

RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

December 2019

Executive Director Corner

I can't believe Christmas is almost here and 2020 is just around the corner. Most of the harvest is completed, but I see an occasional combine still in the field and I saw an article the other day noting there is a lot of corn still in the fields in North Dakota. Nebraska weather continues to be extremely variable with the recent snow after some very mild weather. Who knows what this winter might bring.

I attended the 2019 Nebraska Prescribed Fire Conference in Kearney last week. There were over 200 attendees and Dr. Dirac Twidwell gave a very informative presentation on the rapid expansion of Eastern Red Cedars (ERC) in the Midwest. The amount of burning across the State is growing, but far from what is needed to just keep even with ERC expansion and other invasive species. I also attended the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) meeting in Kearney and presented to the County Weed Superintendents. They always have some great questions about the Trust and our grants.

We have seen an increase in events held at the Ferguson House, most noticeably events that had been held in the Capitol in the past. Since the HVAC replacement started earlier this year, as much as one quarter of the Capitol is closed off at a time and they have been shifting offices and



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agencies around. Meeting and event space is at a premium at the Capitol and will be for several years. We had over 400 people visit the Ferguson House during our annual Holiday Open House. It is always exciting to share not only the history of our office space, but the purpose of the Environmental Trust.

Neither the football nor the volleyball seasons ended as we had hoped, but there is always the proverbial “next year”. I do believe both programs are going to be in good shape next year. The football team seems to be pulling in some great recruits with the latest numbers having us at 24th in the country in recruiting. We only graduate a few players, but not large numbers. The volleyball team has no seniors, so we lose no one on this year’s team and I expect we will be dominating next season. The volleyball team got to the final eight, but a strong Wisconsin team that beat us at home 3-0 and on their court 3-0 earlier this year, swept us 3-0 for a third straight time. If Wisconsin wins out, we could end up ranked as high as 3rd, but I think 5th or 6th is probably more realistic. I would say we are in the toughest volleyball conference in the country and to go 28-5 is a great accomplishment. UNK went to the NCAA Division II volleyball championship and lost 3-1. They ended their season 38-1, very impressive.

Now the basketball season is upon us and the Husker women are on fire with a record of 9-1, their only loss to Creighton by five points. We have one more conference game and then it is Big 10 play. The men’s team has struggled, but beat a pretty good Purdue team this weekend, 70-56. At 5-6, they started out slow, but maybe they will turn things around. My sports kudos for the month go out to Omaha’s Terence “Bud” Crawford for his for his ninth-round TKO in Madison Square Garden. Crawford is now 36-0 with 27 knockouts. Many are saying pound-for-pound, he is the best boxer out there.

Rodney Christen - Steinauer

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I hope everyone is able to spend the holidays with family and friends.

Happy Holidays!

Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

Greener Nebraska Towns, More Resilient, Bio-diverse and Waterwise

Currently the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum has two programs funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust. The Greener Towns and Trees for Nebraska Towns programs help communities improve the resiliency and environmental sustainability of community greenspaces. These programs work with local citizens, community organizations and businesses to implement tree-planting and ecological garden projects by providing technical support and funding assistance.

Properly designed and maintained ecological landscapes, including the community forest, provide a multitude of environmental benefits-- from cleaning and conserving water to reducing air temperature to providing habitat for insects and birds. The benefits can be measured in the millions of dollars; benefits tied to property values, stormwater management, energy conservation, wildlife habitat, community vitality, etc. Planting in communities is a win-win. Natural resources are conserved while dramatically improving the quality of life for our citizens.

So far these programs have provided:

Trees for Nebraska Towns - Thus far 133 planting projects (with another 7 in works) and over 1,599 public trees have been planted. These projects have engaged 1,000

