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RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

February 2020

Executive Director Corner

The 2020 legislative session is about half way through the 60 day session. Fortunately Senator Brewer withdrew Legislative Resolution (LR285CA) to take the Environmental Trust funds for prison overcrowding. We appreciate his consideration of the Trust and the projects we have completed.

I want to congratulate Craig Derickson, State Conservationist of Nebraska for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Derickson recently was awarded the State Conservationist of the Year for 2019 by the National Association of State Conservation Agencies. The Trust has worked with Derickson and his NRCS team on many projects across the State.

At the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Seminar in Grand Island on February 6, the Trust received the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture 2020 Conservation Partner Stewardship Award. Around 250 landowners, agency staff and conservationists filled the room and I was honored to accept the award from Andy Bishop.

It is time for State wrestling and basketball. Hopefully you have a local team or teams coming to State and can cheer them on to victory. It appears the crown of collegiate men's basketball in Nebraska goes to



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Creighton University. They are currently at 21-6 and ranked 15th, and way ahead of the Huskers men's team (7-18) and last place in the Big10. The Husker women (16-10) have shown flashes of success and can still make a positive run at the end of the season. For the Husker football fans, the Red-White Spring Game is April 18th at 1:00 and it will be broadcast on the Big Ten Network (BTN) live. Softball and baseball have started off well and might provide an exciting season.

Travel safe,

Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

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Rainwater Basin Joint Venture 2020 Conservation Partner Stewardship Award.



Kent Zimmerman (left) and Mike Brown (right) present Craig Derickson (center) with the Outstanding State Conservationist of the year award from the National Association of State Conservation Agencies.

Allison La Duke
Grants Assistant

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**Nebraska Environmental Trust Invites Comments
on 2020 Board Recommendation Rank Order List**

At its meeting in Lincoln on February 4, 2020, the Board of the Nebraska Environmental Trust revised the Grant Committee’s Recommendations for Funding Placed in Rank Order.

The Board of the Nebraska Environmental Trust chose to increase funding to the project submitted by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy and Green Plains Inc. for the Nebraska Renewable Fuels & Air Quality Program (20-137). This grant application seeks to provide a 50% cost match in the installation of bio-fuel ethanol blender pumps. The total increase is \$1,851,891.00 over three years. These funds became available by shifting funding from five other projects.

In a 7-2-2 vote, the board approved a motion that was made to revise the Grant Committee’s recommendations. This modification of the Grant Committee’s recommendation was made under the Trust’s Title 137 Rules and Regulations, specifically Chapter 6.005 and 8.005.

The motion de-funds the following projects from the Grants Committee’s Recommendations For Funding Placed In Rank Order that was first published on the Trust website on January 23, 2020.

The grants affected are:

Grant Number	Applicant	Project Name	Total Amount De-funded Over 3 years
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20-178	Ducks Unlimited	Restoring Wetlands of the North Platte River Valley	\$ 201,000
20-181	Ducks Unlimited	Platte River Watershed Conservation	\$ 536,331
20-214	Ducks Unlimited	Eastern Rainwater Basins Environmental and Habitat Improvement	\$ 97,050
20-112	City of Lincoln	Eastern Saline Wetlands Project - 2020	\$ 900,000
20-119	Nebraska Land Trust	Pines and Buttes/Kreman Ranch Protection Project	\$117,510
		Total:	\$ 1,851,891

With the revision that was approved by the Board, the Trust will now be funding 73 new projects and 45 carry-over projects for a total of \$20,000,000 in grant awards for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. This is the 26th year of grants from the Trust, which has provided over 320 million dollars in lottery proceeds to preserve and protect the air, water and land in all 93 counties in Nebraska. The Trust has done an extensive amount of natural resource work in Nebraska since 1993.

Written public comments will be accepted until April 1, 2020 at the Nebraska Environmental Trust, P.O. Box 94913, Lincoln NE 68509-4913 or via email at: marilyn.tabor@nebraska.gov. Please include your

name, address and organizations (if applicable) and be sure to reference the project name and number in your correspondence. Comments can also be presented in person during a public hearing on April 2, 2020. The meeting begins at 1:30 pm at the Ferguson House, 700 South 16th Street, Lincoln NE.

As part of the grant making process, the Trust is seeking public input on the proposed grants before voting on the final awards at their April 2, 2020 board meeting. A revised list of all recommended grants and project information is available on the Trust website at: <https://environmentaltrust.nebraska.gov/>

Restoration of Pollinator Habitat

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) acquired funding for restoration and enhancement of grassland to provide the needed resources to a variety of wildlife species with special attention directed toward pollinators and the monarch butterfly. This grant was awarded in 2016 and renewed annually for a total of three years of funding. Nebraska Department of Roads and Prairie Plains Resource Institute were partners in this endeavor.

The grassland restoration and enhancement consisted of removal of non-native cedar trees, seeding with native prairie seed and planting of milkweed seedlings. Seeding was done within state park, state recreation, and state wildlife management areas and along the Cowboy Trail right of way. 297 acres were seeded with local ecotype seed. Over 26,000 milkweed seedlings were planted and almost 1,000 seedlings were

distributed to community members and Boy Scouts. During the 2018 grant period, the Boy Scouts had the opportunity to earn a SOAR – Save our American Resources patch, by planting milkweed seedlings. The Norfolk Daily News posted an article about the NGPC working with a Boy Scout troop planting seedlings along the Cowboy Trail. The 2018 article can be found at https://norfolkdailynews.com/news/milkweeds-for-monarchs/article_7def5ee8-5b6a-11e8-b705-b3876f7eec36.html.

In addition to grassland restoration and enhancement, over a dozen educational workshops and events were provided by NGPC staff. The workshops were designed for both educators and the community. Session topics included monarch butterflies, how to manage a backyard pollinator garden, and citizen science. A monarch and pollinator educational booth was presented at a local nature event. Through a hands-on educational event, a northeast Nebraska Boy Scout troop learned about the monarch life cycle and migration which led to a spring planting of milkweed seedlings. These workshops and events were conducted to educate and inform attendees of the efforts needed to prevent further decline in pollinator populations.



A Pollinator Plot

Upcoming Events

- April 2, 2020 (Thursday) - 2nd Quarter Board Meeting, 1:30pm
 - April 6, 2020 (Monday) - Lincoln Grantee Seminar, Ferguson House.
 - April 7, 2020 (Tuesday) - Lincoln Grantee Seminar, Ferguson House.
 - April 9, 2020 (Thursday) - Grand Island Grantee Seminar, Central Platte NRD.
 - April 18, 2020 (Saturday) - Earth Day Omaha
 - April 25, 2020 (Saturday) - Lincoln Earth Day
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