An aerial photograph showing a wide river winding through a valley. The landscape is a mix of green fields and brownish soil. In the background, there are blue mountains under a cloudy sky. The text 'The Value of Water' is overlaid on the top half of the image.

The Value of Water

Nebraska Environmental Trust
2004 Annual Report to Nebraska Citizens



Nebraska Environmental Trust Board of Directors

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Department of Natural Resources



A message from the Board Chair

December 2004

"This region which resembles one of the ancient steppes of Asia has not inaptly been named 'The Great American Desert.' It spreads forth into undulating and treeless plains and desolate sandy wastes, wearisome to the eye from their extent and monotony. It is a land where no man permanently abides, for at certain seasons of the year there is no food for the hunter or his steed."

—Washington Irving, American explorer, 1836

In maps from the early 19th century, the land west of the Mississippi was labeled "The Great American Desert." Those Europeans brave enough to explore the area thought that this dry and barren land was incapable of sustaining life. Despite these desolate observations, the pioneering founders of Nebraska saw the land as filled with promise and value. Their vision was correct; the "desert" was able to sustain a new way of life that had never been experienced in the short history of our United States.

The water resources that enabled the pioneers to establish roots in Nebraska continue to support the growth of our state. However, the needs for Nebraska's water have changed over the last century. Our abundant groundwater and surface water must support our agriculture, communities and wildlife now and in the future. This annual report will show how valuable water is to every citizen of Nebraska.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust believes that our water resources must be protected for the next generation of Nebraska pioneers. Our grants have enabled farmers to produce better crops using less water, conservationists to improve wetland areas for migratory birds, communities to protect their water sources from contamination, and lawmakers to develop water policies for the future. The dedicated grantees of the Nebraska Environmental Trust are finding solutions to critical water issues every day with our support, and their stories demonstrate the value of water to Nebraska. I invite you to read about the accomplishments of our grantees in the following pages and join us in preserving Natural Nebraska for future generations to enjoy.

P I D

Paul L. Dunn
Chairman of the Board



Nebraska Environmental Trust
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PO Box 94913
Lincoln, NE 68509-4913

