

# RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

## March 2020

---

### Executive Director Corner

What a huge difference a month makes. A month ago we were monitoring the Legislature and thinking of State basketball. The 2020 legislative session has been suspended with a couple days this week devoted to only passing an emergency \$83.6M appropriation.

The Trust's April 2<sup>nd</sup> board meeting has been postponed to May 21<sup>st</sup> and we will be examining that date over the next few weeks. See below, for Chairman Paul Dunn's letter outlining the Trust's current plan. The Governor has given approval to hold electronic meetings, but we must provide for the public to attend and provide testimony on the 2020 grants and for the media to be present, so we have some challenges to overcome if the current restrictions for public gatherings continue.

We are still planning to hold our Grantee Seminars on April 6, 7 and 9, but they will only be available on-line through GoToMeetings. Attendees have been contacted by e-mail to select a meeting date. If you haven't RSVP'd yet, please contact Allison La Duke ([allison.laduke@nebraska.gov](mailto:allison.laduke@nebraska.gov)). Next week we will send out the meeting link to participating grantees. Most grantee paperwork will be available to download from



---

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

our website and final contracts will be emailed out once the Trust board has met and made final approvals of 2020 grants.

The Trust financial records are being transitioned to an on-line reporting process. Training and assistance will be provided for 2020 grantees at the GoToMeeting Grantee Seminars noted above. Funding for existing grants will be available for reimbursements after April 30, 2020. Instructions and assistance to access the on-line reimbursement will be provided to existing grantees in mid-April. If you have any questions please contact Marilyn Tabor by phone or e-mail, 402-471-5541, [marilyn.tabor@nebraska.gov](mailto:marilyn.tabor@nebraska.gov)

It seems I have mentioned too many great people passing this past year, but unfortunately I must mention two more, Wilber "Bud" Dasenbrock passed away on January 30, 2020. He worked for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for 15 years and then spent 18 years at the University of Nebraska as Director of Landscape Services. Bud loved plants, especially trees, and he was always ready to lend a hand or give horticultural advice.

Another friend, Larry Shafer, passed away March 1, 2020. Larry had a 60 year career at the Nebraska Department of Roads (now Dept. of Transportation). Larry was the Head of Government Affairs and for several years when I held that position at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, we would spend hours in the rotunda of the State Capitol watching bills and visiting with Senators about our agencies and their bills. One day after I became the Director of the Trust, Larry shared with me that he had been the person that personally negotiated the sale of the Ferguson House (home of the Trust) to the State of Nebraska. He had negotiated a Life Estate with Mrs. Ferguson in 1961 and the State did not take

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 Anthone, 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 La Duke  
Grants Assistant

possession of the property until her death, which occurred in 1972 at the age of 103. Larry said he received a lot of teasing for making a deal that took 11 years to be completed.

The sports world has been turned upside down with all of the current sports seasons (high school, college and professional) being canceled and the Olympics will be pushed back to next year. Tom Brady, one of the greatest quarterbacks to play the game, leaves the Patriots for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. No I'm not a Patriots or a Tom Brady fan, but it is a major event in the pro football world.

Stay safe and practice social distancing.

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

---

### **Nebraska Environmental Trust COVID-19 impact - Announcement From Chairman, Paul Dunn**

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,

The Nebraska  
Environmental Trust

700 S 16th Street

PO Box 94913

Lincoln, NE 68509-4913

web site:

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

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

---



**Felix B. Davidson Appointed to Nebraska  
Environmental Trust Board**

A new member has been appointed to the Trust Board by Governor Pete Ricketts. Mr. Felix Davidson replaced Ms. Gerry Lauritzen representing District 1, effective February 14th, 2020, and will continue to serve until March 10, 2025.

Mr. Davidson brings with him his vast experience and expertise in many different areas. He is currently the Chief Operating Officer for Bridges Trust and is responsible for strategy & planning, operations, technology, accounting & finance, compliance, human resources and administration. He has 25 years of leadership experience in a wide variety of management positions that developed a broad base of skills in all aspects of business and corporate governance.

Mr. Davidson said, "I'm honored that the governor and legislature have given me this opportunity to serve my state and help shape decisions that will help improve the natural resources and environment of Nebraska."

The Trust Board is comprised of 14 members representing the State of Nebraska and its citizens. Nine citizen representatives are appointed by the Governor to serve six year terms. Three representatives are chosen from each congressional district, serve without pay and represent a wide variety of natural resource interests. Five agency directors make up the remaining seats on the board to provide coordination with existing state resources. A staff of five handles the day-to-day activities of the agency.

---

### **New Arboretum at Thedford Fire Hall in time for Wildflower Week**

Local volunteers and the Upper Loup NRD are planting a new Arboretum project around the Fire Hall in Thedford this spring as part of Nebraska's Greener Towns Program, funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

The Arboretum plan (pictured) was designed by Chrissy Land of the Nebraska Forest Service and features a paved nature walk and cozy picnic areas

