

AGENDA

Nebraska Environmental Trust Grants Committee

Wednesday, October 21, 2026

10:00 a.m.

2077 N Street, Suite 310
Lincoln, NE 68510

1. Call to Order
 - a. Roll call
 - b. Verify Quorum
 - c. Notice of Meeting; Published Thursday, Oct. 14, 2026
 - d. Notification of Open Meetings Law Posting
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of September 30, 2026, Grants Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Determination of Eligibility of Applications for Grant Funding
5. Grant Portal Scoring Process Explanation
6. Next Meeting; December 02, 2026, NET Office, 10:00 a.m.
7. Adjourn

****This Agenda contains a list of subjects known at the time of its distribution on Oct. 13, 2026. A Current copy is on file at the Nebraska Environmental Trust offices, 2077 N Street, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE 68510. Except for agenda items of an emergency nature, changes are not made later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting. Completing the sign-in sheet available at the meeting may offer public comment on any agenda item. The time for each speaker should not exceed 3 minutes.**

MINUTES

Nebraska Environmental Trust
Grants Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 30, 2026
9:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Andersen called the virtual, on-site meeting of the Grants Committee to order at 9:00 a.m. in Suite 310 at 2077 N St, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Advanced notice of the meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on September 23, 2026. The agenda and documents to be considered at the meeting were provided. The Open Meetings Act was posted near the meeting room entrance and on the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) website.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was present.

Members Present (4):

District I: Ted Vasko, Papillion

District III: Committee Chair Josh Andersen, Edgar; Eric Hansen, North Platte

State Agency Representative: Tim McCoy, Director, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Members Absent (2):

District II: Mark Quandahl, Omaha

State Agency Representative: Matt Manning, Chief Water Officer, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy & Environment

Staff Present:

Holly Adams, Executive Director; Lana Merani, Grants Administrator; Madison Moe, Grants Assistant; Karen Plautz-Castro, Administrative Specialist

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of December 11, 2025, Grants Committee meeting minutes

Motion by McCoy, seconded by Hansen, "I move to approve the December 11, 2025, Grants Committee meeting minutes."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Vasko, Hansen, McCoy, Andersen

Absent: Manning, Quandahl

4 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

4. Grant application process timeline

Executive Director Adams reviewed the Grants Committee timeline as follows:

- **Sept. 30th** at 9:00 a.m. – Grants Committee Meeting – Information Session on Process – via Zoom <https://outdoornebraska.zoom.us/j/94922022097>
- **Oct. 21st** at 10:00 a.m. – Grants Committee Meeting – Grant Eligibility Determinations & Recommendations – *in-person at NET Office*
- **Nov. 5th** – Board Meeting – Public Hearing and Full Board Decisions on Eligibility

- **Nov. 9th** – *Grants Committee Scoring Begins*
- **Nov. 30th** – Scoring submissions are due into the NET Grants Portal – *NET staff will need this time to process the scoring results*
- **Dec. 2nd** at 10:00 a.m. – Grants Committee Meeting – Grant Application Scoring and Recommendations for Funding – *in person at the NET office*
- **Jan. 7th** – Board Meeting – Public Hearing and Full Board Decisions on Grant Awards

5. Review Eligibility questions and criteria

Executive Director Adams discussed eligibility criteria, reviewed a few eligibility “decision flow-chart”/guidance documents, and noted that specific reference information regarding NET’s rules and regulations can be found via NET’s website and the Grants Portal. Additionally, the reference numbers located at the end of each eligibility question indicate location of the pertinent statute or regulation.

Some discussion was had surrounding the difference functions within the grant award process that the eligibility stage plays versus scoring determinations. Executive Director Adams also reiterated that she would be providing recommendations for applications that she suggested be brought forward by the Grants Committee for eligibility discussion.

6. Grants Portal Demonstration

Executive Director Adams briefly demonstrated the NET Grants Portal and requested that Board Members recuse themselves if there are grants for which they have conflicts of interest. It was reiterated that scoring will be completed only after eligibility determinations have been finalized by the full NET Board on November 5, 2026, and that scoring is planned to be completed by the Grants Committee via the NET Grants Portal after the conclusion of that meeting.

7. Next Meeting

The next Grants Committee meeting will be held October 21, 2026, at 2077 N Street, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE at 10:00 a.m.