Phone: 402-471-5409
www.environmentaltrust.org

Trust Staff

Mary A. Harding
Executive Director

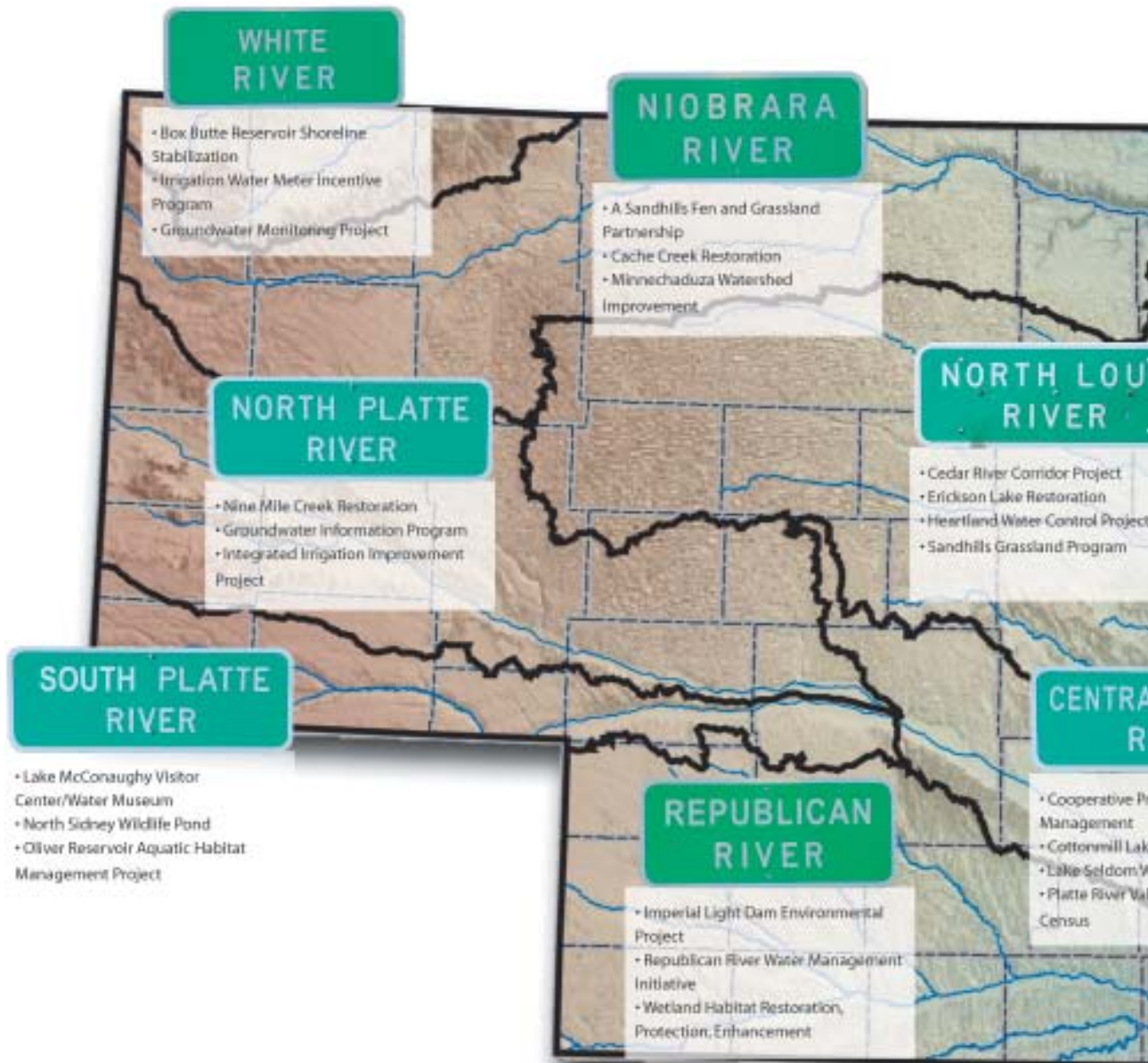
Lisa Beethe
Grants Administrator

Tina Harris
Grants Assistant

Neil Watson
Public Information Officer

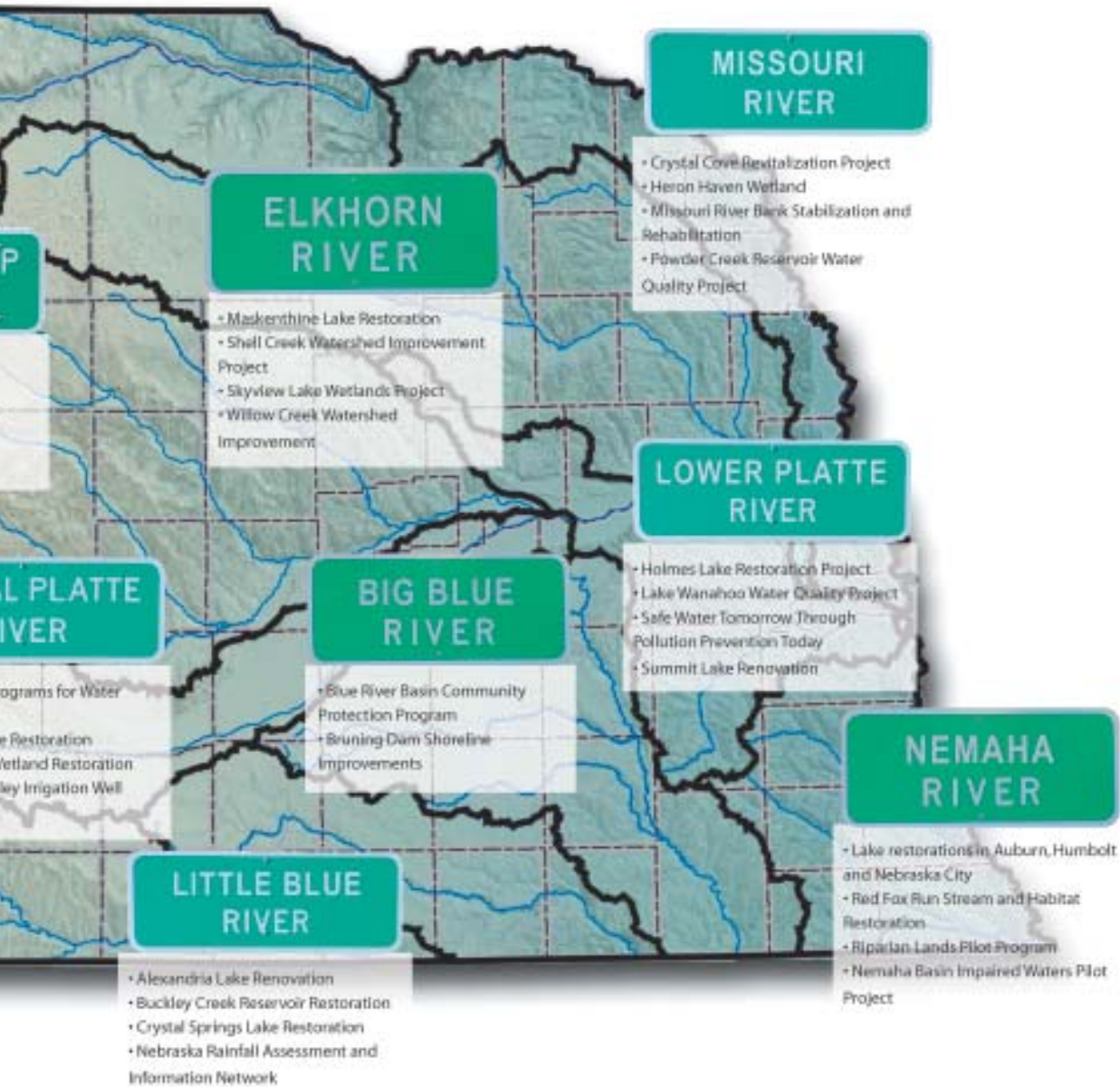
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Water for Nebraska



