

# RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

## September 2020

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### Executive Director Corner

Well COVID-19 still grips the country, but that is all I'm going to say about that topic. We have exciting news at the Trust, we have new two board members. Former Senator Mark Quandahl of Omaha joined the board last week and will be representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District. He is assuming Bob Krohn's seat. Mark is a practicing attorney that recently was the Director of Nebraska's Department of Banking and Finance. The other new board member, Tom Riley, will officially begin his service on November 1, 2020, when he starts as Nebraska's next Director of Natural Resources. Tom is currently the President of the Flatwater Group, a firm in Lincoln and Imperial specializing in water and environmental engineering. We welcome Mark and Tom to the board and know they both bring a world of knowledge and experience to our board.

We are very sorry to see Robert (Bob) Krohn leave the board. He was first appointed to the Trust board in 2003. Bob holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from UNL. After working for the State of Nebraska, he began a long and illustrious career with Henningson, Durham and Richardson, Inc. (HDR), including becoming their President. Bob became the Chairman of Commercial Federal Corporation, Omaha,



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Pete Ricketts, Governor  
Board of Trustees

### District I

Jeff Kanger (Chair) - Lincoln

James Hellbusch - Columbus

John Orr - Blair

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### District II

Felix B. Davidson - Valley

Paul Dunn - Omaha

Mark Quandahl - Omaha

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### District III

in 1990 and has served on many boards. We wish Bob and his wife Mryna all the best and thank him for his many years of service to the Trust and the State of Nebraska.

Tom Riley will replace Jesse Bradley who stepped in for Jeff Fassett upon his retirement earlier this year. We appreciate Jesse joining our board and helping out in the interim.

We received 123 new applications and with the carry-over projects, the total request for 2021 is \$63.8M. We are busy assigning applications to our Technical Reviewers and then the Grants Committee will begin their work in November. Our next board meeting will be November 5<sup>th</sup> in Lincoln, but the location is to be determined. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 guidelines and comply with them.

The Category Roundtable Meetings are coming up soon and will be held via Zoom. The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center will be facilitating the three meetings and setting up registrations. See story and link in our newsletter below. There will also be an opportunity for the public to submit written comments before, during and a few days after the public Zoom meetings.

Nebraska football is certainly catching some ribbing from the sports world. Folks are saying, well Nebraska whined the loudest and eight players sued the Big10, so here is your schedule. Many are calling the Husker's 2020 schedule the toughest in college football. If it is not the toughest, it definitely has to rank right up there. The season will open October 24<sup>th</sup> at Ohio State and it doesn't get much easier with Wisconsin coming to town the next week. Unfortunately, there will not be fans in the stadium, except for very few player relatives and select athletic staff. It looks like college volleyball will be played in the spring and the final four may still be

Sherry Vinton - Whitman

Rodney Christen - Steinauer

Quentin Bowen - Humboldt

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#### 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

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#### Trust Staff

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

[Position Vacant]  
Grants Administrator

Sheila Johnson  
Public Information Officer

Pam Deines  
Administrative Secretary

played in Omaha. I hope you catch some local high school sports this fall.

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

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

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### **Nebraska Environmental Trust Invites Comments on 2021 Grant Applications**

The Nebraska Environmental Trust entered the 2021 grant cycle on September 8, 2020, receiving 123 new applications and 72 carry-over projects requesting a total of \$63,833,541 in funds. Last year the Trust received 120 new applications and 46 carry-over projects asking for \$46,328,020. The Trust has completed 27 grant cycles and will announce the results of the 28<sup>th</sup> round of award recommendations in February 2021.

As part of the grant application process, the Trust invites members of the public to review the proposed grants and provide written comments about the projects. A summary of each proposal will be available soon on the Trust's web site:

<https://environmentaltrust.nebraska.gov> Comments on the grant applications will be accepted until April 7, 2021 at the Nebraska Environmental Trust, 700 S 16<sup>th</sup>

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Street, PO Box 94913, Lincoln, NE 68509-4913 or via e-mail to [mark.brohman@nebraska.gov](mailto:mark.brohman@nebraska.gov)

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### **Latest Appointments To Trust Board**

The Trust is pleased to welcome two new members to the Board.

Newly appointed Director of Natural Resources, Thomas Riley of Eagle was named to be the official representative to sit on the Trust Board with his recent appointment, beginning November 1, 2020.

Also named to the Trust Board is Mr. Mark Quandahl. His term begins September 16th, 2020 and continues until March 10, 2021. He replaces Robert Krohn.

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### **Chance For Public Input For Trust Funding Categories Meetings Coming Up**

NET will hold three category roundtable meetings online via Zoom. There will be one site available in each Congressional District, but everyone is encouraged to attend via Zoom. Each person can only register for one meeting and there is a limit of 150 participants for each session. Written comments will be taken by submitting them to: Nebraska Environmental Trust, 700 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, until October 23, 2020.

Here is the registration link for the Category Roundtable meetings:

<https://go.unl.edu/net2020meetings>

The Public Input meetings will be held online from **1:00pm - 4:00pm CDT** on the following dates:

- **Tuesday, September 29, 2020 (will have a meeting room at the Ferguson House)**
- **Tuesday, October 6, 2020 (will have a meeting room in the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, 1007 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Kearney)**
- **Wednesday, October 14, 2020 (will have a meeting room at the Papio-Missouri River NRD offices, 8901 S. 154<sup>th</sup>, Omaha)**

These meetings allow the public to comment on the existing funding categories (surface and groundwater, air quality, municipal waste/recycling, soil management, and habitat). The public can also comment on other matters concerning the NET. The format will be a general discussion with everyone in that session, followed by breakout small groups, and then reconvening and discussing the small group input.



