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# RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

**April 2018**

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**Executive Director Corner**

We just completed three grantee seminars last week to inform those fortunate enough to get Trust grants about the paperwork and reports necessary to satisfy their grant requirements. We also provided grantees with information about how to publicize their grants. Several Senators joined us at one of the two Lincoln seminars. Unfortunately the Legislature went through the lunch hour for the other Lincoln seminar and additional Senators were unable to join us. We had a few cancellations for our Grand Island seminar because of the blizzard, but a few dedicated grantees made it in from as far as the Sandhills and Scottsbluff.

Speaking of the weather, Mother Nature can't decide if spring is really here or not. We went from highs in the 70's one day, to a blizzard the next day. I'm guessing we still have a snow or two left this month and we have had snow in May, so don't get out the lawn furniture just yet.

The 105th Legislature, second session has come to a close. There is some talk of a special session to try and work on the property tax issue, but it is doubtful they can get the 33 Senators needed to call for a special session.



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The Trust Board met on April 5th and awarded the 2018 grants. Take a look at our list on our webpage and see all the great things going on in Nebraska.

The Spring Football Game is this Saturday, April 21st and it looks like rain. There is a lot of excitement surrounding Scott Frost and his assistant coaches. The UNL baseball and softball teams continue to struggle, but they may settle in soon. Both have the potential to do good things yet this season. The women's bowling team fell a little short this season, losing in the quarter finals. But remember, they have 10 national championships in their short 20 year history.

Bring on summer.

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

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### **Nebraska Environmental Trust Awards 2018 Grants**

At a meeting in Lincoln on April 5, 2018 the Board of the Nebraska Environmental Trust announced that 105 projects will receive \$18,301,819 in lottery proceeds for natural resource work in Nebraska. Out of these, 66 are newly funded grants and 39 are carry-over projects. This is the 25th year of grants from the Trust, which has provided over \$289 million dollars in lottery revenue to preserve and protect the air, water and land of our state. Some of the projects receiving funding include:

- Nebraska Community Foundation – Loup River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange
- City of Lincoln – StarTran CNG Bus Fueling Station
- Nebraska Cattlemen – Wildlife Habitat Improvement Through Prescribed Grazing:  
A Private/Public Partnership

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### **Agency Directors**

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- Nebraska Trout Unlimited Chapter 710 – Dry Spotted Tail Creek and Wetland Project

A complete listing of all approved 2018 grants and summaries can be found on the Nebraska Environmental Trust web site at [www.environmentaltrust.org](http://www.environmentaltrust.org).



*Grantee Seminar in Lincoln*

### **Grantee Seminar Week Well Attended!**

The Trust staff got a chance to meet most of our grantees last week at the grantee seminars that were held in Lincoln and Grand Island. A total of 72 grantees, 8 Senators and 1 staff person attended the workshops. Grantees were briefed on grant and publicity requirements for the tenure of their projects. We look forward to on-going communications with our grantees in the coming months.

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[environmentaltrust.org](http://environmentaltrust.org)



*University of Nebraska State Museum*

**Morrill Hall's Fourth Floor Redevelopment, Cherish Nebraska** - submitted by **Mandy Haase-Thomas**, Chief Communications Officer, University of Nebraska State Museum

Hard hats and safety cones have become a familiar sight around the University of Nebraska State Museum-Morrill Hall -- and for good reason.

Visitors to the University of Nebraska State Museum will soon be able to experience Nebraska and natural history in entirely new ways due to major enhancements to the iconic museum at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL).

After being closed to the public for more than 50 years, the fourth level of the historic 1920s-era Morrill Hall will be transformed into state-of-the-art exhibits using modern technology. Plans include the installation of innovative and interactive science exhibits that will be on par with other Smithsonian affiliates. Expanded educational opportunities are planned for visitors of all ages.

Like other areas of the museum, the new exhibit spaces will become a platform for distance learning, using two-way videoconferencing technology to help take the museum into classrooms, libraries and community centers across the nation. Gallery programs will become virtually available to all who have connectivity.

When complete in February 2019, Cherish Nebraska will celebrate Nebraska's natural heritage – the diversity of life that has been shaped over the millennia by Nebraska's changing environments. Visitors will journey from Nebraska's landscapes through time and space, and learn how our state's natural heritage – our birds, plants and animals - is shaped by geological changes and human-impacts. They will become engaged in the joy and excitement of scientific discovery as they learn about University of Nebraska research, talk with UNL scientists in the Visible Lab, and investigate their own research questions in the Science Exploration Zone.