The Nebraska Environmental Trust has funded over 280 projects concerned with water since 1994. Every major Nebraska river and over 100 lakes have benefited from the hard work of Trust grantees. Below are some examples of water programs in each of Nebraska's river basins that have been funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust over the last 11 years.

Map provided by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources





Water for Wildlife

HOME: a place to stay, a place to return to when the journey is complete. Nebraska is home for many varieties of plants and animals, including 80% of the world's population of sandhill cranes and hundreds of thousands of ducks and snow geese during migration. They come for the vast plains and abundant vegetation our state is known for, as well as for the water that sustains them during their stay. Protecting these water sources ensures that Nebraska wildlife will thrive, and that the citizens of Nebraska can continue to experience wildlife on the landscape.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust has supported many projects to preserve our water resources for wildlife. The following examples show how human ingenuity and hard work are providing real benefits for the wildlife population of our state.

Sandhills Riparian and Wetland Restoration **Grant: \$279,000**

Project Partners: Sandhills Task Force, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Ducks Unlimited, Landowners

The unique ecosystem of the Nebraska Sandhills hosts thousands of migratory birds and shorebirds that depend on the abundant water resources of the area. However, the wetlands, streams and wet meadows that are used by wildlife have been degraded by excessive erosion. The Sandhills Riparian and Wetland Restoration project led by the Sandhills Task Force aims to improve 25 habitat areas in the Sandhills with the assistance of local landowners. The project:

- Improves habitat for wildlife through the installation of water control structures at degraded riparian areas
- Implements solutions that benefit wildlife and can co-exist with ranching operations
- Prevents the loss of wildlife habitat due to erosion, stream downcutting and overgrazing
- Will improve nearly 9,000 acres of wetlands and wet meadows and approximately 80,000 acres of native grassland

Ducks Unlimited Wetland Restorations **Two Grants: \$975,000**

Project Partners: Ducks Unlimited, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Nebraska is an important "pit stop" for migratory birds during the spring and fall migrations. Each year, these travelers visit the wetlands of Nebraska's Rainwater Basin to rest and refuel before heading off to their final destinations. Ducks Unlimited has preserved acres of wetland habitat in the Basin using a revolving fund approach for acquisition, restoration and resale with conservation easements. These efforts have resulted in:

- An increase in high-quality wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl
- Flood control and water quality benefits
- Increased recreational opportunities for Nebraskans

Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Initiative **Six Grants: \$3,141,750**

Project Partners: Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Cornhusker Fly Fishers, Nebraska B.A.S.S. Federation, Nebraska Walleye Association

Nebraska was the first state in the nation to adopt a habitat stamp to fund aquatic habitat restorations. Using these funds and grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Initiative will restore Nebraska's major lakes and rivers over ten years. Funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust supported 24 of the 43 projects completed to date, and played a critical role in attracting matching federal funding for the initiative. Benefits of the initiative include:

- Establishes productive habitat areas that support a diverse array of flora and fauna
- Improves water quality in major Nebraska lakes and streams
- Provides better recreational opportunities for Nebraskans

Water for Agriculture

VISITORS to our state immediately see the importance of agriculture to Nebraska. Traveling along Interstate 80 the plains of Nebraska spread towards the horizon with fields of corn and soybeans, grassland and cattle. The farmers and ranchers of Nebraska provide a hungry nation with its daily meals. Nebraska, in turn, is well prepared for the task of feeding a country with abundant water resources such as the Ogallala Aquifer. But the extended drought of recent years reminds us all how precious water is to our state. To continue our agricultural tradition, we must ensure that adequate supplies of fresh, clean water are available for the next generation of Nebraska farmers and ranchers.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust has supported many initiatives to work with farmers and ranchers on water issues, from projects to increase irrigation efficiency to efforts that conserve groundwater.



