

RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

June 2020

Executive Director Corner

Finally we were able to hold our second quarter board meeting on June 11th. Originally scheduled for April 2nd, then postponed to May 21st, we were able to schedule a Zoom meeting online June 11th. We received 215 comment letters and had 22 testifiers for the public hearing that was held. We had over 120 connections to the meeting. A few of those connections were via phone lines and several of the connections included multiple people listening and watching from one connection. I want to personally thank everyone who took the time to write us, testify or log into our board meeting.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyone's lives. We are back to the full staff reporting to work in the office. Until recently we were rotating two staff in the office and two staff working from home. Fortunately with a 10,000 sq.ft. building, social distancing is a little easier for the Trust staff than most people.

We are not sure how COVID-19 will impact the third quarter meeting that is normally held outside of Lincoln and involves site visits. The two day meeting will be held in Lincoln, unless it is necessary to have the



Pete Ricketts, Governor
Board of Trustees

District I

Jeff Kanger - Lincoln

James Hellbusch - Columbus

John Orr - Blair

District II

Felix B. Davidson - Valley

Paul Dunn - Omaha

Robert Krohn - Omaha

District III

Sherry Vinton - Whitman

meeting online again. The meeting will be held August 3th and 4th.

We continue transitioning to an online reporting system for the way we process reimbursements and receive reports from grantees. While the transition period has been challenging, we hope in the end the system will be much easier for grantees to use and allow staff to be more efficient.

Fall sports, both high school and college, will probably occur in some fashion. Many details are yet to be worked out at this time. Even professional sports from hockey to football are being negotiated. One thing is for certain, sporting events will be different this season and some changes may be long term.

Stay safe, practice social distancing and wash your hands often.

Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

Nebraska Environmental Trust Awards 2020 Grants

The Board of the Nebraska Environmental Trust announced on June 11, 2020 via a web meeting, that 118 projects will receive \$20,000,000 in lottery proceeds for natural resource work in Nebraska. Out of these, 73 are newly funded grants and 45 are carry-over projects. This is the 27th year of grants from the Trust, which has provided over \$328 million dollars in lottery revenue to preserve and protect the air, water and land of our state. Some of the projects receiving funding include:

Rodney Christen - Steinauer

Quentin Bowen - Humboldt

Agency Directors

Jim Douglas, Nebraska Game and
Parks Commission

Steve Wellman, Nebraska
Department of Agriculture

Jim Macy, Nebraska Department of
Environment & Energy

Jesse Bradley (Acting Director),
Nebraska Department of Natural
Resources

Dr. Gary Anthonie, Nebraska
Department of Health and Human
Services

Trust Staff

Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

Marilyn Tabor
Grants Administrator

Sheila Johnson
Public Information Officer

Pam Deines
Administrative Secretary

Allison Majerus
Grants Assistant

- Middle Niobrara NRD – Long Pine Creek Watershed Restoration – Phase 3
- Sandhills Task Force – Sandhills Conservation Partnership – Grassland and Wetland
- UNL, Board of Regents– Improving Statewide Performance of Conservation Investments On Eastern Red Cedar Invasions
- Spring Creek Prairie Audubon – Launching Spring Creek Prairie as a Demonstration Site for Tallgrass Prairie Conservation – Denton Hills

A complete listing of all approved 2020 grants and summaries can be found on the Nebraska Environmental Trust web site at:

<https://environmentaltrust.nebraska.gov/>

The Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992. Using the revenue from the Nebraska Lottery, the Trust has provided grants to over 2,300 projects across the state. Anyone can apply – citizens, conservation organizations, communities, businesses and individuals that want to protect Nebraska’s natural habitat, improve water quality and quantity or find ways to manage our waste. The Nebraska Environmental Trust works to preserve, protect and restore our natural resources for future generations.

Sneak Peek At Some Of The Newly Funded Projects

Platte River Whopping Crane Maintenance Trust - Big Bend of the Platte River Partnership for Habitat Preservation project

The Nebraska
Environmental Trust

700 S 16th Street

PO Box 94913

Lincoln, NE 68509-4913

web site:

<https://environmentaltrust.nebraska.gov>

The Crane Trust, in partnership with conservation organizations and local landowners, proposes the purchase of adaptable, reliable, and efficient equipment to protect and restore critical habitat throughout the Big Bend Reach of the Platte River for threatened and endangered species, Nebraska Legacy Project's tier 1 at-risk species, and residents and visitors of the central Platte River valley. The Crane Trust is requesting funds to purchase and operate a tractor and shredder to be used with existing river clearing equipment to significantly increase the number of acres to be disked and/or shredded annually. Left unattended, noxious and invasive vegetation such as Phragmites and purple loosestrife, shrub and woody species encroachment (e.g. cedar trees), island stabilization, and channel incision occurs, negatively impacting the ecological significance of the Platte River. River clearing and riverine habitat restoration efforts are further challenged by aging machines and equipment and limited numbers of trained operators. This replicable project is regional in nature and is a scientifically research-based practice throughout the Big Bend Reach of the Platte River. This practice is further studied and documented for new adaptive management strategies, publications, community, economic values and education, and continued preservation of critical habitat for conservation.

**Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) -
Richard Plautz Crane Viewing Site Restoration
Project**

The Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) requested \$50,000 in NET funds to cost-share specific, non-trail related improvements associated with the Richard Plautz Crane Viewing Site Restoration Project. NET funds will be used exclusively for 0.6-

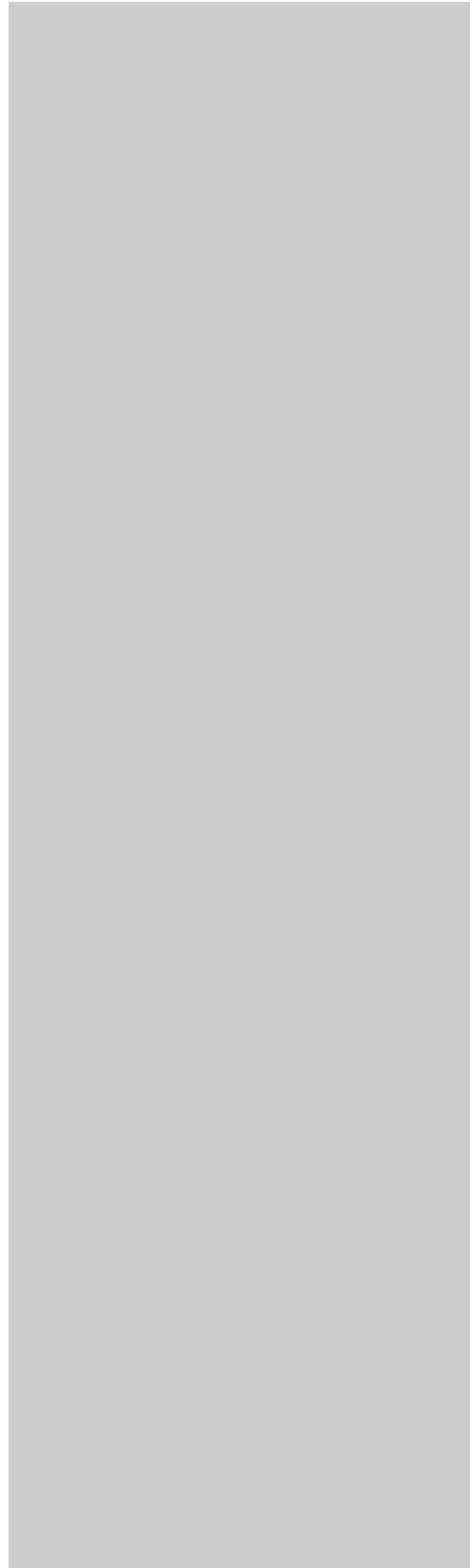
acres of clearing and grubbing, removal of two (2) large trees, installation of 2,700 linear feet (LF) of erosion control silt fencing during the project's construction phase, placement of 803 ton of Quartzite riprap on the southeast side of Lowell Road bridge, installation of 600 willow stakes (live pole plantings) for a natural, ecologically-friendly bank stabilization, and 0.6 acres of seeding and mulching once the new nature trail has been reconstructed.

Spring Creek Prairie - Launching Spring Creek Prairie as a Demonstration Site for Tallgrass Prairie Conservation across the Denton Hills Landscape

Prairie historically covered approximately 170 million acres of central North America creating the continent's largest continuous ecosystem, but this ecosystem has been largely converted, fragmented, and altered. Nebraska's prairies are primarily stewarded by private landowners, so conserving this important habitat will require rapid and concerted action among all the actors that value this landscape.

The Denton Hills Landscape is an intact prairie system in southeast Nebraska that is approaching a tipping point as threats such as encroaching cedars increase, while highly variable management among landowners contributes to habitat decline. With a professional staff and located within this landscape, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center (SCP) will expand its mission to be an anchor for tallgrass prairie conservation and collaborative prairie management on private lands within the Denton Hills Landscape.

SCP will serve as a key node for habitat management experimentation and demonstration, prescribed fire, collaboratively driven landowner engagement and education, and will provide an exemplary sense of ownership of these grasslands by landowners and the



general public. This project will result in improved habitat quality and management practices for the at-risk species and people dependent upon the remaining tallgrass prairie.



Whooping Cranes at the Crane Trust Property taken by Emma Brinley Buckley

Upcoming Events

- August 3-4, 2020 (Monday/Tuesday) - 3rd Quarter Board Meeting - Location: Ferguson House (Tentative), Lincoln NE
 - August 28 - September 7, 2020, Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island (Tentative)
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