



# The Nebraska Environmental Trust

*preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations*

## **2012 PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS**

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**Dave Heineman, Governor**

*Mark A. Brohman, Director*

September 20, 2011

The Nebraska Environmental Trust entered the 2012 grant cycle receiving 93 applications. Applications were either emailed or postmarked on September 6th to meet the deadline. Requests in this nineteenth year of grants totaled \$44,557,886.00. The Trust will announce recommendations for funding these applications in February, 2012, and will award grants in April, 2012.

A summary overview of each proposal, as composed by the applicant, is provided for you. Very few editorial changes were made in this information, which was submitted in the application form in response to the question, "Provide an overview of the project for which you seek funding." Project names were assigned by the applicants. Project numbers are assigned by the Trust to facilitate record keeping.

The summaries are presented in alphabetical order by project sponsor name. The nearest town is also shown to indicate the approximate location of each project in the state.

The amount requested and the proposed term of each project is also noted in each summary. The Trust is authorized to fund a project for up to three years under one application review. The review group to which the application has been assigned is also noted in each summary.

In 2011, the Trust issued statements of intent to 45 projects, indicating continued funding for these projects on the basis of the 2010 and 2011 applications. Those projects are included in these descriptions. The project numbers of these applications begin "10" or "11" and end with a dash 2 (10-101-2) or dash 3 (11-101-3) to indicate the second or third year request. The total of the statements of intent from 2010 and 2011 is \$6,197,277. The total amount to be awarded including statements of intent from 2010 and 2011, and 2012 applications is \$50,755,163.

An index of applications by project number is also included with the materials presented in this booklet.

**Sponsor Name:** Angels on Wheels, Inc**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Cross Training Center Recycling Program**Project No:** 12-159**Amount Requested:** \$60,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Waste Management

Angels on Wheels, Inc. is a non-profit corporation that operates the Cross Training Center (CTC). CTC provides vocational training and job experience for men and women who are undereducated and live in poverty. Our recycling and refurbishing program provides direct hands-on job experience for these students. We collect out-of-service products that contain metals including computers, consumer electronics, large appliances, automobiles and other out-of-service household or industrial equipment. Personal computers that have useful life are refurbished and sold for nominal prices to the needy. Everything else is demanufactured by hand and the materials are sorted into like commodities and sold to local scrap purchasers. Our program assures that these items do not reach landfills and toxic materials such as mercury, lead, copper and other hazardous substances do not contaminate our ground. The funds from this grant will be used towards the cost of marketing and managing collection sites to increase the amount of items we collect for recycling.

**Sponsor Name:** Black Hills Energy**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Fueling Nebraska with Natural Gas**Project No:** 12-187**Amount Requested:** \$240,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Air Quality

"Fueling Nebraska with Natural Gas" will further deploy natural gas vehicles (NGV's) into Lincoln. Lincoln has already seen some success in the deployment of natural gas vehicles. This project will assist several entities in converting their vehicles to natural gas vehicles. The ability of vehicles to use natural gas as a fuel enhances the transportation options for Nebraskans. Natural gas vehicles utilize the cleanest burning alternative fuel available today—a fuel that is abundant, domestic, and affordable. In addition, natural gas vehicles have fewer greenhouse gas emissions, typically 20-29% less than diesel and gasoline fueled vehicles and lower amounts of other emissions. Increasing the usage of natural gas vehicles will reduce the amount of emissions, and will improve the air quality of our state. Black Hills Energy and its partners seek funding for conversions to natural gas vehicles. As coordinator, Black Hills Energy will partner with Eric's Electric, the Lincoln Airport Authority and Paul Davis Restorations. Black Hills Energy, Eric's Electric, the Lincoln Airport Authority and Paul Davis Restorations will each purchase up to two vehicles for two years, for a total of up to 16 vehicles that will be converted to compressed natural gas (CNG). All of these vehicles will have the opportunity to fuel their vehicles at either the Lincoln Airport Authority's CNG station or Black Hills Energy's station, both of which are expected to be public fueling stations within the next year.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Mead  
**Project Name:** Remedial Activities at the Agricultural Research and Development Center (ARDC), Mead, NE      **Project No:** 12-114  
**Amount Requested:** \$1,426,973      **Term of Project Request:** 1      **Review Group:** Water

The University of Nebraska is near its goal of completing remediation activities near Mead, Nebraska, a process now stretching to six years. The University recently received EPA's Proposed Plan for additional remedial activities, which include installation of a landfill cap, establishment of monitoring well network, and treatment of groundwater for 1,4-dioxane. These actions were not in the initial project and budget. The Plan calls for an estimated \$2,798,640 for the landfill: \$243,600 to install a clay cap; 30 years of monitoring (\$73,000 per year); and other costs. The Plan seeks an additional \$2,548,194 for 1,4-dioxane-related ground water treatment: \$1,183,373 of initial costs plus seven years of monitoring and other costs totaling \$1,364,821. The landfill cover is required to meet federal landfill closure standards.

Installation of a landfill cap is essential to prevent potential contaminants from migrating to groundwater. EPA's Plan states that 1,4-dioxane is a possible carcinogen, so removal is essential to restore groundwater quality. Groundwater is the primary source of water at the ARDC and numerous private domestic wells. Lincoln's well field is in nearby Ashland and Omaha's Metropolitan Utilities District has a well field less than four miles east. Actions "To preserve or restore lakes, streams and ground water from degradation or depletion" and "to preserve, conserve and restore soil health" are both priority attainment categories for the NET. The expenditures for this remediation and its scope have grown far beyond the initial estimates. Without this funding, the University would have to seek specific funding from the State Legislature. This grant application seeks funds to pay for the initial clay cap installation and the initial costs of groundwater treatment. The success of the project and the grant will be judged by the successful cleanup and containment of the site to the satisfaction of the EPA and NDEQ.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** North Platte  
**Project Name:** North American Invasive Plant Ecology and Management Short Course      **Project No:** 12-126R  
**Amount Requested:** \$15,000      **Term of Project Request:** 1      **Review Group:** Education

The first annual North American Invasive Plant Ecology and Management Short Course (NAIPSC) was July 6-8, 2011 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln West Central Research & Extension Center in North Platte, NE. The 38 participants that attended the 2011 NAIPSC included landowners, land managers from several agencies (e.g., NRCS, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Army Corps of Engineers), county weed superintendents, and graduate students from as far away as the state of Washington. The 3-day course advanced participant understanding in many areas of invasive plant ecology and management with over 80% indicating that they had significantly improved their knowledge of the main principles. More than half of the participants stated that they would make management changes as a result of the NAIPSC. For example, several participants said they would try to improve their approach in working with landowners to better integrate management, identify species, or adopt revegetation techniques to control invasive plant species. The depth and breadth of information provided by the NAIPSC requires extensive support, including the purchase of educational materials, paying for instructor travel, and supporting an online website. In addition, promotion and marketing for the NAIPSC takes a significant amount of resources. In order to meet the objectives and continue to provide a course in 2012 targeting land managers with resource knowledge on integrated weed management, herbicide fate and mode of action, plant identification, biological control, GPS and remote sensing, and restoration ecology, funds are requested from the Trust to pay for course materials (\$8,000) and 20 partial scholarships for participants, including graduate students (\$7,000). Providing a well-recognized short course on invasive plant species in the central US could be especially beneficial to the Trust and help to meet its goal to conserve, enhance, and restore the natural environments of Nebraska and the central US.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership: Protecting Imperiled Birds and their Habitat      **Project No:** 12-127  
**Amount Requested:** \$193,819      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Education

The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership protects state and federally threatened Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) and state and federally endangered Interior Least Terns (*Sternula antillarum athalassos*) in Nebraska. These imperiled birds nest in close proximity to people working at sand and gravel mines and living at lakeshore housing developments, situations where bird-people conflicts often develop, as on river sandbars. We work cooperatively with a diverse suite of partners to prevent and resolve these conflicts in ways that are successful for all parties, bird and human alike. The TPCP demonstrates that terns, plovers and people can share the sand productively--people generating income and jobs, with birds nesting successfully nearby. Our partners include the aggregate mining industry, businesses, local governments, property owners, NGOs, state and federal agencies and policy makers. We are now implementing our management strategy for the Lower Platte River--increase the amount of sandbar nesting habitat in the LPR, improve the LPR hydrograph through renovation of sandbars, integrate the LPR into range-wide efforts to protect terns and plovers and better integrate partners into our program. We are asking the NET to support our LPR sandbar renovation project which will increase the amount of safe nesting habitat available to the birds. Our outreach program works to improve our fellow Nebraskan's environmental literacy and commitment to conservation - providing benefits beyond terns and plovers. The TPCP is uniquely positioned to protect terns and plovers when they are in Nebraska. We believe that there is a need for the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership to continue its mission of protecting terns, plovers and their habitats in Nebraska.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Lincoln  
**Project Name:** Developing composites for automotive, furniture and construction industries from discarded carpets      **Project No:** 12-129  
**Amount Requested:** \$106,531      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Waste Management

About 9 billion pounds of carpets are consumed and about 4 billion pounds of carpets are disposed in landfills every year in the USA. Carpets contain valuable synthetic polymers such as polypropylene and nylon that are derived from petroleum based resources. Nylon and polypropylene are expensive polymers with selling prices of \$1.80 and \$1 per pound, respectively. In addition to being expensive and obtained from non-renewable petroleum resources, polypropylene and nylon are non-biodegradable. Therefore, discarding carpets in landfills results in the waste of a valuable resource and also causes environmental pollution. It has been estimated that 10,000,000 BTU of energy can be saved and about 4,500 lbs diverted from landfills for every 1,000 square yards of carpet that is recycled (<http://www.brotex.com/carpetrecycling.aspx>). Utilizing carpets from high value composites will help to decrease the amount of carpets disposed in landfills, reduced the need for non-biodegradable synthetic polymers and therefore benefit the environment. In this research, we will study the potential of converting the disposed carpets into composites for the automotive, furniture and construction industries. Carpets will be directly compression molded into composites or mixed with other reinforcing or matrix materials. Utilizing a ton of carpets for composites would save at least \$2,200 in raw materials. There will be substantial value addition to discarded carpets if used as composites for the automotive, furniture and construction industries.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Curtis, Trenton,  
**Project Name:** Centralized Water Use Database for Republican River Basin      **Project No:** 12-153  
**Amount Requested:** \$261,262      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Water

Currently ground water withdrawals in the Middle Republican Natural Resource District (MRNRD) are monitored from a network of about 200 metered irrigation wells. The MRNRD technicians read the meters once a year after irrigation season. The data are compiled and stored at the MRNRD offices. Manual recording of water meter readings is laborious, incurs significant driving expense, and is subject to human errors. In addition, taking readings only once a year after the irrigation season does not provide sufficient data on how water is used during the crop growing season in relation to crop water requirements. For effective irrigation water management, a more accurate and effective method for continuous data recording and documentation is needed. This project is requesting funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to implement a three-year pilot program on an automated water use data collection, documentation and analysis system. The project proposes to use a telemetry system for measuring and transferring irrigation water withdrawal data to a centralized database. The benefits of this project will be a significant savings in the cost of data collection and processing. When accurate and timely water withdrawal measurements are correlated with the crop water requirements, water usage by farmers can be reduced by as much as 20-40%. Ground water quality in the project area will also be improved through the reduction of deep percolation of irrigation water that carries nitrate nitrogen out of the root zone into the groundwater. Surface water quality will also benefit from this project as better water management will reduce irrigation water runoff that would impact streams with sediments laden with agricultural chemicals. These benefits will be achieved with training farmers in irrigation best management practices supported by data from this project.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Nebraska Invasive Species Prevention Program      **Project No:** 12-157  
**Amount Requested:** \$498,066      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Education

Invasive species are a current and growing threat to Nebraska's ecology and economy, and can have widespread impacts for a variety of natural resource users, including: landowners, sportsmen, power industries, municipalities, irrigation systems, fisheries, and recreationalists, to name a few. Species such as zebra mussels, leafy spurge, and common reed (Phragmites) are devastating ecosystems in Nebraska and in neighboring states. Because natural resource users are a main pathway of accidental invasive species introductions, prevention of many species is possible through a collaborative effort that targets users. Modeled after education, prevention, and eradication programs developed by neighboring states, the proposed invasive species program will: 1) Decrease the risk of invasive species introduction by targeted messaging and outreach across multiple user groups, 2) Develop and implement a "next generation" education strategy, 3) Increase local and regional collaboration in the prevention and control of invasive species, and 4) Evaluate public awareness of invasive species through surveys and use to assess the effectiveness of education and outreach in preventing invasive species introductions and spread. This program will increase momentum towards preventing the spread of invasive species into and across Nebraska. We are initiating a multi-institutional program that will, in the long run, save millions of dollars and help to preserve Nebraska's waters. This proposal will be achieved through the collaborative efforts of various agencies and organizations (federal, state, and local). Through this three-year program, we estimate that over 500,000 individuals will receive direct information about how to prevent the spread of invasive species in Nebraska (and over 1 million individuals indirectly), providing a tremendous effort towards maintaining the health of Nebraska's natural resources.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Master Naturalist Program, Phase 2: Regional Expansion and Specialized Training for Volunteers in Conservation of Natural Resources      **Project No:** 12-158  
**Amount Requested:** \$252,250      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Education

The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program provides Nebraska citizens an opportunity to contribute to natural resource conservation through meaningful volunteer experiences. This expert led ecosystem-based volunteer training program is gaining momentum and recognition across the region, with a solid foundation built on partnerships at local, regional, and national levels. Nearly two dozen public and private partners have contributed funds, time, expertise, and resources to the success of the program. By the end of 2011, 100 volunteers will have become Certified Master Naturalists, having already provided 1,500 hours of volunteer time equating to a savings of over \$25,000 performing wildlife management, habitat conservation, education, and other services for more than 50 natural resource agencies and organizations. Nebraska is a human-dominated, highly developed landscape facing declining habitats, and water quality and quantity concerns. Agencies are under staffed to meet the needs of managing publicly-owned resources. During the next three years, we will significantly expand the existing program by engaging and empowering Nebraska citizens to enhance the environment and natural resources statewide. We will certify 300 new volunteers, provide advanced training, expand service opportunities, retain 85% of all volunteers, educate 30,000 people, impact 30,000 acres, and save \$300,000 through volunteer conservation actions throughout Nebraska. The training components of the program will directly address the habitat and surface and ground water categories, targeted geographic areas, and feature program objectives. Program staff and an online network will connect volunteers with agencies needing services, programming will be evaluated for impacts, meetings, new training opportunities, and annual conferences will enable Master Naturalists to build community, and rewards and incentives will provide a meaningful and enriching experience for the Master Naturalist community. Within this supportive community, these actions will lead to increased engagement, activity, and empowerment of Master Naturalists, leading to increased volunteer activity and natural resource conservation.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Demonstrate the Potential use of Biomass Waste to Generate Renewable Energy with a New Technology (RBDS)      **Project No:** 12-165  
**Amount Requested:** \$333,179      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Waste Management

The goal of this project is to demonstrate a fast, low-cost, scalable biodegradation technology that converts bio-mass waste into renewable energy and organic fertilizer and to raise the public awareness of bio-mass waste based solutions for sustainability. Today, approximately 65% of Nebraska's power is generated from coal, which means large sectors of the state economy are tied to it; most of the remainder is drawn from nuclear energy (28%). As a state with an emphasis on agriculture, food processing, and farming, especially more than 47,000 farms and a total of over 11 million dry tons of biomass each year from the agriculture sector alone, Nebraska ranks near the top of the nation in its ability to generate biomass energy. For this reason, the researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) have recently developed the Rapid Biomass Degradation System (RBDS). UNL in partnership with non-profit private organizations including the Peter Kiewit Institute (PKI) and the NUtech Ventures will develop a practical educational program to demonstrate the developed RBDS to public-private communities in Nebraska through on-site visits with mobile labs which will be developed in this project. Unique characteristics of the current RBDS include the rapid production of biogas (up to six times faster than conventional processes) and the utilization of reaction heat (up to 140°F), which is otherwise wasted. The technology is anticipated to be scalable, to provide energy (heating space and water; biogas for electricity or engines) for a residential site up to a community level while still producing organic fertilizer as a final product. As a result of this project, we expect to expand the RBDS to utilize a variety of feedstocks, quantify the net energy generation for various feedstocks and various energy end-use requirements, and improve the technology based upon the energy utilization data and user feedback.

**Sponsor Name:** Board of Regents, University of Nebraska - Lincoln      **Nearest Town:** Holdrege, Geneva  
**Project Name:** Impact of Tillage Practices on Corn and Soybean Transpiration, Crop Water Productivity, Nutrient Dynamics, and Groundwater Recharge      **Project No:** 12-167  
**Amount Requested:** \$548,808      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Soil Management

Tillage practices play an important role in water balance, plant physiological functions (i.e., stomatal resistance, transpiration) and soil evaporation. In our previous large scale and extensive field research (funded by the NE Environmental Trust), we found that the cumulative actual crop evapotranspiration (Etc) in a corn/soybean rotation disk-till vs. no-till fields. The cumulative Etc measured from July 9, 2008 to April 30, 2011 before the growing season started was 2,096 mm (82.5 in) in the no-till field and 2,260 mm (88.9 in) in the disk-till field with Etc being 164 mm (6.4 in) greater in the disk-till field than the no-till field. The largest difference in daily Etc was measured on April 1, 2010 when disk-till field had 2.7 mm (0.11 in) greater Etc. The total difference (6.4 in) in Etc is a large difference one would assume that most of the difference is due to greater soil evaporation in disk-till field. However, the important question is any of the difference in Etc due to differences in plant transpiration between the two fields? This question has not been investigated and our research will deploy detailed instrumentation to measure hourly transpiration rates for corn and soybean throughout the season to quantify any potential differences in daytime as well as night time transpiration differences between the no-till and disk-till fields.

Furthermore, there are other important questions related to the nitrogen and other nutrients dynamics and potential differences in their distribution and uptake rates in disk-till vs. no-till fields. Our project will measure the aforementioned

components related to the transpiration and nutrient dynamic differences for three years in disk-till and no-till corn/soybean rotation fields and will provide scientifically-based research information to the growers, crop consultants, state agency personnel, and other interested parties through extensive education programs. The project will quantify field-scale recharge beneath irrigated and rainfed agriculture and will quantify the impact of no-till cropping and water management systems on recharge, return flows, and associated water quality (nitrates and phosphorus) in the semi-arid loess region of Nebraska. The project will result in good quality data and information that will help producers to better manage disk-till and no-till fields and will also enable Natural Resources Districts to better evaluate the impact of tillage practices on water resources and nitrogen management.

**Sponsor Name:** Clean Green Chesapeake      **Nearest Town:** Lincoln / South Sioux  
**Project Name:** Integrated Anarobic Digestion With Algae Bioenergy and Green Aquaculture      **Project No:** 12-190  
**Amount Requested:** \$298,230      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Air Quality

Microalgae will fulfill new roles as alternative feed for sustainable agriculture and aquaculture because of their biodiversity, basic growth requirements and high rates of productivity. Large-scale cultivation, however, will require new methods of regulating growth and maintaining culture integrity. Moreover, the sourcing of nutrients to grow these organisms will have an impact on the ultimate cost of the biomass produced. The objective of this proposal is to develop robust bioprocessing capabilities to produce algae using nutrient-rich anaerobic digester (AD) liquid effluent. The technical milestones of this proposal address the practical aspects involved in integrated algae cultivation. These include: control and management of pathogens in complex microbial populations; augmenting the productivity of conventional microalgal growth systems; and ensuring consistent composition of algae biomass as premium aquaculture feed. This research will explore operating parameters, decontamination measures, and quality control of biomass composition to achieve maximally efficient production. This research will set the stage for rigorous pilot scale field-testing of the integrated algae process in South Sioux City, Nebraska.



**Sponsor Name:** Columbus, City of**Nearest Town:** Columbus**Project Name:** Recycle Center Building**Project No:** 11-134-2**Amount Requested:** \$100,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

To build a new Municipal Recycle Center building co-located with the Columbus Transfer Station located at 570 S. 14 Avenue, Columbus, Nebraska based on the structural specifications and cost estimate provided by HDR Engineering, Inc., 8404 Indian Hills Drive, Omaha, Nebraska. These designs were made to address several outcomes: 1) provide public drop-off site for recyclables, 2) provide loading dock access for loading semi-trailers in an enclosed structure separate from public drop-off areas, 3) add the capability to unload roll-offs and packer trucks containing only recyclable materials, 4) close proximity to Columbus MSW Transfer Station will allow utilization of scales for weighing large quantities of recyclable materials as well as allowing Transfer Station Staff to visually inspect and divert acceptable loads of clean recyclable materials to the Recycle Center, 5) replace current rented facility that has no enclosed loading dock and only one door for truck loading and public drop off, and 6) to provide a safer more efficient recycling process for employees, public, and businesses.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$330,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$100,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Cornhusker Council, Boy Scouts of America**Nearest Town:** Humboldt**Project Name:** Camp Cornhusker Environmental and Conservation Education Center**Project No:** 12-184**Amount Requested:** \$501,740**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Education

The Cornhusker Council seeks funding for the development of a renewable energy Environmental and Conservation Education Center to be located in Richardson County. The Education Center will consist of the upper section of a one story walk out facility. The base section, a storm shelter, will be funded through NEMA. The Education Center will be 2,450 GSF, and will primarily house education facilities for environmental and conservation education as well as being a model facility for sustainability and LEED. The entire facility will be submitted for a minimum of becoming LEED Certified Building for New Construction and will have an overarching goal of Zero Net Energy design. The building will be used itself as a training tool during the design and construction phase, and then in future educational curriculum when teaching sustainability and conservation. HDR Inc. engineers and architects as partners and board members, will provide LEED accredited professionals for these educational components. The building will also be used to teach merit badges and leadership training, and overnight sleeping quarters. The facility will serve the more than 67,100 scouts and alumni that live in the 16 county service area that the Cornhusker Council serves. The facility will also be available to the general population for functions and will serve as a model through demonstration of renewable energy capabilities to the communities and people it serves in Nebraska.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2011 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

**Sponsor Name:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Hershey**Project Name:** South Platte River Protection**Project No:** 11-185-2**Amount Requested:** \$205,152**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Wetland resources on the South Platte River watershed have been drastically impacted by extensive water diversions, flood control measures, invasive plant species, and wetland drainage activities. Floodplain wetlands have essentially been eliminated adjacent to the South Platte River, greatly reducing suitable habitat for wetland dependent species. It is imperative to protect key parcels that remain intact and currently provide resources while at the same time, begin to restore functions and values that have already been lost. With greater than 97% of the land base in Nebraska being privately owned, habitat programs must be available to landowners in order to provide the resources to numerous wildlife species. In response to the rapid decline of critical wildlife habitat, Ducks Unlimited is proposing to protect and restore a vital habitat complex in Lincoln County. Located in Southwest District Five, the three targeted properties all fall within one of the priority geographic areas for the Trust. Conservation of these key tracts will result in the protection and restoration of over five miles of river frontage totalling over 2,600 acres of critical contiguous habitat. Wet meadow (a limiting habitat on the South Platte) restoration opportunities exist on the proposed easements and will also greatly increase benefits to Nebraska wildlife. Over a two year period, the properties will be protected through permanent conservation easements and over 150 acres will be restored. The conservation easement will protect the complex from future development, and subdivisions, ensuring the invested conservation dollars by the Trust provide long-term benefits. Grant funds for the partial purchase of conservation easements will be used as leverage to secure additional funds through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. Further, landowners will contribute approximately 2/3 of the value of each easement and provide funds for an endowment defense fund.

**Sponsor Name:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Hastings**Project Name:** Rainwater Basin Waterfowl Production Area Restoration**Project No:** 11-201-2**Amount Requested:** \$89,340**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Rainwater Basin Waterfowl Production Area Restoration proposal seeks funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to restore and enhance approximately 670 acres of shallow water, ephemeral wetland habitat in Nebraska's Rainwater Basin. All five project locations are owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, managed as part of the Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District. The sites are managed for the primary purpose of providing wetland habitat to migratory birds, particularly waterfowl, shorebirds and other wetland dependent migratory birds. The Rainwater Basin provides critical migration habitat to over 10 million ducks, geese and other migratory birds, primarily during the spring. Waterfowl and other birds stop to rest and refuel in the Rainwater Basin's shallow water habitats, replenishing nutrient and energy supplies prior to resuming their northward migration. Many wetland dependent species and other wildlife also use Rainwater Basin habitats for breeding purposes. Resident wildlife species include pheasants, quail, grouse, deer and many other species. Many of the properties owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were not fully restored when acquired years ago. The source of funds used to acquire land was not available to fully restore wetland habitats on these properties. Consequently, many of these sites remain substantially less than 100% functional. NETF dollars are requested to help fully restore five properties, enhancing over 670 acres of shallow water habitat. All of these sites are open to a variety of public uses, including hunting, bird watching, hiking and photography. Wetland restoration activities will include filling drainage pits, plugging drainage ditches, removing trees and excavating accumulated sediment from within the wetlands. Ducks Unlimited, Inc. and the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture are partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this project.

**Sponsor Name:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Central City**Project Name:** Timberlake Ranch Habitat Project - Combining Conservation with**Project No:** 12-136**Amount Requested:** \$161,940**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

Nebraska rivers support one of the largest breeding piping plover and interior least tern population in North America. The Platte River is a critical portion of their current range in Nebraska. Unfortunately, the natural processes that maintained Platte River habitats are largely missing today. Despite these changes, the Platte River remains critical breeding habitat to these Tier 1 at-risk species. Located in the heart of plover and tern breeding range, the Timberlake Ranch Camp provides a unique opportunity to conserve valuable habitat and provide educational opportunities to thousands of children each year. Timberlake is a large, expansive piece of property used primarily as a youth camp. The tract has been encroached severely by eastern red cedar and the historic wetland sloughs are degraded and non-functioning. The restoration of habitat will provide an ideal opportunity to greatly increase tern and plover habitat that once existed along this stretch of river. The objective is to restore 50 acres of critical limiting habitat for at-risk species dependent upon the Platte River for some portion of their lifestyle. Through the proposed conservation actions, the project will then be utilized to expose the general public to Nebraska's natural resources in a fun and educational manner. Activities will be tailored to teach the next generation how important, critical and unique Nebraska habitat is and why it should be conserved.

