

RESOURCE

A Monthly Publication of the Nebraska Environmental Trust

May 2019

Executive Director Corner

We have been busy getting paperwork back from the new 2019 grant recipients and getting payments made for reimbursement of expenses. Marilyn and I attended a very nice celebration of the Prairie Corridor project at Pioneers Park. Many of our current and past partners were in attendance. It was also a celebration of Mayor Chris Beutler's 12 years leading the City of Lincoln. Mayor Beutler had a big hand in the formation of the Trust while serving as a State Senator. He and Senator Jim Cudaback were the ones responsible for getting the Trust to locate into the historic Ferguson House.

The Unicameral is in recess until next Tuesday and that will be day 79 of the 90 day session. We will continue to monitor several bills, but don't expect any surprises. The big issue facing the Legislature continues to be taxes, property taxes to be specific. I don't know if they will find a solution that will have enough support of the body and the Governor.

The Husker's new men's basketball coach, Fred Hoiberg, has definitely stirred up some interest with the fans. The new recruits and transfers keep coming. We lost a few players, but the new faces are highly anticipated. Coach Frost continues to garner fan support and most agree the future for Husker football looks bright. The women's softball season ended early, but the men's



**Pete Ricketts,
Governor
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baseball team has shown some promise and might even make it to Omaha with some luck.

Let's hope for timely rains and modest temperatures.

Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

Important Reminders for Grant Reporting

Grantees are advised to check our website for the latest forms when doing grant reporting. Please refresh your page (F5) when doing so. Here's a link to the grant reporting page: http://www.environmentaltrust.org/grants/reporting_forms.html

Save Our Monarchs Foundation visits Lexington Middle School

Save Our Monarchs Foundation visited Lexington Middle School on Monday, May 6th to deliver a Monarch science enhancement program to the 7th grade class which is comprised of almost 300 students. Save Our Monarchs Foundation, with funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, provided students with Monarch host and nectar plants to take home and plant in their school garden. They also participated in a hands-on activity of making wildflower seed balls.

Last Fall, Save Our Monarchs visited Lexington Middle School and the class was given 50 Monarch caterpillars to rear in the classroom. The students learned about the life-cycle, migration, and biology of the Monarch butterfly. They also tagged and

Sherry Vinton - Whitman

Rodney Christen -
Steinauer

Quentin Bowen -
Humboldt

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Mark A. Brohman
Executive Director

Marilyn Tabor
Grants Administrator

released the adult butterflies to participate in citizen science and data collection for the Monarch migration.



Students at Lexington Middle School.

Schramm Education Center

Formerly known as Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, the newly renovated Schramm Education Center will provide Nebraskans with high-quality ecological education, amazing outdoor recreation

Sheila Johnson
Public Information Officer

Pam Deines
Administrative Secretary

Allison La Duke
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opportunities and a chance to interact with nature. Utilizing both public and private funds -- including a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust -- construction on the \$6.5 million renovation began in June 2017. After nearly two years of extensive renovations, the education center features state-of-the-art aquariums focusing on Nebraska's water ecosystems – cool water streams, rivers, reservoirs and farm ponds. Visitors can learn how these habitats are different and how every habitat is both ecologically and economically important to our state. Additionally, the new aquarium features smaller tanks for visitors to learn about some of Nebraska's other aquatic species, including minnows, crayfish and turtles, as well as a touch tank of pallid sturgeon. Schramm Education Center also has seventeen live animal tanks showcasing Nebraska's reptile and amphibian species, as well as a reading nook, maker's space, bird watching area and preschool play area.

“Through the generous donations of numerous Nebraskans and a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, we have had the opportunity to develop a truly amazing place for Nebraskans to learn about our natural legacy and their role in the environment, as well as a chance to experience nature first-hand” said Lindsay Rogers, Wildlife Education Program Manager.



Exploring, wondering, seeing.



A snapping turtle at the Schramm Education Center.

Sundstroms Receive Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award

Russ, Angela, and Cheyenne Sundstrom are the recipients of the 2019 Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award®. The Sundstroms own and operate Broken Box Ranch in Moorefield, Nebraska.

The prestigious award, given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation and management of natural resources by American ranchers, farmers and foresters in 13 states.

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts presented the Sundstroms with a \$10,000 award, and a ranch sign recognizing them as Leopold Conservation Award recipients, at a special ceremony in the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln on April 18.

In [Nebraska](#), the award is presented by Sand County Foundation, [the Nebraska Environmental Trust](#), [Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska \(AFAN\)](#), and [Cargill](#).

The Sundstroms are land stewards committed to productive, restorative and sustainable conservation practices on one of Nebraska's biologically unique landscapes. The native prairie rangelands, hardwood trees, flowering plants, and abundant wildlife

found on their ranch in the Loess Canyons are testaments to their conservation ethic.

The soil beneath the scenic, hilly landscape is highly-erodible. However, Russ Sundstrom's proactive use of prescribed burning and innovative grazing techniques have nursed back the once-tired pastures and cropland that he bought from others. Productive rangeland with diverse vegetation results in quality forage for his beef cattle, and provides an oasis for wildlife including more than 250 species of birds.

Not only has Russ removed hundreds of acres of invasive cedar trees from his Broken Box Ranch, but he and his brother, Neil, cooperate and educate neighbors on conservation land management issues. They volunteer with the Loess Canyons Prescribed Burn Association, a landowner-led effort to burn invasive species from the rugged canyon landscape.