Turkey Creek Project **Two Grants: \$625,000**

Project Partners: Nemaha NRD, Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Pheasants Forever local chapters

The Nemaha Natural Resources District in southeast Nebraska has been a leader in developing water initiatives that bring together landowners to solve agricultural water issues. In the Turkey Creek watershed, landowners faced erosion of their land and devastating flash floods. Grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust allowed for the construction of flood control structures on private land with the assistance of willing landowners, and residents in the watershed have reported noticeably reduced flooding since they were installed. Other benefits include:

- Increased water quality due to lower sediment loads
- Creation of over 240 acres of new wildlife habitat
- Reduced soil erosion

Center Pivot Conversion Incentive Program **Two Grants: \$360,000**

Project Partners: South Platte Natural Resources District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Landowners

Center pivot irrigation is currently the most efficient system for delivering water to thirsty crops. The Center Pivot Conversion Incentive Program from the South Platte Natural Resources District has been highly successful in providing



cost share and equipment farmers need to convert to center pivot irrigation. Features and benefits of the program include:

- 30% cost share assistance to farmers for the purchase of irrigation equipment
- Increased irrigation efficiency and better water application for higher crop yields
- Reduced groundwater nitrate levels from agricultural runoff

Republican Basin Water Meter Proposal **Grant: \$400,000**

Project Partners: Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Middle Republican NRD, Lower Republican NRD, Tri-Basin NRD, Bureau of Reclamation, Landowners

Water use in the Republican River basin has been the subject of ongoing litigation between Kansas and Nebraska. To avoid costly litigation, accurate measurement of agricultural water use in the basin is needed. The Republican Basin Water Meter Proposal is a voluntary project that aims to install 1,470 meters on groundwater wells in southern Nebraska. Features and benefits of the program include:

- 50% cost-share assistance to irrigators for voluntary installation of well meters
- Reduces water usage and encourages conservation
- Provides data to meet conservation needs and implement the terms of the interstate water compact

Integrated Irrigation Improvement Project **Grant: \$199,000**

Project Partners: Nebraska State Irrigation Association, North Platte Valley Irrigators Association, Nebraska Water Resources Association, UNL Conservation and Survey Division, Irrigation Projects Reauthorization Council, 7 Natural Resources Districts

Solutions to water issues require a "big picture" approach because adverse effects to water quality or quan-

tity can have far-reaching impacts in other river basins. In the South Platte, North Platte and Republican River basins, a comprehensive approach to water is benefiting irrigators across a large portion of Nebraska.

This project led by the Nebraska State Irrigation Association assists irrigation districts in three major river basins to implement better and more cost-effective water utilization measures on a basin-wide scale. Benefits of the project include:

- Comprehensive planning, design and implementation of practices through multiple partnerships
- Increased water quantity and quality
- Education of water users about the possible impacts of individual actions across the irrigation district

Irrigation Water Meter Incentive Program **Grant: \$311,000**

Project Partners: Upper Niobrara-White Natural Resources District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, NU Cooperative Extension, NU Conservation and Survey Division, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Landowners

In the Upper Niobrara-White Natural Resources District, irrigation has contributed to ground water declines, diminished wetland habitat and increased nitrate contamination. As a response, the Irrigation Water Meter Incentive Program aims to encourage better water management by installing flow meters on irrigation systems.

Features and benefits of the program include:

- Cost share assistance to producers who volunteer to install flow meters
- Reduced water use due to precise measurement of water applied for irrigation
- Long-term benefits in groundwater quality and wetland habitat

Water for Today

*The well was dry beside the door,
And so we went with pail and can
Across the fields behind the house
To seek the brook if still it ran...*

– *Going for Water* by Robert Frost

NEBRASKA communities large and small have felt the pinch of the prolonged drought in the last 4 years. When wells run dry or water sources become contaminated, difficult decisions must be made. Planning and foresight today can ensure the future of the community, and grantees of the Nebraska Environmental Trust are working to find solutions to the water issues facing Nebraska communities.

Blue River Basin Community Protection Program **Grant: \$99,855**

Project Partners: The Groundwater Foundation, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Kansas Department of Health

The Blue River Basin covers approximately 9,690 square miles. Excessive fecal coliform and atrazine have been found in the drinking water of the area. The fate of these communities rests with their residents, who are coming together with The Groundwater Foundation to better understand the problems of source water contamination.

Features of the project include:

- Educational seminars and community workshops for identifying and strategizing how to reach water protection goals
- Student intern assistance
- Opportunities to network with communities throughout the basin and the nation

Evaluation of Source Water Near Sidney **Grant: \$206,600**

Project Partners: South Platte Natural Resources District, UNL Conservation and Survey Division, US Geological Survey, City of Sidney

Non-point source pollutants are a potential threat for the municipal wells of Sidney, Nebraska. To guard against contamination, a better understanding of the flow of groundwater near the community is required. The South Platte Natural Resources District and its partners have begun to install monitoring wells and collecting water samples for this purpose.