**Sponsor Name:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Lexington**Project Name:** Darr Strip Habitat Complex**Project No:** 12-169**Amount Requested:** \$351,355**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Darr Strip Habitat Complex Proposal consists of five individual projects that collectively will protect and restore 1,250 acres of central Platte River habitat within a 9 mile segment of the river in Dawson County. This reach of the river is incredibly important to migratory birds and historically, endangered species. Whooping cranes, least terns and piping plovers are federally protected species that once used these habitats for breeding and migration purposes. Several million waterfowl stop along the central Platte each spring, loafing on Platte River islands and foraging in shallow wetlands and backwater sloughs. The five projects included in this proposal will result in the restoration of nearly 7 miles of backwater sloughs and channels, clear 45 acres of invasive trees, install fencing to allow invasive species control via grazing, and permanently protect 1,040 acres through donated conservation easements. A signature project included in the proposal is the Darr Strip Wildlife Management Area. Not only will 65 acres of habitat be restored, but the project area is open to a variety of public uses and will be enjoyed by Nebraskans for many years to come. Located in Southwest District Five, the five targeted properties all fall within one of the priority geographic areas for the Trust. The Darr Strip Habitat Complex proposal is a prime example where individual acts of conservation strategically planned can have a landscape-level influence on the central Platte River. Additionally, three of the properties are protected through donated conservation easements while a third, Darr Strip WMA, is owned by Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, ensuring long-term benefits.

**Sponsor Name:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Roundouts Phase II**Project No:** 12-180**Amount Requested:** \$300,396**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The "Roundouts Phase II" proposal requests funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to expand a highly successful wetland conservation program in Nebraska's Rainwater Basin. The "Roundouts" effort is a unique, ground-breaking and innovative approach to restore and protect vitally important wetland habitats. The Rainwater Basin is a landscape originally blessed with over 100,000 acres of shallow wetlands. In the past 150 years, the majority of these wetlands have been drained and converted to cropland. Millions of migratory birds depend on this landscape each year, stopping to rest and feed prior to resuming their northward migration. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have acquired approximately 15,500 acres of wetlands in this region. However, many of these wetlands extend across property boundaries onto adjacent, privately-owned lands, making restoration and proper wetland management difficult if not impossible. The "Roundouts" program is an effort to acquire and restore these important wetlands through outright acquisition or through innovative land trades. A land trade scenario is one in which a nearby property is acquired by DU then traded for the desired roundout property. DU and its conservation partners end up with the needed wetland property while the landowner/farmer ends up with better cropland to continue his agricultural operation. The Phase I grant was initially awarded to DU in April 2009 and has been successfully implemented. An important roundout to the Troester WPA has been acquired while a second property has also been acquired. A proposed land trade involving the second property and another roundout at Troester WPA is being negotiated. The success of the first grant demonstrates the importance of this program and the interest Rainwater Basin landowners have in this innovative wetland conservation effort. DU is now requesting funding assistance from NET to continue this important program. SIMILAR RAINWATER BASIN ACQUISITION PROJECTS WITH DUCKS UNLIMITED HAVE BEEN FUNDED \$1,525,000 FROM 2002- 2009.

**Sponsor Name:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Mitchell**Project Name:** Spring Creek Conservation Partnership**Project No:** 12-181**Amount Requested:** \$209,650**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

Wetland habitat in the North Platte River watershed has been drastically impacted by extensive water diversions, invasive plant species, wetland drainage activities, and reduced groundwater levels along streams and floodplains. The limiting habitat type, floodplain wetlands have essentially been eliminated in the North Platte River drainage, greatly reducing diverse habitat for wetland dependent species. It is imperative to conserve key complexes that will remain intact and will provide resources long-term. With greater than 97% of the land base in Nebraska being privately owned, habitat programs must be available to landowners in order to sustain and improve wetland habitat within the North Platte River watershed. In response to the rapid decline of critical wildlife habitat, Ducks Unlimited is proposing to protect and restore a vital habitat complex in Scotts Bluff County through the Spring Creek Conservation Partnership proposal. Conservation of these key tracts will result in the protection and restoration totaling over 1,200 acres of critical contiguous habitat in the Spring Creek watershed on the North Platte River. Through a community approach, landowners of the Spring Creek Complex have all agreed to work individually with Ducks Unlimited for a common cause – Conserve habitat for wildlife and open space long-term. The conservation easements on two of the properties will protect the complex from future development, and subdivisions, ensuring the invested conservation dollars by the Trust provide long-term benefits. The Spring Creek Conservation Partnership is a prime example of working with communities to achieve conservation success and a landscape-scale.

**Sponsor Name:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Bridgeport**Project Name:** North Platte River Wetlands Conservation**Project No:** 12-185**Amount Requested:** \$304,010**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Platte River Wetlands Conservation project is a concerted effort of habitat partners to protect and restore five parcels of private land that contain or have the potential to restore sensitive wetland environments within the North Platte River watershed. This proposal will restore and protect large blocks of wildlife habitat containing critical habitat types needed along the North Platte River floodplain. While restoring diverse wetlands, the proposal also protects that investment long-term with conservation easements on three of the properties. The projects are unique in that they focus on properties that address terrestrial communities of concern for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project will restore 3 ½ miles of river channel, backwater sloughs, and wet meadow habitat. Three conservation easements will also be secured totaling 724 acres of North Platte River habitat. Projects involve multiple partners, funding opportunities, restoration activities, and long-term protection options. For every NET dollar requested in this proposal, Ducks Unlimited and partners are matching more than \$3 dollars. With a request of \$304,010, matching funds equal \$973,306. From a project standpoint, the proposal is cost effective and does an excellent job at utilizing matching resources.

**Sponsor Name:** EcoTech Fuels LLC**Nearest Town:** Whiteclay / Rushville**Project Name:** Pine Ridge Advanced Synfuels, LLC**Project No:** 12-192**Amount Requested:** \$100,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Waste Management

The Oglala Sioux Tribe ("OST") of South Dakota approached ETF for assistance in solving a municipal solid waste management. Called the "Blue Legs Case", state court fined OST the \$63,000 in fines in 2009. The OST Solid Waste system is underfunded and continues to receive "Failing marks" from the federal inspector appointed by the U.S. District Court.

Our solution is to convert the Tribe's trash and other regional waste into Torqazine-D, a high cetane ultra clean renewable diesel, while creating approximately 42 jobs (skilled and entry-level) needed to operate the synfuel plant. Our aim is to run a profitable business while providing OST with a regular, reliable source of income through shared profits. An MOU setting out the details of the project was unanimously approved by the OST Tribal Council in August 2010 (attached as Appendix A).

Pine Ridge Advanced Synfuels, LLC (the "Plant"), will convert a total of approximately 150 tons per day of regional waste tires, plastics and other trash into approximately 320-400 barrels per day of Torqazine-D is a superior, sulfur-free renewable diesel fuel from a never-ending feedstock – trash.

The Plant is expected to be in full-scale commercial operation in approximately 22 months from project start. It will cost approximately \$76 million to design, build and put into operation. After initial fire-up, it will be self-powered (Utilizing waste heat recovery), and will return power to the grid. In addition, the plant will provide additional renewable power to Sheridan County via grid-connected solar panels. The application is for funds for pre-engineering and environmental permitting costs, required prior to placement of a Renewables Municipal Bond in the State of Nebraska (for approximately 70% of the project cost). The Renewables bond is underwritten by Gustav Escher III, Managing Director of BB&T Capital Markets.

**Sponsor Name:** Edgar, City of**Nearest Town:** Edgar**Project Name:** Reducing Nitrates in Community Drinking Water Supply**Project No:** 12-132**Amount Requested:** \$66,500**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Water

The City of Edgar, after conducting a water study in 2010-11, was given the option of a 1.5 million project. The City consulted with the Little Blue NRD and the Department of Health and Human Services on alternatives on potential ideas on reducing the nitrates in the short-term and long-term and a more reasonable cost. These ideas have a lot of merit by research and analysis conducted by both agencies. So the strategy is three-fold:

\* Decrease the nitrate in the short-term by pumping off the higher nitrates using submersible wells.

\*Decrease the potential of nitrate leaching directly into the aquifer by decommissioning the irrigation wells directly in line with the city wells and re-constructing the irrigation wells to higher water quality standards.

\*Decrease the risk of nitrate leaching in May and June from nitrogen fertilizer by asking the producers in the Wellhead Protection Management Area to use a nitrogen stabilizer and to not fertilizer prior to March 1. Nitrification stabilizer is a chemical product that is used to slow down the release of nitrates.

**Sponsor Name:** Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department**Nearest Town:** Wisner**Project Name:** Be Smart: Do Your Part**Project No:** 12-193**Amount Requested:** \$94,247**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Waste Management

Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department (ELVPHD) seeks funding to support a grassroots waste management project which will intertwine public education and hazardous waste disposal opportunities. Efforts will focus on increasing levels of awareness regarding proper disposal of common hazardous household and farm waste materials (chemicals, oil, personal care products, medications, etc.) in the public by using innovative education venues that have historically been successful to disseminate information in conjunction with a public awareness campaign that will be implemented and will publicize messages pertaining to acceptable hazardous waste disposal methods and the dangers to the environment if inappropriate disposal occurs. In conjunction with public education efforts, ELVPHD will publicize the availability of multiple collection /disposal sites in the ELVPHD service area which will be hosted timely throughout the year. By combining education and waste disposal opportunities, hazardous materials will be diverted from being placed in landfills or flushed into our sewer systems, where they contaminate our water and soil, and also contaminate the habitats of fish and other wildlife. Public health will be positively impacted indirectly by reducing the risk of exposure to dangerous and unhealthy materials, accidental ingestion of such products by children or pets, and will keep high-market medications out of the hands of persons making illegal sales of medications that contribute to drug addictions. A professional, contracted evaluator will evaluate the project—both in terms of process and outcome attainment. All ELVPHD projects are conducted with the premise that activities are evaluated, and only those that are proven to be successful are replicated. For this project, if a high level of success and effectiveness is achieved, the project will be repeated.

**Sponsor Name:** Farwell Irrigation District**Nearest Town:** Farwell**Project Name:** Irrigation System Automation Project**Project No:** 12-135**Amount Requested:** \$197,206**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Water

Farwell Irrigation District begins at the Arcadia Diversion Dam, on the Middle Loup River, Northwest of Arcadia, Nebraska, and diverts water 19.1 miles to Sherman Reservoir. Irrigation begins at Sherman Dam and distributes water through 95.7 miles of canal and 254.6 miles of laterals. There are over 200 miles of laterals that have been buried and we continue with that project. We have also installed a great deal of automation throughout the project to help with water conservation. The specific plans of the "Irrigation System Automation Project" include automation and metering equipment. In addition to the \$646,069 previously spent on installed equipment, the District will also donate \$45,000 in labor and \$75,000 in cash contributions to assist in achieving the following goals: Reduce diversions from the Middle Loup River system into Sherman Reservoir. This can be achieved as shown by similar systems using the same equipment we wish to use; Increase efficiency in managing the water that is diverted into the Reservoir and canals - a large quantity of waste reduction has been achieved in similar systems; Improved distribution of the water to farms in the District for more timely deliveries; Greater accountability of water distributed within a system which reduces internal losses. Implementing our check points with an automated gate system, using automation equipment and gates, installing waste ways with metering devices to forward the information to the "Ditch Rider" and adding communication between each check point so that each site can make adjustments as needed in sequence, will make achieving the previous goals possible.

**Sponsor Name:** Fontenelle Forest Association**Nearest Town:** Bellevue**Project Name:** Erosion Repair and Storm Runoff Reduction in the Childs and Mill Hollow Watersheds**Project No:** 12-131**Amount Requested:** \$816,648**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Water

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center is a 1,400 acre natural area in northern Sarpy County, and is owned and managed by the Fontenelle Nature Association (FNA). Within the Forest upland are seven drainage basins, or watersheds which drain in a northeasterly direction toward the Missouri River. Three of the largest watersheds extend beyond nature center boundaries. Residential development in the upper reaches of these watersheds has changed the hydrology from its historic conditions; resulting in erosion and siltation, loss of water quality, damage to wildlife habitat and public safety concerns. In 2007, FNA and the City of Bellevue co-sponsored a grant request and received Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) funds to match federal dollars to allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) to conduct a watershed Stabilization Study under the Section 22 program. The completed study is on file at NET. The study resulted in a detailed ground survey of each watershed, an analysis of the historical and post development hydrology of each, and conceptual recommendations for repairing problems. Repair of the easternmost watershed, known as Coffin Springs, was completed with NET funds in 2011. This request is for funds to repair storm runoff damage in the two remaining watersheds, Childs and Mill Hollows, over a two year period. The work in Childs Hollow is straightforward, while the Mill Hollow project will result in an extensive makeover of the present watershed drainage pattern. The NET is being asked to fund a portion of the repair project costs and the FNA, Bellevue, Lozier Foundation, Papio-Missouri River NRD and community donors are pledging monetary and in-kind contributions. A companion grant request is also being submitted to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) for funds to build demonstration homeowner rain gardens in the Mill Hollow watershed.

**Sponsor Name:** Fontenelle Nature Association**Nearest Town:** Bellevue**Project Name:** Coffin Springs Watershed Erosion Repair**Project No:** 11-117-2**Amount Requested:** \$150,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center is a 1400 acre natural area in northern Sarpy County adjacent to the Missouri River and situated between the cities of Omaha and Bellevue. It is owned and managed by the Fontenelle Nature Association (FNA). Half the nature center property is deciduous floodplain forest and half is upland oak-hickory woodland. Within the upland are several drainage basins, or watersheds which drain in an easterly or northeasterly direction toward the river. Some of the watersheds are small and are contained within nature center borders, while three larger watersheds extend well beyond the center's boundaries. Residential development in the upper reaches of these larger watersheds has changed the hydrology from its historic conditions, resulting in erosion and siltation, loss of water quality, damage to wildlife habitat and public safety concerns.

To address these issues we formed the "Bellevue Watershed Task Force" made up of representatives of Fontenelle Nature Association, City of Bellevue, Papio-Missouri River NRD, Sarpy County Roads Department and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). In 2007, FNA and Bellevue co-sponsored a grant request and received an NET grant to match federal dollars to allow the COE to conduct a Watershed Stabilization Study under the Section 22 Planning Assistance to States Program. This study, which is still ongoing, will result in a detailed ground survey of each watershed, an analysis of the historical and post development hydrology of each, and conceptual recommendations for repairing problems. As a first step in the repair process, we asked the COE to complete a hydrologic and stabilization analysis for the smallest watershed, known as Coffin Springs Hollow. Based on the COE report, Schemmer Associates Inc. has prepared anticipated cost estimates for the recommended alternative. The Nebraska Environmental Trust is being asked to fund a portion of the repair cost and the FNA, the NRD and City of Bellevue are pledging monetary and in-kind contributions.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$150,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$150,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Friends of the Rainwater Basin**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Hydrologic Restoration of Rainwater Basin Wetlands**Project No:** 10-106-3**Amount Requested:** \$109,623**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Friends of the Rainwater Basin, in cooperation with the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture (RWBJV), Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and Ducks Unlimited (DU) is applying for Nebraska Environmental Trust grant funding to retire irrigation reuse pits and improve wetland function throughout the Rainwater Basin Region (RWB) of south-central Nebraska. The Friends of the Rainwater Basin is submitting this grant on behalf of the RWBJV. The RWBJV will provide cash and administrative support for the grant. The project goal is to restore and enhance approximately 300 acres of wetland habitat by removing 15-20 irrigation reuse pits to improve water delivery to perpetually protected wetlands. Pits in the watersheds of Rainwater Basin wetlands reduce the water reaching the wetland and have a significant negative impact on how the wetland functions. This project would either remove pits no longer used due to a switch from gravity to pivot irrigation or place water control structures on existing pits. This work will be focused on pits in the watersheds of perpetually protected Rainwater Basin wetlands. Emphasis will be placed on pits closest to the wetlands and pits with a large storage capacity. Filling pits provides a win-win situation for the producer and wetland dependant wildlife. Producers will acquire additional farmable acres and the wetland (e.g., Federal Waterfowl Production Areas, State Wildlife Management Areas, and private Wetlands Reserve Program Easements) will function at a higher level increasing habitat for wetland dependant wildlife. As a result of this project, wetland function will be enhanced on perpetually protected Rainwater Basin wetlands. The RWBJV is a conservation partnership of state, federal, and local agencies, conservation organizations, and landowners who have joined together to direct wetland habitat conservation in Nebraska's 6,100 square mile Rainwater Basin landscape.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$115,679 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$109,623 IN YEAR TWO AND \$109,623 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.



**Sponsor Name:** Friends of the Rainwater Basin**Nearest Town:** Hildreth**Project Name:** Freda Wild Acquisition and Restoration Project**Project No:** 12-182**Amount Requested:** \$85,280**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Friends of the Rainwater Basin and Ducks Unlimited are requesting funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the Freda Wild Acquisition and Restoration Project in Franklin County. The Wild property is a high priority "roundout" to the Ritterbush Waterfowl Production Area, an 80-acre tract of wetlands and native grassland. The Wild Property and Ritterbush WPA share a large, partially drained wetland basin. The acquisition of the Wild property will allow significant wetland restoration of this basin to be completed and greatly improve management capability. An excavated pit on the Wild property will be filled with compacted soil. Neighboring landowners have expressed an interest in filling additional pits on adjacent private land, further restoring natural hydrology on the site. By filling all the pits in this watershed, natural hydrology to the basin will be completely restored. This wetland is located in the southwest corner of the Rainwater Basin, one of the most important wetland landscapes in North America. The Rainwater Basin hosts over 10 million waterfowl, shorebirds and other migratory birds each year. The location of this property is particularly relevant to whooping cranes. This property has been ranked as one of the 15 highest priority wetland complexes for whooping cranes in the Rainwater Basin. The new landowner of the Wild property, an adjacent farmer, is buying the 240-acre parcel with the intention of keeping the good farmland and selling a 114-acre wetland/grassland portion of the tract to Ducks Unlimited as an addition to Ritterbush WPA. The new landowner approached Ducks Unlimited with this concept in mind prior to acquiring the parcel and asked DU to help accomplish this mutually beneficial objective. Funding from NET is being requested by the Friends of the Rainwater Basin and DU to accomplish this goal.

**Sponsor Name:** Gracie Creek Landowner's Association**Nearest Town:** Burwell**Project Name:** Gracie Creek Implementation Project: Restoring Habitat for Priority**Project No:** 11-188-2**Amount Requested:** \$60,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Nebraska Sand Hills serves as one of the last strongholds for Northern grassland birds that have suffered precipitous declines globally. This project will conserve and enhance habitat for key bird and plant species across a large privately-owned landscape for the benefit of these species and the public.

The project seeks funding to implement activities identified in an 18 month planning effort: it would improve ecological processes, conserve and protect native species and habitats, engage landowners in management, be livestock-friendly, build local expertise, and provide education and outreach. Because most Sand Hills lands are privately owned and managed for livestock production, conservation must work in partnership with private ranchers and maintain the productivity of their agricultural operations.

Ranchers on 50,000 contiguous acres in the Gracie Creek watershed and their partners will implement beneficial management practices over three years, including prescribed grazing, prescribed burning, and cedar tree removal, to enhance habitat for birds and other State of Nebraska priority species; the project will conserve habitat for Prairie Chickens and other species including Long-billed Curlew and Lark Bunting and promote the viability of the federally-endangered Blowout Penstemon. It aims to model a collaborative, habitat-sustainability project that could be replicated elsewhere in the Sand Hills and Nebraska and will provide outreach and public education including a ranch tour, public presentation, and media outreach. The project will begin on three ranches which together have been designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area; it will encourage the participation of other adjacent landowners, with the goal of including over 100,000 acres. This proposal builds on assessment and planning efforts over the previous 18 months funded in part by NABP (NETF) and with input from Nebraska Game and Parks and complements funding for species habitat conservation from the NRCS CCPI program.

A SIMILAR PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$90,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$60,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$60,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Grand Island Area Clean Community System**Nearest Town:** Grand Island**Project Name:** Household Hazardous Waste Facility**Project No:** 11-136-2**Amount Requested:** \$75,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Grand Island Area Clean Community System (CCS) is seeking \$250,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for leasing and modification of a 5,000 square foot Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility for one-stop disposal of household hazardous waste, medications and recyclable products. The existing building has been vacant for two years, meets zoning requirements and leasing-reusing this building is more cost effective than new construction. The building will include a 3,000 square foot bay processing area, a swap shop, education/conference room and office space for the offices of the Grand Island Area CCS. The HHW Facility will be open year round and available to any Nebraska resident. Initially it will benefit approximately 125,000 residents and landfills of five counties in Central Nebraska; Adams, Hamilton, Merrick, Howard and Hall. It will provide a safe location for disposal of household hazardous waste materials and unwanted medications stored in homes, garages, basements, sheds, medicine cabinets and other personal property.

The education area will be used to teach children and adults about HHW, the environment and recycling. The swap shop will provide free materials to residents for reuse which will reduce the amount of waste that would otherwise require disposal fees. Computers, lead-acid batteries, televisions and other electronics will also be accepted and recycled.

THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND SUBMITTED SIMILAR PROJECTS IN 2007 AND 2009 THAT WERE NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$85,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$75,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$75,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Green Recycling Enterprises, LLC dba Second Nature  
Public Recycling**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Recycling on the Go!**Project No:** 12-103**Amount Requested:** \$141,272**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Waste Management

GRE is in the business of providing recycling containers at public events throughout Nebraska. During the past year we have proven the demand for public recycling containers at over 25 events in Omaha, Lincoln, Papillion, West Point, LaVista and Bellevue. Some events we conducted include: (1) College World Series; (2) Nebraska spring football game; (3) Lincoln Marathon; and (4) the Cox Classic Golf Tournament. GRE wants to expand the 2012 Recycling on the Go campaign to at least 40 public events throughout the State of Nebraska. GRE will secure additional funding from sponsors for the Recycling on the Go campaign by providing a promotional opportunity via a full-color graphic display (17.5 in. x 28.5 in) located on each side of the recycling containers. The program was extremely successful in 2011. We believe, in 2012, more people will realize the bins and this will result in an increase of recycled material. The need for educational material and additional recycling containers is crucial for this expansion to be successful. We are confident GRE will be able to find sponsors to facilitate the expansion of this campaign with the support from NET. NET's financial support will provide the stimulus to ensure the successful commencement of our campaign. GRE plans to incorporate two NET recycling messages via the display on each container. These messages will educate over 1.5 million event participants about recycling. The NET can use these displays to promote its mission and accomplishments. The support of the NET will enable GRE to provide a turnkey recycling campaign for the State of Nebraska, and its outlying communities-most of which would not be able to recycle under normal conditions. Without the NET and some private sponsors, GRE would not be able to provide this successful and proven program. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$105,000 IN 2011. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Gretna Sanitation, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Ashland**Project Name:** Landfill Diversion and Soil Improvement Initiative**Project No:** 12-147**Amount Requested:** \$155,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Waste Management

Gretna Sanitation, Inc. seeks assistance from the Nebraska Environmental Trust to partially fund a trommel screen to fortify the success of its composting project. The project's purpose is to conserve landfill space and reduce pollution to Nebraska's land, water and air by annually diverting 9,200 cubic yards of collected yard waste to an alternative site where otherwise dismissed resources can be recovered. Yard waste is converted to compost and marketed as an organic option to chemical fertilizers and amendments to the agricultural community, construction and industrial entities, parks and recreation facilities, nurseries, home improvement stores, and residential customers.

**Sponsor Name:** Habitat for Humanity of Omaha ReStore**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Habitat ReStore Renovation Phase I**Project No:** 12-148**Amount Requested:** \$224,600**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Waste Management

Habitat for Humanity of Omaha requests a grant of \$224,600.00 to renovate and improve the ReStore's receiving area, customer and donor entrance and outdoor storage area. By renovating these sections of the operation the ReStore will be able increase our efficiency at receiving and moving home improvement material which has been rescued from landfills at the Habitat Omaha ReStore.

Habitat ReStore is a discount home improvement retail outlet that provides a convenient way to recycle surplus, unneeded construction supplies that would otherwise be sent to the landfill. The ReStore inspects, organizes, and sells this donated unneeded material to the general public at prices 50-75% below retail cost, "recycling" it to new owners. In 2010, 360 businesses and 3,518 individuals donated their excess items to the ReStore instead of sending them to the landfill. These numbers represent an increase of 166 businesses and 942 individuals from 2009. The sale of these donations totaled 1,220 tons of usable building materials, an increase of 171 tons that were diverted from the waste stream, and reused and recycled by new owners.

Due in part by the increase of donations the movement of material from drop off to display is becoming severely hampered by an inefficient and congested receiving and donation drop off area as well as an inadequate and uneven outdoor storage area. Streamlining the donation area by moving it to a section of the building that can allow a drive thru drop off that is set far enough away from the street will increase efficiencies and allow for the handling of more drop off donations. The more effectively and efficiently we can be in collecting, storing, managing, and displaying merchandise means the more donations we can collect and the more material we can rescue from landfills and recycle to new owners.

