

RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

November 2017

Executive Director Corner

The Grants Committee has begun meeting to review the 112 new grant applications received. It is always difficult to narrow so many great applications to the number we are able to fund, but it is a necessary evil of the grant process. After this week, the Grants Committee will meet three more times and produce their recommendations.

At the last board meeting, our two newest members Ryan McIntosh and John Orr joined us for the first time and Quentin Bowen attended his second meeting. We are waiting for the Governor to name Greg Ibach's replacement. The Governor indicated last week that he and his advisors are waiting until the bulk of the harvest is completed to begin interviewing potential candidates.

Just when we didn't think Husker football could sink any lower, along comes Minnesota and we discovered we haven't hit the bottom yet. I know there are a lot of Husker fans that will be asking Santa for a new coach for Christmas and I think they will get their wish. Mr. Moos has his work cut out for him over the next few weeks and months. At the opposite end of the spectrum the Husker volleyball team continues to rise in the polls and has a great shot at winning the Big 10 title and playing in the Regionals, if not the Final Four. And don't forget the Husker women's bowling team, who I believe is currently ranked number two in the country and for years has competed for the National Title. State high school



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volleyball wrapped up and now it is time for the state high school football finals (my high school, Callaway, now South Loup is still in the hunt in D-1 with a record of 14-0 and will play Nov. 20th in the Championship game against East Butler).

Hopefully you have finished the harvest and have those spring calves weaned.

Safe travels for Thanksgiving.

Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

Ferguson House Christmas Open House

The Nebraska Environmental Trust will host a holiday open house at the historic Ferguson House on Sunday, December 10th. The public is invited to visit and tour the 106 year-old Renaissance Revival home from 1 to 5 p.m. The Kennard House will NOT be open this year due to renovations. There is no charge to tour the Ferguson House during this event.

The Ferguson House is located at 700 S 16th Street in downtown Lincoln. For more information, call 402-471-5417 or e-mail: allison.laduke@nebraska.gov

Considered to be one of the finest examples of Second Renaissance Revival architecture in the area, the Ferguson House was built between 1909 and 1911 by William Henry and Myrtle Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson helped introduce winter wheat and new varieties of alfalfa to Nebraska and was co-owner of Yankee Hill Brick and

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Capital Beach Amusement Park, President of Beatrice Foods and owner of Woodlawn Dairy. The state of Nebraska acquired the property from the Ferguson family in 1972 and the property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house is a well-known landmark in Lincoln located across from the Nebraska State Capitol. The staff of the Nebraska Environmental Trust currently occupies the second floor of the Ferguson House. The first floor living and dining rooms are available to rent for meetings and events.



The Ferguson House

Zoo Expands Conservation Efforts with Energy from the Sun - submitted by the Verdis Group and the Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

What started as an idea of modeling a strategy to help fight extinction with on-site clean, renewable energy at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is now a reality. In May 2017, a newly installed solar photovoltaic (PV) panel array at the north end of the Zoo's African Grasslands near the Safari Tent Camp began generating electricity.

The project was made possible by a partnership between Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium's facilities and education departments, Creighton University's Energy Technology Program, and Verdis Group with grant funding

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from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. The team's hope was to inform the Zoo's over 2 million annual visitors how accessible solar energy can be in Nebraska. The Zoo's education department and Creighton's Energy Technology Program developed an after-school science curriculum using the solar array and the data generated by the electricity production.

The 25-kilowatt array of solar panels lessens the Zoo's impact on the environment and is an example of a strategy to help fight extinction. Greenhouse gases from electricity production are a leading cause of climate change, which is a major factor in accelerating species extinction due to the inability of species to adapt quickly to altering temperature and rainfall patterns. Over the panels' 40-year life, the array is projected to avoid 1,427 metric tons of carbon dioxide, equivalent to avoiding nearly 1.53 million pounds of coal burned.

"Installing the solar panel in the African Grasslands exhibit was a win-win situation for both our visitors and Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium's interest in research conservation," said Dennis Pate, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium's president and chief executive officer. "The clean energy produced by the panel enables the Zoo to be more sustainable and move forward with its mission in conservation. The structure also provides much needed shade for our guests waiting in line to ride the Skyfari." Solar energy production improves habitats and water- and air-quality, which ultimately improves human health. For over half the year, the array is expected to produce 100% of the electricity needed for areas such as the lion viewing structure, the Safari Tent Camps and restrooms, and nearby lighting.

Leading by example and education are central to this project. The array is in a high-traffic spot where visitors can enjoy shade provided from the solar array as they wait to

board Skyfari in the African Grasslands exhibit. An educational interactive solar panel and digital screen provide information on the environmental benefits of producing electricity using the sun. Educational exhibits are being used in lessons for students in Omaha, and Zoo visitors of all ages can learn about the benefits of solar energy as well. As part of the Zoo's commitment to conservation, the Zoo will continue to maintain the system and gain the benefit of clean, renewable energy on the Zoo campus for generations to come.



Solar Panels at the Omaha Zoo

Upcoming Events

- Christmas Open House at The Ferguson House, Sunday, December 10, 2017, 1pm-5pm.
- 23rd Annual Informational Seminar - Thursday, February 1, 2018, Hotel Grand Conference Center, 2305 S. Locust, Grand Island, NE, 8:30 am. (visit: www.rwbjv.org)
- 1st Quarter Board Meeting - Tuesday, February 6, 2018, Ferguson House, Lincoln NE, 1:30 pm.