Benefits of the project include:

- Increased understanding of the municipal water supply
- Protection of community water from nitrate contamination and other pollutants
- Information for locating new wells providing high-quality water

Urban Lead and Water Quality Protection Project **Grant: \$73,999**

Project Partners: UNL Cooperative Extension, Habitat for Humanity, Holy Name Housing Corp., Papio-Missouri River NRD, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Douglas County Health Department, City of Omaha

Minimizing this risk of lead contamination is the goal of a new program in east Omaha sponsored by the UNL Cooperative Extension. The Urban Lead and Water Quality Protection Project establishes neighborhood demonstration sites to showcase sustainable landscaping techniques. Features of the project include:

- Landscaping and groundcover demonstrations at Habitat for Humanity and Holy Name Housing project sites
- Educational meetings to inform community residents of pollution-prevention strategies
- Enables residents to learn to live safely with lead contamination while protecting the environment.

Water for Tomorrow

NO ONE can predict what the future holds for Nebraska. But one thing remains certain: the water resources we depend on to grow our crops, support our communities and sustain our wildlife populations will need protection. As our state moves forward, we must begin to lay the groundwork for the future of Nebraska.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust is committed to finding solutions to tomorrow's water issues. From water education to rainfall monitoring, Trust grantees are shaping the future of our state for future Nebraskans to enjoy.

Cooperative Hydrologic Modeling & Assessment Grant: \$1,400,000

Project Partners: Central Platte NRD, Cities of Grand Island, North Platte and Scottsbluff, Platte River Crane Trust, Nebraska Audubon Society, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska Water Resources Association, Nebraska Water Users

The Cooperative Hydrologic Modeling & Assessment (COHYST) project is compiling a database of information about the interaction of surface and ground water along the Central Platte River. A database of this type is helpful for planning water use with regards to irrigators, municipalities and endangered species. Using cutting-edge technology and innovative research techniques, the Central Platte Natural Resources District and its partners have developed one of the most comprehensive tools in the nation to evaluate water use. The COHYST project:

- Allows for better decision-making about water policy
- Ensures the protection and preservation of habitat for fish and wildlife
- Encourages the development of new water conservation and water supply projects

Decommissioning Abandoned Wells Two Grants: \$115,000

Project Partners: Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Association of Resource Districts, Public Water Suppliers, Nebraska Rural Water Association

Aging and abandoned wells present a significant risk to the health of all Nebraskans. Protecting our water supplies is a priority for the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, who is working with public water suppliers to protect groundwater by decommissioning abandoned wells. Trust funds are matched with federal funding and funds from local Natural Resources Districts, so well owners who choose to participate can close abandoned wells at no cost. It is estimated that over 100,000 abandoned wells exist across the state. Decommissioning abandoned wells can:

- Prevent children and small animals from injuries
- Prevent pesticides and contaminants from entering groundwater supplies
- Ensure that clean water is always available for Nebraska communities

NeRAIN Project Grant: \$15,000

Project Partners: Little Blue Natural Resources District, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, and 13 NRDs across Nebraska

Administered by the Little Blue Natural Resources District, the NeRAIN project recruits volunteers in 13 NRDs in western and central Nebraska. Each volunteer is provided with a high-quality rain gauge and training to read and record daily precipitation. This information is collected using the Internet and posted on the NeRAIN web site for public use. The precise weather information provided by NeRAIN is already proving useful to the National Weather Service, which uses it to find patterns of heavy rainfall in Nebraska. The NeRAIN project:

- Aims to recruit one volunteer in every township in the state
- Provides a history of precipitation in Nebraska
- Supports future water use models and studies
- Provides information useful for planning irrigation schedules, establishing flood watches and warnings, and understanding the effects of local weather events

2004 Grant Listing

Notes: The Trust can provide grants over a three-year period, and the funding year is noted accordingly. Due to space limitations, only the primary project sponsor has been listed. For more information about any of these grants contact the Trust office at 402-471-5409.

Alliance, City of

Stream restoration project using plant materials and grading to decrease sedimentation and improve water quality. \$111,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

Bellevue, City of

Funding to preserve and restore one mile of habitat along the Missouri River. \$200,000 (yr. 1 of 2)

Bluebirds Across Nebraska

Project to increase the Wood Duck population by establishing nesting sites across Nebraska. \$15,000

Center for Rural Affairs

Project to educate farmers about carbon management practices. \$65,773 (yr. 1 of 2)

Central Platte Natural Resources District

Funding to establish a coordinator to assist with prescribed burning to manage grassland habitat. \$50,000 (yr. 1 of 3)

Crete, City of

Grant to purchase additional recycling containers in Crete. \$8,150

Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Funding to develop a revolving fund for wetland acquisition, restoration and resale to a public agency or to private buyer using a conservation easement. \$150,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