*Photo by Justin Powell/NGPC*

### **Game & Parks Grateful For Firefighting Partners**

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission credits the outstanding work of volunteer fire departments and

other responders in limiting damage from two Panhandle wildfires in late August.

The Hubbard's Gap Fire in the Wildcat Hills south of McGrew burned about 4,000 acres, including more than 60 percent of the land at the 1,829-acre William's Gap Wildlife Management Area. During the same period, the Aristocrat Fire burned about 400 acres in the Pine Ridge 3 miles south of Chadron.

Along with air tankers, helicopters and dozens of responders on the ground, more than a half-dozen Game and Parks employees sprang into action with their wildland firefighting rigs, known as Type 6 engines, and other equipment.

Wildlife manager Matt Steffl of Chadron said a strong working relationship with local volunteer fire departments, the U.S. Forest Service and the Nebraska Forest Service was key.

"Our staff training on fire behavior and prescribed fire techniques, along with wildfire courses and past practical experience, all played into this," Steffl said. "The equipment that we use for land management, including burn units and hand tools, was ready and immediately put to use. We also have several agency personnel who have the coursework, practical experience, and certification to work directly with U.S. Forest Service crews on federal properties."

Steffl said experience from the Pine Ridge's catastrophic wildfires of 2012 helped ensure preparation this time around.

"After the 2012 fires, we used funds from NGPC, Nebraska Big Game Society, National Wild Turkey Federation and Nebraska Environmental Trust to purchase and furnish a wildfire response trailer with two skid units, drip torches, hand tools, and other equipment," Steffl said. "One of the skid units along with

hand tools was deployed for the Chadron fire. Basically, this is a quick way of turning a standard pickup into an impromptu grass rig for wildfire or prescribed fire.”

Wildlife biologist Justin Powell of Alliance also was thankful the Game and Parks personnel and equipment could contribute to the effort.

“We had to draft out of stock tanks a lot throughout the first night of the Hubbard’s Gap fire,” he said, in reference to the process used to draw water from a static water source. “There was a point where a fire engine wasn’t able to draft correctly, so we ended up drafting from ours and using our hose to fill them up. It felt good to know that a wildlife rig was able to help fellow firefighters continue to do their job.”

Powell also said education and experience was critical.

“Education on fire behavior was big on this for me,” he said. “Between the Wildland Fire Academy, Chadron State College classes and job experience, I felt comfortable fighting some intense fires. There were a couple of head and flank fires that we attacked, and knowing safe approaches and how to attack was key, especially in the middle of the darkness of the night.”

With much of the Panhandle in extreme fire danger, officials are urging the public to avoid any activity that might ignite a wildfire.



*Photo by Justin Powell/NGPC*



#### 40th Annual Bird Seed Sale

The Omaha Audubon Society (ASO) is hosting its 40<sup>th</sup> annual Bird Seed Sale. If you are in the Omaha area and are interested in purchasing seed for your feathered friends (or squirrels!), you can go to their website to view the order form and learn more about how to use different seed mixes to attract a larger variety of birds to your yard.

Orders may be placed (online or by mail) until October 21st with pick-up on Sat, Oct 31st and Sun, Nov 1st at the NEW ASO office near 90th and L Streets in Omaha. The Fall Seed Sale is their largest fundraiser of the year and proceeds support LOCAL conservation and education.

Find "Audubon Society of Omaha" on Facebook and visit their website at [www.audubon-omaha.org](http://www.audubon-omaha.org) for more information.



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### **Wachiska Fall Birdseed Sale in October**

The Wachiska Audubon Society will be taking birdseed orders until Wednesday, October 7, 2020, with order pick-ups to be Oct 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. For everyone's safety, when orders are picked up, they ask that you stay in your vehicle and open your trunk for the seed to be loaded. Order forms are available on their website at: [www.WachiskaAudubon.org](http://www.WachiskaAudubon.org) or calling their office at 402-486-4846.

National Audubon calendars are also available on their website.



### **Nebraska Natural Legacy Seeks Nominations for the 2020 Nebraska Natural Legacy Awards**

You are invited to the 10th Annual Nebraska Natural Legacy Conference: A Decade of Connections on the Landscape. This will be a five-day virtual conference experience with all sessions hosted on Zoom, October 19–23, 2020. Registration is free for this virtual conference. Registration will open the week of

September 21 and close Wednesday, October 14, 2020. Please visit the conference website at <https://OutdoorNebraska.gov/Legacy2020/>.

The Nebraska Natural Legacy Project is the blueprint for conservation of at-risk species and landscapes in Nebraska. The annual conference covers research, education, and management of our natural resources. We have nearly 60 presentations from field biologists, graduate students, and conservation practitioners across Nebraska. See our website for more details on sessions and presenters: <https://OutdoorNebraska.gov/Legacy2020/>.

We are also accepting nominations for two awards this year: the Nebraska Natural Legacy Conservation Award and the Nebraska Natural Legacy Education Award. Please consider nominating an individual or organization that exemplifies the Natural Legacy Project's mission of conserving Nebraska's flora, fauna, and natural habitats for our Natural Legacy Conservation Award. New this year, we also have the Natural Legacy Education Award; we encourage you to consider nominating someone that has advanced environmental or conservation education and has inspired others to learn about natural resources and the Natural Legacy Project. Nominations are due Friday, October 2, 2020.

Questions can be sent to [sarah.nevison@nebraska.gov](mailto:sarah.nevison@nebraska.gov) or 402-471-5708.

### **Upcoming Events**

- NET Category Roundtable Meetings (1:00pm - 4:00pm). Registration link to be available soon.
1. September 29, 2020 via zoom

2. October 6, 2020 via zoom
  3. October 14, 2020 via zoom
  - 4th Quarter Board Meeting, November 5, 2020 (Thursday), 1:30 pm, Venue: TBA.
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