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RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

May 2018

Executive Director Corner

It looks like summer has finally hit Nebraska. It seems like we went from winter, right into summer with very little spring. Hopefully we get adequate rainfall and don't see the wide-spread drought conditions we saw in 2012. Schools are getting out for the summer and graduations are upon us.

I had the great fortune of attending the lone Werthman street naming in Omaha near Heron Haven last week (see the story below). I had the pleasure of knowing lone since the mid-80's and working with her on a number of projects at Heron Haven. I sure miss her smile when I stop by there now.

Last week Governor Ricketts attended the ribbon cutting on the new flex fuel pumps at Grand Island's Bosselman Travel Center (complete story below). The Governor even pumped ethanol blends for a few surprised travelers. It was fun to see the Governor interact with the drivers and their reactions when they realized it was the Governor pumping their gas. When asked if he did windows, he replied, "I don't do windows". The E85 was priced at 85 cents a gallon during the event, which also drew a lot of smiles.



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We hosted a very successful Eastern Red Cedar (ERC) meeting at the Nebraska National Forest near Halsey on April 25th. Over 60 people attended, including landowners, state and federal agencies, natural resources districts, UNL, conservation groups and others. I think everyone agreed that ERCs are a problem in most parts of the State. But they do serve a purpose, especially in arid parts of the State where it is difficult to establish trees. Finding a sterile variety or other species of trees to plant is on everyone's mind. Many organizations, including the Trust, are spending a lot of resources on controlling ERCs and we all realize there is not a "silver bullet" at this point to control them. If we all keep working together, hopefully we will find solutions in the near future.

I won't mention the Husker's baseball or softball teams, but everyone is still buzzing about the Scott Frost football team and some recent recruiting. I hope fans don't expect miracles, but I do think the atmosphere has changed around the team. It is just a little over three months before the first football game and I know I can't wait to see how they perform.

Safe travels.

Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

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Gov. Pete Ricketts Pumping Ethanol At Bosselman Travel Center

Heron Haven Honors Its Late Founder, Ione Werthman

A ceremony celebrating the re-naming of a portion of Old Maple Road to honor the person whose conservation efforts led to the founding of the Heron Haven Wetland, was held on Thursday, May 17th at 7PM. The late Ione Werthman was honored for her dedication to Heron Haven and other conservation projects with the commemorative naming of the section of Old Maple Road bordering the wetland as "Ione Werthman Road." Members of Friends of Heron Haven, Inc., Ione's family, local conservation supporters who worked with Ione, board members of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, the Trust and interested members of the public were invited to the

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unveiling ceremony at Heron Haven Wetland Nature Center at 11809 Old Maple Road.

Without lone Werthman, the Heron Haven Wetland would not exist. Her persistence, hard work and ability to recruit supporters kept the wetland from being turned into an apartment complex and enabled it to be preserved as a sanctuary for wildlife and humans alike. An added benefit was that lone also turned it into a teaching facility for all ages by presenting programs for school children and adult groups single-handedly for many years. In due course, lone established a nonprofit organization, Friends of Heron Haven, Inc., and lobbied the property owner, Papio Missouri River Natural Resources District, to award its management contract to Friends. They did, and lone's dream for the wetland continues. Grant support for the organization's programs has come primarily from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, which is supported by the Nebraska Lottery.

Sam Bennett, president of Friends of Heron Haven Inc., led the board of directors in choosing the memorial road renaming because it seemed particularly appropriate to honor lone with a sign bordering the wetland she cared so much about and to which she dedicated many years of her life.

Following lone's passing, volunteer Nebraska Master Naturalists assumed responsibility for the educational programs, working with school groups and introducing students to nature and its intriguing diversity. Monthly Second Saturday programs have brought in many new visitors, especially family groups, for hands-on nature learning experiences. Scheduled programs can be accessed on the Heron Haven website (heronhaven.org).



Lone Werthman's Family Celebrate At The Unveiling



Pond Picture before NuStyle

NuStyle Development Grant

The Atlas Redevelopment Project is a project that will convert the former Creighton University Medical Center Hospital to mixed use apartments. Due to its proximity and connections to the Creighton Campus, a pedestrian bridge will be constructed to cross over Nebraska State Highway 75 to the east of the project. To help enhance the building conversion the existing impervious site will be redeveloped to include a variety of on-site amenities such as: volleyball courts for tenants, outdoor gathering and seating areas; and a water quality lake. The proposed water quality lake will collect and treat on-site stormwater runoff and reduce peak flow rates in the downstream collection system. The lake will be open to the public for recreation and be an environmental amenity. During the conceptual design of the water quality lake, it was determined that off-site storm water could be redirected into the lake to provide additional localized flood control and downstream sewer relief. The lake would also provide the City of Omaha (City) the flexibility to reduce combined sewer overflow (CSO) volume as part of future separation projects. In the long-term this will help control the number of overflows from combined sewer outfalls, ultimately improving the water quality of both the Papillion Creek and Missouri River. After reviewing the public benefits of the projects, the City and NuStyle have agreed to a unique public/private partnership on the project. This effort will be the first significant public/private partnership using green infrastructure to assist with the City's CSO program. This project can help set precedent and procedures for potential future public/private partnerships to assist the City in achieving the goals of the CSO Long-Term Control Plan.