8. Adjourn

Committee Chair Andersen adjourned the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

Holly Adams, Executive Director

Grants Committee Eligibility Review

Item: 4

Object: Review and make decisions on 2027 grant eligibility

Contact Person: Holly Adams

For: ACTION

Attachment: 17 Pages

BACKGROUND

Nebraska Revised Statutes §81-15,168 and 81-15,176, Title 137, Chapter 4 – Criteria for Eligibility and Chapter – Evaluating Proposals for Eligibility, Nebraska Environmental Policy Section III: Conflict of Interest, Nebraska Environmental Policy Section V: Grant Applications

EXPLANATION

The Grants Committee receives an application after the Executive Director has reviewed it for completeness. A technical review is conducted, if necessary, and provided to the Grants Committee members in the Grants Portal. The Executive Director makes an eligibility recommendation to the Grants Committee. The Grants Committee makes a determination of eligibility and recommendation to the full NET Board for consideration.

After the Grants Committee makes their recommendations to the NET Board for consideration, the NET Board may adopt or revise the Grant Committee determination for eligibility. If the NET Board determines an applicant is eligible, it would then be scored by the Grants Committee. An application must be eligible before it is considered for scoring.

PROPOSAL

The Grants Committee received grant applications, eligibility criteria and supporting documentation. The Grants Committee members had an opportunity to independently review the applications. The Executive Director has provided recommendations for grant eligibility discussion.

Recommended motion eligible: “I move to determine that grant applications (each listed) are eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and approval.”

Recommended motion not eligible: “I move to determine that grant applications (each listed) are not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.”

2027 NET Applications

App ID	Project Sponsor	Project Name
27-101	Grand Island Area Clean Community System	Operation of Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility including agriculture
27-102	Pheasants Forever Inc., Chapters	No-Till Drills --Maple Creek, Antelope Valley, and Great Plains PF Chapters
27-103	City of Minden	STARR City of Minden & Pioneer Village Revitalization
27-104	City of Omaha-Public Works	Hell Creek Stabilization
27-105	Goodwill Industries Inc. Serving Eastern Nebraska and Southwest Iowa	Goodwill Omaha Regional Materials Recovery & Circular Economy Infrastructure Project
27-106	Middle Niobrara Natural Resources District	MNNRD Educational Complex 2026
27-107	Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District	Recharge Lake Sediment Retention Project
27-108	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Rock Creek Lake Wetland and Water Quality Enhancement Project
27-109	Habitat for Humanity of Omaha	2026 HVAC Replacement Project
27-110	Southeast Nebraska Development District	Southeast Nebraska HomeLift
27-111	Christensen Well & Irrigation	Nebraska Groundwater Protection Through Advanced Well Construc
27-112	Nebraska Community Foundation for Business of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture	Divots in the Pivots III
27-113	Pheasants Forever, Inc.	Pathway For Soil Health, Grazing, and Wildlife
27-114	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	North Platte River Valley Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Partnership V
27-115	Pheasants Forever, Inc.	Cottonwood Fire and Loess Canyons Resiliency
27-116	Sandhills Task Force	Sandhills Stewardship, Conservation, and Resiliency Project
27-117	Keep Omaha Beautiful	Community Environmental Education & Improvement
27-118	Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries	Crystal Springs Lake Trail and Soil Stabilization Project
27-119	Nebraska Board of Educational Lands and Funds	Preserving our Heritage: Maintaining Nebraska's Educational Trust Grasslands
27-120	Lower Platte North NRD	Increasing Irrigation Efficiency in the Lower Platte North NRD

2027 NET Applications

App ID	Project Sponsor	Project Name
27-121	Keep Sidney Beautiful	Keep Sidney Beautiful: Clean & Green Sidney Initiative
27-122	Southern Plains 4-H	Southern Plains Safety Day
27-123	Nebraska Community Foundation for Business of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture	Rainwater Basin Wetland Restoration for Wildlife Habitat and Groundwater Recharge
27-124	Lower Niobrara Natural Resource District	LNNRD Habitat Restoration Program
27-125	ROAM Share (dba Heartland Bike Share)	Free Rides Program
27-126	National Audubon Society dba Audubon Great Plains	Conservation Forage Program
27-127	Keep Alliance Beautiful	Community Beautification and Environment Education
27-128	Panhandle Public Health District	Environmental Health Education
27-129	Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development	Household Hazardous Waste Collections
27-130	City of Edgar	Edgar Downtown Revitalization & Veterans Memorial Park
27-131	Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation	Agriculture and the Environment, Education and Outreach
27-132	RippleFX, LLC	Connecting Communities, Industries, and Education through Recycling
27-133	Nebraska Recycling Council	Waste Diversion Grants
27-134	American Bird Conservancy	Wings Over the Tallgrass: Conserving Eastern Nebraska's Prairie
27-135	National Audubon Society dba Audubon Great Plains	Grassland Restoration & Enhancement Across Two Landscapes
27-136	Platte River Basin Environments	Restoring Rangelands Through Long-Term Cheatgrass Control Phase II
27-137	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Wild Nebraska Program
27-138	The Nature Conservancy	Expanding Sandhills Fire Training
27-139	Nebraska Community Foundation for business of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture	Recovering Nebraska's Grasslands
27-140	Johnson Lake Carp Removal Fund with Lexington Community Foundation	Restoration of Aquatic Habitat and Water Quality through Biomanipulation at Jphnson Lake