Russ is a skillful grazing manager who uses an innovative style of rotational grazing of his beef cattle. He intensely mob grazes an area to rid it of invasive species. This welcomes native vegetation to return to the landscape during the year-long rest period that follows. Intensive mob grazing around an area designated for a burn also reduces the risk of fire escape.

When Broken Box Ranch was accepted recently as a Rangeland Health Demonstration Ranch, it was further evidence of Russ' leadership and innovation. He will be responsible for collecting data and monitoring effects of various management strategies and their impacts on wildlife, beef production, and soil and plant health. This community-driven landowner will then share his findings through public access and tours of the property.

The Sundstroms share large swaths of their ranch with the public through its enrollment in the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission's Open Fields and Waters Program. Public hunting access provides wildlife population management of turkey, deer, prairie chickens, quail and elk, while other areas are managed for endangered species. In addition, he has established 20 acres of flowering pollinator habitat for bees and butterflies. Sometimes conservation success comes from what you don't do to the landscape. They do

not aerially apply herbicides or insecticides out of concern that it will kill non-target species. Instead, they spot spray for noxious weeds only.

Russ has a sharp pencil when it comes to knowing the economic impacts of his decisions on his business. His tireless devotion to leaving the landscape better than he found it is making a positive impact on his ranch and far beyond the Loess Canyons.

Sand County Foundation, the nation's leading voice for conservation on private land, created the Leopold Conservation Award to inspire American landowners by recognizing exceptional ranchers, farmers and foresters.

In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*; Aldo Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage. He wrote it was "an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity."

"The Sundstroms are an excellent example of the care Nebraska farmers and ranchers put into their land," said Steve Martin, Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska (AFAN) Executive Director. "What really impressed us is not only what they've implemented on their own ranch, but their willingness to share the lessons they've learned with others. That spirit of cooperation is fundamental to continuing to improve our stewardship of the natural resources that support our number one industry: agriculture."

"Devotion to finding balance between production and conservation in agriculture is tireless, and often unappreciated work," said Sammy Renteria, general manager of Cargill in Schuyler. "Cargill is proud to support the recognition of the Sundstroms through the Leopold Conservation Award. Their devotion to their land is evident by their efforts to reduce invasive cedar trees, and provide quality habitat for wildlife and livestock."

"The Nebraska Environmental Trust is proud to be part of the annual Leopold Conservation Award in Nebraska recognizing families that do so much for conservation like the Sundstroms," said Mark Brohman, Nebraska Environmental Trust Executive Director. "The Sundstroms have removed hundreds of acres of

eastern red cedars on their land and thousands of acres in the region with their local prescribed burn association. Their burning and grazing practices have had very beneficial impacts to wildlife and cattle.”

“Leopold Conservation Award recipients are at the forefront of a movement by America’s farmers and ranchers to simultaneously achieve economic and environmental success,” said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer.

The Leopold Conservation Award in Nebraska is made possible thanks to the generous contributions from Cargill, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska, Farm Credit Services of America, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Sandhills Task Force, Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, Audubon Nebraska, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Lyle Sittler Memorial Fund, McDonald’s, World Wildlife Fund – Northern Great Plains, and Green Cover Seed.

For more information about the Leopold Conservation Award and Sand County Foundation, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org.

THE LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD

The Leopold Conservation Award is a competitive award that recognizes landowner achievement in voluntary conservation. The award consists of a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold and \$10,000. Sand County Foundation presents Leopold Conservation Awards in California, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin. www.leopoldconservationaward.org

SAND COUNTY FOUNDATION

Sand County Foundation inspires and enables a growing number of private landowners to ethically manage natural resources in their care, so future generations have clean and abundant water, healthy soil to support agriculture and forestry, plentiful habitat for wildlife and opportunities for outdoor recreation. www.sandcountyfoundation.org

NEBRASKA ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

The Nebraska Environmental Trust was established in 1992 to conserve, enhance and restore the natural environments of Nebraska. It was created on the conviction that a prosperous future is dependent upon a sound natural environment and that Nebraskans could collectively achieve real progress on real environmental issues if seed money were provided.

AFAN (Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska)

AFAN was formed in 2005 by the leading agricultural organizations in Nebraska to conduct outreach, promotion and provide information to consumers about Nebraska agriculture and where their food comes from. In 2015, these organizations saw another need, advancing livestock development and agriculture and food processing businesses in Nebraska. Since then AFAN has been primarily focused on encouraging the development of livestock and working with communities and Nebraska leaders to create opportunities for industries that add value to Nebraska's agricultural output and energize the economy.

CARGILL

Cargill provides food, agriculture, financial and industrial products and services to the world. Together with farmers, customers, governments and communities, we help people thrive by applying our insights and 150 years of experience. We have 149,000 employees in 70 countries who are committed to feeding the world in a responsible way, reducing environmental impact and improving the communities where we live and work. We are passionate about our goal to be the global leader in nourishing people and operating responsibly across the agricultural, food, industrial and financial markets we serve.



Sundstrom Family receiving Award from Governor Pete Ricketts.

Upcoming Events

- August 5 - 6, 2019 - 3rd Quarter Board Meeting, Beatrice NE.
 - August 23 - Sep. 2, 2019 - Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island.
 - September 3, 2019 - Grants Deadline
 - September 7, 2019 - World O Water Fest, Omaha, NE.
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