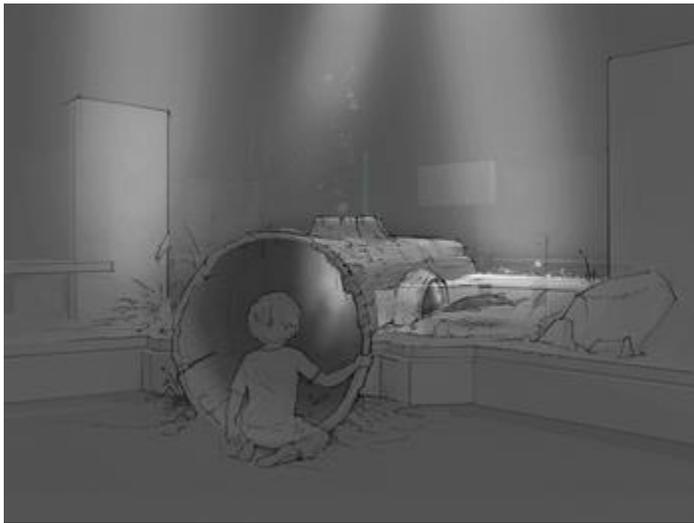
Visitors will be greeted by the iconic ambush predator *Barbourofelis* and the extinct Giant Bison when they arrive. Nebraska has one of the best fossil records in the world for the interval of time called the Miocene (23 million years to 5.3 million years ago). Making their way through the new exhibit areas, visitors will navigate the major ecological regions (ecoregions) and water systems to understand how they tie together. Visitors will contemplate the Platte River system, play in a virtual watershed and explore why there is hidden water in the Ogallala Aquifer. Visitors will marvel at the complexity of prairies, including the Sandhills, the largest sand dune region in the western hemisphere. The plants, animals, and complex geology that creates these environments are featured in videos, crawl-through exhibit spaces, and many other interactive experiences.

A state-of-the-art digital exhibit, the Sustainable Earth gallery will feature a five-foot diameter projection globe.

Visitors will learn about Earth's interrelated weather and climate processes and their relationship to Nebraska and the Midwest region.

For more information go to [museum.unl.edu/fourthfloor](http://museum.unl.edu/fourthfloor)

The redevelopment project is partially funded through a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.



*Gallagher & Associates*

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### **Audubon Celebrates Cranes and Partners - submitted by Autumn Taddicken**

Audubon celebrated spring crane migration at the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary on Wednesday. During **Celebration 2018**, Audubon recognized the 25th anniversary of the Nebraska Environmental Trust. During the evening reception Rowe Director Bill Taddicken and Board President Ed Berglund recognized staff and board members of the Nebraska Environmental Trust. The evening wrapped up with crane viewing from riverside viewing blinds.

“The Nebraska Environmental Trust is an important partner in Audubon’s work to conserve the Platte River and the cranes for future generations,” said Bill Taddicken, Director of Audubon’s Rowe Sanctuary and Interim Director for Audubon Nebraska. “Here at Iain Nicolson Center at Rowe Sanctuary, we have received \$1.6 million in grants from Nebraska Environmental Trust since their inception. They are truly an asset for all of Nebraska.”

Audubon hosted partner organizations and supporters throughout the day in activities that highlighted their conservation strategies. The morning kicked off with a habitat management presentation by Rowe’s Conservation Director Andrew Pierson, followed by a bus tour of the approximately 3,000 acres Audubon protects along the Platte River.

At a luncheon in the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center, participants heard about the new Kearney Outdoor Learning Area partnership between Audubon and Kearney High School. Rowe’s Habitat and Outreach Assistant Cody Wagner described the project, partially funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust, with a series of before and after photos and videos. Participants were then led by Rowe’s Education Manager Beka Yates in a “rotten log” inquiry activity used as part of Rowe’s school programs.

Following the presentations, Audubon hosted a dedication ceremony at a new wildlife viewing area located at Rowe Sanctuary. The new parking area, viewing space, and interpretive signs are located on a large wet meadow protected by Audubon in 2014. The extensive list of partners on the project included The Nebraska Environmental Trust.

### **About Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary**

The mission of Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary is to conserve and restore the Platte River ecosystem, focusing on cranes, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Visit [rowe.audubon.org](http://rowe.audubon.org) or call (308) 468-5282 to learn more.