2027 NET Applications

App ID	Project Sponsor	Project Name
27-141	The Nebraska Soil Health Coalition w/ Nebr. Community Foundation	Producer-Engaged Precision Forage Management for Economically Favorable Environmental Stewardship
27-142	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Growing the Core Through Cedar Removal on Cherry County Wildlife Management Areas
27-143	PlantNebraska	Planting Knowledge, Growing Canopy
27-144	Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries	Camp Property Acquisition and Habitat Preservation
27-145	Southwest Weed Management	2027 -2028 Western Republican River Basin Riparian Habitat Project
27-146	Nebraska Pharmacists Association	Nebraska MEDS: Protecting Nebraska's Environment Through Safe Medication Disposal
27-147	S2 Refuse & Recycling	Fremont Community Recycling and Resource Recovery Program
27-148	Middle Niobrara Weed Awareness Group	Scenic Niobrara Corridor Project
27-149	Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment	Kimball County & Banner County Floodplain Mapping Project
27-150	Panhandle Weed Management Area	Landowners and PWMA United for Invasive Species Management
27-151	Ducks Unlimited	Restoring Habitat in the Platte Watershed
27-152	Trailblazer Resource Conservation & Development	Household Hazardous Waste Recycling Event
27-153	National Audubon Society dba Audubon Great Plains	Investing in the Platte River Ecosystem for Wildlife and People
27-154	City of North Platte	Log Splitter
27-155	Bellevue University	Citizen Soil: Mapping Nebraska's Microbiome
27-156	Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment	Domestic Well Research and Education: Incentivizing Participation through Treatment
27-157	Nebraska Community Foundation for business of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture	Morphy Waterfowl Production Area Restoration
27-158	Creative Reuse Omaha, Inc.	RECYCLE OMAHA Waste Diversion Operations and Event
27-159	Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment	BMP Implementation in Wellhead Protection Areas
27-160	City of South Sioux City	Crystal Cove Boardwalk
27-161	Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment	Public Drinking Water and Proactive Environmental Management

2027 NET Applications

App ID	Project Sponsor	Project Name
27-162	Green Omaha Coalition	Green Directory
27-163	City of Bellevue - Public Works Department	Quail Creek Stream and Riparian Ecosystem Restoration Initiative
27-164	Twin Valley Weed Management Area	Eastern Republican and Little Blue Watershed Improvement Project
27-165	Keep Chadron Beautiful	Northwest Nebraska Recycling Expansion and Waste Diversion Project
27-166	Choat Land and Livestock	Invasive Plant Species Removal Through Sheep Grazing with Virtual Fence
27-167	Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust	Enhancing Crane Trust Education and Public Programming Transportation
27-168	Rooted Vessel Farm	Rooted Vessel Farm 150-Acre Ecosystem Restoration Project
27-169	Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment	Building Voluntary Watershed Coalitions: A Proactive Monitoring and Outreach Initiative
27-170	Shelly Kelly	Adaptive Grazing Across Nebraska: Evaluating Virtual Fencing
27-171	Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska	Advancing Kelly Pond Restoration: Phase 3 Engineering, Design, and Water Quality Monitoring
27-172	Midwest Soilogix, LLC	Compost Site
27-173	Keep Nebraska Beautiful	Keep Nebraska Beautiful Used Oil Collection Program (2027 - 2028)
27-174	Laura Taylor	From Water Gaps to Habitat Gains