**Sponsor Name:** High Plains Weed Management Association      **Nearest Town:** Scottsbluff  
**Project Name:** North Platte River Invasive Species Control Project (Phase 2)      **Project No:** 11-173-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$250,000      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The High Plains Weed Management Association is requesting \$1.884 million dollars for three years towards a \$2,480,000 project in helping to restore the waterways of the North and South Platte Rivers and its tributaries. For the last three years over 4,000 acres of Russian olive, Salt Cedar, and Phragmites have been removed or removed in the watersheds. Over the last 50 years, invasive species have invaded the riparian areas of the Platte Rivers. Our invasive species eradication and control project targets 123 miles along the North Platte River, 9 miles of the South Platte River and all perennial streams that feed the main river channel. This totals more than 100,000 acres. During the last three years, the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the High Plains Weed Management Association in partnership with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the eight county weed superintendents of Garden, Morrill, Sioux, ScottsBluff, Banner, Kimball, Cheyenne and Deuel, the South Platte NRD and the North Platte NRD have been working to restore habitat along the Platte Rivers and its tributaries. What should be open meandering waterways have become inaccessible to both man and beast due to the congestion of Russian olive, Salt Cedar and Phragmites. With the help of the Nebraska Environmental Trust and our partners, we presently have removed 3,800 acres under contract with removal of Russian olive trees along with a 10 year follow up plan with landowners for spraying Russian olive re-growth on over. In partnership with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the Nebraska Environmental Trust and additional 500 acres of Salt Cedar trees, Phragmites and Russian olive trees were aerial sprayed with habitat.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,800,000 FROM 2008-2009, WITH A FOLLOW-UP PROJECT FUNDED \$700,000 IN 2009-2010, AND SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING FOR \$150,000 IN 2011, WITH A STATEMENT OF INTENT FOR \$250,000 IN YEAR TWO, WITH THREE YEARS TO EXPEND FUNDS PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THE BOARD VOTED TO NOT FUND THIS PROJECT IN 2011 AND ALLOCATE \$250,000 IN YEAR TWO, WITH TWO YEARS TO EXPEND FUNDS PENDING APPROVAL OF THE 2012 GRANTS COMMITTEE. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Joslyn Castle Institute for Sustainable Communities      **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Strategic Communications Design for Sustainable Development      **Project No:** 12-123  
**Amount Requested:** \$498,000      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Education

This is a proposal for the development of a "strategic communications design for sustainable development" that can be applied throughout Nebraska on any and all environmental issues. The final product will be an electronic handbook accessible to all communities. Design Strategy: To develop transparent and accessible models of communication design on specific sustainability problem-opportunities in Nebraska.

By communication we mean the complex processes of human interaction(s) necessary to address a problem-opportunity that is embedded in the interdependent systems of nature, public policy, economics, technology and local culture. By design we mean intentional and creative intervention and innovation making something that was once problematic, need conservation, or underutilized into something that serves the public good and allows the people affected to live better lives. Since 2005 the Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities, with funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and others, has undertaken a series of interrelated studies for the purpose of aiding in the establishment of a balanced vision of the natural environment in harmony with the growth and development of human enterprises and community living conditions.

- 2005-2008 (at an aggregate value of \$317,419.00) model studies and recommendations on growth-management issues and "Envisioning Regional Designs" for the future of the Flatwater Metro region of Southeast Nebraska.
- 2009-2010 (at a value of \$1,147,500.00) we packaged the Flatwater tools and strategies into a series of 22 statewide leadership workshops on sustainable development for local officials and community leaders; the resulting book, "Sustainometrics: Measuring Sustainability" has been published.
- 2010-2011 (at a value of \$540,000.00) four public conferences, "Conversation Conferences on Nebraska's Essential Resources", to bring public attention to the natural resources for land, water, energy, materials, and food, conducted in Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island and Scottsbluff.

Each of these projects and investigations has lead to the next effort in the quest for Nebraska to become a model of economic and social well-being within an environment of abundant and sustainable resources. Through these experiences and resources we have come to the conclusion that sustainable development and planning for sustainable futures requires special and distinctive communications among all stakeholders, if future generations are to continue a sustainable vision of "Nebraska's Future Environment".

**Sponsor Name:** Keep Alliance Beautiful**Nearest Town:** Alliance**Project Name:** 2010-2012 Recycling Center Equipment & Education Programs**Project No:** 10-132-3**Amount Requested:** \$27,240**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Keep Alliance Beautiful is seeking Trust grant funds to support education program funding and recycling equipment for a three year grant period. Projects requesting funding include: 1) Personnel Salaries (partial funding request only); 2) Education Programs & Events to teach the local communities about Waste Reduction. Proposed programs are Recycling Ambassadors (3 year funding), Students for Recycling (annual) Contest (3 year funding), Reduce-Reuse-Recycle Fair (2 year funding), and Water Bottle Re-Use program (1 year funding); 3) Recycling Equipment for Keep Alliance Beautiful recycling center operations (partial funding request only).

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$44,990 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$23,990 IN YEAR TWO AND \$27,240 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Keep Nebraska Beautiful**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Nebraska School Chemical Cleanout Campaign**Project No:** 11-158-2**Amount Requested:** \$60,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

A majority of high schools in Nebraska have chemicals that are outdated, unknown, unnecessary, highly hazardous, potentially explosive and radioactive. Many of the chemicals are quite old having been purchased as early as the 1950s when the federal government provided substantial funds to schools to enhance science curriculum and many of those legacy chemicals remain on school lab shelves. Chemicals have continued accumulating over the decades and have in many cases created serious health and safety problems for students and school staff.

In 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency collaborated with several federal agencies to initiate the Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign. Keep Nebraska Beautiful became aware of the need for a School Chemical Cleanout Program in Nebraska through an incidence of a school seeking help with a couple of chemicals which were later identified as radioactive. We applied for a grant from the U.S. EPA in 2007 to develop the program. Our goals are to: 1) Remove inappropriate, outdated, unknown and unnecessary chemicals from schools; 2) Prevent future chemical mismanagement in schools through training, curriculum and policy change and long-term management solutions; and, 3) Raise awareness of chemical issues in schools and promote sustainable solutions.

KNB partnered with the 17 Educational Service Units (ESUs) to write state grants to help high schools pay for the initial cleanouts. To date, 127 schools in 10 ESUs have been cleaned out resulting in the removal of 7,250 chemicals including 4,764 lbs of high haz, 976 lbs. of mercury removed from 85 schools, radioactives from 21 schools, and potential explosives from 66 schools. This grant proposal is for 41 schools in the remaining 5 ESUs to have assistance with a 1-time cleanout of chemicals.

KNB will work with all Nebraska schools to provide sustainable management solutions and to prevent future chemical mismanagement.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$108,024 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$60,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Lincoln Children's Museum**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Water Exhibit Renovation**Project No:** 12-175**Amount Requested:** \$98,786**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Education

Funding will be used to help replace the Lincoln Children's Museum's current water exhibit which has exhausted its useful life. Specifically, financial support from the Nebraska Environmental Trust would be used to fund the installation, wall construction, drainage/water barrier implementation, anti-slip flooring, educational graphics, and signage that are critical to making this exhibit successful. Within this context the renovated water exhibit will appeal to and educate our entire audience with activities for the very young (ages 1-2) and richer educational content for early elementary learners. Children will gain an appreciation for the importance of water as a natural resource and learn the unique properties and abilities of water. As the most popular exhibit in the museum, the renovated water exhibit has the potential to educate hundreds of thousands of children over its lifetime. With specific education components such as the importance of water in our daily lives specifically in terms of food production, the water cycle, respect for natural habitats, pollution prevention, and appreciation for unique Nebraska natural resources and wildlife this exhibit will provide a hands-on learning experience unlike any other.

Fundraising to reach the full \$700,000 required for project completion has been continuous. Once funds are secure, the museum will commence the detail design, prototyping, testing, fabrication, and installation of the exhibit. The outcomes of this renovation are numerous including increased attendance and membership renewals, however the most important outcomes lie in increased educational value of both the water exhibit and the Lincoln Children's Museum along with the increased appreciation for natural environments and resources that every child (and adult for that matter) will experience after spending time in the renovated water exhibit.

**Sponsor Name:** Lincoln Parks Foundation**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Revitalizing Nebraska's Centennial Mall**Project No:** 11-143-2**Amount Requested:** \$250,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Located in the heart of downtown Lincoln, Nebraska, Centennial Mall was installed in 1967 to honor the State's 100th birthday. The mall was designed to be an urban oasis where people could relax and meet in a park-like setting. Over the years, Centennial Mall has served as the State Capitol's "welcome corridor" for visitors. The mall is a unifying structure tying State government, the City of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska together.

Over the last decade, Centennial Mall, which is maintained and managed by the Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department, has started to crumble. Its infrastructure is made primarily of cement, which cannot hold up under the onslaught of Nebraska's tough winters. Trees were placed in planters. Growth has caused tree roots to bust apart the planters and make the sidewalks unsafe. Most of the fountains gracing Centennial Mall have been filled in with sod due to safety concerns. Centennial Mall, once the pride of Nebraska, is now an eyesore. Additionally, the mall does not conform to modern accessibility requirements.

The proposed project will raise a total of \$10.0 million (includes \$1.5 million for a maintenance endowment, \$8,419,488 million for demolition, design, construction and contingencies, and \$180,512 in campaign expenses) to renovate Centennial Mall. The City of Lincoln has committed \$3 million toward the project with the University of Nebraska Foundation providing another \$2,000,000, the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners providing \$100,000, and State Energy Program providing \$97,500 for a total of \$5,197,500 in committed funds. This leaves \$4,802,500 to raise. Our request to NET is for \$754,500. A capital campaign led by Lincoln Parks Foundation will raise the remainder. We plan to announce the public portion of campaign in second quarter of 2011 and complete fund raising by second quarter of 2012. Construction will begin third quarter of 2012 and be completed in 2014.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$60,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$250,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$200,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Lincoln, City of**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Eastern Saline Wetlands Project - 2012**Project No:** 12-139**Amount Requested:** \$1,400,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Eastern Saline Wetlands Project 2012 will conserve the most imperiled natural community in Nebraska. The targeted eastern saline wetland ecosystem is located primarily in the Salt Creek watershed in northern Lancaster and southern Saunders counties. Conserving the eastern saline wetlands also protects the endangered Salt Creek tiger beetle and saltwort plant as well as other fauna and flora which survive in the saline wetlands unique to this limited area of the state. Only about 4,700 acres of saline wetlands still exist and these acres are only partially conserved. Conservation would be afforded the saline wetlands in five ways: 1. By acquiring the wetlands and adjoining buffer and connective tracts in fee simple from willing sellers. 2. By purchasing permanent conservation easements from willing sellers on the wetlands and adjoining buffer and connective tracts. 3. By continuing to retain a full-time Saline Wetland Coordinator. 4. By restoration and management work on the wetlands. 5. By developing area conservation plans. No commercial, industrial, residential, or other use detrimental to the protected ecosystem would be allowed on project lands. Land acquired or conserved by a conservation easement would be largely left in its natural state or used for limited agricultural purposes. The saline wetlands are largely in the flood plains of the streams; the conservation of them will provide a permanent measure of flood control along the waterways and protect the quality of the stream water and groundwater from typical urban and agricultural pollutants. With the existing Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership and a Coordinator focused on the project, the partners will continue to implement the Conservation Plan; a framework for more effective and higher-leverage conservation of the eastern saline wetlands as an integrated unit. We feel the Eastern Saline Wetlands Project 2012 qualifies for the feature program bonus. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$2,750,000 FROM 2002 TO 2009. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Lincoln, City of**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Haymarket Arena Recycling and Composting Program: Equipment and Education**Project No:** 12-173**Amount Requested:** \$168,250**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Waste Management

The West Haymarket Arena in Lincoln, set to open in 2013, is being constructed on former blighted industrial property to the west of Lincoln's vibrant commercial and residential Haymarket District. The Arena will soon become a hub of statewide activities, including annual high school tournaments, University of Nebraska-Lincoln athletics, and major performances. Each year, over 600,000 Nebraskans will use the Arena and its services. The City of Lincoln and its partner the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are committed to establishing the West Haymarket Arena as a model for sustainable practices and positive environmental impact, both for Lincoln and the state as a whole. On average, every visitor to the Arena will create 2.4 pounds of waste. To address this significant waste stream, the Arena will include a state-of-the-art recycling and composting program as a fundamental feature of its waste management, with a goal of diverting up to 75% of this waste from the landfill. The Arena will be a national leader among sports and entertainment facilities practicing environmental responsibility. This goal provides a one-of-a-kind educational and promotional opportunity on the ease and value of recycling and composting efforts for the hundreds of thousands of Nebraskans using the Arena. This proposal to the Nebraska Environmental Trust seeks funding for the recycling equipment that is the project's backbone: state-of-the-art waste collection stations/receptacles, and compactor/balers. This proposal also seeks funding for an educational and promotional collaboration between the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Arena to make "zero waste" a meaningful goal for Arena patrons in both their visits to the Arena and in their daily lives. The Nebraska Environmental Trust will be recognized in all signage, promotions, and other materials - being a full partner in this unique opportunity to bring recycling even more to the public's attention.

**Sponsor Name:** Lincoln, City of - Public Works and Utilities/Solid Waste Operations

**Nearest Town:** Lincoln

**Project Name:** Community Attitude Assessment for Solid Waste Management Plan

**Project No:** 12-143

**Amount Requested:** \$55,000

**Term of Project Request:** 1

**Review Group:** Water

The City of Lincoln is undertaking the development of a comprehensive solid waste management plan for Lincoln and Solid Waste management plan for Lincoln and Lancaster County. This will include the analysis and recommendations on a number of issues regarding waste reduction reuse and recycling. Issues such as: local adoption of product stewardship and/or zero waste principles; expanding the yard waste composting to include food waste; waste haulers to provide curbside recycling instituting volume based fees for waste collection; operate a permanent household hazardous waste facility; develop commercial recycling requirements for cardboard and office paper; and construction waste requirements for remodeling and new construction projects. The plan will analyze the sustainability of the current solid waste management system and estimate the amount of green house gas reduction that could be achieved through a more aggressive waste reduction and recycling. These issues could bring significant changes to our current solid waste system and are complex in nature. In order to gauge public opinion on these issues the proposed project will provide the funds to undertake a public involvement process to gain their opinion on various alternatives. Activities may include community surveys, web-based platforms and focus group meetings. This will allow detailed information to a Mayoral appointed citizen advisory committee of community leaders to make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on changes to the solid waste system in an informed manner.

**Sponsor Name:** Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

**Nearest Town:** Lincoln

**Project Name:** Local Pharmacy Medication Disposal - A Prescription for Public Health

**Project No:** 11-160-2

**Amount Requested:** \$50,000

**Term of Project Request:** 1

**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD), in cooperation with Nebraska MEDS partners is seeking Nebraska Environmental Trust funding for a pilot project entitled, "Local Pharmacy Medication Disposal – A Prescription for Public Health". Funding for this project will be utilized in the construction and facilitation of a pharmaceutical pollution prevention system that safeguards our aquatic and human environments from the danger of emerging contaminants. This system will develop both educational and disposal mechanisms as a statewide model for a sustainable medication waste management approach that helps to protect public health and the natural environment. Participation and involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders will produce the following project deliverables:

1. An educational campaign for the general public that builds awareness of the need for sound pharmaceutical waste management.
2. An educational kit for pharmacy staff that details the need and recommended steps for pharmaceutical waste disposal.
3. A simple and easily documentable disposal system for pharmacies to use that includes one-way tamper resistant disposal devices for non-controlled substances that can be shipped directly to a permitted medical/hazardous waste incinerator.
4. A documentable and legal disposal system for consumers to directly ship their unwanted controlled substances to a permitted medical/hazardous waste incinerator.

LLCHD and the Nebraska MEDS partners will align project materials, procedures and practices with pre- and post-project feedback from participating stakeholders and the general public to ensure project relevance and effectiveness. Funding for this project will provide the initial resources needed to seed what the Nebraska MEDS partners feel will be a "sea change" in terms of the public and private practices and behaviors associated with the safe handling and ultimate environmental impact of unwanted pharmaceuticals. The project will help to ensure a healthy environment and sustainable waste management system for tomorrow by implementing pollution prevention education and sound practices today.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$50,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$50,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.



**Sponsor Name:** Little Blue Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Davenport**Project Name:** Protecting our Drinking Water Supply**Project No:** 12-191**Amount Requested:** \$330,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Water

This application is to acquire cost-share monies for the purchase of pivots and/or sub-surface drip (SDI) irrigation systems reduce the amount of water applied to the soil. At this time approximately 65% of the irrigation systems are pivots, 30% are gravity or flood irrigated and 5% other. The Little Blue NRD has shown through its voluntary reporting program that gravity fields put on 15 inches per acre compared to 8 inches under pivots/SDI. Another concern with gravity fields is over-irrigating which causes contamination leaching. To be able to convert gravity irrigation to pivot will curb both of these concerns. The technology to improve nitrogen management will benefit producers by applying only the nitrogen that is needed for the plant. Nitrogen stabilizers and split application has the potential to increase crop yield for producers and control leaching into the groundwater. Mapping of these results will be critical on management decisions for communities and producers. The Little Blue NRD has unique soil types throughout, ranging from clay to sandy soils. Through demonstrations on water patterns and nitrogen sensor, producers will glean the advantages of new technology. The technology is available to control nozzles on a pivot to water according to soil types. Soil types can be a limiting factor on crop yields, so adding more water to areas within a field can be detrimental to the crop and cause over-watering.

**Sponsor Name:** Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Pierce**Project Name:** Understanding Cyanobacteria Blooms in Willow Creek Reservoir**Project No:** 12-188**Amount Requested:** \$140,770**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Water

Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green or toxic algae, pose a health threat to people and animals that come in contact with lake water suffering from an algal bloom and result in economic hardships to local communities that depend on recreational dollars spent at lakes experiencing blooms. Willow Creek Reservoir near Pierce, Nebraska is one such lake that has experienced several cyanobacterial blooms since its construction in 1984. When placed on alert status due to cyanobacteria levels, the estimated impact is an 80% drop in boaters and beach goers, a 33% drop in camper numbers, and a 50% drop in angler visitation. Local stakeholders such as the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District wish to reduce these blooms to the extent possible. However, in order to do so, a better understanding of the causes of those blooms needs to be established. This project proposes to achieve that understanding by: (1) characterizing cyanobacteria levels in Willow Creek Reservoir; (2) characterizing potential causes of those cyanobacteria blooms; (3) identifying relations between cyanobacteria levels in Willow Creek Reservoir and potential causes; and (4) sharing those findings with the public and local stakeholders to provide guidance for managing cyanobacteria in Willow Creek Reservoir. These tasks will be accomplished over a 3-year period through a collaborative effort between six separate agencies and by leveraging funding from local, state, and federal sources in addition to those requested from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund.

**Sponsor Name:** Lower Loup Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Irrigation Monitoring Program**Project No:** 10-111-3**Amount Requested:** \$50,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Funding is being sought from the Environmental Trust Fund to cost-share flowmeters for irrigators in order to increase understanding of groundwater irrigation occurring in the Lower Loup Natural Resource District (LLNRD). A flowmeter, depending on model, costs around \$1,500. The LLNRD would match the Trust funds with NRD funds to purchase flowmeters to a maximum of \$1,500 per approved site. Installation of purchased flowmeters would be paid for by the cooperating landowners. The LLNRD would also use received Trust funds to assist with the purchasing for pressure transducers and data loggers for deployment at 10% of the cost-shared flowmeter sites. Pressure transducers would be used to determine the long-term impact of pumping on the water level in each of the well casings. Data loggers would be used to further clarify exact irrigation amounts throughout the season. The District has certified 1,211,158 acres in active irrigation from the use of 9,789 high capacity wells. There is limited information available regarding the total amounts of irrigation taking place across the District. Data is needed on a variety of factors that affect irrigation amounts. Since January 1, 2008, the LLNRD has been in a ground and surface water moratorium and has certified nearly all the irrigated acres. The LLNRD is one of the lead agencies involved in the Elkhorn Loup Modeling (ELM) Project. The ELM project heavily relies on irrigation pumping figures and having accurate, spatially diverse data is absolutely imperative to ensuring the accuracy and replicability of the numerical groundwater model. Better information on the amount of water withdrawn from the aquifer used in combination with changes in static water levels will provide the LLNRD Board of Directors and other management entities with a key piece of information when developing groundwater management policy.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$60,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$40,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$50,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Lower Platte North Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Valparaiso**Project Name:** No-Till Grass Drill**Project No:** 12-106**Amount Requested:** \$20,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Equipment

The Lower Platte North NRD is seeking funding from the NETF to purchase a no-till grass drill. This new drill will replace our very first drill which is 18 years old and has covered thousands of acres. This drill has exceeded its useful depreciated life of seven years because of our excellent operations and maintenance schedule. The drill needs major repairs which we feel is not worth the cost and would rather put that cost into a new drill. Our drill helps landowners establish cool and warm season grasses for soil conservation, water quality and wildlife habitat. Over the years our no-till native grass drill was very useful for the demand in Saunders, Butler and Lancaster County area and there is still a high demand for this type of equipment. With the significant increases in Prairie type plantings in the area through programs like CRP, Continuous CRP, CRP-MAP, CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program), WRP (Wetland Reserve Program), EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program), Buffer Strip Program, Corners for Wildlife, and others it greatly increases the need for a no-till grass drill in the area. The purchase price of a no-till grass drill is \$31,865. The operation and maintenance will be taken care of by a private landowner, NRD and the implement dealer in which the drill is purchased. The drill will be available for any landowner in the area at a reasonable fee. A no-till grass drill is needed to handle the fluffy seeds associated with many warm & cool season grasses, wildflowers and legumes. These fluffy seeds are not effectively planted with conventional drills. The establishment of these native grass stands will help control erosion & sedimentation of our streams & ponds, improve water quality and improve wildlife habitat.

LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD WAS AWARDED \$15,000 IN 2002 AND \$15,000 IN 2008 FOR NO-TILL DRILLS, AND REQUESTED FUNDS BUT WAS NOT FUNDED IN 2004.

**Sponsor Name:** Lower Platte North Natural Resources District      **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Todd Valley Surface and Ground Water Modeling Study      **Project No:** 12-177  
**Amount Requested:** \$84,452      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Water

The Todd Valley Surface and Ground Water Modeling Study is both a continuation of the Lower Platte River Modeling Study (also funded by NET), which just addressed ground water, as well as, new components since this study will also address surface water with the goal to develop a comprehensive integrated water management model. Dr. Chen of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln developed the original Lower Platte River Modeling Study for the Lower Platte North NRD using MODFLOW software, which requires boundary conditions with larger grid size outside the specific modeled area such as the Todd Valley. Since the Todd Valley is hydraulically connected to the Platte River, the Todd Valley was an important component to the Platte River model and was also modeled but using more generalize inputs of precipitation, soil properties, and geologic parameters. Since this basic information has now been compiled it will be less costly to refine this data to obtain a smaller grid size for the Todd Valley than to start this informational gathering and model development from the very beginning. This cost saving is reflected in the proposed budget for this project.

The Todd Valley Surface and Ground Water Modeling Study is also new in that Dr. Chen proposes to use the SWAT software to model surface water and couple this with the MODFLOW model to develop an integrated water management model and plan.

**Sponsor Name:** Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance      **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Real-Time Contaminant Prediction in the Lower Platte River Basin      **Project No:** 11-145-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$33,000      **Term of Project Request:** 1      **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Lower Platte River and its tributaries are important resources for Nebraskans that provide a variety of uses to an increasingly large portion of the state's populace. Understanding the quality of these resources will assist decision makers managing this valuable resource for the citizens of Nebraska. Having rapid access to water-quality data will help protect the public and the environment. Therefore, this project seeks to predict contaminant concentrations such as E.coli or suspended sediment at select locations in the lower Platte River basin and provide those predictions in near real-time to inform and educate via the internet. These predictions will be made by: (1) Continuously measuring data such as stream flow or turbidity that have the potential to predict contaminant concentration, (Objective 1); (2) relate those predictive data to measured contaminant concentrations (Objective 2); and (3) Predict those contaminant concentrations and make them available from any internet-accessible device (Objective 3). To maximize the impact of NET funds, this project proposes to leverage monitoring activities already funded for the next 2 years to accomplish the first objective. This would be associated with multiple monitoring programs and several partners. Therefore, Trust funds would be combined with federal funding to accomplish objectives two and three. Thank you for your consideration.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$90,240 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$33000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Spatial and Temporal Dynamics of Sandbars in the Lower Platte River **Project No:** 12-149  
**Amount Requested:** \$333,610 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

Sandbar height in the lower Platte River is directly related to the probability of nest survival for the interior Least Tern and Piping Plover (tern and plover), bird species that are state and federally listed as “endangered” and “threatened” respectively. The proposed project will implement a sandbar monitoring program along the 103-mile reach of the Platte River from the confluence with the Loup River, near Columbus, to just upstream of the Highway 75 bridge near Plattsmouth. Sandbar surveys will occur three times annually along this reach. The goal of the surveys will be to characterize the spatial and temporal variation in the height and area (relative to an index discharge) of sandbars along the lower Platte River, and thereby gain some understanding of the primary formative, erosion, and persistence processes of on-river nesting habitats of the tern and plover. Currently, little is known about which hydrologic or geomorphic processes are most important to sandbar geometric characteristics. This lack of understanding reduces the efficiency and viability of long-term planning in the lower Platte River corridor because natural resources managers are often faced with predicting impacts from future water resources development, bank protections, levees, bridge construction, and even river restoration activities on tern and plover habitats.

The proposed project builds on projects previously funded by NET for the lower Platte River Cumulative Impact Study Phase 2. A pilot sandbar monitoring study, funded by Lower Platte South NRD, has already been implemented in the lower Platte River between the confluence of Salt Creek and highway 74 near Plattsmouth. The proposed project will expand the spatial scope of the pilot study, upstream to the Loup River, and therefore will provide greater inference into the spatial variability, and influence of tributary hydrology and sediment sources on sandbar geometry.

