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# RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

## January 2018

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### Executive Director Corner

2017 has come to an end and if you are like me, you've been changing a lot of 7's to 8's when you date things. It will probably be March before I get in the habit of signing things 2018 and not 2017. Luckily it is very easy to make an 8 out of a 7.

The Grants Committee has made their recommendations. You can find those recommendations on our web page and referenced below in this newsletter. The full board will receive the recommendations at the first quarter board meeting on February 6, 2018. A public hearing will be held on April 5, 2018, and the final funding list will be announced at that time.

The Legislature has gotten underway in the second session of the 105th Legislature. The last day to introduce new bills was January 18th (the tenth day of the session). There were 468 bills introduced. This is a 60-day session and will end on April 18th. Last year was a 90-day session and there were 667 bills introduced. There is a proposed Constitutional Amendment (294CA) that would allow the Legislature to "authorize any game of chance, any lottery, or any gift enterprise." This would allow the Legislature to establish casino gambling and other forms of gambling with 98% of the revenue going to



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### Pete Ricketts, Governor Board of Trustees

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the Property Tax Credit Cash Fund and 2% to the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund. For everyone that has been excited about the mountain lion license plates, there is a bill (LB 1080) that proposes wildlife conservation plates. It allows up to three plate designs. The bill states, "The department shall create no more than three designs reflecting support for the conservation of Nebraska wildlife, including Sandhill cranes, bighorn sheep, and rainbow trout." There is also a lot of talk about the Governor's budget bill taking General Funds from the Water Sustainability Fund, so stay tuned.

To all the Minnesota Vikings fans out there, what a finish last weekend. With 10 seconds left the Vikings scored a miraculous touchdown and sent the Saints packing. Some of the YouTube videos of fans watching the last 10 seconds of that game are priceless. How about the Husker men's basketball upset of number 23 ranked Michigan wolverines? The Huskers had not beaten them since 1964; I was one year old at the time. The recruits keep coming for Scott Frost and the excitement is growing for the Spring Game (now set for April 21st at 11:00am). I am predicting a sellout. In case you didn't catch it, former Nebraska soccer player, Haley Hanson was selected 7th overall by the Houston Dash in the NWSL draft this week.

Have a great 2018!

Mark A. Brohman  
Executive Director

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### **2018 Grant Committee Recommendations For Funding Placed in Rank Order**

A copy of the 2018 Grant Committee Recommendations For Funding Placed in Rank Order can be found below.

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#### **Agency Directors**

Jim Douglas, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Steve Wellman, Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Jim Macy, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality

Jeff Fassett, P.E., Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

Dr. Tom Williams, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

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#### **Trust Staff**

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Grants Administrator

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Public Information Officer

Pam Deines  
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Allison La Duke  
Grants Assistant

The Nebraska  
Environmental Trust  
700 S 16th Street

These recommendations will only be finalized at the board meeting in April.

[2018 Grant Committee Recommendations For Funding Placed In Rank Order](#)

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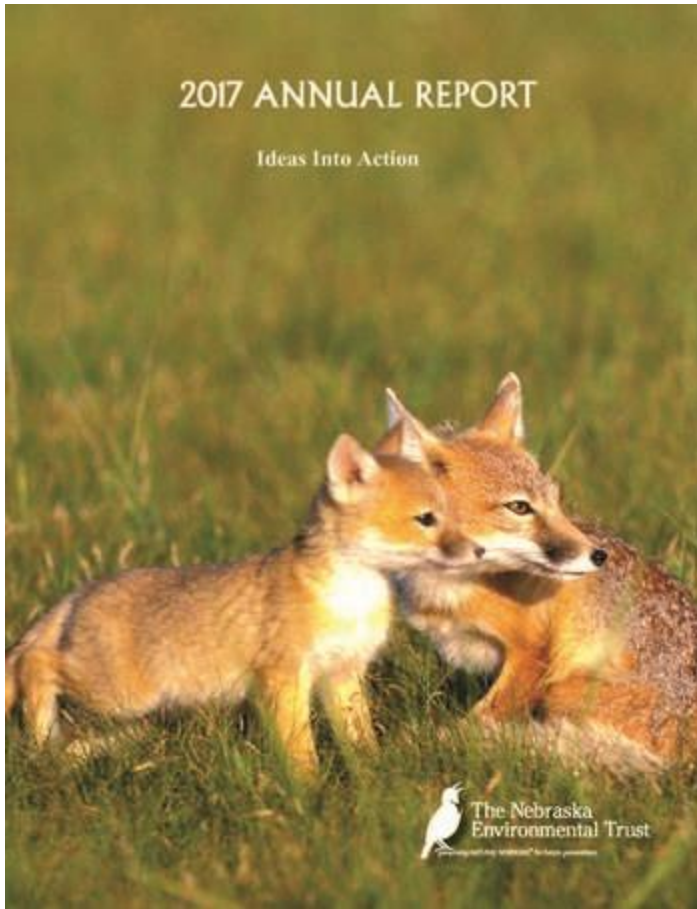
### **2017 Annual Report**