Eligibility – Discussion

App ID	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Review Notes
27-111	Christensen Well & Irrigation	Nebraska Groundwater Protection Through Advanced Well Construc	Private vs. public benefits
27-147	S2 Refuse & Recycling	Fremont Community Recycling and Resource Recovery Program	Technically feasible
27-166	Choat Land and Livestock	Invasive Plant Species Removal Through Sheep Grazing with Virtual Fence	Private vs. public benefits
27-168	Rooted Vessel Farm	Rooted Vessel Farm 150-Acre Ecosystem Restoration Project	Private vs. public benefits
27-170	Shelly Kelly	Adaptive Grazing Across Nebraska: Evaluating Virtual Fencing	Private vs. public benefits
27-172	Midwest Soilgix, LLC	Compost Site	Private vs. public benefits
27-174	Laura Taylor	From Water Gaps to Habitat Gains	Private vs. public benefits

App ID: 27-111

Sponsor: Christensen Well & Irrigation

Project Title: Nebraska Groundwater Protection Through Advanced Well Construc

Project Summary

The applicant requests NET funds to acquire a new dual-rotary drill rig for a three-year groundwater protection and field demonstration project. The applicant will provide licensed drillers, water trucks, and other support equipment needed to operate the rig.

During each full operating year, the drill will be used on at least 10 qualifying Nebraska wells. The applicant will document field performance, construction conditions, materials used, relevant well design decisions, and final well results when available.

Annual findings, including benefits, problems, and limitations, will be shared with NET and Nebraska well professionals. The project will demonstrate how dual-rotary construction can improve well integrity and provide long term protection for Nebraska's groundwater resources.

Eligibility

Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? Compensation for contributions made to a project, such as land or land rights, shall not constitute payment for private benefits. (04.005)

No: The project's primary purpose and benefit are public and environmental: improving groundwater protection through better borehole control, reduced reliance on drilling fluids, improved well sealing, documented field evaluation, and statewide sharing of results with Nebraska well professionals. Grant funds will support the DR24 for the demonstration project, not

customers' ordinary well-construction costs or routine business operations. Any incidental benefit to the applicant is secondary to the project's documented public environmental benefits.

Does your project provide the greatest environmental benefits relative to cost? (04.001.02)

Yes: A single investment in the DR24 will provide environmental benefits across numerous Nebraska well sites rather than at only one location. The equipment can improve borehole stability, reduce reliance on drilling mud, produce clearer formation and groundwater observations, and support more reliable placement of grout...This repeated use and statewide knowledge transfer extend the environmental value of the investment beyond the three-year grant period.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 27-111 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App ID: 27-147

Sponsor: S2 Refuse & Recycling

Project Title: Fremont Community Recycling and Resource Recovery Program

Project Summary

S2 Refuse & Recycling proposes to establish a community-accessible recycling and resource-recovery program in Fremont, Nebraska, in connection with a planned solid-waste transfer facility.

Grant funds will be used for recycling collection containers and covered storage units, secure lithium-battery equipment, used-oil containment equipment, tire and electronics collection equipment, and recycling-related material-handling equipment and attachments.

Implementation is contingent upon S2 receiving the City of Fremont transfer-station RFP award, acquiring an approved site and obtaining required permits. Construction is expected to take approximately 12–18 months, with operations anticipated to begin in 2028. The completed program will increase landfill diversion, reduce improper disposal and provide long-term public environmental benefits.

Eligibility

Is your project financially and technically feasible? (04.006) - See Title 137 or the Eligibility Criteria link at the top of this page for more information.

Yes: S2 has solid-waste operating experience and will provide the required \$50,000 cash match, property acquisition, construction funding and ongoing operating support. **Implementation is contingent upon the Fremont RFP award, site acquisition and required approvals.** Grant-funded equipment will be purchased after execution of the NET grant agreement and installed as facility construction allows.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 27-147 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App ID: 27-166

Sponsor: Choat Land and Livestock

Project Title: Invasive Plant Species Removal Through Sheep Grazing with Virtual Fence

Project Summary

This project seeks funding to expand a proven targeted grazing program using small animal Nofence virtual fencing collars to control invasive, noxious, and undesirable vegetation on Nebraska grasslands and marginal lands. *A group of 80 collars on ewes were successfully tested during the 2026 grazing season to manage sheep grazing on leafy spurge near Verdigre, Nebraska.

Funding would be used for the purchase of Nofence sheep collars and associated subscriptions to expand the grazing system. The project will use managed sheep grazing as a biological vegetation management tool to suppress invasive plants, improve desirable plant communities, protect soil resources, and improve the long-term condition and productivity of marginal land. Project outcomes will be documented through grazing records, acreage treated, photographs, GPS data, and vegetation monitoring.