**Sponsor Name:** Lower Republican NRD **Nearest Town:** Alma  
**Project Name:** Demonstration of Desalination Processes to Augment Republican River Water Supply **Project No:** 12-102  
**Amount Requested:** \$353,031 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Water

The LRNRD seeks to implement a pilot scale project to determine and demonstrate the physical and economic suitability of modern inland desalination and other treatment processes to increase the long-term supply of usable water in Nebraska's Lower Republican River Basin. The project has been developed in collaboration with the University of Texas at El Paso's Center for Inland Desalination Systems via a recommendation from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility where UTEP's cutting edge work in this field has been successfully tested. The project will include comprehensive chemical and physical testing and evaluation of water supply options including currently unused brackish Dakota aquifer water, oil-and-gas-produced water and other potential sources; evaluation of sites for pilot testing; determination of potential treatment methods from among seven available modern technologies; temporary installation of UTEP and/or private industry-owned equipment to test selected methods for 4-6 weeks each to obtain operational and water quality performance data; evaluation of the potential for use or disposal of desalination waste streams (with a potential additional project component outside the scope and funding of this application to facilitate possible entrepreneurial opportunities for local use of byproducts such as gypsum, salt, magnesium, etc.); and comprehensive analysis of project findings including a final report of all results and recommendations in publishable format to inform and educate interested parties and the public.

**Sponsor Name:** Metropolitan Area Planning Agency **Nearest Town:** Omaha  
**Project Name:** Integrated Solid Waste Management Study and Plan Update **Project No:** 11-151-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$50,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

In 1994, in compliance with the Nebraska Integrated Solid Waste Management Act, the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) adopted a 20-year, Regional Plan for the 5-county area (Cass, Douglas, Pottawattamie, Sarpy and Washington). The Plan was intended to: reflect the State's landfill diversion hierarchy, identify source reduction and recycling strategies to achieve specific diversion goals over time, provide assurances of adequate disposal capacities for 20 years. In January of 2003, a Plan Update was released for the Douglas County and Sarpy County service areas. The Update included a review of the following: waste generation in the 2-county area; status of the 1994 Plan and waste diversion goals; planned program improvements (notably UnderTheSink, the new household hazardous waste facility). With the window of the Plan sun setting in 2015, it is time to begin reassessing the status of solid waste management in the MAPA region. This grant will be used to fund a consultant to assist in a study and new plan update to: gather and review waste generation and diversion and disposal data for the MAPA region; develop an ongoing system to efficiently track waste generation, diversion and disposal; engage regional stakeholders (including the general public) to identify priorities to develop end markets for recyclables and increase landfill diversion; develop an implementation plan that includes community involvement and education; evaluate opportunities to expand the service area for UnderTheSink (for which the NET was a substantial funding source); improve the overall sustainability of the Plan under current and future conditions. While MAPA is the lead agency in this effort, Douglas County, Omaha, and Sarpy County have entered into a Interlocal Agreement to support MAPA and plan provide in-kind contributions to help prepare the updated Plan.

A SIMILAR PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 1994 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$50,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$50,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Middle Republican Natural Resources District **Nearest Town:** McCook  
**Project Name:** Desalination Demonstration **Project No:** 12-104  
**Amount Requested:** \$189,392 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Water

The MRNRD seeks to implement a pilot scale project as a companion project to a larger, similar project proposed by the LRNRD, to determine and demonstrate the physical and economic suitability of modern inland desalination and other treatment processes to increase the long-term supply of usable water in Nebraska's Republican River Basin, by utilizing currently unusable brackish ground water including oil-and-gas-produced water. The original project and this companion project have been developed in collaboration with the University of Texas at El Paso's Center for Inland Desalination Systems via a recommendation from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility where UTEP's cutting edge work in the field has been successfully tested. The researchers working toward the LRNRD project have determined that Red Willow County, within the jurisdiction of the MRNRD, may be a promising site for treatment of oil-and-gas-produced water, and the MRNRD proposes to work with the same project team while they are already in Nebraska working with the LRNRD, contingent on funding of the LRNRD project by one of the sources to which they have applied. The MRNRD project will include comprehensive chemical and physical testing and evaluation of water supply options in our district; evaluation of sites for pilot testing; determination of potential treatment methods; temporary installation of UTEP and/or private industry-owned equipment to test selected methods; evaluation of the potential for use or disposal of desalination waste streams; and comprehensive analysis of project findings with a final report of results and recommendations including cost estimates for a full scale project.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Academy of Sciences, Inc., The **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Nebraska Environmental Public Information and Education MiniGrant Program **Project No:** 11-108-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$56,600 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Nebraska Environmental Trust Public Information and Education MiniGrant Program will award a total of \$51,000 each year for the next three years, in MinGrants of up to \$3,000 each, to support the presentation and dissemination of information and perspectives that will stimulate enhanced environmental stewardship in any category eligible for Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) funding. These categories are habitat, surface and ground water, waste management, air quality, and soil management. The grants seek to expand dialogue on important current conservation topics and to provide information on emerging or highly useful conservation methods. All Nebraska individuals, private organizations, and public entities are eligible to apply for these funds. This program will be administered by the Nebraska Academy of Sciences.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$55,997 IN 2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$56,600 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$56,600 IN YEAR TWO AND \$56,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Agricultural Education Educators **Nearest Town:** Lincoln  
**Project Name:** Nebraska Agricultural Education Soils Project **Project No:** 11-128-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$100,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Nebraska Agricultural Education Soils Project (Soil Project) is a focused but broad-based soil/soil quality initiative to educate Nebraska Agriculture Education (Ag Ed) teachers, Ag Ed students and Nebraskans. Those individuals will then have the resources and skills to be actively involved in soil quality projects.

Nebraska Ag Education (Ag Ed) is offered in 137 Nebraska High Schools to 6,000 students. Ag Ed Educators, (teachers) advise and instruct students in classroom, laboratories and field experiences about soil science. Nebraska Ag Education lacks soil-science based information and resources to improve Nebraska soil.

We, the Nebraska Agricultural Education Educators, are soil educators as teachers, soil researchers, environmentalists, conservationists, land users and property owners. Our backgrounds, occupations and careers have a common passion, "HEALTHY NEBRASKA SOILS". OUR PASSION AND DESIRE IS TO PRESERVE, CONSERVE AND/OR RESTORE NEBRASKA SOILS. The Soils Project will educate Nebraska Agricultural Educators (Ag Ed teachers), Ag Ed students and Nebraskans so they can learn to improve Nebraska Soils and Land Health. Having the knowledge base about soil quality, teachers and students will have the confidence and abilities, with appropriate tools, to collect soil data, monitor soil quality and manage Nebraska's landscape.

The "Soils Project" will develop and provide "action plans" for and to Ag Ed teachers and students with educational soil material, soil testing equipment and soil science resources.

This "Soils Project" will prepare Nebraska's students, as future leaders, with the skills to sustain Nebraska's land productivity and our soil health.

Preserving soil health has a direct bearing on soil productivity and crop production producing abundant food, feed, fuel and fiber while not damaging Nebraska's environment. Soil quality has a direct bearing on the quality of life for all Nebraskans. Therefore, funding for "Nebraska Agricultural Education Soils Project" is important to provide a foundation for prosperity of future generations.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$75,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$100,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$15,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Association of Resources Districts **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Living Snow Fences to Provide Habitat and Protect Highways **Project No:** 12-162  
**Amount Requested:** \$550,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

This Nebraska Living Snow Fence Initiative intends to establish living snow fences (LSF) on public and private lands to protect lives and property and enhance our natural resources. Emphasis is placed on "new generation" LSFs designed to be "wildlife friendly." To achieve this, LSF design will emphasize native shrub components in planting designs. The goal of a Nebraska Living Snow Fence Initiative is to establish primarily native tree and shrub planting across Nebraska to enhance wildlife habitat, protect natural resources, and control blowing and drifting snow and dust at strategic locations along Nebraska highways. LSFs will utilize nationally-recognized windbreak practices designed by field staff of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and/or the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS).

LSFs will be planted by Nebraska's natural resource districts (NRDs) adjacent to roadway sections identified by the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) as high priority safety and maintenance problem areas. Landowners will contribute use of land for LSFs and agree to maintain trees/shrubs for three years following planting. Financial incentives encourage landowner participation by offsetting lost income from land removed from agricultural production.

The primary goal of a new Nebraska LSF Initiative will be to make available funding to pay 100% of all costs of planting LSFs in priority locations. Costs covered will include plant materials, machine planting, weed barrier fabric installation, and fence installation if needed to protect a LSF from damage by livestock. Funding will also be made available to landowners for per-acre land rental payments when applicable. Funding incentives to landowners will be coupled with robust promotional efforts by all project partners. If awarded, NET funding will supplement available natural resource conservation cost-share programs managed by the NRCS and Farm Service Agency. NET funding will also supplement committed funding and services from Pheasants Forever, NFS, NDOR, and NRDs.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Bird Partnership **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Building Capacity for Successful Local and Regional Conservation **Project No:** 11-121-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$40,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Local conservation efforts are responsible for some of the most effective and efficient conservation achievements in Nebraska, and are uniquely able to find and implement win-win solutions that meet the needs of area wildlife and local people. However, such local groups often struggle with capacity issues that limit what they can achieve. Since 2003, the Nebraska Bird Partnership (NBP) has garnered funding from various sources including the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) to implement our Capacity Building Grant Program to assist local conservation partnerships. To date, 25 projects have received \$275,000 total funding assistance from our Capacity Building Grant Program. NET funding remains a critical component enabling us to continue to support this valuable conservation capacity building effort statewide.

The NBP Grant Committee annually releases a request for proposals (RFP) from conservation partnerships with current capacity building needs consistent with established NBP goals and criteria. Two proposals were selected for funding in the most recent grant round. These projects will yield tremendous benefits in the areas of biological planning, development of conservation program delivery tools, conservation implementation, education and outreach, and monitoring. Each project will build capacity for ongoing conservation efforts. Selected projects for 2011 include: 1) Northern Prairies Prescribed Fire Capacity Building, 2) A Conservation Strategies Assessment to Guide Conservation Delivery to Achieve RWBJV Wetland Conservation Objectives.

In addition to these 2011 projects, these NET funds will support future projects which we will select through our annual grant proposal and review process in 2012 and 2013. Future projects will be similar in nature to the 27 projects approved in the past and will also meet NBP established goals and criteria.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$40,000 IN 2008, \$40,000 IN 2009 AND \$43,500 IN 2010. A SIMILAR PROJECT WAS NOT FUNDED IN 2007.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$30,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$40,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$40,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Bird Partnership **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Strategic Habitat Conservation for Nebraska's Avian Resources **Project No:** 12-174  
**Amount Requested:** \$199,500 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

In the past, conservation delivery has primarily been opportunity driven. This two phase project will significantly shift the conservation delivery paradigm to a more strategic approach. Strategic delivery guides implementation of conservation programs within priority landscapes to areas with the greatest potential to address limiting factors negatively influencing priority species. The first phase of this project will develop spatially explicit species habitat models. These models help describe the habitats, landscape context, and spatial scale that priority species respond. These models will provide a robust set of tools to identify landscapes on a statewide scale that have the greatest potential to support Nebraska's priority avian species. These models are also used to develop programmatic Decision Support Tools that identify conservation program priorities in these landscapes. These tools will allow the partners to evaluate conservation priorities for Nebraska's avian resources on a statewide basis. The second phase of this project, will integrate the statewide resource assessment to identify potential locations and hire a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist. This will add delivery capacity in the priority landscape to ensure conservation projects are developed with willing landowners. This Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist will use these models and Decision Support Tools to a guide marketing and outreach campaign to 500 landowners and farm operators with the greatest potential to improve habitat for priority species. It is expected that this position will develop 75 projects and enhance and/or restore nearly 8,000 acres in this priority landscape through Farm Bill conservation programs. Based on projects developed by other Farm Bill Wildlife Biologists these 75 projects have the potential to target 1.2 million Farm Bill conservation dollars to priority areas, which have a high probability of positively influencing habitat for priority species.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Cattlemen **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Leopold Conservation Award Video Project **Project No:** 12-109  
**Amount Requested:** \$30,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Education

In his influential book, A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage. This land ethic lives on in farmers and ranchers across Nebraska and nationwide who are committed to the enhancement of the land, water, and wildlife in their care. Since 2006, Nebraska Cattlemen and Sand County Foundation have presented the Leopold Conservation Award to families who internalize this land ethic and are dedicated to leaving their land better than they found it. In 2010 and 2011 the Leopold Conservation Award Program benefited from Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman's announcement of the award recipient at the State Capitol on Earth Day. Governor Heineman's involvement brought increased media interest to the award, including three Nebraska television stations, both major Nebraska newspapers, and numerous other print and online publications. The Associated Press picked up the Omaha World Herald's story both years, vastly expanding its reach to media outlets as far away as The Connecticut Post. The Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award Video Project seeks to capture the landowners' ethic in their own words and images, giving the recipients an opportunity to share their story. Visual media are essential for not only archival purposes but it is also important for educating the general public on the type of conservation practices occurring every day in Nebraska. Aside from actually setting foot on these operations, we view these video profiles as the next best way to experience the exceptional efforts of these agricultural families. The project involves a full day of crew time interviewing the landowner and filming the conservation features they have put in place. The video will be professionally produced first as a stand-alone piece to be shown during speaking engagements, conventions, and trade shows, and second as a piece to be placed on Sand County Foundation's YouTube channel, award partner and sponsor websites, and other online video outlets, as appropriate.

SIMILAR PROJECTS WERE SUBMITTED IN 2007 AND 2008 BUT NOT FUNDED. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$19,725 FROM 2009 TO 2011. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.



**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Center for Sustainable Construction (NCSC)**Nearest Town:** Lincoln, York, Wahoo,**Project Name:** Equipment for Satellite Expansion of EcoStores Nebraska**Project No:** 12-124**Amount Requested:** \$97,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Equipment

The Nebraska Center for Sustainable Construction (NCSC), a d/b/a unit of the Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities, in the context of the EcoStores Nebraska and the DeConstruction Nebraska operations is planning to expand its physical presence into at least two other communities in Southeast Nebraska. The planned expansion will require purchase of one 1 ½ ton towing truck and three box trailers to transport salvageable materials from the communities and the SE Nebraska region to Lincoln and into the inventory of the EcoStore. The expansion concept will consist of negotiated agreements with two, or more, independent school districts in communities within 100 mile driving distance of Lincoln. The high schools' focal point will be the "industrial arts teacher and programs" in the selected schools. The industrial arts instructor will oversee the location and use of one box trailer, designated as a "donations pick-up and delivery point" for the Lincoln based EcoStore. The instructor will also function as a marketing extension of the Lincoln based DeConstruction unit, for contacts for new deconstruction contracts in the region of the trailer-based community. The NCSC will negotiate a "profits" sharing with the Industrial Arts program from the sales of donated salvageable materials and deconstruction contracts that occur in the community and/or region of the community. Students in the IA programs will have extra funding support, as well as opportunities for employment and training in construction skills through this program of C&D waste reduction at the local community level. The EcoStore and the DeConstruction operations will experience expanded markets around the location and operation of each remote trailer site.

The NCSC will schedule cyclical pickups of the loaded trailers, replacing an empty trailer on each site as a loaded unit is hauled back to Lincoln.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Clean Cities Coalition**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Green Fleets Initiative**Project No:** 12-179**Amount Requested:** \$925,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Air Quality

Nebraska Clean Cities Coalition (NeC3) is a statewide coalition of public and private members and partners dedicated to improving environmental, economic and energy security and sustainability. NeC3 supports partnerships, projects and programs that advance clean-burning fuels and vehicles in Nebraska and the region. NeC3 is fuel-neutral and promotes security and sustainability through fuel diversity.

NeC3 is requesting up to \$925,000 in NET funds over two grant terms to help establish the NeC3 Green Fleets Initiative (NeC3 Green Fleets). NeC3 Green Fleets is a suite of projects, programs and resources dedicated to improving the environmental, economic and energy performance of business, government and consumer fleets in Nebraska. NeC3 Green Fleets projects support efforts by our members and partners to install infrastructure, upgrade equipment and vehicles and create local and regional clean-fuels corridors across Nebraska. NeC3 Green Fleets programs are designed to empower business owners, fleet managers, retailers, service providers, emergency responders, policymakers and the public with the tools, resources, networking, training and technical assistance necessary to develop, implement and maintain achievable green fleet goals based on specific operational needs and market conditions. NeC3 Green Fleets resources provide for online access and administrative services to meet the growing demands of NeC3 Green Fleets participants.

NeC3 Green Fleets projects and programs described in this application include: 1) NeC3 natural gas vehicle grant program; 2) support for natural gas fuels and vehicles education and training; 3) creation of the first statewide system of networked charging stations in the nation; 5) upgrades and improvements to a mobile renewable diesel production and demonstration laboratory; 6) a pilot demonstration for a community-based renewable diesel distribution network; 7) support for the installation of up to 6 blender pump systems in the Omaha metro area; 8) development of the NeC3 website, online tools, resources and services.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality**Nearest Town:** Fremont**Project Name:** Fremont State Lakes Renovation**Project No:** 12-152**Amount Requested:** \$309,868**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Lake Rehabilitation

This project is designed to proactively address human health concerns related to algal toxins and improve the environment at the Fremont Lakes System (FLS). The FLS is a State Recreation Area near Fremont, NE, made up of 20 sandpit lakes that comprise 265 acres of water. Many of the lakes at FLS have documented water quality impairments. Eight lakes are currently on the 2010 List of Impaired Waters and an additional 2 lakes are expected to be placed on the 2012 list due to nutrients, algae densities, dissolved oxygen, and pH. While only one lake is currently on the impaired list for the microcystin toxin, all twelve lakes monitored since 2008 have had detectable concentrations with three above the beach posting target of 20ppb. The successful treatment approach utilized on Fremont Lake #20 in 2007 will be applied to 15 of the lakes in this system. Algaecide will be applied to eliminate the current algal community, alum will be applied to inactivate the phosphorus in the water column and bottom sediments, and the fish community will be renovated where needed. The FLS is proposed for this work due to: 1) human health concerns related to algal toxins, 2) the high recreational use of these lakes, 3) the large number of impairments in a small area, 4) the high potential for water quality improvement based on the success of completed projects, and 5) the resource agencies wanting to be proactive in dealing with human health issues. Additionally, NGPC would like to reduce waste by manufacturing their own wood chips and providing used oil collection containers to reduce spills and runoff into the lakes. Project partners include the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC)-Parks and Fisheries Division, Lower Platte North NRD (LPNNRD), Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance (LPRCA) and NDEQ. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$82,500 FOR LAKE #20 IN 2007. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Department of Natural Resources**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Platte Basin Water Management Action Initiative**Project No:** 12-119**Amount Requested:** \$9,900,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Water

The project is three year's allocation of funding for the Water Resources Cash Fund (WRCF) pursuant to the legislative mandate of LB 229, 2011, and as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. 61-218(7)(a). All funds obtained through the allocation will be used for the purposes of the WRCF as set out in Neb. Rev. Stat. 61-218(7)(b). The WRCF was established by LB 701 in 2007 to fund the State's contingent water resources remediation needs in fully and overappropriated basins. The WRCF has funded various projects since its inception in 2007. One project is the Platte Basin Habitat Enhancement Project (PBHEP), that is currently also funded with Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) dollars. The "Platte Basin Water Management Action Initiative" (Initiative) described below is an anticipated evolution of the PBHEP, expanding on other methods and water projects; shifting the focus from the purchase of easements to other projects that achieve the same goal. The purpose of the Initiative is to plan, implement, and monitor activities that result in more effective water management, remediating for current depletions caused by past actions. The Initiative will assist the Department of Natural Resources and the Platte Basin Natural Resources Districts (NRDs), in cooperation with other partners to optimize timing and efficiency of water use, enhance streamflows, and reduce water consumption in fully and overappropriated areas. The Initiative described in this application is a portion of the currently intended uses for the WRCF. Other projects will be carried out under the auspices of the WRCF with available funds as well. Projects include both in-progress and new projects such as: surface water storage projects, groundwater retiming, leasing or purchasing water, conjunctive management of water, conservation easements, and other water use efficiency measures that would optimize water use in the basin. THE PBHEP PROJECT MENTIONED ABOVE WAS AWARDED IN 2009 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,000,000.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Forest Service**Nearest Town:** Plattsmouth**Project Name:** Creating a Forestry Demonstration/Education Center**Project No:** 12-128**Amount Requested:** \$246,984**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Education

This project will leverage \$250,000 in recent investments and convert the 240-acre Horning State Farm Demonstration Forest in Plattsmouth from a limited-access forestry research facility to a broadly accessible and critically needed Forestry Education Center. The Center will serve a broad clientele including woodland and acreage owners, producers, conservation and green industry professionals, and urban residents. It will demonstrate and promote sustainable forest, agroforest and urban tree management practices appropriate across eastern Nebraska. This facility will be the only tree, forest and agroforest management-focused educational center in Nebraska. It combines 1) field-based demonstrations, 2) an established forested facility with mature and diverse forests, 3) a location that is central to a large population of forest landowners, producers, urban/acreage owners and residents, and 4) a powerful link to technical assistance programs and field personnel of the NFS- facilitating landscape-scale replication across eastern Nebraska. Our unmanaged eastern forests are in poor and declining condition. Management is essential for healthy, diverse, resilient forests that produce cleaner air and water, improve wildlife habitat, sequester carbon, and generate many other environmental and economic benefits. Unfortunately, these stressed resources are facing formidable threats such as highly destructive invasive species (Emerald Ash Borer, Thousand Canker Disease of walnut, honeysuckle, garlic mustard, etc.), other forest pests (Pine Wilt, Oak Wilt), and severe weather events, all exacerbated by a changing climate. This Center will serve as a vital resource to minimize, through improved forest management, the negative impacts of these threats. It will do so by developing a field-based demonstration facility and associated partner-based outreach and education programs. These assets, combined with the rural and urban forestry technical assistance capacity of the NFS, will train and support landowners and practitioners in implementing improved practices on their own land, fostering improved forest/agroforest management and urban tree care across eastern Nebraska.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Initiative**Project No:** 10-103-3**Amount Requested:** \$300,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The goal of the Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Initiative is to conserve, restore and enhance water quality of aquatic ecosystems across the state using environmentally sound rehabilitation techniques. The Initiative goal will be accomplished through an ongoing program of project design, technical assistance and funding administration by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission while working and cost sharing with private partners, local political subdivisions and municipalities. A major objective of this Initiative is to facilitate completion of the aquatic rehabilitation projects that were submitted to and approved first by the Legislature as part of the original Aquatic Habitat Plan, and second by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as part of the second Aquatic Habitat Plan. The core of the Initiative's \$2,250,000 funding will be used to design, engineer and construct these water quality projects over a three year period.

NGPC will match Initiative funds with Aquatic Habitat Stamp, Sport Fish Restoration, EPA Section 319, Bureau of Reclamation Title 28, Game Cash, Parks Cash and private monies to complete the projects. Potential project techniques include sediment/nutrient dikes, dredging, excavation, bank stabilization, offshore breakwaters, jetties, aeration, sediment by-passes, water level management, islands, submerged islands, riparian buffer zones, alum treatments, fringe wetland development and fish renovations. The Initiative will address the Trust's priorities for improving water quality and conserving water by rehabilitating lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams in order to provide diverse, stable and productive habitats that support a greater diversity of flora and fauna. Associated human benefits would include high quality recreation and aesthetics.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$4,141,750 FROM 1997-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$850,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$400,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$300,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Lincoln  
**Project Name:** Nebraska Natural Legacy Project - Phase III Implementation **Project No:** 10-152-3  
**Amount Requested:** \$360,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

In 2005, the US Fish and Wildlife Service approved the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project (Legacy Project), the state's first comprehensive Wildlife Action Plan. The habitat-based plan identified at-risk species, threats to those species, conservation actions to address threats, and identified 40 Biological Unique Landscapes (BULs) for effectively conserving Nebraska's biological diversity. The primary goals of Legacy Project-Phase III are to expand implementation to new BULs, focus on new opportunities with existing partnerships, and continue established Legacy Project implementation. Conservation actions on both private lands and conservation lands will improve the ecological condition of native prairies, woodlands and wetlands for the benefit of at-risk species. Habitat projects are delivered collaboratively with partners, using voluntary, incentive-based strategies when working with private landowners. Project ranking, monitoring, and evaluation procedures are established. This project will also implement education and outreach activities that address biodiversity education and sustainable land and water management, and will encourage nature-based recreational opportunities. Legacy Project implementation has been supported since 2005 from two past NETF grants and several million dollars from other sources. Legacy partners have implemented conservation in 12 BULs enhancing over a hundred thousand acres of at-risk species habitat by working with conservation partners and hundreds of private landowners. The primary Legacy partners involved in this grant include the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission), US Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Northern Prairies Land Trust, Pheasants Forever, Audubon Nebraska, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Sandhills Taskforce, Nebraska Forest Service and US Forest Service. We request \$1,200,000 of NET funds for this three-year project. Partners and the Commission will provide \$2,400,000 cash match. Participating private landowners will typically provide cash or in-kind match. We believe this project qualifies for the Feature Program Bonus Points for the reasons listed in the narrative section.

A REQUEST FOR PHASE I ACTIVITIES WAS SUBMITTED IN 2003 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. A REQUEST FOR ACTIVITY ON THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2006 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,100,000 FROM 2005 THROUGH 2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$480,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$360,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$360,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Valentine  
**Project Name:** Snake Falls Ranch Acquisition **Project No:** 11-130-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$807,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission) and its partners are working to preserve the cultural and natural resources on an approximately 3,100-acre tract of land located along the Snake River below Merritt Reservoir in Cherry County. As part of this project, the Commission is requesting Trust funds to acquire approximately 1,300 acres of land that includes nearly three miles of the Snake River and the iconic 54-foot wide Snake River Falls. This important fee acquisition will establish high quality public fishing access to self-sustaining trout populations unequaled in quality anywhere in Nebraska or neighboring states. It will also establish permanent public access to the Snake River Falls, an important regional tourist attraction. Our private partners in the project, the Snake Falls Sportsman's Club (Club) will acquire the adjacent approximately 1,800 acres and donate a conservation easement and first-right-of-purchase to the Commission further protecting the pine-cloaked canyon downstream of the falls. The property supports a variety of wildlife including turkeys, grouse, ducks, deer, wintering bald eagles, and rattle snakes. According to the National Park Service the Snake River has high potential for cultural resources of National Register quality. Artifacts found on the property include Clovis points made by the first inhabitants of North America over 13,000 years ago. Paleontological findings are also common. Portions of the property contain canyons up to 300 feet deep and could be used for a Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep introduction site. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,410,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$807,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$200,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Ponca, Auburn  
**Project Name:** Oak Woodland Enhancement at Ponca and Indian Cave State Parks **Project No:** 11-154-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$140,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The oak woodlands at Ponca State Park (SP) and Indian Cave SP are two of the largest and highest quality remnants in Nebraska and they support numerous at-risk species. Both parks are included in Biologically Unique Landscapes identified by the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project and improved management of the parks' woodlands is a specific Legacy strategy.