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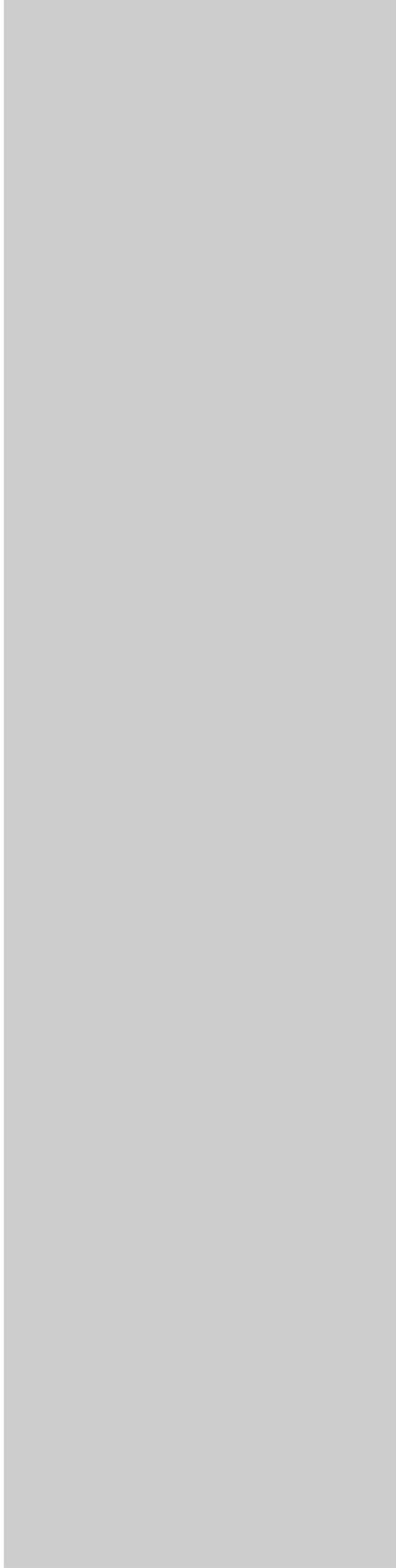
volunteers. In addition, tree preservation projects are taking place in 6 arboretum sites across the state—with more to come.

Greener Towns - Twenty-two ecological-landscapes have been completed, with another 17 in the planning phase. Over 12,000 plants and 139 trees have been planted. These projects have engaged over 400 volunteers.

What does the future hold?

Nebraska communities face a host of complex economic, social and environmental challenges. Currently they are experiencing a generational loss of community tree canopy, climate change, challenging growing conditions, public apathy and many missed opportunities for high-functioning ecological landscapes.

Partners must work together across sectors and have committed, long-term action. More investment is needed in planning, policy, planting projects and their long-term management to ensure that the community forest and associated landscapes are sustainable and healthy in the future.



Close to 500 people attend the Ferguson House Holiday Tours

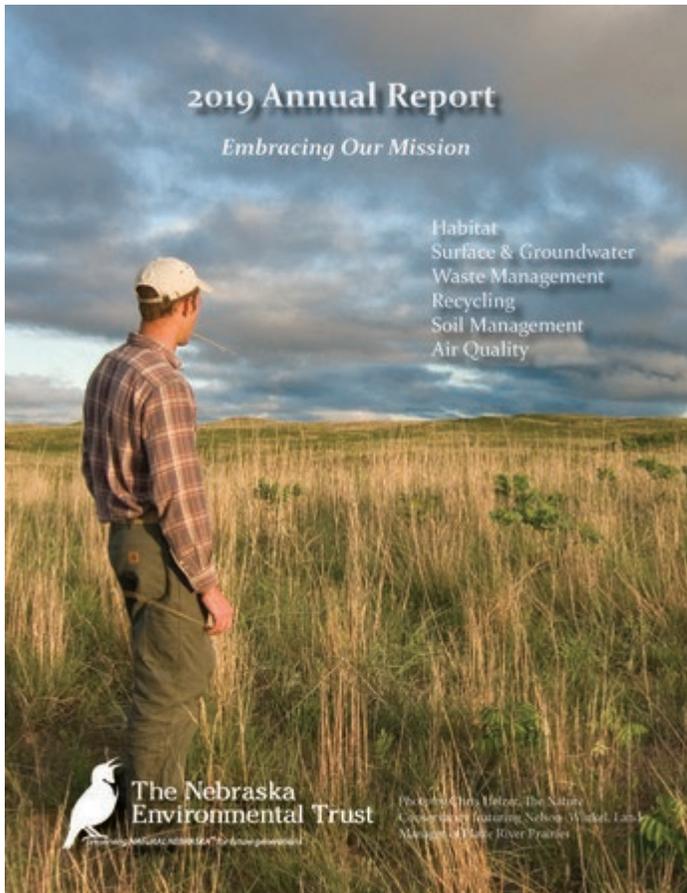
The Nebraska Environmental Trust hosted a holiday open house at the historic Ferguson House on Sunday, December 8th. Close to 500 people attended the event, which marked the second highest attendance since the annual event first started in 2003. Over 600 people attended last year. Guests were able to tour all the floors of the historical home and experience the house in its full splendor with all the Christmas decorations.

The event is held annually in the 1st week of December. The first floor is available to rent for smaller events throughout the year. You may contact Allison La Duke, Events Coordinator at 402-471-5417 for pricing and availability.



Table Setting For The Holiday Open House

2019 Annual Report Available Soon On Our Website



The Nebraska Environmental Trust Annual Report will be available soon on the Trust website. Look for your copy in the mail in January, if you have a subscription with us.

Upcoming Events

- February 4, 2020 (Tuesday) - 1st Quarter Board Meeting
 - February 6, 2020 (Thursday) - 25th Anniversary of the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Informational Seminar
 - April 2, 2020 (Thursday) - 2nd Quarter Board Meeting
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