***Note: Choat Land and Livestock was a part of another project awarded in 2026 for virtual fencing (ID: 26-140). 26-140 was awarded to Rebecca Ravenkamp, which included multiple landowners, a public partner, and a public field day to demonstrate results. This was a three-year project and will expire in 2028.**

Eligibility

Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? Compensation for contributions made to a project, such as land or land rights, shall not constitute payment for private benefits. (04.005)

No: Although Choat Land and Livestock and participating landowners will receive incidental benefits from implementation of the project, the project is designed to produce broader environmental and public benefits. It will demonstrate a practical and scalable method of managing invasive plant species through targeted sheep grazing while reducing reliance on herbicides and improving management of sensitive areas. The results can inform similar management on rangeland throughout Nebraska, extending the project's value beyond the participating properties.

No additional funding partners were directly identified on the application.

Does your project offer public benefits? (04.005)

Yes: The public benefit of this project will be twofold. First, it will improve local ecosystems by managing invasive species with targeted grazing, reducing reliance on herbicides, preserving desirable plant species, and protecting water resources. Second, the project will demonstrate a scalable approach to invasive species management that can be replicated by other Nebraska landowners and producers. Project results will provide practical information on the effectiveness and feasibility of using sheep and virtual fencing for invasive species management while maintaining productive agricultural use of the land.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 27-166 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App ID: 27-168

Sponsor: Rooted Vessel Farm

Project Title: Rooted Vessel Farm 150-Acre Ecosystem Restoration Project

Project Summary

Rooted Vessel Farm, LLC. Requests NET funding to implement a comprehensive ecosystem restoration project across its existing 150-acre regenerative farm in Washington County, Nebraska, near Fort Calhoun.

This project addresses all five NET funding categories through an integrated set of conservation practices: 95 acres of native perennial pasture and 95 acres of silvopasture establishment; 15 acres of native pollinator habitat and 30 acres of native wooded understory restoration following invasive eastern redcedar removal; approximately 3,800 feet of ravine and riparian restoration, including grade stabilization at identified erosion points; a 3.5-acre habitat pond; a five-row, 5,000-foot shelterbelt; adaptive rotational grazing infrastructure, including fencing, a buried livestock waterline, and terrace removal; a dedicated manure composting facility and bedding processing system; and 336 bird nesting boxes and 15 bat houses.

Environmental outcomes will be independently verified through a three-year monitoring agreement with the Ecdysis Foundation and baseline soil health testing with Understanding Ag. This project directly benefits Moores Creek, which flows into the Missouri River, while restoring soil health, expanding wildlife habitat, improving water and air quality, and reducing agricultural waste on working farmland.

Eligibility

Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? Compensation for contributions made to a project, such as land or land rights, shall not constitute payment for private benefits. (04.005)

No: The primary purpose and predominant benefit of this project is public: improving soil health, water quality, air quality, waste management, and wildlife habitat across 150 acres. The project protects and restores the wooded ravine and Moores Creek corridor (on our property), which GIS mapping confirms drains to the Missouri River, extending runoff, erosion, and nutrient-management benefits beyond the farm. **Some components, including fencing, water distribution, and manure-management infrastructure, also provide operational farm benefits, but are necessary to achieve the project's environmental objectives.** They enable adaptive rotational grazing, protect sensitive habitat, reduce erosion and nutrient runoff, and improve manure collection, composting, and beneficial reuse. Extensive native habitat establishment and

independent environmental monitoring ensure measurable public benefits. The project's public environmental benefits substantially exceed its incidental private benefits.

Does your project offer public benefits? (04.005)

Yes: This project provides substantial public benefits extending beyond Rooted Vessel Farm, LLC. Improved water quality in Moores Creek, which flows directly into the Missouri River, benefits a shared watershed. Native prairie, pollinator, riparian, wetland, and wooded habitat restoration benefits wildlife and biodiversity beyond the property boundary. Soil restoration and erosion control protect agricultural resources and reduce sediment and nutrient movement into shared waterways, while improved manure management reduces environmental impacts associated with livestock waste. Public field days and the Omaha Home for Boys partnership will share conservation practices with youth, producers, and the community. Environmental outcomes will also be independently monitored by the Ecdysis Foundation, allowing project results to contribute to broader understanding of conservation practices on working farms.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 27-168 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App ID: 27-170

Sponsor: Shelly Kelly

Project Title: Adaptive Grazing Across Nebraska: Evaluating Virtual Fencing

Project Summary

This three-year project will demonstrate and evaluate virtual fencing as a conservation grazing tool on two Nebraska ranches representing different ecosystems, ranch sizes, and grazing opportunities.