Since settlement, lack of fire in our once open-canopied, fire-adapted oak woodlands has allowed proliferation of fire-intolerant shrubs and trees, such as elms. The now dense canopies have shaded out many native grasses and wildflowers, degrading wildlife habitat in the process, and inhibited the regeneration of the sun-loving oaks. As older oaks die they are not being replaced by young trees. At-risk species, such as the purple milkweed, dwarf chinkapin oak and southern flying squirrel, that depend on open oak woodlands are in decline. Without implementation of tree thinning and prescribed fire to decrease tree densities the parks' oak woodlands will eventually be lost.

The NGPC has begun a prescribed burning program in both parks to decrease brush and tree sapling densities. We are seeking \$235,000 in NETF funds for this two-year project to clear smaller (< 6 inch diameter), shade-tolerant trees from 600 acres of oak woodlands at Ponca SP (CA 200 ac) and Indian Cave SP (CA 400 ac). At present the project partners, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska Forest Service and National Wild Turkey Federation, have committed \$119,400 in cash and in-kind match (after the Turkey Federation budget meeting in January 2011 they hope to provide additional cash match to the project).

Nebraska's conservationists and private landowners have little experience managing oak woodlands, and this project will serve as a demonstration for sound oak woodland management. Combined the two parks receive nearly one million visitors annually who will be exposed to this project and the work of the NETF. We will install signage at both parks detailing our project and hold field tours in the parks regarding woodland management.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$60,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$140,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$35,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Lincoln  
**Project Name:** WILD Nebraska Program **Project No:** 11-155-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$80,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and its' partners have been implementing the WILD Nebraska program on private lands in the state since 2000. This habitat based program has been widely accepted and received by ranchers and farmers throughout the state as a means of encouraging conservation and wildlife habitat on private lands.

Currently, the agency allocates approximately \$100,000 towards WILD Nebraska and requests for these funds far exceed the annual allocation. With approval of this this NETF grant, more funds will be available to private landowners fostering better stewardship on the landscape, creating better wildlife habitat, and increasing public use opportunities.

The main goal of WILD Nebraska is to increase and improve wildlife habitat on private land and public land not owned or controlled by the Commission to optimize recreational access opportunities. The program accomplishes its goal through 2 main objectives: 1) To increase quantity and quality of wildlife habitat in Nebraska to meet program and doctrine goals of the agency's strategic plan; and 2) To evaluate current Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and non-Commission habitat programs and their impacts on regional habitat needs in Nebraska.

The NET grant request of \$300,000 (\$100,000 per year) will be distributed among habitat projects in approximately the following proportions: 40% to grassland/prairie projects; 50% to wetland projects; and 10% to woodland projects. Specific projects are not identified in this grant application so some latitude in project type will be necessary to maximize the grant outcomes. Acres resulting directly from NET funding are estimated at 750 - 1,200 grassland acres, 300 - 420 wetland acres, and 75 - 150 woodland acres. With partner contributions, the noted acreage estimates should be considered as minimum habitat benefits.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$300,000 FROM 2004-2006 AND \$300,000 FROM 2008-2010. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$80,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$80,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$80,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission      **Nearest Town:** Cambridge  
**Project Name:** Medicine Creek State Recreation Area Shoreline Stabilization      **Project No:** 12-121  
**Amount Requested:** \$363,375      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Bank Stabilization

There has been significant shoreline erosion and filling of the bay area with sediment at the Medicine Creek Trail #1 access point at Medicine Creek State Recreation Area on Medicine Creek Reservoir. The area is a popular spot with visitors due to the amenities located in the area. This erosion results in 1) increased water turbidity, 2) a decrease in water quality, 3) reduction of the lake's overall mean depth, 4) elimination of desired emergent and submergent vegetation and plants, 5) decreased fish habitat, and 6) loss of boating access. The grant funds request would address these environmental issues. This natural point and shoreline requires protection to protect the bay area from additional sedimentation. This project will decrease the rate of erosion, provide fish habitat and spawning substrate and most importantly ensure shore line stabilization and equilibrium.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission      **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Statewide Grassland Enhancement Project      **Project No:** 12-140  
**Amount Requested:** \$900,000      **Term of Project Request:** 3      **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The objective of this project is to complete grassland habitat improvements on 25,000 acres across Nebraska over the next three years, with the majority of these habitat improvements coming on private and public lands. Nebraska has been a leader in undertaking grassland management activities to improve the wildlife habitat benefits on grassland acres. With time and an absence of management, plant diversity of grasslands has decreased and many tracts have become monocultures of grass. This loss of plant diversity has decreased the amount of suitable nesting and brood rearing habitat for grassland birds. Grassland management activities on these acres can restore diversity and productivity for wildlife, especially for grassland songbirds, greater prairie chickens, bobwhite quail, and pheasants. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), Pheasants Forever (PF), private landowners, USDA, and other partners have worked together to improve habitat and provide public access on grasslands. Programs such as CRP-Management Access Program (CRP-MAP), Open Fields and Waters (OFW), and Focus on Pheasants (FOP) specifically address important grassland habitat enhancement and public access needs across the state. With CRP expiration this fall Nebraska is poised to drop below the 1 million acre mark for only the second time since 1988. Over 40% (>400,000) of Nebraska's current CRP acres will expire during the next 3 years, so active grassland management is going to be more important on non expiring CRP to maintaining wildlife habitats and populations. This grant will assist in making habitat improvements and evaluating success of those efforts, and it is our intent to use other funds for making access payments. The additional acres of grassland habitat enhanced with Nebraska Environmental Trust funding for these programs will generate many direct and indirect benefits not only to wildlife, but also to landowners, hunters, wildlife viewers, and local economies for years after the enhancements are completed. THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED BUT NOT FUNDED IN 2004 AND 2011, AND WAS FUNDED \$1,450,000 FROM 2005 THROUGH 2010. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Missouri River Post-Flood Habitat Recovery **Project No:** 12-141  
**Amount Requested:** \$300,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

This grant application seeks funding to renovate Missouri River floodplain habitats on public and private lands impacted by flooding. Landowners owning land in the Missouri River Valley are currently facing an unprecedented flood. They will soon be looking at land use options for lands impacted by the flood of 2011. Agricultural landowners will need economically viable alternatives for lands they deem unfarmable. Recreational landowners, both public and private, will need support renovating floodplain habitats. State-owned lands are limited in the Missouri River Valley of Nebraska, but 60% of the State's population lives within an hour of the Missouri River. The habitat and recreational opportunities provided by these lands are extremely valuable to Nebraskans. Current flooding on the Missouri River will likely have reconfigured these areas, requiring post-flood renovation activities to maximize public use benefits. Private landowners have shown interest in USDA wetland and floodplain habitat programs since their introduction in the late 1990s. One hundred sixty-seven landowners have voluntarily enrolled twenty-two thousand acres of Missouri River floodplain into USDA programs like Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), WREP, and EWP. Additional acres have been enrolled into USDA's CRP. Funds from this grant may be used to incentivize existing USDA programs like CRP and WRP, do habitat renovation work on EWP sites, leverage additional USDA WREP funding for Nebraska, or meet other landowner habitat development requests.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Game and Parks Commission **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Wildlife Habitat Improvement Through Prescribed Grazing: A Private/Public Partnership **Project No:** 12-142  
**Amount Requested:** \$300,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The objective of this project is to improve wildlife habitat on private and public lands by installing fencing and watering facilities to allow for prescribed grazing management. The environmental outputs will be improved lake, stream, wetland and prairie habitat on 8,797 acres and improved water quality by encouraging best management practices on surrounding lakes streams, and wetland areas. Partners in the project include Nebraska Cattlemen, private landowners, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. These partners will provide match exceeding 1:1. In 2004, 2005, and 2008 this project received \$350,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (grants #04-169, #05-176, and #08-144). These grants have all been successfully completed, and a summary of the results is provided in the narrative.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Youth & Land Manager Outreach Project**Project No:** 11-149-2**Amount Requested:** \$60,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The youth of today represent the next generation of owners/operators of the grazing lands resource of the state of Nebraska and beyond. Succeeding generations find themselves increasingly raised away from the farm/ranch environment preventing a viable understanding of the importance of sustaining productive grazing resources. Educational opportunities exist to enhance the awareness of this important resource to the next generation through the public education system and summer camp opportunities. The Youth and Land Manager Outreach Project will target the 139 Nebraska Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters with a hands-on educational exercise. The Youth and Land Manager Outreach Project will also target the Society of Range Management, Nebraska Section Youth Range Management Camp with financial support to incentivize attendance and increase the knowledge base of capable youth with future leadership potential throughout grazing regions of the state. In addition, the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC) is requesting Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) financial support for objectives targeting grazing land manager education along with public awareness of NGLC activities. Increased visibility of NGLC efforts coupled with land owner/operator participation in educational events will lead to enhanced plant community biodiversity, superior wildlife habitat and improved soil health through increased organic matter due to better mineral recycling. This will be achieved through on-ranch demonstrations, grazing manager workshops, tours, news releases, radio ads, magazine articles, exhibits and web site development targeting both current and future generations. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$70,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$60,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$70,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Renewable Energy Systems**Nearest Town:** Lyons**Project Name:** Algae Energy Recovery System**Project No:** 12-168**Amount Requested:** \$179,450**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Air Quality

Large amounts of waste heat and old carbon emissions are emitted by commercial, agricultural and industrial operations across the nation. This demonstration project will show how existing technologies can be utilized to generate algae biomass while reducing greenhouse gas emissions in a wide variety of existing commercial, industrial and agricultural environments. Nebraska Renewable Energy Systems and Nebraska Screw Press will construct an Algae Energy Recovery System (AERS) that will grow a fast growing algae species that creates oil which can be used to increase the available non- food feedstock pool for second generation biofuels, while the residual biomass that remains after oil removal provides a high protein material that can be used for human food, animal feed or energy. The tremendous opportunity presented by fast growing algae species has been clearly documented. Algae can grow in space unusable for agriculture, can be fed on waste products and produces 50 times more oil per acre than soybeans. Producing algae on a large scale, however, creates logistical issues that have yet to be resolved. Massive expenditures will be required to build these large, centralized facilities. While this infrastructure will be created in time, the opportunity to install decentralized algae energy recycling systems that will serve to reduce emissions and improve air quality, while creating clean energy and jobs in the short term will be shown with this project. This demonstration project will create a pattern that can be overlaid onto a wide variety of applications and will work in cooperation with the algal biology and biotechnology research groups at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The UNL algae program, under the direction of Drs. George Oyler and Paul Black, will provide support -in testing and selecting high-performance algae strains to be used in this system. THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED AND NOT FUNDED IN 2011.



**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation **Nearest Town:** Bayard  
**Project Name:** Grasslands at Chimney Rock: Acquisition of Conservation Easement **Project No:** 11-159-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$100,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation (NSHSF) in conjunction with The Conservation Fund and the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS), requests Nebraska Environmental Trust support for purchasing a conservation easement on 551.7 acres of agricultural land described as N ½; SE ¼; E ½; SW ¼ of Section 17, T20N, R52W in Morrill County Nebraska.

This request is for funds in addition to those committed by NET for the Chimney Rock project in 2010. The project intent has been changed in conjunction with the landowners from outright purchase of the land to purchase of a conservation easement.

Once the purchase of the easement - preliminarily estimated at \$700,000—if funded, the easement will be held by the NSHS, which manages the 88 acres of state owned land there including Chimney Rock itself and the Abbott Visitors Center. The NSHS holds other preservation easements.

The project supports the Nebraska Environmental Trust Habitat and Soil Management priority issues. In terms of habitat, it is adjacent to the Wildcat Hills Biologically Unique Area. Consulting ecologist Dr. Patrick Reece sees it as, "critical habitat for numerous at-risk plant and animal species." Ecological highlights include sand, sagebrush, and at-risk plant community. The land supports a diversity of native grass and forb species. Fauna include raptors, the swift fox, and prairie dogs.

About two-thirds of the land is never-plowed grazing acres and the remainder flood irrigated acres. The management plan to be developed will take into account soil and agricultural/grazing management with the intent of preserving the ecology with its native plant and animal species.

This land is a single parcel with willing and conservation-motivated owners. The appraiser has indicated that the highest and best economic use of this parcel would be mini-ranches. Therefore, the project offers what might well be a once in a lifetime opportunity to protect this historic land.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$300,000 IN 2010.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$100,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$100,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska State Irrigation Association **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Water Leaders Academy **Project No:** 12-115  
**Amount Requested:** \$137,314 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Education

The Association began planning for a water leadership education program in 2009. The first Water Leaders Academy was introduced in 2011. It sought applicants from all backgrounds and interests which relate to water resources. Individuals selected for 2011 fulfilled that goal. Participants commit to attend six week end programs across the State. The programs provides tours, discussions and structured presentations about Nebraska water laws, political structures responsible for water resources management decisions, water sciences, water economics and water policy planning. Sessions also include a strong program of leadership training activities. Leadership techniques that emphasize cooperation and collegiality to solve complex water issues are employed in the training. Participants are assigned projects to be completed between week end sessions and are teamed into work groups to develop independent study projects related to water resources subjects. Presentations are then prepared and presented to the Academy with the goal of ultimately being used in public education efforts. It is expected that academy graduates will remain connected to the Academy in the future and will assist in development and implementation of future Academy programs. It is also expected that the graduates will apply their water education and leadership skills training in water policy decision making positions at the local, regional, state and national levels. Informed water leaders are essential to sound water resources decisions now and into the future. The Nebraska Environmental Trust needs to be an active partner in this critical preparation of tomorrow's leaders in Nebraska water policy decisions and this grant request for the continuation and growth of the Academy project is the opportunity to be that significant partner.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska State Recycling Association**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Recycling Equipment Grant**Project No:** 12-117**Amount Requested:** \$490,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Waste Management

This recycling equipment grant will help NET build our recycling infrastructure across Nebraska by continuing the "smaller grants" program we have done through NET for 10 years. Eligible applicants are municipalities, other government entities, non-profits, and recycling processors. Eligible equipment can include pickup-towable recycling trailers with compartments, semi-trailers, balers, recycling carts, utility trailers, forklifts, skid-steer loaders, trucks, lift-gates for pickups or straight trucks, glass crushers, dumpsters, carts, indoor & outdoor bins, compactors, cart tippers and the like. While there are recycling programs across Nebraska there are still many communities who have no recycling program or have a limited program they wish to expand. Even in Nebraska's large urban areas there are still those, for instance, apartment dwellers, who do not have easy access to recycling. Municipalities and recycling processors across Nebraska tell us regularly that without grants they would have no recycling program, or it would be limited. They have aging equipment for handling recyclables that is worn out and can no longer be fixed or used safely. Budget constraints for municipalities, non-profit organizations and recycling processors often make it difficult or impossible to buy needed recycling equipment. Ours is a quick-turnaround grant program where application-to-approval can be accomplished in under a month.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$315,450 IN 1999, SUBMITTED BUT NOT FUNDED IN 2000, FUNDED \$662,900 FROM 2001 TO 2003, SUBMITTED BUT NOT FUNDED IN 2004, FUNDED \$850,000 FROM 2005 TO 2009, SUBMITTED BUT NOT FUNDED IN 2010, AND FUNDED \$200,000 IN 2011 (TOTAL FUNDING: \$2,028,350).

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Statewide Arboretum**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Water Wise Landscapes Initiative**Project No:** 10-163-3**Amount Requested:** \$258,692**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Water Wise Landscapes Initiative is a multi-partner, statewide initiative that will make Nebraska's community green spaces more sustainable through water-wise stewardship practices. The evidence is clear: landscape sustainability, especially as it relates to water, is a looming environmental issue with potentially overwhelming financial implications for communities. Actions must be taken to reduce the use of potable drinking water in the landscape. It's also important to begin treating stormwater as a resource to be utilized rather than something to be flushed away. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Inc. (NSA, Inc.) is requesting NET funds to create a three-year program that will develop model sustainable landscapes and enable partnering communities to develop the plans, tools and incentives to transition away from water-wasting landscape practices to those that make sustainable use of natural resources. The goal is to create a new landscape ideal that is not only aesthetically acceptable but which is environmentally beneficial and sustainable. The initiative will advance the Trust's priority of Surface and Ground Water by demonstrating and promoting horticultural practices that conserve water, reduce stormwater runoff and which help keep lawn and landscape pollutants out of local water supplies. The initiative also advances the NET's priority of Habitat by greatly expanding the use of native and ecologically appropriate plantings that provide food and shelter for community wildlife.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$206,570 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$259,091 IN YEAR TWO AND \$258,692 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Statewide Arboretum**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT)**Project No:** 11-132-2**Amount Requested:** \$300,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT) is a statewide, three-year initiative aimed at reversing the decline of Nebraska's community forests by promoting and investing in intensive tree planting, sound resource management, community capacity building and public education. Inventories reveal that Nebraska has lost up to 50% of its community tree resource in recent decades due to weather events, diseases, insects and human neglect. Replanting has not kept up with the loss and now a near-perfect storm of emerging diseases and insects, including emerald ash borer, threatens to decimate the resource even further if actions are not taken soon. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, Inc. (NSA) is requesting \$955,775 to fund the Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT) Initiative. TNT will provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting, public education and sustainable community forest management practices in participating communities. Specifically, the program will enable at least 100 different projects; plant up to 15,000 large-maturing trees (with eventual annual benefits of up to \$1,140,000); educate at least 5,000 Nebraskans about proper tree planting and management practices; and engage and empower at least 1,000 volunteers and resource professionals in proper planting. Ultimately the program will establish the groundwork for increased sustainability of Nebraska's community forests. The program will be a multi-partner collaborative including NSA, the Nebraska Forest Service, the Nebraska Community Forestry Council, natural resources districts, Nebraska's green industry and participating communities statewide. If funded, the program will leverage up to \$1,500,000 in matching funds from a wide-variety of sources and partners. The program will advance each of the Trust's funding priorities with a special emphasis on Surface and Ground Water and Air Quality.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$332,717 IN 2006 AS A PILOT PROJECT AND \$1,000,000 FROM 2008 THROUGH 2010.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$205,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$300,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$400,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Statewide Arboretum**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Sustainable Schoolyard Partnership**Project No:** 12-116**Amount Requested:** \$519,004**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Urban Habitat

Sustainable Schoolyard Partnership (SSP) is a statewide, three-year initiative aimed at dramatically improving the natural environment of school grounds through innovative development and management of green infrastructure as well as equipping schools to better care for the landscape via inquiry-based education and demonstration. This effort will target 20 partner schools to implement and demonstrate landscape level improvements to maximize energy/water efficiencies and conservation practices as well as training 100 educators and engaging up to 30,000 students in conservation education principles. Research shows most school landscapes lack the green infrastructure to reap the educational, environmental, and physiological benefits of green spaces. Current research also demonstrates that American youth are increasingly disengaged from nature. Use of electronic media has increased over the last five years to 50 hours a week; obesity and other health related risks continue at epidemic rates among children and youth; and science test scores are below acceptable levels. The SSP seeks to reverse many of these negative trends while creating landscapes that are more useful, manageable, and sustainable. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) is requesting \$519,004 to fund on-the-ground projects of the SSP program. Federal assistance has been requested to fund the educational component. SSP will provide funding for landscape improvements and technical assistance to reduce water use, improve water quality, increase habitat and empower students, teachers, parents, administrators and community volunteers to take responsible action on behalf of the environment. SSP will be a multi-partner collaborative effort including NSA, Nebraska Forest Service, UNL Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, Groundwater Foundation, Verdis Group, local NRDs, and participating schools statewide. If funded, the program will leverage an additional \$700,000 in matching funds from other sources and partners. The program will advance each of the Trust's funding priorities, with a special emphasis on Surface and Ground Water and Habitat.

**Sponsor Name:** Nebraska Water Balance Alliance**Nearest Town:** Sutherland**Project Name:** Water Budget Study and Curriculum Development**Project No:** 12-160**Amount Requested:** \$447,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Water

Ecosystem health and water availability are inseparable. In Nebraska, the largest user of water is agriculture. Agriculture is also a cornerstone of social and economic health. As Nebraskans we must seek a balance between our use of our natural resources and their effective conservation. To assist in that understanding it is critical for agriculture to have solid knowledge of its water use relative to water availability. Agriculture in Nebraska is changing rapidly with the advancement of technology. Producers are using new technology and new practices that allow them to make better use of their natural resources, especially water. These efficiencies are not being accounted sufficiently in the large scale world of watershed management. This project will: Take the information gathered from a water budgeting methodology. Verify the water conservation practices used on farm for their contribution to watershed/groundwater sustainability. Promote the increased use and accounting of such measure in agriculture to promote a landscape where sound groundwater levels, healthy rivers and a solid farm economy are the norm and not the exception. The water budget process uses market ready tools such as soil probes and weather stations to continuously monitor the utilization of water to establish a baseline for producers. This baseline will guide decisions about cropping practices, residue management, tillage practices, irrigation and/or crop selection based on what their water budget will allow. The data collected from this project will help bring clarity to watershed scale modeling by adding a real time utilization level of analysis. It will also help producers to see the value of irrigation performance through better scheduling and use of best management practices. Finally this project will build an accreditation pilot program to engage additional producers on how to use the water budget tool kit to make more sustainable on farm water management decisions.

**Sponsor Name:** North Central Nebraska Resources Conservation & Development Council**Nearest Town:** Bassett**Project Name:** Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol for the Middle Niobrara River Corridor**Project No:** 10-124-3**Amount Requested:** \$10,925**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

This project addresses the mission of the Nebraska Environmental Trust's "Habitat" funding category. The goal is to restore riparian habitat along the middle segment of the Niobrara River that has become choked over the years with purple loosestrife, an invasive noxious weed. Restoration is a priority activity because the area contains critical habitat for several federally endangered and threatened species, and because it is both a state-designated "biologically-unique landscape" and a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River. Funding is being sought to significantly expand the use of native insect enemies of purple loosestrife (biocontrol), such that the environmental burden of herbicide applications can be significantly reduced. The Middle Niobrara Weed Awareness Group (MNWAG) will use those funds to purchase purple loosestrife-specific flea beetles that will be placed at strategic infestation sites throughout the corridor. MNWAG will be aided by the staff of the National Park Service (NPS) in the placement, mapping, and long-term monitoring of the beetles. Funding is being requested to place additional beetles during the second and third project years. It is hoped that the initial populations will grow to the point of allowing transplantation to untreated infestation sites by the third project year. The primary objective is to achieve a downward trend in the purple loosestrife population that parallels a reduction in the ratio of herbicide-based to biocontrol treatment methods. The secondary objectives are to increase public 1) awareness of the ecosystem threats posed by invasive plants; 2) awareness of the benefits of non-chemical control methods; and 3) appreciation of the rare species potentially in harm's way of this threat.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$16,150 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$10,925 IN YEAR TWO AND \$10,925 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** North Platte Natural Resources District **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Analyzing Western Nebraska Hydrogeology **Project No:** 11-123-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$250,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The NRDs are requesting assistance to continue development of innovative analysis of recently collected data to create aquifer maps in three dimensions. This information will be used by the NRDs for groundwater management decisions and evaluating the feasibility of alternatives for their individual Integrated Management Plans and the Platte River Overappropriated Basin Plan. Areas affected by these plans lie within the fully and overappropriated boundaries of the Platte River Basin. Intentional groundwater recharge and groundwater controls are examples of the different management scenarios being used by the NRDs. NRDs need to forecast changes in water supply through groundwater modeling. Management decisions for water resources in western Nebraska are based on the results of regional and local groundwater models, which are currently based upon limited amounts of data from test-holes versus the continuous data from this work. The reliability of the results from these models is improved thru the collection of additional data describing the hydrogeologic frame work, which reduces model uncertainty. Recent innovative work using airborne and surface geophysics in concert with traditional geologic methods is producing substantially more accurate data interpretation. The NRDs have obtained data in critical areas of their districts that require analysis for characterizing aquifer size, extent and properties for modeling. Magnetic resonance soundings used with previously collected airborne geophysical data will provide three dimensional aquifer property maps. The improved data interpretation provided to the models will strengthen assessments of impacts and socioeconomics of water management scenarios. It is vital to have accurate, affordable information about the hydrogeology affecting water supplies. The NRDs are working together through an interlocal agreement and are supported by USGS and UNL-CSD.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$800,000 IN 2008-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$275,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$250,000 IN YEAR TWO, WITH THREE YEARS TO EXPEND FUNDS, PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Northeast Nebraska RC&D **Nearest Town:** Plainview  
**Project Name:** Integrated Management of Noxious Weeds in Biologically Sensitive Areas **Project No:** 12-189  
 by the Northeast Nebraska Weed Management Area  
**Amount Requested:** \$70,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

Invasive species are cited frequently as significant threats to biological diversity in Nebraska's Natural Legacy Project planning document (NNLP). To address issues with invasive species, NNLP recommended development of collaborative conservation efforts to seek effective control measures, increase awareness of biological diversity, and to implement strategies that address specific issues in biologically unique landscapes (BUL's) identified in the plan. One such group is the Northeast Nebraska Weed Management Area (NNWMA). Established in 2004, they seek innovative, collaborative, and effective means to reduce ecological and economic impacts of noxious weed infestations. NNWMA is composed of a diverse group of partners. The area of responsibility covers 8 counties and 4,610,212 acres of private, public, and tribal land. Eight BUL's are partially or wholly within NNWMA boundaries. These include prairies that contain federally threatened Western Prairie Fringed Orchid and state listed Small White Lady Slipper Orchid, as well as habitats that are home to 34 other Tier 1 plant, mussel, fish, insect, bird, and mammal species. Historic flooding has occurred on 3 major river systems during the last 2 years, likely creating habitat that will be conducive for noxious weed growth. Beginning in 2012, NNWMA proposes to conduct aerial mapping surveys, acquire biological control agents (insects) to control noxious weeds on ecologically sensitive sites, and conduct annual education and outreach tours and workshops. Releases will be prioritized and will be targeted at places where herbicide use is not desired (i.e. high diversity grasslands, wetland/riverine habitats, rangeland with organic designations etc.). Targeted plants are Purple Loosestrife, Leafy Spurge, Salt Cedar, and non-native Phragmites. Appropriate insects will be acquired for purple loosestrife and leafy spurge. Releases will occur in a variety of locations within the NNWMA over a 3 year period and will be marked using GPS equipment.