Fontenelle Nature Association

Environmental education project that teaches Omaha schoolchildren about the Missouri River. \$10,000 (yr. 1 of 2)

Girl Scouts-Great Plains Girl Scout Council

Funding to purchase a critical habitat area adjacent to Camp Maha. \$570,000

Great Plains District - Boy Scouts of America

Funding to continue restoration work at Ft. Robinson by replanting approximately 30,000 ponderosa pine tree seedlings annually. \$15,000

Kearney, City of

Construction of a new recycling center in Kearney. \$100,000 (yr. 2 of 2)

Keep Creighton Beautiful

Funding to purchase a forklift to move plastics for recycling. \$4,500

Kleager, Dr. Lou

Funding for the acquisition of 2,449 acres adjacent to Chadron State Park to be used as a new state-owned wildlife management area. \$500,000 (yr. 2 of 3)

Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park & Wildlife Safari, The

Grant to create a wetlands conservation exhibit for whooping cranes at the Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park & Wildlife Safari. \$60,000

Lincoln, City of

Project to purchase, restore and maintain a 552-acre native prairie adjacent to Lincoln's Pioneer Park. \$177,000 (yr. 1 of 2)

Funding for restoration work at Holmes Lake in Lincoln, including the construction of new lake wetlands, sediment excavation and a post-restoration water quality maintenance program. \$250,000 (yr. 2 of 3)

Project for acquisition of land easements in the Salt Creek floodplain south of Lincoln to serve as natural barriers for stream protection and provide a natural setting for outdoor recreation. \$250,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

Little Blue Natural Resources District

Volunteer program to collect precipitation data in central, western and southeast Nebraska. \$15,000

Study of groundwater aquifers in Thayer, Jefferson and Nuckolls counties. \$41,943

Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District

Project to develop and improve wetland habitat at Maskenthine Lake. \$34,067

Lower Platte North Natural Resources District

Purchase of an ultrasonic flow meter to assist landowners with monitoring water use and fertilizer application. \$12,000

Lower Platte South Natural Resources District

Funding for conservation easements on large contiguous tracts of tallgrass prairie in southwestern Lancaster County. \$150,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

McCook, City of

Grant for the construction of a new recycling center in McCook. \$153,000

MOSAIC at Bethpage Village

Community-based initiative to restore 80 acres of cropland back into an environmental recreation area. \$174,830

Nebraska Association of Resources Districts

Funding to complete research on the endangered Pallid Sturgeon and threatened Sturgeon Chub. \$99,000

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

Cost-share assistance for cleanup activities at five Superfund National Priorities List sites in Nebraska. \$178,333 (yr. 1 of 3)

Grant to enable public water suppliers to decommission abandoned wells to protect groundwater supplies in Wellhead Protection Areas. \$37,500 (yr. 2 of 2)

Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

Cost-share assistance to purchase and install approximately 1470 well meters for groundwater monitoring in the Republican River Basin. \$400,000

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Acquisition of public lands currently held in trust by the Board of Educational Lands and Funds. \$200,000 (yr. 1 of 3)

Project to improve wildlife habitat on public and private lands using prescribed grazing. \$150,000

Funding to construct exhibits on water issues at the new Lake McConaughy Visitor/Water Interpretive Center. \$32,559 (yr. 1 of 3)

Project to conserve tallgrass prairie areas on public and private lands in Nebraska. \$50,000 (yr. 1 of 2)

Funding for a habitat-based conservation program working with Nebraska farmers and ranchers. \$100,000 (yr. 1 of 3)

Grant for the construction of water control structures on Rock Creek. \$270,000

Project to conserve and restore grassland area within the Big Bend Reach of the Platte River. \$35,000 (yr. 1 of 2)

Funding to establish a voluntary, incentive-based conservation effort to address water issues in NRDs with moratoriums on surface water appropriations. \$50,000

Funding for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of aquatic ecosystems across the state. \$500,000 (yr. 1 of 2)

Funding for a voluntary, incentive-based conservation program to create wildlife habitat and improve water quality on pivot irrigation corners. \$100,000 (yr. 2 of 3)

Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation

For the development of a statewide plan to identify habitats important for bird conservation in Nebraska. \$15,000

Nebraska Public Power District

Grant to recover methane from a hog confinement operation to generate electricity and eliminate manure stored in open pits. \$200,000

Nebraska State Irrigation Association

Funding to assist irrigation districts in the South Platte, North Platte and Republican River basins implement improved and more cost effective water utilization measures. \$57,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

Funding to establish a grant program for community landscaping projects using environmentally sound practices. \$250,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

Nemaha Natural Resources District

Funding to implement best management practices in the watershed surrounding Kirkman's Cove Lake. \$100,000 (yr. 2 of 2)

Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Program to establish permanent wildlife habitat on the corners of center-pivot irrigation fields in cooperation with local landowners and Natural Resources Districts. \$150,000 (yr. 1 of 3)

Platte River Basin Environments, Inc.