Approximately 3,300 virtual fence collars will be deployed—3,000 on a ranch in Cherry, Hooker, and Grant Counties in the Sandhills and 300 on a ranch in Custer County in the Loess Hills. The project will evaluate how virtual fencing can increase grazing flexibility on rangeland as well as crop residue and cover crops. By allowing livestock managers to change grazing boundaries without constructing permanent fencing, virtual fencing may improve wildlife habitat, soil health, health and vigor of the plant community, and water infiltration by targeting livestock distribution, allowing for more strategic rest and recovery periods, and increased flexibility during changing weather conditions, facilitate use of crop residue and cover crops, and increase flexibility during changing weather and forage conditions.

The results will be evaluated and presented in reports and during ranch tours. Three ranch tours will be conducted during the project to demonstrate the technology and share results. The project will produce practical, independently evaluated information that Nebraska land stewards can use when considering virtual fencing as a conservation and grazing-management tool.

Note: project will take place on two private ranches, will include ranch tours to demonstrate results and will be utilizing funds from WWF and FWS.

Eligibility

Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? Compensation for contributions made to a project, such as land or land rights, shall not constitute payment for private benefits.

(04.005)

No: Although the participating ranches may receive management benefits from the use of virtual fencing, the purpose of the NET-funded project is to demonstrate and independently evaluate a conservation practice and share the resulting information with Nebraska landowners and the public. The project will directly address Habitat, Soil Management, and Surface and Ground Water objectives. The three ranch tours and independent evaluation will provide opportunities for other landowners and conservation professionals to learn from the project. The resulting information will help determine whether virtual fencing can be used to improve grazing management and natural-resource outcomes on other Nebraska ranches.

Does your project offer public benefits? (04.005)

Yes: The project will produce environmental benefits through improved grazing management and will generate practical information that can be used by other Nebraska landowners. Three ranch tours will be conducted during the three-year project to demonstrate virtual fencing, discuss management practices, and share results. An independent contractor will evaluate the project and prepare reports documenting environmental, management, and economic outcomes. The project will therefore provide benefits beyond the participating ranches by helping Nebraska landowners better understand whether virtual fencing can be an effective conservation tool.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 27-170 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App ID: 27-174

Sponsor: Laura Taylor

Project Title: From Water Gaps to Habitat Gains

Project Summary

This project will install five solar-powered livestock wells to improve water availability and enable more effective rotational grazing. Three wells will be installed on upland Sandhills rangeland where a previous pipeline project did not provide sufficient water to support an adequate rotational grazing system. Reliable water in these upland pastures will allow livestock to be distributed more strategically, provide adequate rest and recovery for grazed areas, and improve the overall health and resilience of the rangeland.

Two additional wells will be installed in meadows along the North Loup River. These meadows currently receive limited grazing because livestock must access water directly from the river when they are grazed. Concentrated livestock access at water gaps quickly degrades the riverbank and surrounding area. Providing alternative livestock water will allow the meadows to be rotationally hayed and grazed while reducing the need for cattle to water directly from the river.

The project will improve grazing management, soil health, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and water quality. It will also improve drought resilience by providing reliable livestock water during changing weather and forage conditions. The wells will be maintained by the ranch after the grant period, providing long-term conservation benefits.

Eligibility

Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? Compensation for contributions made to a project, such as land or land rights, shall not constitute payment for private benefits. (04.005)

No: Although the project will occur on private land and will provide management benefits to the ranch, the proposed improvements are intended to produce substantial environmental benefits. The wells will enable improved rotational grazing, improve rangeland and meadow habitat, reduce concentrated livestock impacts, protect riparian habitat along the North Loup River, reduce erosion, and improve soil and water resources. The project will use livestock production as a tool for achieving and maintaining these conservation outcomes.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 27-174 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

The Adopted Policies of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

Section V: Grant Applications,

D. Eligibility: Private Gain

Benefits from a Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant must be public in nature. Private benefit, especially private financial gain, must be incidental to the project. This may create a special challenge for private landholders seeking to improve their property or for for-profit enterprises seeking assistance for their operations. The following list is provided as an illustration of some, though not all, possible options that may demonstrate predominant public benefit of a project. An applicant could incorporate any or all of the following components into a proposal in order to demonstrate that a project results in public gain:

1. The project is co-sponsored by at least one public entity in full partnership. The entity will determine appropriate public benefit as a pre-condition to partnership.
2. Incidental private gain, e.g. increased equity value, reverts to the public sector.
3. The project returns a benefit value to the public exceeding the dollar amount of the grant, and the grant represents the minimum investment required in order to produce the projected benefits to the public; and there is clear public need that is unmet and the private sector is unlikely to meet this need without public assistance.