**Sponsor Name:** Northern Prairies Land Trust**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Tallgrass Prairie Conservation on Private Lands IV**Project No:** 12-107**Amount Requested:** \$706,500**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

Tallgrass prairie and oak woodlands are among the most threatened ecosystems in North America. Most remaining prairies and woodlands are privately owned, making cooperation between landowners and conservationists essential for their conservation. In 2003, public and private conservation groups and landowners formed the Nebraska Tallgrass Prairie Partnership (NTPP) whose mission is to conserve and enhance tallgrass prairies in the state. In 2007, the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project endorsed NTPP's efforts in southeastern Nebraska as the Southeast Flagship Initiative. Partners in the Initiative include the Northern Prairies Land Trust (NPLT), Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), Southeast Nebraska Grazing Association, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Audubon Nebraska, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and others. Over the past eight years, using primarily NETF and USFWS Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) and State Wildlife Grant (SWG) funds, the NTPP/Southeast Flagship has worked with 131 landowners to enhance over 31,200 acres of tallgrass prairie and oak woodland, primarily through implementation of invasive tree clearing, prescribed fire, planned grazing and reseeding prairie. Additional NETF funds are critical to continued success of our now well-developed initiative. Due to restricted Federal budgets, LIP funds have been discontinued and SWG funds greatly reduced. We must now rely more heavily on in-state conservation monies to maintain our infrastructure and increase our capacity to meet demand for native habitat conservation in southeast Nebraska. We are seeking \$706,000 from the NETF for this three-year project. The project partners will provide approximately \$212,500 in cash match. The NPLT will lead the project and NGPC will conduct funds management and reporting. NETF funds will be used to enhance 8,000 acres of tallgrass prairie on private lands through tree clearing, prescribed fire, etc. in southeast Nebraska and continue our Annual Tallgrass Prairie Management Seminar for landowners.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,550,0000 FROM 2005-2011. THIS REQUEST IS FOR A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Carter Lake Restoration and Rehabilitation Project**Project No:** 11-174-2**Amount Requested:** \$200,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Carter Lake is an urban oxbow lake located along the Missouri River and is bordered by the cities of Omaha, NE and Carter Lake, IA. The 320-acre lake is shallow (mean depth = 7.2 ft), hypereutrophic (mean summer TP = 177 ppb; mean summer Secchi Disk depth = 13 in; mean summer chl a = 124 ppb) and has a history of toxic algal blooms of *Cylindrospermopsis* sp. that has closed the lake to primary contact recreation for 24 weeks since 2004. In 2002, the lake was placed on Nebraska's Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters due to elevated concentrations of nutrients. In

2007, a joint TMDL from Iowa and Nebraska for TP, TN, algae, pH and turbidity was submitted to and approved by EPA. Watershed and lake water quality models were developed and calibrated with stormwater sampling and internal loading estimates derived from lake sediment P-fractionation analyses. These efforts showed that 70% of the P load was internal and 30% was watershed/stormwater loading. A variety of watershed and in-lake management approaches were developed to reduce P loading by 69% and meet the water quality goals defined in the TMDL and by the local watershed group. Specifically, these management approaches include two whole lake alum treatments, shoreline stabilization, stormwater detention basins and forebays, establishment of 100-acres of no-wake boating, targeted dredging, wetland creation, renovation of existing stormwater detention cells, conversion of existing drainages to biofilters, and a watershed education program targeting fertilizers and pet waste. This application seeks funding to support the Nebraska shoreline stabilization and alum treatment components of this innovative project. The project is unique to its significant community involvement, multiple project partners across two states, and high probability of large environmental, economic, social and public health benefits.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$425,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$200,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Compressed Natural Gas Street Sweeper**Project No:** 12-137**Amount Requested:** \$46,632**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Equipment

The City of Omaha seeks funding to cover the incremental cost to purchase a new dedicated Compressed Natural Gas powered street sweeper in place of purchasing a diesel powered street sweeper. The City of Omaha is in the process of placing our first CNG vehicle in-service and would like to expand this program with the addition of a CNG Street Sweeper. The street sweeping program operates daily up to 16 hours a day. Street sweepers travel throughout the city, have two engines, consume a large amount of diesel fuel and therefore are one of the higher polluting vehicles in the City fleet. We also feel public sector use of CNG will help the widespread private acceptance of this fuel as a variable alternative to gasoline and diesel fuel.

**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Saddle Creek Stormwater Wetlands and Detention Basins**Project No:** 12-144**Amount Requested:** \$1,054,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Water

The City of Omaha (the City) requests funding for construction of the wetland and stormwater detention components of a natural stormwater treatment system to reduce flooding and improve water quality in the Saddle Creek basin. The project's Green Solutions (directing stormwater into natural treatment areas) components include: wetlands; dry detention ponds with pretreatment basins; and restoration of an open channel. The overall project also includes sewer separation, for which the City is not requesting grant funding. The stormwater quality improvement and peak flow reduction components of this Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) project go beyond the requirements of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) and USEPA by providing treatment of stormwater prior to discharge to the Little Papillion Creek, which is currently on the list of State waters not meeting quality standards. The project is supported by the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District (P-MRNRD) and the NDEQ. This project will accomplish multiple objectives that, when achieved, will provide a wide range of the benefits to the community including:

- Increasing wildlife habitat. • Improving water quality in the stream and reducing pollutants reaching the Little Papillion Creek.
- Addressing permitting requirements while maximizing mitigation opportunities. • Maximizing sewage treatment with existing and proposed wastewater treatment facilities.
- Reducing capital costs for the CSO Program for sewer fee payers. • Providing public education opportunities via a demonstration project for Green Solutions. The project will demonstrate Best Management Practices for stormwater management in an urban setting and the incorporation of Green Solutions for improving water quality. The project will also reduce combined sewer overflows to Little Papillion Creek, and thereby reduce the financial impact on Omaha's sewer rate payers; currently 1/3 of the State population.

**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Used Oil Filter Recycling Program**Project No:** 12-145R**Amount Requested:** \$7,595**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Equipment

The City of Omaha Fleet Management Division seeks funding to purchase a heavy duty oil filter and can crusher for large and small filters. This machine will lessen our waste load significantly by crushing the oil filter to a compact size while at the same time eliminating the amount of oil that can be left behind stuck in dirty filters. Fleet Management is responsible for the repair and maintenance of over 2,600 pieces of equipment and uses over 3,300 oil filters a year. By crushing oil filter the City of Omaha will be able to recycle used oil filters instead of the current practice of hot draining the filters and disposing them in the trash. The City is requesting funding for the purchase of the machine, the City will fund the costs associated with the install and 22 volt wiring install.

**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of**Nearest Town:** Omaha**Project Name:** Spring Lake Park Pond Restoration, Phase 4**Project No:** 12-146**Amount Requested:** \$3,142,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Water

The City of Omaha and its Partners, request funding to fulfill the restoration visions for Spring Lake Park that began in 1939: construction of a natural stormwater treatment system in an urbanized area. The planned construction includes more elements than originally conceived: wetlands; fishing pond; dry detention facilities; pretreatment basins; rain gardens; infiltration basins; and a restored stream are being evaluated for feasibility. The construction will be phased to coordinate with concurrent sewer separation projects and associated funding. This request is for construction of Phase 4 (Phases 2 and 3 were partially funded by previous NETF grants). The City is requesting NET funding for only the stormwater related components of the project. The overall Missouri Avenue Sewer Separation project also includes sewer separation, for which the City is not requesting grant funding. These improvements will provide peak flow reduction and stormwater treatment prior to discharge to the Missouri River. The project will enhance the habitat for wildlife that already frequent Spring Lake Park and the surrounding areas, as well as provide a pond able to sustain a reproducing population of fish and other aquatic species. The project has a high level of support from partners ranging from grass roots neighborhood organizations to the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The City will provide the project site on dedicated park ground and therefore the investments made will remain in the public trust in perpetuity. The partners will provide extensive in-kind support to the project including coordinating communications about the project and supporting annual park clean-ups. The project will demonstrate best practices for stormwater management in an urban setting through the incorporation of "Green Solutions". The project will also reduce combined sewer overflows to the Missouri River, and thereby reduce the financial impact on Omaha's sewer rate payers, currently 1/3 of the State population. CITY OF OMAHA RECEIVED \$15,000 FOR PHASE 2 AND \$325,000 FOR PHASE 3 OF THE SPRING LAKE PARK POND PROJECT.



**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of **Nearest Town:** Omaha  
**Project Name:** An Integrated Approach to Effective Stormwater Education for Omaha **Project No:** 12-150  
**Amount Requested:** \$256,077 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Education

The City of Omaha and its Partners, request funding for a Stormwater Educator and Planner position within the City to collaborate, engage, and educate with targeted audiences to increase the adoption and utilization of green infrastructure (GI) as the preferred approach to stormwater management. The prevailing paradigm on the management of stormwater has been to collect it and transport it off-site as quickly as possible, degrading habitats with pollution, limiting groundwater recharge, and causing significant soil degradation and erosion. The GI paradigm embraces stormwater as a resource and looks to manage it where it lands, i.e. rain gardens, permeable pavement, green roofs, rain harvesting, etc..., rather than sending it away as a waste product. This is accomplished by creating and establishing six core programs: 1. Omaha Stormwater Collaboration and Education Resource (OSCER); 2. Design Professional Education Program; 3. Omaha Green Infrastructure Virtual Tour; 4. Rain Barrel Program; 5. Impervious Surface Inventory; 6. Sinking Omaha’s Water Use. It is critical that the City establish good communication and provide knowledge on green infrastructure to support the shift to a paradigm that embraces water as resource and not a waste product. Green infrastructure has numerous additional benefits including improve air quality through increased plant use, less waste by limiting construction boundaries, connecting fragmented green spaces together to improve habitat for wildlife, and preserving and restoring soil health. The implementation & establishment of these six programs will take place over three years and establish Omaha as a leader in stormwater management through green infrastructure. With strong support from Keep Omaha Beautiful, Nebraska Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association (NeFSMA), University of Nebraska Stormwater Work Group, and Nebraska H2O this educator position will have a significant impact on improving Omaha and Nebraska’s environment.

**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of **Nearest Town:** Omaha  
**Project Name:** Omaha Parking Garage LED Retrofit **Project No:** 12-156  
**Amount Requested:** \$1,110,120 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Air Quality

The Omaha Parking Garage LED Retrofit project involves the removal of metal halide lamp fixtures and the procurement and installation of LED fixtures and occupancy sensors in six parking garages operated by the City of Omaha. The City will issue a Request for Proposals for the materials and installation and award the contract according to the standard public procurement process. The City will leverage \$245,000.00 for project oversight and the proper recycling and disposal of the metal halide lamp fixtures. There are six parking lots maintained and operated by the City of Omaha:

- Parking Lot #3 – Approx. # of lights to be retrofitted 80; • Parking Lot #4 – Approx. # of lights to be retrofitted 100;
- Parking Lot #5 – Approx. # of lights to be retrofitted 200; • Parking Lot #6 – Approx. # of lights to be retrofitted 455;
- Parking Lot #7 – Approx. # of lights to be retrofitted 305; • Parking Lot #8 – Approx. # of lights to be retrofitted 600.

The existing metal halide lamps use approximately 185 watts of electricity; the LED replacements will use 62 watts and have a life expectancy of 3 to 4 times that of the existing lamps. The City of Omaha will also take steps to reduce energy consumption in these facilities by examining the current operating procedures and lighting schedules currently implemented. Replacement of lighting will further reduce energy consumption and significantly improve maintenance requirements. The City will ensure that proper recycling occurs for the bulbs that are replaced as well. Finally, the City will calculate energy savings and use these savings to estimate reductions of emissions for the region. These calculations can be estimated fairly accurately through an Inventory Management System that the City had developed in the Comprehensive Energy Management Plan.

**Sponsor Name:** Omaha, City of - Department of Parks, Recreation and Public Property

**Nearest Town:** Omaha

**Project Name:** Gene Leahy Mall and Lagoon Renovation

**Project No:** 12-120

**Amount Requested:** \$1,046,977

**Term of Project Request:** 2

**Review Group:** Water

The Gene Leahy Mall is a twelve-acre oasis in the middle of downtown Omaha. Constructed in the 1970's and 1980's, it was conceived to be an impetus to economic redevelopment of the area. Since then, the Mall has been connected to subsequent recreational development, first to Heartland of America Park, and then to the Riverfront, Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge and on into Iowa. The Mall is unique to Omaha and draws visitors from all over the region. It features a lake, fountains, waterfalls, a trail, decorative lighting, custom slides, and numerous sculptures. Special events attract up to 100,000 people to the Mall and surrounding area. The lake is in need of renovation, in terms of water quality and a deteriorating infrastructure. A deteriorated pond liner results in over 6 million gallons of water loss annually. Incandescent bollard lighting is obsolete compared to new energy efficient technologies. The irrigation system is inefficient compared to new, water-conserving systems. The environmental benefits of new and efficient lighting, irrigation and lake water retention are goals of this project. It is for these items that the City of Omaha is requesting funding from the Trust. This project is part of a \$3 million effort to improve the Mall. Other projects will include upgrading of the rest of the lighting, playground expansion, a new shade structure, and trail, boardwalk and retaining wall rehabilitation. The City is committing \$1,000,000 and is requesting \$1,046,977 from the Trust. The Omaha Parks Foundation, in partnership with Omaha by Design, has already begun a fundraising campaign and is approaching the first set of potential donors. These organizations are confident of raising an additional \$1,000,000 for these projects. The NET grant, if awarded, will be used to build excitement in the community and challenge the Private/Public campaign for raising additional funds.

THE TRUST FUNDED A 12,800 SQUARE FOOT NATIVE PLANTING ON GENE LEAHY MALL FOR \$74,000 TO OMAHA BY DESIGN IN 2006.

**Sponsor Name:** Panhandle Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.

**Nearest Town:** Multiple

**Project Name:** Soil Health - Key to Sustainable No-till & Organic Farming

**Project No:** 12-170

**Amount Requested:** \$136,300

**Term of Project Request:** 3

**Review Group:** Soil Management

This project is needed to fill a serious gap in the Panhandle RC&D to reduce non-point source pollution while building healthy soils and sustainable agriculture. The training made available focuses on an education and information program to improve soil health for sustainability. This is a continued effort in support of No-till and Organic farming operations of the Panhandle no-till cadre and organic efforts. Soil health is one of the main factors in addressing savings of input costs, water conservation and the reduction of weed and insect pressures. A timely response for approved pest management alternatives from Organic Certification Agencies to requesting organic growers is needed. The expertise and guidance from soil health specialists and support group provided through this project is very important to the success of new and continued no-till, organic farming and ranching. Proper soil testing for nutrients and the biology in support of a strong soil food web is an opportunity for success in no-till and organic farming. This project will provide the farmer and rancher with the knowledge and support base and skills they need to confidently and successfully meet adopted practices that do not rely on chemical fertilizer and pesticides. It will train NRCS and others so they can provide better service and build up a local support group that can be duplicated throughout Nebraska. Building local support through the Panhandle RC&D will mean continued and expanded participation by other farmers and ranchers towards no-till and organic farming. It will assist NRCS and NRD personnel with their efforts in promoting no-till and organic farming. Research has shown over and over again that soil fertility and nutrient composition on the plant are related to pest and disease occurrence (Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service). A well managed soil food web helps provide a sustainable alternative.

**Sponsor Name:** Pheasants Forever - Perkins County**Nearest Town:** Grant**Project Name:** No-till Grass Drill**Project No:** 12-172**Amount Requested:** \$20,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Equipment

This grant application seeks funding from the NET to purchase a no-till grass drill to be used by landowners to establish wildlife habitat. Currently, there are few no-till drills available in the area and those that are available are owned and rented out by private businesses. A no-till grass drill made available to interested landowners would increase both the quantity and quality of wildlife habitat established. Significant increases in wildlife habitat plantings in the area through programs like: Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Continuous Conservation Reserve Program, Corners For Wildlife, CRP-MAP, etc. have greatly increased the need for this type of specialized equipment. Matching NET moneys with that of the Perkins County Pheasants Forever chapter would purchase the no-till drill. The purchase price of a no-till grass drill is approximately \$24,000 to \$32,000. Uehling Well Service, Inc. of Grant, NE will oversee the operation, maintenance and rental of the drill. A fund will be set up to pay for routine maintenance of the drill as well as any repairs needed to keep the drill in top operating condition. The drill will be available for any landowner in the area to use at a nominal fee. A no-till grass drill is needed to handle the fluffy seeds associated with many warm-season grasses, wildflowers and legumes. These fluffy seeds are not effectively or efficiently planted with conventional drills. By establishing more wildlife habitat to a higher quality habitat provided by these seed mixtures, wildlife will benefit.

**Sponsor Name:** Pheasants Forever, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Corners for Wildlife**Project No:** 12-171**Amount Requested:** \$900,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

This application continues a partnership funded by the Trust from 1995 to 2011. The program successfully partners money from the Trust, Pheasants Forever, Inc., Pheasants Forever (PF) and Quail Forever (QF) chapters, Natural Resource Districts, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and landowners throughout the state to establish permanent wildlife habitat. In the 16 years the program has been offered, Trust funds have been partnered with over \$1.7 million for materials from 45 Pheasants Forever chapters, 16 Natural Resource Districts, the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and private landowners on 1,378 projects throughout the state. With "in-kind" contributions included, the level of financial partnership being combined with Trust funds currently exceeds \$5.3 million. Landowners receive a rental payment for a five-year contract to establish and maintain high diversity wildlife habitat on center pivot irrigation field corners. Materials to establish cover practices are cost-shared 75% by PF and QF chapters with landowners responsible for 25% of the material costs. In some cases, the cover practices are established with a 100% cost share by the participating Natural Resource Districts. This program is very successful at establishing permanent wildlife habitat as landowners have averaged 334 wildlife shrubs and/or trees per corner in the program. Every year the program has been offered, there has been more interest in enrollment than the program can fund. Projects are established to cover practices that promote high quality nesting, brood-rearing and/or pollinator habitat for native wildlife species of concern. The habitat established on projects is specifically designed to meet the goals of the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project and many of the species and habitat types of concern identified in the statewide wildlife plan. By establishing and managing for highly diverse native habitat, the needs of native wildlife that are imperiled by the loss of diverse and undisturbed grasslands is being addressed. THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 1997 AND 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$2,842,000 FROM 1994-2011. THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Platte River Basin Environments, Inc. **Nearest Town:** Gering, Scottsbluff  
**Project Name:** Wildcat Hills Wildlands Initiative (WHWI) - Cox Ranch **Project No:** 11-164-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$300,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The request is to add two key land parcels (Cox tracts) to the Wildcat Hills Wildlands Initiative's (WHWI) holdings, with a lesser amount of funding for interpretive hiking trail development. Acquisition of these tracts is a once-in-a lifetime opportunity for the WHWI and essential to fulfilling our biodiversity conservation goals within the Wildcat Hills Biologically Unique Landscape (BUL). These additions to our conservation lands portfolio would connect three now discontinuous tracts within our western core area (Attachment A and Attachment A-1) forming a 16,000 acre contiguous block of habitat. Acquisition of the tracts will conserve pine woodlands, western mixed grass prairie and rock outcrops and several at-risk species which utilize these habitats. The lands will also be used for conservation education and public recreation. If these lands are not acquired for conservation, there is great risk that they will be developed for housing or ranchettes, thus fragmenting already established conservation lands.

The Cox family approached the Platte River Basins Environments, Inc. (PRBE) to purchase their properties. The Wildcat Hills are marginal grazing land due to steep, rocky, and partially tree-covered terrain. Combine the marginal grazing with the region's high property taxes and ranching profit margins are tight in the Wildcat Hills. Several longtime, local ranching families are getting out of the business and would rather see their property become conservation lands and continued to be grazed than developed.

We are requesting \$950,000 in NETF funds for this two-year project. The project partners, including, but not limited to, PRBE, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Park Service (NPS), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Pheasants Forever (PF) and Oregon Trail Community Foundation (OTCF) are contributing \$779,276 in cash and in-kind match.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$640,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$300,000 IN YEAR TWO, TO EXCLUDE TRAIL FUNDING, PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Platte River Basin Environments, Inc. **Nearest Town:** Mitchell  
**Project Name:** Spotted Tail Wetlands Complex, Tottenhoff Acquisition **Project No:** 12-186  
**Amount Requested:** \$385,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Platte River Basin Environments, Inc. (PRBE) is requesting funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) to assist with the acquisition and restoration of the Tottenhoff property near Mitchell, Nebraska. The Tottenhoff tract will be an addition to the vast Spotted Tail Wetlands Complex along the North Platte River, a 1,000 acre complex of wetlands, native grasslands and riparian habitat owned and managed by PRBE. Previous grants from NET have helped immensely with the acquisition of the Spotted Tail Complex. The Tottenhoff property is a 256-acre tract located on the east side of the current Spotted Tail Complex and will add an additional ½ mile of Platte River frontage to this protected and restored wetland complex. The acquisition of the Tottenhoff tract is urgently needed. The property offers a wonderful opportunity to restore and enhance Dry Spotted Tail Creek, native grasslands and other wetland habitats on this site. The acquisition will also provide additional protection to wetland habitats previously restored on the Spotted Tail Complex. Funding is requested from the NET to assist with the acquisition cost of the tract. The landowner is very interested in selling the property to a conservation organization and wishes to see the property's important wildlife habitat restored and available to the public for various public recreational activities, including hiking, bird watching, wildlife photography, hunting and fishing. Local governmental agencies have expressed support for this conservation effort. PREVIOUS NET GRANTS HAVE BEEN AWARDED TO DU FOR SPOTTED TAIL COMPLEX PROJECTS. 09-187 AND 10-197 TOTALLING \$537,294.

**Sponsor Name:** Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Alda**Project Name:** Nebraska Prairie Trail and Bison Project**Project No:** 12-183**Amount Requested:** \$385,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Education

The Platte River Whooping Crane Critical Habitat Maintenance Trust (Crane Trust) respectfully requests your consideration of a grant in the amount of \$385,000. This three-year request includes funding for the Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center (NNVC) and a trail system with bison with a budget that is over \$1,100,000. The Crane Trust and its partners will insure the success of the over-all budget of the program. NNVC and the Crane Trust have entered into an agreement to merge operations. This will result in a large, stable organization that will deepen both existing and new opportunities for good science, land management, communication, and education in Nebraska's native habitats. This is a unique opportunity that will have a significant impact on conservation and outreach in Nebraska, as well as an economic impact within the central Nebraska region. The Crane Trust, Inc. was formed in 1978 as part of a court-approved settlement of Grayrocks Dam on a tributary of the Platte River in Wyoming. The Crane Trust was funded by a payment from the Missouri Basin Power Project, and income from the endowment is used to further the Trust's mission. Three trustees are appointed by the three participants in the settlement to administer the Trust. The Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center, established in 1989 as a private, 501c3, non-profit organization, was reorganized on January 31, 2007 under the direction of a five-member Board of Directors, a group of successful business leaders committed to re-establishing the Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center as a center for environmental education. The result of the merger will mean that the NNVC will operate within the structure of the Crane Trust. Key aspects of this proposal include:

- Creation of a ten-mile nature trail network that is available to the public.
- Facilitating a bison herd on Crane Trust ground that is accessible to the public.
- Continued operation of the NNVC through sound business operations.

Central Nebraska is the fortunate site of the annual migration of the sandhill crane, one of the world's great natural phenomena, as well as a fragile yet beautiful ecosystem, the native prairie and Platte River habitat. The Crane Trust is uniquely positioned to manage and showcase these environmental wonders and educate a new generation of environmentally committed Nebraskans. The goal of this proposal and the merger of these two organizations is to create a unique and exciting destination point in central Nebraska. We are planning on building up to 10 miles of trails and with bison being reintroduced, people from around the Midwest will come to the Nature Center. We will have the opportunity to show everyone how Nebraska truly looks. The bison will draw tourist off the interstate and all will learn more about Nebraska. We hope you will choose to support our vision.

**Sponsor Name:** Prairie Plains Resource Institute**Nearest Town:** Marquette**Project Name:** Sherman Land Acquisition, Hamilton County**Project No:** 12-125**Amount Requested:** \$800,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

Prairie Plains Resource Institute is seeking \$800,000 from NET (~ 1/3 purchase price) for a 650-acre Platte River property in Hamilton County. Remaining partner funds will come from Ducks Unlimited (NAWCA), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and as-yet unknown sources, e.g., individuals, foundations, State and Federal (e.g., NRCS - Farm and Ranchland Protection Program). Prairie Plains has been granted an option to buy this land by the landowner, Tom Sherman, who has lived here since 1962. Mr. Sherman has long promoted Platte River parks, serving on the Bader Memorial Park board and managing nearby Tooley Park. He frequently allowed people access to his land for recreation. We will honor Mr. Sherman's wishes that it remain accessible for such use. We also plan on extensive educational use of the land in conjunction with Griffith Prairie and Education Center.

