

# RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

**June 2018**

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## **Executive Director Corner**

First of all, I want to congratulate Gene Hanlon on his recent retirement. Gene is the long-time recycling coordinator for the City of Lincoln and has done many great things in Lincoln and across the State of Nebraska over the years. Congratulations also goes out to long-time Trust board member, Paul Dunn, who was recently promoted from the Recycling Coordinator for the City of Omaha to Solid Waste Section Supervisor. By the way, Paul was once an intern for Gene Hanlon.

Marilyn and I have attended a few of the ribbon cutting ceremonies for the new flex fuel pumps across the state. I even pumped gas for a couple of hours at a dedication in Bellevue. The flex fuel pumps allow for different percentages of ethanol. The fuel pumps will dispense E10, E15, E30 and E85. Over \$6M in federal, state and private funds have gone into the blender pumps, fuel storage tanks, infrastructure, marketing and education. Nebraska ethanol plants produce around 2 billion gallons of ethanol a year, of which over 95% is shipped to other states or countries. The Trust contributed \$1M to this project. Currently, one in seven Nebraska motorists drives a flex fuel vehicle, which can run on any blend of American Ethanol and gasoline, up to E85.

The College World Series is here again and there are no Big 10 teams present, but hopefully there is a team you can root for. Washington is a first timer, Florida is back as the defending champ from last season, former Nebraska coach Dave Van Horn



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### **District I**

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Syracuse

James Hellbusch -  
Columbus

John Orr - Blair

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### **District II**

Gerry Lauritzen -  
Omaha

Paul Dunn - Omaha

Robert Krohn - Omaha

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### **District III**

and his Arkansas team, or perhaps Texas will be who you cheer for. If you are a baseball aficionado you may like Texas because Kody Clemens will be playing for Texas and he is the third Clemens family member to play in the College World Series. His dad (Roger) pitched on two Texas teams at the CWS and won the title in 1983 and his older brother Kacy was on the 2014 Texas team that was at the CWS and was eliminated in the semi-final game. Then there is Oregon State, North Carolina, Texas Tech and Mississippi State to root for in Omaha.

Safe travels this summer.

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

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### **An Update On the Grants Process**

We are excited to announce that access to the on-line application portal for NET grant applications will be available July 15, 2018. All applications for 2019 NET funding must be submitted through the online web portal. No other application format will be accepted.

If you need assistance with the application, please contact Marilyn at 402-471-5541. Instructions, Standards of Evaluation, and FAQs are available now at:

[http://www.environmentaltrust.org/grants/application\\_instructions.html](http://www.environmentaltrust.org/grants/application_instructions.html)

Information requirements are the same except the Project Summary has been reduced from 300 words to 200 words and instead of a 5-page narrative, the project must be described in 1200 words. A decision on "Geographic Points" will be made at the August NET Board meeting.

2019 grant applications will be accepted through midnight, September 4, 2018. The online portal will be disabled at that time. We encourage applicants to contact us to discuss draft

Sherry Vinton - Whitman

Rodney Christen -  
Steinauer

Quentin Bowen -  
Humboldt

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#### **Agency Directors**

Jim Douglas, Nebraska  
Game and Parks  
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Steve Wellman,  
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Natural Resources

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Nebraska Department of  
Health and Human  
Services

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#### **Trust Staff**

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

Marilyn Tabor  
Grants Administrator

Sheila Johnson

proposals and ask any questions about the application process. You can reach our office at 402-471-5409.



### **Ducks Unlimited - 25 plus Years Of Habitat Success Stories**

Ducks Unlimited says without the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET), DU would have only completed a mere fraction of the 312 projects on more than 107,000 acres it has protected, restored or enhanced in Nebraska.

“NET funding was part of more than 90 percent of Nebraska DU projects,” said John Denton, DU manager of conservation for Nebraska. “We encourage Nebraskans to support this vitally important conservation partner.”

In the last year alone, NET has awarded Ducks Unlimited and partners grants for seven restoration projects on crucial migration habitats. The almost \$746,000 in grants has been matched with federal sources to at least double the available funds for restoration work along the Lower Platte River, North Platte River, Loup Rivers, Sandhills and Rainwater Basin. These restorations will be completed on perpetually protected properties.

In partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited will restore 890 acres of Asian carp-infested wetlands at the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge. Carp wreak havoc on wetland vegetation, leaving no forage available for migratory birds. With this

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grant, carp will be removed and new water control structures will keep carp out.

The Loup River Public Wetland project is a partnership with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to restore and enhance degraded wetlands on five wildlife management areas along the Loup River. The wetlands are choked with cattails. DU will clean inactive river channels of sediment and invasive plant species and install water control structures. Two of the grant awards are devoted to these projects covering eight Wildlife Management Areas.