The Nebraska Environmental Trust's Annual Report is in the process of being mailed out to Trust contacts. If you would like to view an electronic copy of it, please click the link below:

[2017 Nebraska Environmental Trust Annual Report](#)

PO Box 94913  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4913

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



**Working with students to document swift fox on Nebraska ranches - submitted by Alexis Fedele, Research Associate with the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, School of Natural Resources, UNL.**

In Nebraska the distribution of swift fox, a priority conservation species, is largely unknown making management efforts difficult. To complicate matters, surveying for swift fox requires looking over a staggering 26,000 square miles of western Nebraska for one of the smallest, most elusive carnivores in North America. The challenges to uncovering information about swift fox populations are numerous, but also provide potential opportunities to engage the communities and citizens of

Nebraska.

Jenny Dauer and Joseph Fontaine at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and Teresa Frink at Chadron State College worked with conservation partners to develop a program that engages students and landowners as citizen scientists to help overcome the difficulties associated with swift fox monitoring and management. Many students from Nebraska's colleges and universities have roots in western Nebraska, providing the opportunity for them to survey for swift fox on family land. Not only does their effort help them understand more about swift fox, it provides students the opportunity to learn about conservation and engage in authentic scientific research. With the support of the Nebraska Environmental Trust, they were able to bring this project to fruition, with approximately 180 students trained to date.

The project coordinator, Amanda Sorensen, feels that the opportunity presented to students who participate in this research is an invaluable learning experience.

“It is exciting to be leading this class where students learn by meaningfully contributing to real scientific research. The students learn about ecology, the complexity of doing scientific research, how to use scientific data in natural resource decision-making, and gain practical research skills that they can use in future professions. This is a new approach to teaching science that can be actively useful for students, who are getting insight into the process of science, and researchers, who can broaden the scope of their research with increased data provided by the students taking the class,” said Sorensen.

With the help of the students from Chadron State and the University of Nebraska, researchers are learning more about swift fox and in doing so are helping natural resource professionals meet the challenges of wildlife management

in Nebraska. Researchers and students are also creating a dialogue with landowners and the public about endangered species and the future of conservation in Nebraska.



*A swift fox visits a scent station near one of the project's trail cameras in western Nebraska.*

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### **Rainwater Basin Informational Seminar**

You are invited to attend the 23rd Annual Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Informational Seminar being held on Thursday, February 1, 2018. This annual one-day seminar is an opportunity for landowners, agricultural producers, natural resource professionals, and other interested individuals to learn about conservation issues, research, and habitat programs in the Rainwater Basin region.

Below is a link to the flyer detailing the schedule and topics that will be presented, which includes morning plenary sessions on human dimensions by Dr. Christopher Chizinski, Assistant Professor of Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and TJ Fontaine, with the U.S. Geological Survey Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Unit, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Break-out sessions will cover a variety of topics, including landowner experiences with conservation practices, grazing as a management tool, programs available for landowners and current research being conducted in the Rainwater Basin region, such as the effects of contaminants on amphibians, upland game birds,

wetland restoration and VRI on net-farm income.

The seminar will be held at the Hotel Grand Conference Center located at 2503 S. Locust Street, Grand Island.

To register [click here](#) or go to our website, [www.rwbjv.org](http://www.rwbjv.org), and complete the registration form.

A \$40 fee, payable by cash/check at the door or by filling out a credit card authorization form, covers all sessions, snacks, and a buffet lunch. **Pre-registration by January 25th is requested to ensure an adequate lunch count** however registrations will be accepted at the door. Landowners and agricultural producers are invited to register free of charge and to enter a drawing to win a \$50 Cabela's gift card.

If you have registration or payment questions, please contact Niki Messmer at [niki.messmer@rwbjv.org](mailto:niki.messmer@rwbjv.org) or call 308-382-8112.

Organizations that wish to host a booth or exhibit at the seminar may also contact Niki Messmer via e-mail or phone.

[Link to Flyer](#)

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### Upcoming Events

- 23rd Annual Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Informational Seminar - Thursday, February 1, 2018, Hotel Grand Conference Center, 2305 S. Locust, Grand Island, NE, 8:30 am. (visit: [www.rwbjv.org](http://www.rwbjv.org))
- 1st Quarter Board Meeting - Tuesday, February 6,

2018, Ferguson House, Lincoln NE, 1:30 pm.

- 25 Years of Preservation Work - The Nebraska Environmental Trust, March 19-24, 2018, Rotunda, State Capitol Building, Lincoln NE
  - Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival, March 22-25, 2018, Kearney NE
  - 2nd Quarter Board Meeting, Thursday, April 5th, 2018, Ferguson House, Lincoln NE
  - Earth Day Omaha, Saturday, April 21st, 2018, Elmwood Park, Omaha NE.
  - Lincoln Earth Day, Saturday, April 28th, 2018, Union Plaza Park, Lincoln NE
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