This is a rare – and urgent - opportunity to protect a large and diverse ecological resource that includes a mile of river frontage, prime wet meadow and scenic bluff upland prairie. The Sherman Land is a keystone in a 2,000-3,000-acre block of Platte grassland from Griffith Prairie east five miles to Highway 14. This region is designated by Nebraska's Legacy Plan as a Biologically Unique Landscape (Central Platte). There is potential for successful future conservation and recreation action (e.g., easements, co-op agreements) on several nearby private lands. However, being near to eastern Nebraska's population, it could easily be converted to acreages for housing and private hunting, eliminating significant public access and impacting grassland and wetland ecosystems. Failure to acquire this land is opportunity lost: lost Platte River natural resources, lost economic development as a public use resource, lost outstanding education/research site, and lost opportunity for countless visitors to come and enjoy an unusual and magnificent Platte River landscape.

**Sponsor Name:** PrairieLand RC&D Council**Nearest Town:** Madison**Project Name:** Nebraska Continuous No-Till Project Phase II**Project No:** 10-146-3**Amount Requested:** \$100,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

This state-wide educational project will build on and expand existing efforts to increase the adoption and sustainable use of Continuous No-till (CNT) by one million acres. More than three public and eight private partners will combine and coordinate their efforts to deliver educational programs to inform producers and the public about the benefits of CNT and help producers develop and manage no-till production systems on their farms. CNT is the single best practice for producers to reduce risks to the environment and improve profitability. Improved crop rotations and biological diversity reduce pest problems and improve the soil system, greatly reducing pesticide use. CNT will provide economic benefits to individual farmers, \$50/acre or more. This project will be extremely cost-effective, about \$0.79/acre for the million acre goal, or about \$30/producer if half of Nebraska's producers adopt or increase their use of CNT. The practice works across Nebraska, conserving soil and water while improving productivity. Five to 12 inches of water can be saved per acre, reducing irrigation needs and greatly improving dryland yields. Fuel and labor requirements can be cut by 50% or more. Soil erosion by wind and water can be reduced by an average of 4 to 14 tons/acre, reducing blowing dirt and surface water pollution, bringing erosion down far below the allowable soil loss level.

CNT can sequester large amounts of carbon, especially when used with cover crops and livestock manure management. CNT and residue cover increases wildlife habitat, number, and diversity. NET funds will be used to fund all or part of the following: an Extension No-till Specialist, a Western Nebraska No-till Specialist, a project administrator, a CNT website, many educational programs, networking activities, opportunities for producers to attend key out-of-state no-till events, and development and distribution of Information & Education materials.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$330,000 FROM 2007-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$168,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$100,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$100,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** PrairieLand RC&D Council**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Project, Phase 3**Project No:** 10-161-3**Amount Requested:** \$150,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Shell Creek Watershed Improvement Project's (SCWIP) goal is to increase the use of resource conservation practices and to restore a conservation ethic within the Shell Creek Watershed. A very dedicated volunteer watershed board, which received a World Herald Master Conservationist award in 2005, partners with public and private entities to educate land users and the public about conservation practices and to offer incentives for implementing best practices. Renewed funding of this aggressive informational/educational and conservation-practice-incentive program has and will continue to generate significant positive contribution to surface and groundwater quality, waste management, soil management, wildlife habitat, and air quality, both within and beyond the Shell Creek Watershed. The education component of the SCWIP consists of land user and public education on soil health and water quality. NET funds, in conjunction with grant funds from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, support educational meetings and field tours, led by UNL Extension and Natural Resource Conservation Service personnel, to educate landowners about the watershed project. Over 2,000 land users and partners receive the popular quarterly SCWIP Newsletter. Water Quality Teams, students at Newman Grove and Schuyler High Schools, complete comprehensive water testing throughout Shell Creek and report findings to project stakeholders. The Newman Grove Water Quality Team has received the World Herald Master Conservationist Award and recognition from the Nebraska State and the Western RC&D Association. The monitoring program encourages community buy-in for the project and commitment to environmental issues. In combination with support from other sources, NET funds provide conservation incentives to stimulate increased landowner participation in several conservation programs on thousands of acres in the Shell Creek watershed. Increased no-till crop management will decrease soil erosion and stream contamination by nutrients and pesticides. Newly established vegetative buffers will provide filtering of sediment and pollutants and increase wildlife habitat.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED FROM 2004-2009 FOR A TOTAL OF \$705,000. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$150,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$150,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$150,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Proyecto Cultural**Nearest Town:** Lincoln**Project Name:** Proyecto Cultural Center**Project No:** 12-113**Amount Requested:** \$38,550**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Air Quality

The Proyecto Cultural Center is a place where people can come for educational and physical activities. The members of the community can learn and perform historic Hispanic Dances, take part in language classes, tutoring classes and participate in fund raising projects for their community, while preserving the Hispanic Culture. Our goal is to support the members of this community, young and old, to encourage them to finish high school and work to have a quality life. Our building is located on 'Y' Street and to be able to continue to work with the community is in need of repair and updating. Being in this position gives us an opportunity to set an example for the community by doing this in an environmental and economical way.

**Sponsor Name:** Quail Forever**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Mobile Prescribed Burn Unit & Education Outreach**Project No:** 12-178**Amount Requested:** \$84,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Equipment

This application seeks funding to continue the process of building Mobile Prescribed Burn Units (MPBU), forming prescribed burn associations, conducting landowner education outreach events and increasing the use of prescribed burning on the landscape. Nearly every wildlife partnership and management plan in the state calls for the increased use of prescribed burns and expanded educational outreach regarding conservation programs to reach their management and partnership goals. Despite those management plans, prescribed burning continues to be a difficult management option to apply. Quail Forever is working closely with the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project (NNLP) to implement its management goals and employs 17 Biologists in the state with Pheasants Forever that are working directly with the plan. The creation of MPBU's and expanding educational outreach is directly benefiting the NNLP by creating a set of tools and events that can quickly be directed to whichever NNLP Biologically Unique Landscape was the focus. The unique aspect of a MPBU is that the necessary prescribed burn equipment could be available in any region of the state in less than a day. Quail Forever has begun the process of identifying four prescribed burning limitations and is working to overcome them. Six different scenarios are outlined in this continuing partnership that are specifically working to expand outreach education and increase the use of prescribed burning on the landscape. The requested Trust Funds will be matched with those of Quail Forever, Pheasants Forever and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to purchase, maintain and administer MPBU's and Continuing Education equipment in strategic locations throughout the state, develop prescribed burn associations and provide expanded and improved landowner educational events across the state.

**Sponsor Name:** Rainwater Basin Joint Venture**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Rainwater Basin Wetland Management for Improved Migratory Bird Habitat **Project No:** 10-113-3**Amount Requested:** \$89,250 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

This project will address the management of aggressive and invasive vegetation negatively effecting wetlands in the Rainwater Basin region of south-central Nebraska. Waterfowl and shorebird habitat is negatively impacted by dense, monotypic stands of vegetation including reed canary grass, river bulrush, hybrid cattail, phragmites, and purple loosestrife. In addition, wetland invasion by woody species like cottonwood, willow, and green ash is also negatively impacting habitat. A shortage of funds to pay for needed materials and equipment and to hire contractors for management such as disking, herbicide spraying, prescribed burning, mechanical tree removal, installation of fences, and roto-tilling are limiting these actions on both private and public wetlands resulting in a significant degradation of migratory bird habitat. A portion of this grant will also be used to buy a field, or finish disk, that is needed to further treat wetlands that have been plowed with a construction disk. Finish disks are 4 times wider than construction disks. This piece of equipment provides current land managers a new tool that under certain situations will dramatically increase the acres that can be treated.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$105,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$78,750 IN YEAR TWO AND \$89,250 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Rainwater Basin Joint Venture**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Wetland Habitat Restoration, Protection, Enhancement**Project No:** 11-194-2**Amount Requested:** \$150,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The "Wetland Habitat Protection Restoration and Mangement Project" will restore, enhance, and protect wetland and associated upland habitat within the Rainwater Basin landscape in south-central Nebraska. The project entails wetland restoration on lands owned by private individuals, acquired from willing sellers, or covered by purchased easements. The project will increase the amount and quality of habitat through restoration of hydrology, management of vegetation, and restoration of wetland function. Incentive programs will assist landowners in water and vegetation management in wetlands they own. Partnerships with federal, state and local government and non-governmental conservation organizations will facilitate long term protection & restoration of wetland resources. Ten-year land use and transition payments will assure sustainable changes in the use of the land. Lands acquired for wetland restoration and protection will be restored and managed for wildlife habitat and recreational activities associated with upland and wetland dependant birds. The Joint Venture Management Board will allocate grant funds between the private lands and public lands programs.

THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF WORK DONE BY THE RAINWATER BASIN OVER THE LAST 16 YEARS - THEY HAVE BEEN FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$5,685,000 FROM 1994-2010.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$170,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$150,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.



**Sponsor Name:** Rainwater Basin Joint Venture**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Development of Grazing Infrastructure to Support the RWB Working Lands Initiative**Project No:** 12-166**Amount Requested:** \$250,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

If funded, this grant will provide funding that will be leveraged with partner funds to work with local producers to develop infrastructure that will facilitate grazing on abandoned wetlands throughout the Rainwater Basin Landscape. These projects will provide demonstration sites that will showcase both the biological and economic benefits of grazing Rainwater Basin wetlands. As agriculture production increased throughout the Rainwater Basin, many of the remaining wetlands under private ownership were abandoned. With the lack of disturbance these sites transitioned to monocultures of invasive/exotic vegetation (reed canary grass, river bulrush, and hybrid cattail). Once these vegetation communities are established, waterfowl, waterbird, and shorebird use is negligible. Successful implementation of this project will require three stages: 1) producers with abandoned wetlands in high quality wetland complexes will be contacted about this opportunity to integrate grazing back into their operation, 2) funds from this grant will be matched with partner dollars to construct necessary infrastructure (perimeter fence, cross fence, and livestock watering) to facilitate grazing, and 3) landowner tours will be conducted at several demonstration sites throughout the Rainwater Basin Region. These tours will be coordinated by the Nebraska Cattlemen and Sand County Foundation to ensure an open dialogue between landowners and biologists. This dialogue will help both biologists and the producers develop better projects in the future, more clearly understand the win-win for production agriculture and wildlife. Developing infrastructure at these sites will ensure cost effective long term management of these sites through prescribed grazing. This management will significantly increase the habitat value of these wetlands for the estimated 8.6 million waterfowl that depend on these wetlands during spring migration, as well as provide optimal habitat for Whooping Cranes, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, King Rails, and nearly 20 other priority species identified in Nebraska's Natural Legacy Plan that depend on RWB wetlands.

**Sponsor Name:** Raptor Recovery Nebraska, Inc.**Nearest Town:** Elmwood**Project Name:** Flight Preparation Structure and Raptor Guide**Project No:** 12-138**Amount Requested:** \$48,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Education

Raptors or Birds of Prey - we revere them in our symbols and our songs, they are on our money and on our uniforms and they play an important role at the top of the food chain. They are valuable to humans because if raptor prey species such as mice, rabbits, and rats become too abundant, they can damage crops and lands and transmit diseases to humans, domestic livestock and pets. Raptor Recovery Nebraska (RRN) is a non-profit, mostly volunteer organization that serves Nebraska by treating injured, sick and orphaned raptors; rehabilitates them and releases them back into the wild. RRN also works with federal and state agencies in the management and recovery of raptor populations and reaches 20,000 Nebraskans each year during education and outreach programs. During the past 35 years over 10,200 birds have been received into the center where approximately 25% of those are considered "At Risk Species" as identified by the Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan. This proposal seeks a one-time grant of \$48,000 to construct a Flight Preparation Structure and to develop a Raptors of Nebraska Information and Education Guide. The flight structure is an integral and vital stage in the rehabilitation process of raptors, a unit where birds are housed after critical care and before they are ready for flight and exercise pens. This housing will benefit the raptors by lessening their time in captivity, and will benefit the public who want the birds returned to the wild. The education guide will highlight the life history, occurrence range, management and identification of the raptor species found in Nebraska in addition to providing instructions to individuals who discover injured or sick raptors.

**Sponsor Name:** Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory**Nearest Town:** Scottsbluff**Project Name:** Using Education as a Management Tool for Habitat Conservation in the Panhandle of Nebraska**Project No:** 10-208-3**Amount Requested:** \$101,255**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Nebraska Prairie Partners (NPP), a cooperative partnership of Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) have outlined conservation and educational activities that will assist in addressing threats to at-risk species in addition to informing and educating students, teachers, landowners, and resource professionals about the shortgrass prairie and ponderosa pine habitats of the Nebraska panhandle. NPP will support a full time Wildlife Education Coordinator to design, implement and coordinate education and outreach activities that will focus on wildlife habitat and water conservation needs critical for long-term viability of panhandle communities and at-risk species. We will use successful education models from Colorado (existing RMBO Education and Bird Banding Station programs) Nebraska Panhandle Eco-Extravaganza about Prairies (PEEP), Project WILD, to assist students of all ages in developing awareness, appreciation, and decision making skills regarding the unique biological communities and habitats in western Nebraska. Our programs will provide experiential and place-based education for all learners. We will also build on the successful NPP's effort to outreach to landowners and resource professionals by organizing conservation and education workshops and integrating these with youth education to reach all members of the community within the region. With support from the Nebraska Environmental Trust we anticipate reaching at least 10,000 students and an additional 500 landowners, resource professionals, and educators in western Nebraska. We propose to conduct pre-service, in-service, landowner and Flying WILD workshops, educational bird banding stations, PEEP, nature clubs, and family nature nights to reach our audiences. Proposed actions will make significant strides towards priority strategies outlined in the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project, and the Nebraska Environmental Education Master Plan.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$213,653 FROM 2007-2009. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$99,634 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$99,167 IN YEAR TWO AND \$101,255 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory**Nearest Town:** Kimball**Project Name:** Grassland Bird Habitat Conservation and Outreach on Private Lands in the Kimball Grasslands BUL**Project No:** 12-118**Amount Requested:** \$345,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Kimball Grasslands Biologically Unique Landscape features a diverse group of rare, declining, and high priority species in an area that is primarily privately-owned and used for agricultural production. For more than 10 years, Nebraska Prairie Partners (NPP), a partnership between RMBO and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), has been successful at working with private landowners to implement wildlife and habitat conservation projects that also maintain profitable farming operations. For example, we demonstrated that Mountain Plover (MOUP) can achieve high breeding success when nests are marked and thereby preserved on crop fields, helping to inform the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recent decision against federal listing. Funding is needed to expand into new habitats, reach more landowners, and evaluate success of previous grant activities. We propose to 1) Continue marking MOUP nests on crop fields while empowering landowners to locate an increasing proportion of nests themselves, with a goal of preserving at least 95% of nests that would otherwise be tilled during agricultural operations. 2) Expand habitats surveyed to include rangeland and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands. 3) Survey landowners to evaluate the effectiveness of, and alternatives to, nest payments via the Landowner Incentive Program so that future strategies can be identified. 4) Organize Kimball County Conservation Cooperative (KCCC) meetings, with upcoming discussions featuring NRCS staff and developers on CRP restoration, water and wind development issues. 5) Inform private landowners about the effects of land management (crop type, timing of tillage, and type and timing of chemical applications) on MOUP breeding success, through partner-supported research, with publication of results in an information sheet for landowners, Best Management Practices document, and at least one scientific manuscript. 6) Evaluate the use and success of raptor nest platforms erected through previous grant activities, helping landowners with active nests to avoid impacts.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$696,166 FROM 2002-2011.

**Sponsor Name:** Sandhills Task Force**Nearest Town:** Taylor**Project Name:** Price Ranch Conservation Easement**Project No:** 12-133**Amount Requested:** \$395,627**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

This application seeks funding to complete the acquisition of a conservation easement on approximately 25,450 acres of Sandhill grassland and wetlands in Loup County. In January of 2011, the Price family and the Sandhills Task Force (STF) signed a letter of intent to pursue funding for the easement. A grant application was submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCs determined the ranch qualified for their Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and agreed to fund approximately 50% of the value of the easement. The Price family has agreed to contribute 25% of the easement value. The Sandhills Task Force is currently raising the remaining 25% to complete the purchase. We have allocated a large amount of our funds toward the project, as well as secured a significant contribution from the Nebraska Land Trust. Because of the large size of this easement, additional funds are still needed. The proximity of the property to the headwaters of the Elkhorn River and the Calamus River elevates the importance of this unique landscape. Both the Elkhorn headwaters and the Upper Loup River tributaries have been identified in the Nebraska's Natural Legacy Plan (NNLP) as significant areas of biological diversity. In addition, Audubon has identified the Price ranch as the first privately-owned Important Bird Area (IBA) in Nebraska. Recently, the ranch became a core part of a landowner-driven association focused on enhancing habitat for grassland bird and plant species. This landowner-driven conservation is expected to be the model for similar efforts throughout the Sandhills and around the nation. The Price families' leadership and commitment to sound ranching practices coupled with a holistic approach has resulted in a conservation ethic that will provide a lasting legacy for the citizens of Nebraska. Placement of a conservation easement on this property will ensure that this area remains an intact landscape in the eastern Sandhills.

**Sponsor Name:** Sandhills Task Force**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Sandhills Native Ecosystem Project**Project No:** 12-134**Amount Requested:** \$361,200**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Sandhills Task Force has been the recipient of several NET grants since the conception of the Trust. The monies received have been strategically used with grants from other sources to complete much needed conservation projects within the Sandhills. By its nature, the region is sparsely populated with large individual ownerships. Within many of these ownerships exists water quality and wildlife habitat concerns that are far from public view and lack local communities to support conservation. Landowners are reluctant to seek government involvement or submit individual grants. The result is stream erosion, overgrazing, and decline in grasslands which remain unaddressed. Our organization is working on behalf of Sandhill landowners to protect natural resources. This grant will be used to build capacity to enhance the entire ecosystem-its abundant surface and ground water, its grasslands, and its wildlife. Our approach will build trust among landowners and conservation groups and address isolated resource problems. Work will be done to complete about 40 projects that restore grassland health and diversity; restore degraded streams and wetlands; increase public awareness of the Sandhills; control of invasive plants (primarily eastern redcedar); and encourage proper use of fire to control tree encroachment of grasslands. To accomplish this work, each project will be field inspected and evaluated according to its resource value and feasibility. Qualifying projects will be surveyed, designed, and completed using matching partnership funds from landowners, Federal and State agencies, and non-profit organizations. Each project will have a 10-year contract with the landowner and other participating partners. Monitoring and follow-up will be conducted by the Sandhills Task Force and its partners (primarily the Fish and Wildlife Service, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and Natural Resource Conservation Service). This project addresses the resources of the Sandhills' Biologically Unique Landscapes identified by Nebraska Game & Parks. SANDHILLS TASK FORCE HAS BEEN AWARDED \$1,000,500 THROUGH THREE GRANTS FROM 1997 THROUGH 2011.

**Sponsor Name:** South Platte Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Sidney**Project Name:** Expanding the Hydrogeological Framework for Selected Areas of the  
South Platte Natural Resources District**Project No:** 10-134-3**Amount Requested:** \$193,190**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The South Platte NRD is requesting funds in the amount of \$529,190 to install monitoring wells with related geophysical surveys to gather information on aquifer properties and to provide long term groundwater monitoring facilities in crucial areas within our district. The South Platte NRD is unique to Nebraska as we manage three separate aquifer formations, the Brule, Ogallala, and Alluvium respectively. Data on water level and water quality changes need to be gathered from all formations for future management needs as the aquifers have different properties and geology. The aquifer systems within the district are fragile environments and concern about changes in surface-groundwater relationships, groundwater recharge, and ground water quantity and quality have prompted the District to expand its efforts in collection and analysis of groundwater data for its water management programs. The SPNRD is currently using the Cooperative Hydrology Study (COHYST) groundwater model and currently participating in Helicopter Electromagnetic (HEM) Surveys as tools to aid in management decisions. Although these are helpful, we are still missing crucial water level data in the majority of our district. Water quality data is just as scarce. With the help of this grant, the SPNRD plans to begin an improved program for water quality sampling and a more representative picture of water level data. Dedicated monitoring wells can provide unaltered samples and levels from distinct zones within the aquifer(s). Monitoring well installation and water level-water quality information will be a large part of the districts foundation for setting future management needs as well as protecting water resources.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$168,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$168,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$193,190 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** South Platte Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Sidney**Project Name:** Preserving CRP Grassland Benefits in Western Nebraska**Project No:** 10-138-3**Amount Requested:** \$200,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has provided millions of acres of conservation benefits since its inception in 1985. CRP has been highly successful in western Nebraska where approximately 382,000 acres are enrolled. These grassland acres provide critical habitat for wildlife, prevent soil erosion, improve soil health, prevent air and water pollution, and play an important role in sequestering carbon. Western Nebraska's CRP grasslands - and their invaluable conservation values - are in jeopardy. Beginning in 2009, thousands of acres will expire from the program. It is unclear whether the federal government will extend these contracts or hold a program sign-up to re-enroll acres. Due to this uncertainty, producers are faced with hard economic decisions for their land and operations, and their decisions have widespread implications for natural resources. One of their options, and a very real threat to natural resources, is to convert their CRP grasslands to cropland. A second option for producers, and a more desirable option for conservation, is to maintain their lands in grass and use them for livestock grazing. This project's goal is to maintain CRP's benefits to air, water, soil and wildlife resources by providing producers with options to maintain these acres in grassland through the use of livestock grazing. The partners will do this by 1) providing cost-share incentives for installing and implementing well-managed grazing systems on CRP grasslands, 2) providing information and education on the importance of CRP grasslands and their conservation value, 3) using demonstration sites to showcase the benefits of livestock grazing on CRP grasslands, and 4) increasing the partner's capacity to delivery high-value conservation assistance through the addition of a wildlife biologist position. The project has widespread support, and partners include local, state, and federal government, non-profit organizations, and landowners in addition to this 3-year request from the NET.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$300,000 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$300,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$200,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Southwest Weed Management Area**Nearest Town:** McCook, Benkelman,**Project Name:** Western Republican River Improvement Project VI**Project No:** 12-151**Amount Requested:** \$548,625**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

This project will maintain the current work of the Western Republican Riparian Improvement Project. It will also continue to compliment the eastern half of the Republican River work completed by Twin Valleys Weed Management Area. Mechanical tree removal has been an integral part of the removal of invasive species on the Republican River.

The initial program only removed invasive species within the 100' of the bank of the river. Southwest Weed Management plans to continue removing these invasive species from the channel of the Republican River to the flood plain. It is our belief that removing this excess vegetation aids in increased water flows and a healthier stream bed. The islands on the Republican River are infested with patches of phragmites and other vegetation allowing for silt and debris in the river to deposit and cause the islands to increase in size. This grant would enable Southwest Weed Management to fly the channel of the Republican River and spray the islands, dramatically decreasing the vegetation.

Southwest Weed Management Area was formed in 2006 and includes as members: county weed superintendents, Southwest Nebraska RC&D Inc., the Upper and Middle Republican NRDs, NRCS field office personnel, and other agencies and private land owners. The group coordinates and assists efforts to identify and control noxious weeds and invasive plants. The primary targets of this project are saltcedar and phragmites within the river channel and red cedar and Russian olive within the 100 foot corridor on the stream banks up to the high flood plain. Field days will be held in each affected county to educate the public and encourage land owners to maintain the control efforts.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$1,246,428 FROM 2009 to 2011. THIS REQUEST IS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Spencer Area Development Corporation**Nearest Town:** Spencer**Project Name:** Spencer Pond Renovation Project**Project No:** 12-161**Amount Requested:** \$445,789**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Lake Rehabilitation

The goal of the project is to rejuvenate the wildlife habitat of a 9.7 acre pond by dredging to an acceptable depth in order to create sufficient capacity to sustain fish and other aquatic wildlife. In addition the renovation will enhance native plant species which will support other native wildlife both in and around the pond. The pond will have features that create a natural environment as well as include erosion control features so that the lake will last indefinitely for many years to come. Grant funding of \$322,835 is sought for 2012 and \$112,954 for 2013 for a total of \$445,789. Total project costs are \$924,672 with significant contribution by Boyd County and Spencer Development Group. In addition to the proposed lake renovation future plans include walking trails, park amenities and greenery, as well as access to the fairgrounds and athletic fields immediately to the east of the property. The earthen dam and road structure on the south end of the property have eroded badly and with no remedial attention would continue to deteriorate. The Boyd County Board of Supervisors are responsible for maintaining the roadway and culvert and they will be contributing \$418,884 to the project. A partnership letter confirms the County's commitment. The lake renovation and dam repair is estimated to cost \$924,672 and would be completed in 2012 and 2013. It addresses removal and replacement of the roadway and box culvert as well as the lake dredging and installation of features that promote aquatic wildlife and control erosion. An amount of \$140,000 of cash and in kind contributions are to be provided by the sponsor. Please see the detailed cost estimate and narrative report prepared by Speece Lewis Engineers and Steve Nichols of Nichols Engineering. Fish and other features would be added by Nebraska Game and Parks as Jeff Schuckman has provided input on design recommendations. Long term benefits also include: Recreational opportunities for local residents as well as visitors to the area. The town is located on the Hwy 281 and Hwy 12 corridor in north central Nebraska which is the gateway to the Sandhills. Many canoeists, hunters, campers and fisherman travel through this area on their way to recreational areas on the Niobrara River. This project would provide another recreational amenity along the way. A resolution was adopted by the Village of Spencer confirming that they will take ownership of the pond area and will be responsible for the long term maintenance. A SIMILAR PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2008, 2009, AND 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST.