Grant for the purchase and preservation of approximately 4,000 acres of mountain/prairie ecotone in the Wildcat Hills of western Nebraska. \$370,000 (yr. 1 of 2)

Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, Inc.

Project to restore and enhance sandbar nesting habitat for the endangered least tern and threatened piping plover along the Big Bend reach of the central Platte River. \$55,250 (yr. 1 of 3)

Prairie Land RC&D Council

Funding to implement conservation practices in the Shell Creek watershed that will increase water quality and reduce damage from erosion and flooding. \$85,000 (yr. 1 of 3)

Prairie Plains Resource Institute

Funding for the purchase of environmentally-sensitive land along the Upper Niobrara river. \$220,000

Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

Funding to restore, enhance and protect wetland habitat in the Rainwater Basin. \$500,000

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

Project to protect and enhance short-grass prairie habitat in Western Nebraska vital to a number of at-risk flora and fauna species. \$29,320 (yr. 1 of 3)

Project to build a coalition of landowners and land managers that are actively involved in the conservation of lands important to short grass prairie birds. \$30,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

Sandhills Task Force

Grant to assist private landowners in the restoration of degraded stream and wetlands in the Nebraska Sandhills. \$93,000 (yr. 1 of 3)

South Platte Natural Resources District

Study to investigate groundwater quality and flow near Sidney's north well field. \$44,000 (yr. 2 of 3)

Project to encourage landowners to convert to more-efficient center pivot irrigation by using Trust grants as a cost-share for equipment. \$100,000 (yr. 2 of 3)

South Sioux City, City of

Lake improvements at Crystal Cove Park in South Sioux City. \$80,000 (yr. 2 of 2)

Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership

Partnership between private industry, state agencies and community groups to protect endangered least terns, threatened piping plovers, migratory shorebirds and other water birds along the Platte River. \$66,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

The Groundwater Foundation

Educational project to assist communities in the Blue River Basin with protecting their source water supplies. \$49,928 (yr. 1 of 2)

The Nature Conservancy

Funding to establish permanent conservation easements on private property along the Niobrara River in Keya Paha County. \$150,000 (yr. 2 of 3)

Funding for the acquisition of a working ranch in Sioux County, to be maintained as an example of the important role ranching plays in maintaining biological diversity in large, unfragmented landscapes. \$300,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

University of Nebraska - Cooperative Extension

Project to establish demonstration sites and utilize native landscaping to minimize the risks of lead contamination. \$29,333 (yr. 1 of 3)

University of Nebraska - Cooperative Extension

For the construction of on-farm demonstration sites that use new concepts and technologies to minimize the environmental impacts of small livestock operations. \$500,000 (yr. 2 of 2)

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Grant to assist livestock producers in developing plans to utilize manure more efficiently and protect groundwater from runoff contamination. \$30,000 (yr. 3 of 3)

Upper Niobrara - White Natural Resources District

Cost share assistance for landowners to install flow meters on irrigation wells in northwest Nebraska. \$311,000

Western Irrigation District

Project to increase irrigation efficiency and conserve surface water in the Western Irrigation District. \$50,000

The Nebraska Environmental Trust is now accepting applications for the 2006 grant cycle. The deadline for submitting applications is September 6, 2005. Application forms are found on the Trust web site, www.environmentaltrust.org or can be mailed by calling the Trust office.

Nebraska Environmental Trust
700 S 16th Street - PO Box 94913
Lincoln, NE 68509-4913

402-471-5409

Facts In Brief

The Nebraska Environmental Trust...

- ... is funded by the Nebraska Lottery. The Lottery has transferred more than \$81 million to the Trust over the last 11 years.
- ... covers the cost of operations through interest earnings. The Trust has operated with overhead expenditures equaling less than 2% of income since it was created.
- ... has completed 11 grant cycles, and will announce the results of the twelfth round of award recommendations in January 2005.
- ... has received 1,549 applications and awarded 719 grants since 1994.

