



Important Announcement by Nebraska Environmental Trust Chairman, Paul Dunn

Nebraska Environmental Trust COVID-19 impact

Dear Grantees and Friends of the Trust-- Dealing with the COVID-19 virus is ever changing. The latest recommendations, requirements, and forecasts of the future impacts are different from one day to the next. Conferring with staff, here is the current status for the NET.

Daily Operations NET staff is still reporting to work at the Ferguson House and is in compliance with the 10 person rule. If necessary or mandated, staff will follow state office requirements for dealing with the virus. Staff will work to maintain operations as smoothly as possible, especially the processing of grant reimbursements. Staff is here to take your phone call, or if it would be helpful, they are able to conduct an on-line meeting sharing their computer screen so you are both looking at the same thing.

Ferguson House All events at the Ferguson House will be cancelled until the 10 person rule expires.

2nd Quarter Meeting and Public Hearing I am postponing the 2nd Quarter Meeting to Thursday, May 21, at 1:30pm. I am hopeful that with these extra seven weeks, much will be back to (a new) normal and the meeting and public hearing can proceed without complications. However if restrictions remain, the Governor has signed an Executive Order permitting all boards and commissions to conduct business meetings on-line for a limited time provided there is adequate public accessibility. Our ability to hold a successful public hearing as our first on-line meeting is a tremendous concern to me. As weeks progress we will have a better idea of how to proceed and if on-line meeting provisions need to be made. To our grantees with current funding pending this year, I apologize for this delay. Please contact the staff with any questions you may have regarding when funds will be available for current pending grants.

Grantee Seminars These seminars are held to help grantees successfully complete the requirements of their grant contract. The seminar covers things like submitting receipts for reimbursement, public education requirements, quarterly reporting, etc. This year the grantee seminars will be held as on-line webinars using GoToMeeting. These will be on the same dates as the live events had been planned, April, 6, 7, and 9, 10:30am - noon. Because these on-line meetings won't have the meeting room size limitations, anyone may attend but registration will be required to receive the meeting link.

5-year Funding Categories The NET's enabling legislation has a requirement to review the funding categories every five years. The requirement is that there be a meeting in each of the three congressional districts. Those meetings would have occurred during the summer so the results would be available at the Board's third quarter meeting. I have recommended to staff that these meetings be postponed until the fall when travel, meeting restrictions, and social distancing have hopefully eased. It disappoints me that I won't be the NET Chair for these meetings.

Third Quarter Meeting Typically the third quarter meeting is a two day meeting held in a location outside of Lincoln. The intent is to give the board an opportunity to observe the work of our previous grants. The selection of the location for this meeting is at the discretion of the board chair. At the February meeting I had polled the board to see their willingness or interest to travel to Chadron this year. Unfortunately, at this time I do not feel it is prudent to make the commitment of travel to Chadron by the board and any of the public who want to join us. I have instructed staff that my choice of location for the third quarter meeting is in Lincoln, at the Ferguson House. Meetings away from the office place a burden on our small staff. In times like these, with the three 5-year funding category meetings being a requirement, I believe it is best to relieve the burden of an additional away from the office meeting. For board members and staff, this provides the least amount of out of area travel and away from home stays. On the up side, it has been a very long time since the Board has visited the projects in and around Lincoln.

Stay healthy everyone. With sincerity and gratitude.

Paul L Dunn

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