*Bus tours with Partners at Rowe Sanctuary*



*Dedication of the Crane Viewing Pull-Out*

### **Audubon Dedicates New Wildlife Viewing Area**

Audubon also dedicated a new wildlife viewing area at Rowe Sanctuary on Wednesday. The pull-out area is located on Elm Island Road, just west of the Iain Nicolson

Audubon Center, overlooking a wet meadow and portion of the south channel of the Platte River.

The viewing area provides ample parking and features a viewing fence through which guests can watch cranes that commonly use the meadow for feeding and as a loafing area. Interpretive signage at the viewing area provides information about cranes and the importance of wet meadows for birds and other wildlife.

Audubon recognized an extensive list of partners who helped protect and restore the wet meadow and create the new wildlife viewing area. Audubon's partners on the project included The Nebraska Environmental Trust, Nebraska Wildlife Conservation Fund, Nebraska's Natural Legacy Project, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, Central Platte Natural Resources District, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Main Street Design, and Prairie Plains Resource Institute.

"This project isn't unique," stated Autumn Taddicken, Rowe's Project Manager. "Nearly every conservation success on the Platte River is a story about conservation organizations, government agencies, private landowners, donors, volunteers, business, media, and community members coming together to create positive outcomes for wildlife."

According to Audubon, only 10 percent of wet meadows remain in the central Platte River region. "Most have been converted to agriculture, sand and gravel mines, and housing developments," Taddicken stated. "These meadows are important habitat for cranes, waterfowl, grassland birds, and many more animals and insects. They are rich with diversity and important to a healthy river

ecosystem. We hope more people will come out to join us at the Nicolson Audubon Center to experience the beauty of the Platte River ecosystem year-round.”



*Flex Fuel Grand Opening in Milligan*

### **Flex Fuel Grand Opening in Milligan, Nebraska**

Flex fuel vehicle drivers were able to take advantage of huge savings on E85 for just \$0.85 a gallon at the HWY 41 Express Stop near Milligan (1200 Road 24) Saturday, April 7. Consumers were limited to 30 gallons.

The grand opening kicked off with a ribbon cutting at 10:45 a.m. to mark the opening of the new flex fuel pumps that now dispense E10, E30 and E85. Nebraska Ethanol Board, Nebraska Corn Board and local corn growers were on site greeting drivers, pumping fuel, and providing giveaways. Hwy 41 Express Stop offered Champ's Chicken food specials.

The rural convenience store is recognized for their food options since opening in July 2017. Five local investors –

Kenny Harre, Dale Luzum, Jason Pribyl, Tom Pribyl and Jan Rischling – established Hwy 41 Express Stop to offer food and fuel in an area of Nebraska that needed both. “Our community didn’t have a restaurant, so the station gives people a place for meal options and acts as a small grocery store,” said Tom Pribyl. “Offering ethanol-blended fuel allows us to support our agriculture community, which has been a great asset for our community.”

Higher ethanol blends like E30 and E85 are approved for use in flex fuel vehicles. One in seven Nebraskans are driving a flex fuel vehicle, which can run on any blend of American Ethanol up to E85 (85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline). Drivers can check their owner’s manual to see if they’re driving a flex fuel vehicle. The vehicle might also have a flex fuel badge on the trunk or tailgate — or have a yellow gas cap.

A portion of Hwy 41 Express Stop’s fuel pump upgrades were paid for with the Access Ethanol Nebraska (AEN), a grant program administrated by the Nebraska Corn Board, Nebraska Ethanol Board and Nebraska Department of Agriculture, with the Nebraska Energy Office as the lead agency. Nebraska’s federal award of approximately \$2.3 million for the AEN program came from the USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation’s Biofuel Infrastructure Partnership (BIP). USDA rules require that the USDA funds be matched dollar for dollar with funds from state, private industry or foundations. Matching funds will come from the Nebraska Corn Board through the state corn checkoff funds paid by Nebraska corn farmers and from the Nebraska Environmental Trust approved funding of \$500,000 for each of the two years. Matching funds will also come from contributions made by individual ethanol plants and “Prime the Pump,” a nonprofit organized and funded by the ethanol industry to improve ethanol infrastructure.

## Upcoming Events

- Earth Day Omaha, Saturday, April 21st, 2018, Elmwood Park, Omaha NE.
- Eastern Red Cedar Meeting, April 25th, 2018, 12:30 pm - 5:00 pm, Halsey National Forest, Halsey NE.
- Lincoln Earth Day, Saturday, April 28th, 2018, Union Plaza Park, Lincoln NE.
- 3rd Quarter Board Meeting, August 6-7, 2018 (Monday-Tuesday) Columbus, NE.

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