An applicant could incorporate the following into a proposal to help determine that a project results in public gain when seeking funds for the improvement of private property:

1. The increase in ecosystem value can be quantified; e.g., tons of soil conserved, volume of water with measures of clarity, purity, etc.
2. The increase in value of private property is quantified; and the increase in ecosystem value clearly exceeds the increase in the value of private property; and the grant represents the minimum investment required in order to produce the projected benefits to the public.
3. A private property owner might enter into an agreement granting equity interest, a conservation easement, or like arrangement with a public entity to demonstrate how the private gain is to be repaid.

The burden of proof of any of these conditions lies with the applicant.

Title 137 Rules and Regulations

CHAPTER 4 - CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

001. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. To be eligible for consideration in the rating processes for funding, the applicant's proposed project must be consistent with the following criteria for eligibility as described in Sections 001 to 006 of this Chapter.

001.01 PROHIBITION AGAINST FUNDING REGULATORY MANDATES.

001.01(A) Regulatory means to control, direct, or govern.

001.01(B) Regulations means only those rules codified in the Nebraska Administrative Code or in the Code of Federal Regulations.

001.02 The fund shall not pay for projects to the extent such projects have direct beneficiaries who could afford the costs of the benefits without experiencing serious financial hardship. For purposes of this section, "direct beneficiaries" shall not be deemed to include a person who receives incidental benefits from a project which primarily benefits the general public. A serious financial hardship may be deemed to exist when the direct beneficiary of the grant funding, which may or may not be the grant sponsor or applicant, needs substantially all of its current and anticipated income and liquid assets to meet current and anticipated ordinary and necessary subsistence expenses during the project period.

001.03 The grants should assist those projects which will make a real contribution to achieving the board's environmental categories. A real contribution is one that is measurable.

001.04 The grants should assist those projects which offer the greatest public benefits; and the public benefit must be greater than an incidental private benefit.

001.05 Grants for land purchases or easements shall not cause the elimination of the property tax liability.

002. ENVIRONMENTAL ACCEPTANCE. A project is considered to be environmentally acceptable when:

002.01 The project will not jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or modification of the critical habitat of any such species and shall meet the requirements contained in the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act, Nebraska Revised Statute § 37-801; and

002.02 The plan of development minimizes any adverse impacts on the natural environment, adequately addresses existing cultural resources and results in environmental net gain.

002.03 In addition to any proposed mitigation measures, all aspects of the project which

can be anticipated to result in environmental enhancement shall be considered in determining whether the plan minimizes adverse impacts. The Board may request additional information it deems necessary in determining environmental acceptability. The applicant, if required by the Board, will be provided a reasonable period of time to respond to requests for information and such other items as the applicant of the Board identifies as relevant to the issued of environmental acceptance.

003. CLEAR AND DIRECT ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS. A project will be considered to have clear and direct environmental benefits if the realization of those benefits can be reasonable expected, as a result of the project and if those benefits will be obvious. The application will need to describe the environmental benefits anticipated as a result of the project and how those benefits will be clearly and directly attained. Environmental benefit can be achieved through the contribution of assets and services that enhance the capability of communities and individuals to conserve, enhance, and restore the natural physical and biological environment in Nebraska, including the air, land, ground water and surface water, flora and fauna, prairies and forests, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and natural areas of aesthetic or scenic values.

004. CONTRIBUTION TO ACHIEVE THE BOARD'S FUNDING CATEGORIES. Only those projects which contribute to the existing environmental categories established pursuant to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Act shall be eligible for financial assistance.

005. PUBLIC BENEFITS. For a project to be eligible for funding assistance, it must produce public, not just private, benefits. The public benefit must be greater than the private benefit. The project must be implemented and completed in Nebraska. Public access is a public benefit.

006. FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY. Financial and technical feasibility may be evaluated by the use of subcommittees, contractual assistance or advisory groups. Standards for each of these factors are as set out below:

006.01 FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY. A project is financially feasible if sufficient funds will be made available to complete the project as described in the application and to maintain and operate any tangible component of the project for its useful life or until disposal. Each applicant shall submit a project budget identifying the nature and amount of each source of funds to be used to carry out the project; a schedule indicating when such funds will be received; and a schedule indicating when the funds available will be expended to carry out the project. Additional financial data may be supplied by the applicant.

006.02 TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY. A project that is structural in nature shall be considered technically feasible when it can and will be designed, constructed, and operated utilizing accepted engineering and other technical principles and concepts to accomplish the purpose(s) for which it was planned. A project which is nonstructural in nature shall be considered to be technically feasible when it can and will be designed and carried out to accomplish the purpose(s) for which it was planned.

Grants Portal Demonstration

Item: 5

Object: How to utilize the grants portal for Scoring

Contact Person: Holly Adams

For: Discussion

Attachments: 2 pages

BACKGROUND

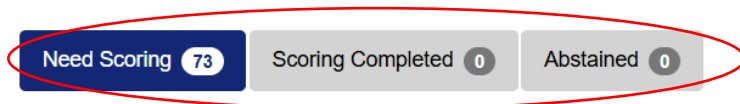
Login page: <https://environmentaltrustgrants.org/>

EXPLANATION

Grant applications are submitted by applicants through the NET grants portal. The Grants Committee utilizes the Grants Portal to review applications and make scoring determinations.

How to Review Projects for Scoring

1. Login to Grants Portal at the following link: <https://environmentaltrustgrants.org/>
2. You will see the following screen when logged in:



Manage	App ID	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Review Group	Amount Requested	Term of Request
	26-101	ROAM Share (dba Heartland Bike Share)	The Free Rides Project	Air Quality	\$240,000	3
	26-102	Southwest Weed Management	2026 - 2027 Western Republican River Basin Riparian Habitat Project	Water	\$186,960	1
	26-103	Grand Island Area Clean Community System	Operation of Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility	Waste Management	\$360,478	2

3. The top menu shows the number of projects you need to score, how many have been submitted, and how many you've abstained from. **Note:** Only projects deemed eligible by the full NET Board will be listed here.
4. To open a project for review, click on the pencil icon under the manage column. This will open the application.
5. The following are the available tabs for review in the applications.



- a. Cover Sheet** – Grant Application Summary and Narratives
- b. Budget** – Proposed dollar amounts for application, including grant funds and cash match
- c. Real Estate** – If there is any proposed purchase of real estate or real estate improvements, the property information is listed here.
- d. Timeline** – The applicants proposed project timeline if awarded

- e. **Requirements** – This also lists their responses to the eligibility and scoring criteria questions
- f. **Attachments** – The applicant’s attachments. Sometimes there’s supplemental information provided.
- g. **Technical Review** – If a technical review was requested, the reviewers responses are here
- h. **Recommendation** – This is the recommendation for award information. This will not be completed until after the project has been decided
- i. **Eligibility** - The applicant’s responses to the eligibility criteria questions with the relevant rules and regulations.
- j. **My Score** – This is where you can review the scoring criteria questions, the grantees responses, rules and regulations, and where the score for each criteria question is entered.

6. **My Scoring Tab.** This is where you will enter your score. You will need to click on the **Enter My Score** icon. Here you will select your score from the dropdown menu. Once completed, click the save and then submit icon at either the top or bottom of the page. **Note:** You can also click the save icon and come back to your scoring later.

Cover Sheet	Budget	Real Estate	Timeline	Requirements	Attachments	Technical Review	Recommendation	Eligibility	My Score
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Enter My Score

	Criteria	Applicants Response	Review
1.	Does your project conform to the funding	Yes. HBS's "The Free Rides Project" contributes measurable impact toward NET's commitment	

Back Save Submit

	Criteria	Applicants Response	Enter Review
1.	Does your project conform to the funding categories? Explain which categories and how. (04.001.03, 04.004, and 81.15.176)	Yes. HBS's "The Free Rides Project" contributes measurable impact toward NET's commitment to Air Quality projects in Nebraska. HBS directly replace carbon-intensive trips (i.e. those completed by personal motor vehicles, rideshare, taxi, etc.) with trips on low /zero emission bike share. This directly	- See Guidance -