DU will also restore wetlands in remnant channels along the North Platte River in Scotts Bluff County and the Lower Platte River in Dodge County. The private landowner on the North Platte River tract is donating easement value to provide match for the NET grant. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is also assisting.

The restoration projects in the Rainwater Basin will be completed on two DU “revolving” tracts. NET was pivotal in the initiation of DU’s Revolving Habitat Program in Nebraska. The program has permanently protected over 10,000 acres in Nebraska.



**Prairie Corridor Project - submitted by Nicole Fleck-Tooze,  
Special Projects Administrator, Lincoln Parks and Recreation**

Lincoln and Lancaster County are located in the Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion, which was historically covered by native tallgrass prairie and home to bison, antelope, grassland birds, and many other plants and animals. This tallgrass prairie is a remarkable, and unfortunately now rare, part of our natural and cultural heritage. Nebraska Natural Legacy Project notes that “approximately two percent of Nebraska’s tallgrass prairie remains, mostly as remnants less than eighty acres in size.”

The Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch, funded in part with grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, will be a 13-mile corridor of virgin and re-established tallgrass prairie along a trail generally following the Haines Branch of Salt Creek. The Prairie Corridor presents a unique opportunity to reduce fragmentation with an interconnected, diverse habitat. In addition to tallgrass prairie, riparian stream corridors, woodlands and both freshwater and saline wetlands provide unique habitat, supporting a variety of plant, animal and insect species. Land and easements purchased from interested landowners support these conservation and restoration efforts.

A 10-mile trail supported by matching funds will invite families and visitors to get out and immerse themselves in the prairie and will help to reconnect people with nature. A 1 ½-mile segment is planned to connect to the Conestoga State Recreation Area currently undergoing renovation. The Pioneers Park Nature Center and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center that will bookend the Prairie Corridor trail already offer interactive programs for thousands of students and families each year. Every fourth grader in Lincoln has the opportunity to experience the beauty and diversity of the tallgrass prairie thanks to the Prairie Immersion program, a collaborative effort of the two centers, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, and Lincoln Public Schools. This project will build on the strong foundation already offered by these destinations. The trail is also a key component of economic opportunity and ecotourism, as it will allow people to immerse

themselves in the tallgrass prairie to experience this unique attraction and to make connections between these important resources. The 20-mile roundtrip trail ride will encourage visitors to stay another day in Lincoln and bring them through rural towns like the Village of Denton.

Lincoln Parks and Recreation, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District (NRD), and Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center (SCPAC), along with the Lincoln Parks Foundation, Lancaster County and over 20 other partners, have made significant progress since the project's inception in 2013. Over 800 acres have been conserved through the purchase of land and easements. Restoration and enhancement work has included the re-establishment of high diversity tallgrass prairie on about 120 acres, and the use of management techniques including prescribed fire, haying, and cedar removal to enhance existing grassland areas. Nearly 2 ½ miles of trail have also been completed to the western edge of Pioneers Park. Research performed by University of Nebraska-Lincoln's School of Natural Resources is examining how to increase pollinator species in the design and management of prairie reestablishment, and is monitoring plant and pollinator species abundance and richness as indicators of habitat that is most supportive of a high pollinator diversity.

Last year, the Lincoln Parks Foundation convened a group of 16 community members chaired by nationally recognized conservationist and photographer Michael Forsberg to assist in community engagement, fundraising, and other aspects of the project as it continues to progress. The City of Lincoln also entered into long-term agreements with both the NRD and SCPAC, and approved funding to start building an endowment, all of which will help provide sustainability for the project moving into the future. The project partners are continuing landowner outreach, habitat enhancement, development of the trail, and public engagement, and are working to enhance communication through social media.

Additional information about the project can be found at [prairiecorridor.org](http://prairiecorridor.org), on social media @prairiecorridor, or by contacting the project team at [prairiecorridor@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:prairiecorridor@lincoln.ne.gov).



*Newest trail segment in Pioneers Park Nature Center*

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### **Upcoming Events**

- 3rd Quarter Board Meeting, August 6-7, 2018 (Monday-Tuesday) Columbus, NE.
  - August 24 - September 3, 2018, Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island, NE.
  - September 4, 2018 (Tuesday) - Grants Deadline
  - September 8, 2018 (Saturday) - World O Water, Papio-Missouri NRD, Wehrspann Lake, noon - 4pm
  - September 11 -13th, 2018 - Husker Harvest Days
  - September 15 & 16, 2018 (Saturday & Sunday) - Ponca Outdoor Expo, Ponca State Park
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