Final Bird Eye view Renderings

North Platte NRD Geothermal Greenhouse

The North Platte NRD has nearly completed construction of a geothermal greenhouse that includes a teaching facility. This facility is modeled on a successful geothermal greenhouse in Alliance, Nebraska, which has been operating for over 25 years. The greenhouse is approximately 138' x 17' and will have a 14' interior height and is wheelchair assessable. The design specifications included constructing the base of the greenhouse at approximately four feet below grade. A geothermal ground air exchanger will supply heating/cooling to the greenhouse. Tubes have been placed 8 feet below ground surface; the ground is a constant 52° F at that depth, and air from the tubes comes up into the pump to be distributed throughout the greenhouse keeping it warm in the winter. Automated fans will be installed at both ends of the building to pump hot air out in the summer. The greenhouse will maintain year-round growing temperatures between 32° and 90° F and will support many varieties of citrus trees and vegetables. All food grown will be donated to the local Veterans Administration; excess produce beyond the veterans' needs will be donated to local food pantries in Scotts Bluff, Garden, Morrill and Banner Counties. Landscaping on the 1.6 acres outside the greenhouse will include 70 plots of different varieties of native and introduced grasses, with signs listing the variety

or mixtures of grasses planted. Students from area schools will be able to view each individual grass to improve range judging skills and knowledge of local plant ecology. Plots of native mixtures used by Farm Service Agency for the Conservation Reserve Program will be planted. This will include CP-1, CP-2, CP-4A, and CP-25 mixtures, as well as examples of several different grass mixtures best suited for wildlife, haying, or grazing.



Geothermal Greenhouse

Gov. Ricketts Cuts Ribbon on New Flex Fuel Pumps in Grand Island to Highlight Renewable Fuels Month

Governor Pete Ricketts celebrated Renewable Fuels Month during a ribbon cutting event at Bosselman Travel Center in Grand Island. At the event, Governor Ricketts pumped gas for motorists, highlighting the new flex fuel pumps now offering a variety of ethanol blends at Bosselman Travel Center.

“Corn ethanol and soy biodiesel not only help build demand for Nebraska’s crop farmers, but they also help build our state’s economy and create local jobs,” said

Governor Ricketts. “Just this week, I visited with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue about the importance of higher ethanol blends, and I will continue to encourage the Trump administration to act quickly on the approval of the use of E-15 all year long. With infrastructure like the pumps we just launched in Grand Island, we will continue to grow demand for our locally-produced, clean-burning ethanol products.”

Governor Ricketts has been a constant advocate for Nebraska’s biofuel industry. He has served as chairman of the Governor’s Biofuels Coalition, testified before the Environmental Protection Agency in support of the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) twice, and successfully worked to recruit new investment in the state’s biofuels infrastructure and industry.

Over 90 percent of all fuel in Nebraska is blended with locally-produced ethanol. This homegrown industry supports over 1,300 jobs across the state and 25 ethanol plants. The ethanol industry promotes higher prices for corn, soybeans, and other agricultural products as well, supporting the agriculture industry at large. In 2017, over 2.1 billion gallons of ethanol and nearly 6.4 million metric tons of distillers grains were produced in Nebraska.

With more than 1 billion gallons being produced across the country, soy biodiesel is another important biofuel for Nebraska. Like ethanol, biodiesel burns cleaner than petroleum diesel, is locally produced, and helps our nation’s farmers. Biodiesel adds \$0.74 per bushel to the value of soybeans, and the industry supports more than 60,000 U.S. jobs and \$2.6 billion in wages.

“Nebraska’s ethanol industry is really a win for everyone,” said Dave Merrell, chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board and farmer from St. Edward. “By using ethanol, we are reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting cancer-

causing toxic chemicals from entering into our atmosphere, which makes our air cleaner to breathe. Additionally, we produce a locally-grown feed for our livestock industry.”

“Bosselman Enterprises is among several key marketing partners working with Nebraska biofuel producers to offer a wider range of cleaner-burning fuel products,” said Jan tenBensel, chairman of the Nebraska Ethanol Board. “This new infrastructure provides greater access to high performance renewable fuels at a lower cost to consumers. Consumers save money at the pump, the agricultural sector benefits from increased demand for ag products, our economy benefits from fuel cost savings, and we have more choices at the pump.”

“As a Nebraska farmer, I feel a great amount of pride in the work we all do to provide our world with a safe and abundant supply of food, fuel, and fiber,” said Tony Johanson, chairman of the Nebraska Soybean Board and farmer from Oakland. “We know we need to ensure the sustainability of our planet, but how sustainable are we if we are burning fossil fuels? By producing and using renewable fuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel, we were able to replace the need for 540 million barrels of imported crude oil and 2.9 million gallons of imported petroleum diesel in 2017. That is significant.”

The Trust was one of the major funding partners, putting in \$1 million dollars over two years for blender pumps across the state.



Upcoming Events

- 3rd Quarter Board Meeting, August 6-7, 2018 (Monday-Tuesday) Columbus, NE.
 - August 24 - September 3, 2018, Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island, NE.
 - September 4, 2018 (Tuesday) - Grants Deadline
 - September 8, 2018 (Saturday) - World O Water, Papio-Missouri NRD, Wehrspann Lake, noon - 4pm
 - September 11 -13th, 2018 - Husker Harvest Days
 - September 15 & 16, 2018 (Saturday & Sunday) - Ponca Outdoor Expo, Ponca State Park
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