Agenda Item 6. Grant Modifications

A. #17-119 – The Nebraska Land Trust Incorporated - Lower Platte Preservation Partnership

The sponsor is requesting a one-year extension of the expiration date to June 30, 2021. The landowner is continuing to work through estate planning and the USDA Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) program. This extension is requested to ensure funds are available to accommodate project completion.

Staff recommends approving the one-year extension to June 30, 2021.

Possible Action: a motion to approve, modify and approve or deny the modification request.

Board Authority:
Title 137, chapter 9, Section 010. If a grantee wished to modify a project other than one covered by section 006 above, the grantee must submit a proposed amendment to the grant agreement including a revised line-item budget. The proposed amendment must be submitted to the Executive Director at least 30 days prior to the requested changes with an explanation of need. The Executive Director will then either approve or deny the proposal and inform the grantee in writing of his or her decision.

Nebraska Statute 81-15-175 (4). The board may commit funds to multiyear projects, subject to available funds and appropriations. No commitment shall exceed three years without formal action by the board to renew the grant contract. Multiyear commitments may be exempt from the rating process except for the initial application and requests to renew the commitment.
January 27, 2020

Dave Sands  
Executive Director  
Nebraska Land Trust  
9200 Andermatt Drive, Suite 7  
Lincoln, NE 68526

Reference: NET 17-119 - Lower Platte Preservation Partnership

Dear Dave,

We are in receipt of your letter dated January 24, 2020 requesting a one-year grant extension to June 30, 2021. We understand your local advisory committee has identified the Miller property as the top priority of six properties interested in the Agricultural Land Easement program and you are continuing to work with the landowner with their application. This extension will allow grant funds to remain available in until all approvals are in place.

The request for the extension of this grant will be reviewed by the Board at their February 4, 2020 meeting and you will be notified if the extension is granted.

Thank you for providing this information to us. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Tabor
Grant Administrator
Environmental Trust
402-471-5541

pc Mark Brohman
January 24, 2020

Mark Brahman
Nebraska Environmental Trust
P.O. Box 94913
Lincoln, NE 68509-4913

RE: Request for one-year Extension on Grant 17-119, Lower Platte Preservation Partnership

Dear Mark,

I am writing to request a one-year extension on the above referenced grant to protect additional land in the Schramm Bluffs of Sarpy County. In 2017, your Board approved a $350,000 three-year grant for this project with the understanding that the Nebraska Land Trust would form a local advisory committee to create scoring criteria for prospective projects, so that we could select the very best and get the most conservation bang for NET bucks. That advisory committee was formed and worked for a year to create the scoring criteria, then helped us to score six properties in the fall of 2018.

From this process, we did identify the top priority as Miller Farm, which abuts Schramm State Park and the Fedde Farm Conservation Easement. Not only would protection of this farm help to protect the public investment in Schramm State Park so there is never a subdivision on its boundaries, it will help to protect oak/hickory woodlands that provide significant habitat for migrating songbirds and water quality of a stream that runs directly into Schramm Park from the Miller Farm. In other words, we believe that this project is well worth the wait.

As promised in our grant, we intend to match NET funds with funding from the NRCS Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) program. Virginia Miller is still working through some estate planning issues regarding the farm, but we will strive to close this project by June 30, 2021.

Given these exceptional natural resources, development threats in Nebraska’s fastest growing county, Sarpy County support for conservation of the Schramm Bluffs, and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to conserve a very significant working farm next to Schramm State Park, we would like to extend our grant so we can use it for this project. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Dave Sands
Executive Director

Cc: Marilyn Tabor
Miller Farm
~ 200 acres adjacent to Schramm State Park and the Fedde Farm Easement in Sarpy County

- Springs at the head of a perennial stream that flows into Schramm Park
- Mature oak/hickory woodlands
- Key habitat for migrating songbirds and bats
- Working farm with prime soils and terraces on steep slopes
- Farmhouse built in 1884
- Archeological sites eligible for listing on the National Register
- Development Threat -- HIGH
Beatrice Miller Easement in Relation to Protected Properties and Towns