**Sponsor Name:** The Groundwater Foundation**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Growing Groundwater Awareness in Nebraska**Project No:** 10-128-3**Amount Requested:** \$58,881**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Groundwater Foundation (GF) is proposing the Growing Groundwater Awareness in Nebraska (GGAN) project as a perfect means to achieve the Trust's goal of ensuring a sound natural environment, which is required for a prosperous future. Recently Nebraska surpassed California as the state with the most irrigated acres, over 85% of Nebraskans rely on groundwater for their source of drinking water, world-renowned irrigation manufacturers are housed in the state of Nebraska, and the groundwater-grown crops of our state feed the world round. Yet there is a general lack of understanding about the role groundwater plays in our lives. Data from a recent survey shows that while 86.1% of Nebraskans consider clean drinking water extremely important, only 57.1% consider clean groundwater extremely important. The question the GF poses is this: How will Nebraskans conserve, enhance and restore the natural environment if they do not understand the role groundwater plays? The answer the GF offers is GGAN, an orchestrated project that leverages strategic partnerships to diffuse compelling messages about groundwater and surface water, their interaction, their role in our livelihood, and ultimately engage individuals, businesses and communities in managing the resource. The project has two overarching goals: to enlighten the general public about this vital resource; and to identify and cultivate communities to participate in proactive protection efforts, such as Wellhead Protection Area Management Planning (WHPAMP), Groundwater Guardian (GG), Groundwater Guardian Green Site (GGGS), etc., which have proven effectiveness in long-term protection efforts. The GF has secured funding for the project from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). Substantial in-kind services have been offered by partnering organizations. The funding requested from NET will enable the GGAN project to be extended, penetrate more communities, and further utilize the tools and resources developed.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2009 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$54,520 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$70,811 IN YEAR TWO AND \$58,881 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** The Groundwater Foundation**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Bridging the Gap in Source Water Protection**Project No:** 12-163**Amount Requested:** \$127,546**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Education

The major source of Nebraskans' drinking water is groundwater. The quality of our drinking water is largely dependent on our actions; while some contamination occurs naturally the majority of source water pollution is due to human actions. To reverse the paradigm the Groundwater Foundation (GF) proposes the "Bridging the Gap in Source Water Protection" project. The project will foster groundwater protection and conservation actions in Nebraska homeowners. It will create awareness of best management practices by showcasing efforts with proven environmental benefits and will provide homeowners with tools to replicate the practices. The GF will accomplish this by selecting proactive sites (from the GF's vast network of partners and program participants) where the GF will incorporate educational activities into events. By proactive sites the GF intends businesses, places and communities that have implemented water conservation and protection efforts into their practices. For example the GF will provide workshops for employees at proactive businesses (i.e. training sessions to employees at Assurity Life Insurance Company to highlight efforts that Assurity has adopted to protect water quality and quantity) or educational booths at site events (an example is incorporating a Test Your Well opportunity at a Spring Creek Prairie event, since this is a practice that Spring Creek Prairie utilizes to monitor their water quality). The GF will also develop educational materials; handouts for site visitors, online resources and a smart phone app. The GF anticipates participating in up to 40 site events (workshops, training sessions, educational/activity booths), therefore estimates directly working with 5,000-8,000 people. The GF anticipates distributing the handouts to approximately 25,000 visitors and the online resources will reach an unlimited audience. In-kind services are secured from ISL company (website development company) and Trust funds will be matched by additional funding sources (as outlined in budget).

**Sponsor Name:** The Groundwater Foundation**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** LEAP into Groundwater**Project No:** 12-164**Amount Requested:** \$182,670**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Education

The Groundwater Foundation (GF) is requesting funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for a collaborative project with Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska. The GF is a nonprofit organization that educates people and inspires action to ensure sustainable, clean groundwater for future generations. The GF has over 25 years of experience in educating youth about groundwater. Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska is the largest girl serving organization in Nebraska with more than 25,000 girl and adult members. The project, to integrate experiential-based learning activities about water into the Girl Scouts program, is an opportunity for the GF to utilize its expertise and reach a vast new audience across the state. The timing is ideal; Girl Scouts USA has developed a new series of books dedicated to the environment. The series addresses important issues facing our environment, but it does not offer the opportunity for hands-on learning, nor for girls to take action in their local community. The Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska asked the GF to develop tools to integrate these components into the new environmental series. The GF has developed a three-year comprehensive plan to integrate activities that will complement the structure of the Girl Scouts. The GF is requesting funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust towards implementation of this plan. The GF has secured matching funds from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. The project while initially will be developed for the Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska, has the potential to be expanded to Girl Scouts USA and will be explored during this project.

**Sponsor Name:** The Nebraska Land Trust Incorporated**Nearest Town:** Crawford**Project Name:** Pine Ridge Bighorn Preservation Project**Project No:** 11-178-2**Amount Requested:** \$130,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

In 1884, while hunting bighorn sheep in North Dakota, Theodore Roosevelt became enamored by their "marvelous agility...and wonderful command over iron sinews and muscles." By the time of his Presidency, market hunting, habitat loss, and disease had erased this regal animal from much of its historic range, including the rocky buttes of Nebraska's Pine Ridge.

In a rare reversal of extirpation, bighorns are roaming the Pine Ridge once again, thanks to the reintroduction of two herds on public lands. But bighorns need a lot of habitat to thrive, so long-term success will also depend on the future of surrounding private lands. With \$638,000 from the NET and \$20,000 from other partners, the Nebraska Land Trust will match \$658,000 committed by the NRCS/FRPP, to purchase conservation easements on two properties that provide critical habitat for bighorns in the Pine Ridge. An additional \$131,600 is needed to satisfy the requirement for a 10% defense fund, unless this policy is changed.

One property encompasses 1,121 acres bordered by Fort Robinson State Park on two sides and the Petersen WMA on a third. It includes critical lambing habitat for bighorns, a locally rare wetland, historical/cultural significance, and picturesque views from Highway 20 and Fort Robinson. The landowner, a small Native American college, would place \$55,000 of easement proceeds into an escrow account, for improvements in grazing and habitat management. The second property includes 558 acres of ranchland, bordered by the Ponderosa WMA to the west and the Nebraska National Forest to the east. With buttes, meadows, pines, a pond, West Ash Creek, and years of good stewardship, this ranch provides habitat and a critical migration bridge between large blocks of public land used by bighorns, elk, and other wildlife. The chance to preserve both properties, at once, is a rare conservation opportunity indeed.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$639,600 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$130,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Tri-Tails District, Longs Peak Council, Boy Scouts of**Nearest Town:** Crawford**Project Name:** Fort Robinson Tree Replant**Project No:** 12-101R**Amount Requested:** \$14,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Education

The Fort Robinson State Park Tree Replant is a joint venture between the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Boy Scouts of America to replace ponderosa pine tree seedlings in a nearly 50,000 acre burn that occurred in 1989.

Each year since then Boy Scout volunteers from a five state region have met the first weekend in April to plant trees. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has verbally agreed to continue. The grant is for \$14,000 to purchase seedlings for the April 2012 replant.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED A TOTAL OF \$151,750 FROM 1997-2010. THIS REQUEST IS A CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT.

**Sponsor Name:** Twin Valley Weed Management Area**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Eastern Republican Riparian Improvement Project**Project No:** 12-112**Amount Requested:** \$528,200**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Water

The Eastern Republican Riparian Improvement Project continues ongoing efforts to control invasive riparian plants along the Republican River and its tributaries within the eight counties of the Twin Valley Weed Management Area (TVWMA). Control efforts are conducted in a holistic manner, utilizing a full range of mechanical, biological and chemical tools to eradicate invasive species and control vegetation in stream channels. TVWMA has undertaken this project over the past several years to improve stream flow along the Republican River, maintain a healthy river system, and increase public awareness of the best management practices that can be used to properly manage riparian lands. In addition, TVWMA will begin to implement a plan, with input from landowners adjoining the river, for future river maintenance. TVWMA members include county weed superintendents, Trailblazer RC&D, Lower Republican NRD, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, other public agencies, and private landowners. The group coordinates and assists with efforts to identify, contain and control the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants. In the first phases of the Eastern Republican Riparian Improvement Project, TVWMA worked to eradicate reed canary grass, salt cedar and phragmites populations along the Republican River and around Harlan County Reservoir. The project has now moved toward restoring the natural river and tributary channel to reduce potential flooding, and promote more efficient water conveyance to the Nebraska-Kansas state line. Mechanical removal of debris (i.e. logjams), and restoring natural spring flows will be done to enhance water flow within the Republican River watershed from the Cambridge Diversion to the Nebraska-Kansas state line. Previous funding has allowed TVWMA to implement these management practices in areas of the channel with marked success.



**Sponsor Name:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**Nearest Town:** Multiple**Project Name:** Private Land Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Partnership**Project No:** 12-176**Amount Requested:** \$405,000**Term of Project Request:** 3**Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (Partners Program) is seeking funding for the restoration, enhancement, and management of grassland, wetland, and riverine habitats. The Partners Program has been an extremely effective model for conservation on private lands for nearly twenty years. Since its inception in 1992, the Nebraska Partners Program has entered into more than 800 agreements with private landowners throughout Nebraska to restore, enhance and manage important fish and wildlife habitats on private lands. To date, the successes of the Partners Program include restoring, protecting, or enhancing approximately 45,500 acres of wetland habitat, over 215,000 acres of upland habitat, 263 miles of stream/riparian habitat, and 132 miles of riverine sloughs, backwaters, and side channel habitat. In light of declining budgets, we are seeking funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund over the next three years to provide support for the continuation of conservation work within focus areas located across the state of Nebraska. Funding support will assist the Nebraska Partners Program in: 1) providing cost-share incentives for restoring and managing declining habitats on private lands; 2) providing information and education on the importance of priority habitats and how best to manage those habitats across Nebraska; 3) providing technical assistance to private landowners regarding the incorporation of fish and wildlife habitats into their farming and ranching operations; and, 4) participating and supporting locally-based conservation partnerships and assisting in the development of new partnerships efforts in priority landscapes across Nebraska.

**Sponsor Name:** University of Nebraska - Board of Regents**Nearest Town:** Statewide**Project Name:** Conserving Water Through Informed Irrigation Management**Project No:** 11-150-2**Amount Requested:** \$30,000**Term of Project Request:** 2**Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Conserving water through irrigator education is the focus of this proposed project. Conservation will be accomplished through a water management educational program by providing irrigators and water managers with the knowledge and skills needed to obtain maximum benefit from water applied to crops. Ongoing programs that have reached a limited audience have demonstrated that irrigation applications can be reduced by at least two inches annually when the irrigator uses scientific methods for managing irrigation applications. If a similar average savings can be realized across all irrigated acres in Nebraska, the total water applied (and volume pumped) could be reduced by more than 1.4 million acre-feet annually; for comparison this potential savings is equal to 82% of the total capacity of Lake McConaughy. However, these ongoing programs have reached a limited number of irrigators; ways to reach a broader audience are needed. A partnership of the University of Nebraska Extension in the Biological Systems Engineering Department and the Nebraska center pivot manufacturers, Lindsay Corporation, Reinke Manufacturing Company, Inc., T-L Irrigation Company, and Valmont Industries, Inc., provides access to a larger audience of irrigators through the manufacturers' dealer networks. Further, by holding an irrigation school at Husker Harvest Days the partnership will also have access to an audience not previously reached, and the manufacturers will be able to reinforce the learning by providing supplemental information at their exhibits. Additionally, four, two-day irrigation short courses providing more in-depth management education will be offered each year at selected locations across Nebraska. Areas with ongoing water management challenges, e.g., the Republican River Basin and the Platte River Basin upstream of Kearney, will receive special attention. This project will rely heavily on input from the industry partners, the center pivot manufacturers, to determine the correct level of technical content and to reach previously unreached irrigators.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$215,000 IN 2008.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$30,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$30,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$30,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Ogallala  
**Project Name:** Eastern Redcedar Removal for Habitat Restoration and Maintenance at Cedar Point Biological Station **Project No:** 11-156-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$10,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

We request funding to enhance our current efforts at controlling the eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) population on the Cedar Point Biological Station (CPBS) property. The product will be improved grassland habitat diversity and stewardship by UNL. Since our leasing of the site in 1976 and final purchase in 1996 through NET we have not had sufficient resources to consistently control the cedar growth, and so we are requesting funding to supplement our equipment and labor costs.

This modest proposal includes funds for a tree shear and chipper attachment for our existing tractor, 2 additional chainsaws (total <\$10,000), as well as \$25,000 to pay for local vendors and students hired to assist in removal of eastern redcedar from the CPBS property. We believe it would be most effective to spread this initial work over a 3 year period, and the equipment will be serviceable for many years after that. The primary purpose of this project is to enhance and restore the quality and diversity of the grassland habitat on the CPBS property by reducing the redcedar population. Secondary end products include enhanced fire protection, it will facilitate implementation of a storm water management plan that will improve soil retention and water infiltration in the areas surrounding the campus, and provide funding for students on workstudy which will support improved undergraduate student access to CPBS. For more on CPBS see: <http://cedarpoint.unl.edu>

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$10,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$10,000 IN YEAR TWO, WITH THREE YEARS TO EXPEND FUNDS, PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Wood River  
**Project Name:** Developing Adaptive Prairie Management Using Monitoring Data **Project No:** 11-175-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$10,000 **Term of Project Request:** 2 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Remnant and restored prairies are a key habitat upon which a diverse collection of native plants and animals depend. A variety of techniques by a variety of agencies and private land owners have been used in Nebraska to protect remnant native prairies and to restore abandoned fields; a number of these efforts have been funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust. However, very little effort has been made to evaluate the success and cost-effectiveness of different management techniques. Thus we don't know if our restorations efforts are maximizing the potential of these sites. In addition, sites differ strongly in productivity, species composition, history and soil and we do not know the importance of these factors in determining grassland quality. Protecting and restoring grasslands is essential as these are key habitats for endangered species and a sustainable resource for livestock operations. To that end we must evaluate our restoration efforts so that Nebraskans can adopt economical and effective management techniques. We will monitor vegetation dynamics using a simple, cost-effective protocol in order to evaluate management techniques in use on prairies in critical wildlife habitats along the Platte River valley. Our recommendations will be disseminated to governmental agencies, non-profits, and private ranchers and farmers managing prairies in Nebraska.

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$25,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$10,000 IN YEAR TWO AND \$10,000 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** University of Nebraska - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Professional Application of Manure in Nebraska **Project No:** 11-199-2  
**Amount Requested:** \$40,000 **Term of Project Request:** 1 **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

Land application of livestock manures is still one of the largest potential sources of water quality contamination of pollutants (pathogens and nutrients) to the surface and ground waters of Nebraska. Improper application of animal manures has the potential to impact sensitive ecosystems and habitat. Proper handling, application, observation of setbacks from waters, operational safety are prudent to this laborious activity to ensure it is done safely for the operator and protects the environment. Professional Manure Applicators are those individuals who apply manure "for-hire" (Custom Manure Applicators) and medium to large livestock operators who apply significant amounts of manure that is self-generated. In Nebraska Land Application Training is required for permit holders, which are typically owners and operators, but no requirement exists for those that apply manure. Recent meetings with CMA's NDEQ and Extension has made clear that routine communication (possibly in the form of an association), training for crews, and a manure expo educational training field day is warranted in Nebraska. An on-line training program is also proposed to be developed for new crew members and those not able to attend workshops. This proposal will locate PMAs in Nebraska, use a focus group of PMAs to direct training needs, deliver training workshops and an educationally focused manure expo, and establish an on-line training program and resources for those that apply manure in Nebraska.

THIS PROJECT WAS SUBMITTED IN 2010 BUT NOT FUNDED DUE TO PLACEMENT ON THE RANK ORDER LIST. THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$50,000 IN 2011 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$40,000 IN YEAR TWO PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** University of Nebraska - Omaha - Board of Regents **Nearest Town:** Omaha  
**Project Name:** Glacier Creek Watershed Initiative **Project No:** 12-122  
**Amount Requested:** \$1,265,000 **Term of Project Request:** 3 **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Glacier Creek Watershed Initiative will purchase approximately 105 acres (the West Watershed) to extend the western boundary of Allwine Prairie so as to incorporate the entire upper drainage of the Glacier Creek watershed. This purchase, in conjunction with purchase of the north watershed which is presently in progress, will create a truly unique prairie preserve that encompasses an entire drainage which, after restoration, will encompass a significantly expanded diversity of native terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. A portion of the cost of land acquisition is being requested from the Nebraska Environmental Trust with this proposal. Because of its location within 30 minutes of the Omaha metropolitan area, the expanded preserve will provide unique regional educational opportunities for local and watershed-level environmental experience for individuals, classes, and organizations. From a broader perspective, this initiative will take land once preliminarily platted for development and (1) restore natural upland and aquatic features and vegetation which will also (2) reduce soil erosion, (3) improve local surface water quality, and (4) reduce water flow into the Big Papillion Creek while also (5) ensuring the long-term viability of a dynamic preserve with diverse habitats for wildlife and with regional opportunities for environmental education for future generations.

**Sponsor Name:** University of Nebraska - Omaha - Board of Regents      **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Shifting Focus: Expanding Wellness Programs to Deliver Environmental Health      **Project No:** 12-155  
**Amount Requested:** \$289,082      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Air Quality

Preserving healthful urban air quality through a shift in resident behaviors is the focus of this proposed project. Behavior change will be accomplished through an innovative shift among volunteer workplace wellness programs. The wellness program content will be developed for use by wellness program project partners with the assistance of sustainability and environmental health experts at UNO's College of Business and with community health education or marketing graduate student assistants. Wellness programs exist among 35% of the workforce in Nebraska and have demonstrated measurable success at delivering pro-health behavior change among employees and their families. This project will focus on delivering pro-environmental behavior change, a very similar set of oft-ignored activities with obvious personal and social benefits to those of eating well and exercising. The unique need which drives this effort is the realization that in 3-5 years the steadily increasing levels of smog (ground-level ozone) will reach a concentration that will kick-in regulations which will have a significant economic impact on the business community and the community as a whole. Another need for this project is one of finding a successful non-regulatory method for inducing change throughout a community that will have positive environmental outcomes. The old model of providing complete and convincing information to the public has been clearly demonstrated to deliver limited implementation. This project will offer a replication potential that can be quickly adopted among wellness programs across the nation, and can be expanded from smog to other non-regulated environmental issues with public health consequences, such as climate change.

**Sponsor Name:** Upper Loup Natural Resources District      **Nearest Town:** Multiple  
**Project Name:** Upper Loup NRD Recycling Program      **Project No:** 10-177-3  
**Amount Requested:** \$12,129      **Term of Project Request:** 1      **Review Group:** Statement of Intent

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District (ULNRD) is a governmental agency that is dedicated to conserving and protecting our natural resources. To promote conservation, water quality, and waste reduction in the Upper Loup District, the ULNRD is requesting funds in the amount of \$54,977 to implement and expand recycling efforts in the ULNRD. A survey had been done by the ULNRD, with the villages of the District, to determine interest and a need for recycling efforts. The results of the survey, in general, found that the villages understand the importance and benefits of recycling, but stated that without the help from a partner it is not feasible. The three year project is designed to place a total of five, 6-bin recycling trailers throughout the district and to provide regular transport of these trailers to the end market. The overall goal is to establish a sustainable recycling program District-wide. By the end of the 3 year grant period our target goal is to reduce the amount of municipal and rural solid waste disposed of by 608 tons (25%).

THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED \$21,424 IN 2010 WITH THE INTENT TO FUND UP TO \$21,424 IN YEAR TWO AND \$12,129 IN YEAR THREE PENDING AVAILABLE FUNDS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS. THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR REQUEST.

**Sponsor Name:** Upper Loup Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Thedford**Project Name:** Groundwater Irrigation Management Program**Project No:** 12-105**Amount Requested:** \$106,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Water

Funding is being sought from the Environmental Trust to provide flowmeters and crop water sensors for interested irrigators in order to increase understanding of groundwater irrigation occurring in the Upper Loup Natural Resources District (ULNRD) as well as help irrigators to conserve water by managing water application practices. A flowmeter, depending on model, costs around \$1,700 and the soil moisture sensors, depending upon models, cost around \$600 each. There is limited information available regarding the total amounts of irrigation taking place across the District. Since January 1, 2008, the ULNRD has certified all the groundwater irrigated acres and estimates nearly 23,000 new acres have been developed for irrigation since that date. Due to the increasing demands of water for irrigation it is important that long-term water usage is managed in a sustainable and equitable way. Effective groundwater irrigation management begins with accurate water use measurements. Quantifying the amount of groundwater utilized for irrigation is essential for water and nitrate management. Currently data is manually recorded by farmers resulting in irregular reporting and is subject to human errors. With the placement of flowmeters on wells and qualified District personnel reading the meters, data accuracy will be ensured. The ULNRD is also involved with the Elkhorn Loup Modeling (ELM) Project, which heavily relies on irrigation pumping figures and having accurate data is absolutely imperative to ensuring the accuracy and replicability of the numerical groundwater model. The ULNRD wants to use the best scientifically-based management practices to deal with current and future ground-water management needs and feels that this project will provide key information when developing groundwater policy.

**Sponsor Name:** Upper Loup Natural Resources District**Nearest Town:** Thedford**Project Name:** Upper Loup NRD Recycling Program**Project No:** 12-111**Amount Requested:** \$170,000**Term of Project Request:** 1**Review Group:** Water

The Upper Loup Natural Resources District (ULNRD) is a governmental agency that is dedicated to conserving and protecting our natural resources. To promote conservation, and waste reduction in the Upper Loup District, the ULNRD is requesting funds in the amount of \$170,000 to expand current recycling efforts. Upon implementing the existing recycling program of collecting recyclable materials of aluminum, plastics, tin, and paper, the ULNRD has been strongly urged to collect cardboard by constituents to help further reduce solid waste that is being sent to the land fill. The overall goal for this project is two fold. One is to meet the expressed desires of the NRD's residents and two, to establish a means of making the current recycling program sustainable. Funding would be used to construct a new building and to purchase two vertical balers. The building would be located on District property and have loading dock access as well provide enough room for the balers and ample storage capacity to store the recyclables until transport to end market.

**Sponsor Name:** Upper Republican Natural Resources District      **Nearest Town:** Parks  
**Project Name:** The Rock Creek Prairie and Stream Flow Restoration Project      **Project No:** 12-154  
**Amount Requested:** \$1,000,000      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Rural Habitat

The Rock Creek Prairie and Stream Flow Restoration Project will be the only project of its kind in the state and the largest habitat renewal undertaking to date in Southwest Nebraska's Sandsage Prairie, recognized as a Biologically Unique Landscape in Nebraska's Natural Legacy Project. Nebraska Environmental Trust funds would be used to help return nearly 3,300 acres of cropland that has been heavily irrigated for decades with Ogallala Aquifer water to native rangeland in the Sandsage Prairie core that abuts Rock Creek Fish Hatchery and Rock Creek State Recreation Area, which is anchored by a recently renovated 50-acre lake frequented by residents of southwest Nebraska. A primary intent of the overall project is to help the state of Nebraska maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact by piping significantly less water than what otherwise would have been used for irrigation on the nearly 3,300 acres into Rock Creek, a tributary of the Republican River. Trust fund dollars would be used for desired components of the project not directly tied to compact compliance. In addition to prairie restoration, these include additional pipeline and storage facilities to provide consistently higher flows needed to maintain the viability of Rock Creek Fish Hatchery, which contributes to the production of nearly half of the trout stocked in Nebraska. The project is expected to reduce depletions to groundwater resources while restoring a key waterway in the region and increasing soil and water quality through the reduced use of agricultural chemicals.

**Sponsor Name:** WasteCap Nebraska      **Nearest Town:** Statewide  
**Project Name:** Sustainable Business Certification Program      **Project No:** 12-130  
**Amount Requested:** \$196,384      **Term of Project Request:** 2      **Review Group:** Waste Management

WasteCap Nebraska requests funding in the amount of \$196,384 over a 2-year period to implement a Sustainable Business Certification pilot program. WasteCap Nebraska will provide training and resources to 12 business enterprises to conserve water and protect ground water/waterways; to manage waste, implement source reduction initiatives and find viable substitutions for toxic materials; and to measure and reduce air polluting emissions, including carbon dioxide and its equivalents while generating cost savings. These 12 businesses will represent four regions in Nebraska, and involve primarily small and medium-sized business enterprises. Through a facilitated process, participants in each region will form a "sustainability circle", working through a structured curriculum that educates and offers options for practical and implementable improvements. A variant of the model will introduce the basic concepts to 80 businesses via 4 workshops over 2 years. WasteCap will conduct the pilot program to evaluate the identify ways to improve program delivery and take it to a community scale after the conclusion of the pilot. We strive to design a replicable and affordable program.

**Sponsor Name:** Wayne, City of

**Nearest Town:** Winside

**Project Name:** Trail Overlook Project

**Project No:** 12-108

**Amount Requested:** \$56,836

**Term of Project Request:** 1

**Review Group:** Bank Stabilization

The bank where the trail overlook is located is exposed and eroded. The bank is nearly vertical and further erosion and undercutting of the bank could cause the bike trail overlook to collapse. The City of Wayne would like to armor the overlooks north bank to stop future erosion and undercutting of the bank.

**Sponsor Name:** Wayne, City of

**Nearest Town:** Winside

**Project Name:** Storm Water Outfall Project

**Project No:** 12-110

**Amount Requested:** \$124,428

**Term of Project Request:** 1

**Review Group:** Bank Stabilization

Currently, the north bank of South Logan Creek consists of exposed earth in the form of a vertical wall at the two project locations. The vertical bank is extremely unstable and progressively degrading. As the bank degrades, sediment and organic material or other pollutants are discharged into South Logan Creek, deteriorating the quality of the water flowing in the creek. Stabilizing the bank will prevent further degradation and further discharge of sediment and pollutants into South Logan Creek. The City of Wayne will use retaining walls to armor the bank. The walls will protect the bank and prevent farther contamination into South Logan Creek.