quady first learned of the organization and the charging station grant opportunities during a convention of municipal administrators a few years ago.

The Nebraska Community Energy Alliance (NCEA) was formed in 2014 by nine Nebraska communities to sponsor a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to purchase charging stations and electric and compressed natural gas vehicles. Today the 26 community members promote the mission of the NCEA to save energy and reduce pollution through transportation and housing technology.

Electric car drivers in Lincoln and Omaha have wanted a charging station in Ashland for quite some time, according to Anne McCollister, NCEA executive director, who attended the dedication ceremony. "I had people for three years want to have a charging station here," she said.

The total cost of the Ashland charging station project was \$53,000, McCollister said. The Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) paid 50 percent of the project, and the City of

Ashland paid for the other half, along with an extended warranty on the equipment and other extras. The NET also paid half of the cost of installation, which totaled nearly \$12,000.

McCollister said she will be marketing Ashland to electric vehicle drivers on the app that is linked to the Charge Point charging station. The app tells users where charging stations are located.

“Apps can also let users know what’s available in Ashland,” she added.

While the fast charger can charge a battery to 80 percent or higher in 30 minutes, the Level-2 charging station also located in the Ashland city parking lot takes about four to six hours to charge a vehicle, giving drivers plenty of time in the city.

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#### Upcoming Events

- March 16-19, 2017 - The 47th Annual Audubon Crane Festival, Kearney NE.
- April 6, 2017 (Thursday) - 2nd Quarter Board Meeting, Ferguson House, Lincoln NE
- April 10, 2017 (Monday) - Grantee Seminar, Lincoln NE
- April 12, 2017 (Wednesday) - Grantee Seminar, Lincoln NE
- April 14, 2017 (Friday) - Grantee Seminar, Grand Island, NE
- April 21, 2017 (Friday) - Earthstock, UNL, Lincoln NE.
- April 21, 2017 (Friday) - Eco Fair, Wesleyan, Lincoln NE.
- April 22, 2017 (Saturday) - Earth Day Omaha, Elmwood Park, Omaha NE.
- April 22, 2017 (Saturday) - Lincoln Earth Day, Lincoln NE.

- April 27, 2017 (Thursday) - Sustainability Expo, UNMC/Nebraska Medicine, Omaha NE.

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