Operations Less Than 2% of Total Revenue

INCOME

Interest Income	\$	476,711.57
Lottery Proceeds	\$	10,052,433.00

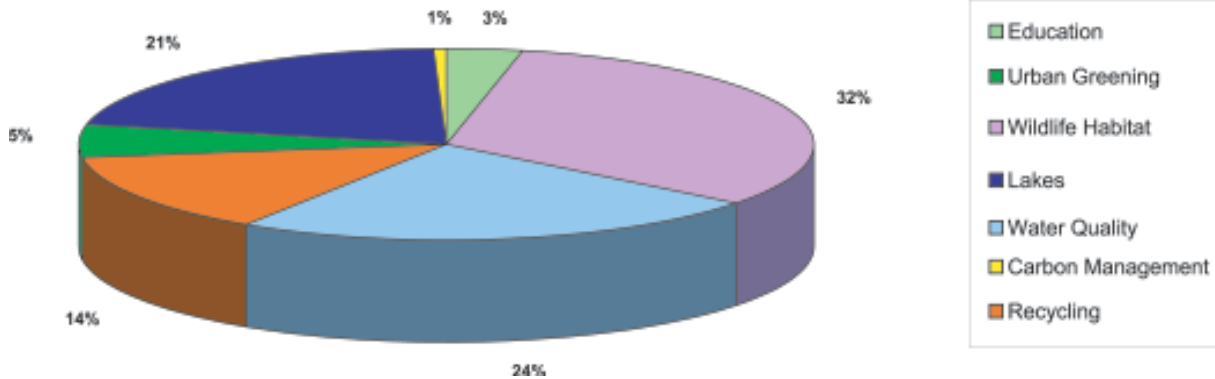
EXPENSES

Operations	\$	361,438.38
Grant Awards	\$	9,364,486.00
Legislated Transfers	\$	925,000.00

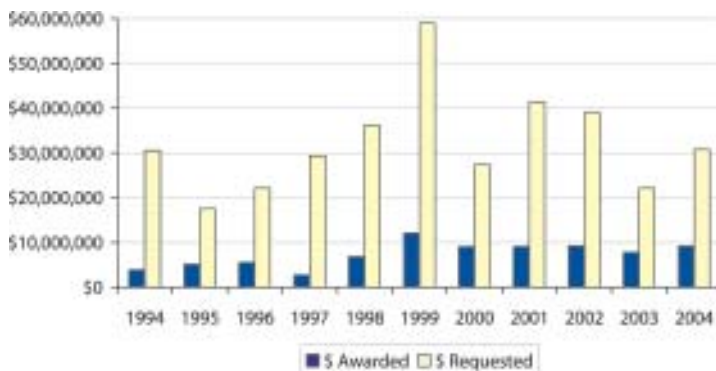
Fiscal Note: The Legislature approved a transfer of \$925,000 to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources. This transfer reduced the amount of Lottery proceeds available for grants.

Average Operation Expenses to Income Percentage from 1994-2004 = %1.93

Grant Awards by Category 1994-2004



Demand Outstrips Availability



Giving for the Future

CARVED into the soft sandstone of Chimney Rock are thousands of names inscribed by westward travelers. The pioneers who left their mark upon Nebraska's prominent landmark did so because they understood that, long after their wagons had left, their mark on the land would remain. This legacy reminds us that the actions we take today shape the future of the next generation of Nebraskans.

Our children deserve to enjoy all of the special places that Nebraska has to offer. They deserve to experience the wonder of spring migration in the Platte River Valley, and see the ruts from the wagon wheels in an undisturbed prairie. They deserve pure water to drink and clean air to breathe. Now you can help to build a natural legacy for the future through a gift to Natural Nebraska™, the endowment fund of the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

Giving to Natural Nebraska gives donors large and small the ability to designate how their gift is used. Use your donation to establish a grant fund for conservation work in your community. Provide your gift to support a local natural resources project you feel passionately about. Or, allow your gift to continue to support Nebraska Environmental Trust grantee projects like the ones described in this annual report. Whatever you choose, be assured that your tax-deductible gift will directly benefit the natural resources of Nebraska, as only 3% of every donation is spent on administration costs.

Please consider building your legacy through a gift to Natural Nebraska™ by returning the form below. Because, the best thing you can give your children is right beneath their feet.

One Donor's Story

The untamed spirit of the Nebraska Sandhills has captured the hearts of many wandering travelers. One of those travelers was Pamela Sprenkle, who fell in love with the broad expanses of prairie and rolling dunes of the area and decided to stay on an 18-acre ranch near Valentine. "I live a dream come true, and I call that dream Sweet Grove Homestead," said Sprenkle. Now, this love for one of Nebraska's special places will be used to preserve it for generations to come. Ms. Sprenkle has graciously bequeathed the Sweet Grove Homestead to Natural Nebraska™ as a planned gift. Funds from the sale of the estate will be used to establish the Sandhills Legacy Fund dedicated to conservation work in the Nebraska Sandhills.

Please accept my tax-deductible gift to the Natural Nebraska Fund, to be used solely to help ensure the beauty and bounty of our state's natural resources far into the future.

Enclosed is my check for:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- Other \$ _____

My/Our Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Please make check out to the Natural Nebraska Fund

Please contact me about:

- Designating My Gift
- Estate Gifts
- Bequests
- Stock Transfers

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 c/o The Nebraska Environmental Trust
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