

*Nebraska  
Game and Parks  
Commission*



*2004 Annual Report*





# Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

2200 N. 33rd St. / P.O. Box 30370 / Lincoln, NE 68503-0370

Phone: 402-471-0641 / Fax: 402-471-5528 / [www.outdoornebraska.org](http://www.outdoornebraska.org)

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Governor Dave Heineman  
State Capitol  
PO Box 94848  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Dear Governor Heineman:

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission had a busy and exciting 2004, and I am pleased to issue this Annual Report as an overview of our activities, projects and accomplishments during the past 12 months.

One of the highlights of the year was our involvement in hosting the National Signature Event for the Corps of Discovery BiCentennial Commemoration at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park. Staff from all areas of our agency helped plan and present this four-day event, attended by thousands from across the United States. The Commission also coordinated the state's efforts for "Take Pride In America." More than 800 Nebraskans volunteered at 31 parks, recreation and wildlife management areas across the state as part of this national program to beautify our shared natural sites.

Our many state parks, recreational areas and historical parks were popular attractions for Nebraskans and out-of-state visitors alike, with a total attendance of more than 10 million. Planning trips to several of these areas became easier this year, as 19 locations joined our online reservation system. This makes 26 areas for which reservations can be made in advance via our web site or call center.

Good numbers of pheasants were found in the state in 2004, due in part to the success of our Focus on Pheasants initiative. A record number of spring and fall turkey permits were issued, as Nebraska's wild turkey population continues to grow. The state's elk herd continues to expand as well, with permit numbers increasing and a new hunting unit added in the Pine Ridge.

More than 5,100 acres were added to Nebraska wildlife lands during 2004. Agency wildlife personnel worked on behalf of our nongame species by meeting with residents across the state to put together a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy as part of the Nebraska's Natural Legacy project. NEBRASKAland Magazine staff produced Birding Nebraska, a unique special issue looking at the bird species found in our state.

The ongoing drought situation continues to challenge the state's fish and wildlife, and again had an impact on several of our largest bodies of water. Agency fisheries staff worked with BOR drought mitigation funds to replace the aeration system in Lake Ogallala with a system to oxygenate the cold water at the bottom of the lake; this project helped ensure the survival of coldwater fish as the lake shrunk and the water warmed. A number of lakes experienced cyanobacterial, or blue-green alga, blooms in 2004, resulting in the closure or partial closure of affected water bodies. NGPC staff worked with the Department of Environmental Quality to make the public aware of any safety concerns. We also continued efforts to track the presence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Nebraska, and monitor its slow spread in the western portion of the state.

Members of our law enforcement division worked diligently throughout 2004, handling their assigned tasks as well as assisting with state Homeland Security efforts and training. Our education and outreach programs continued to inform young Nebraskans and others about their role in conservation efforts through skills camps, mentored youth hunts, hunter safety courses and other activities. Agency staff developed an Outdoor Skills Workshop Guide to assist others in providing similar workshops. Our Urban Fisheries and Youth Fishing programs conducted fishing clinics statewide for over 8,648 participants and the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium provided field trip opportunities for 222 groups and a total of 8,668 students.

In all, 2004 was filled with activity. This agency remains committed to managing Nebraska's wildlife and park lands in the best manner possible. We are please to share our accomplishments with you.

Sincerely,

Rex Amack  
Director

## Offices

### Headquarters & District V

2200 N. 33rd St. / PO Box 30370  
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370  
402-471-0641 / fax 402-471-5528

### Metro Office

1212 Bob Gibson Blvd.  
Omaha, NE 68108-2020  
402-595-2144 / fax 402-595-2569

### District I

299 Husker Rd. / PO Box 725  
Alliance, NE 69301-0725  
308-763-2940 / fax 308-763-2943

### District II

524 Panzer St. / PO Box 508  
Bassett, NE 68714-0934  
402-684-2921 / fax 402-684-2816

### District III

2201 N. 13th St.  
Norfolk, NE 68701-2267  
402-370-3374 / fax 402-370-3256

### District IV

301 E. State Farm Rd.  
North Platte, NE 69101-0430  
308-535-8025 / fax 308-535-8028

### District VI

1617 First Ave.  
Kearney, NE 68847-6057  
308-865-5310 / fax 308-865-5309

### Commissioners

#### District 1

Dr. Mark Pinkerton, Wilber  
8/15/2002-8/15/2007

#### District 2

Bill Grewcock, Omaha  
1/16/2002-1/15/2007

#### District 3

Gary Parker, Columbus  
2/3/2003-1/15/2008

#### District 4

Randall K. Stinnette, Inland  
10/6/1999-9/7/2004  
James Ziebarth, Wilcox  
10/18/2004-9/7/2009

#### District 5

Marvin Westcott, Holdrege  
1/15/2000 -1/15/0/2005

#### District 6

Bill Zutavern, Dunning  
11/22/2002-9/7/2007

#### District 7

George Hall, Bridgeport  
1/15/1999-1/15/2004

#### District 8

James Stuart, Jr., Lincoln  
1/15/2001-1/15/2004

### Administration

Rex Amack, Director  
Assistant Directors:  
Roger Kuhn  
Kirk Nelson

# MISSION

The mission of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is . . .

*Stewardship of the state's fish, wildlife, park and outdoor recreation resources in the best long-term interests of the people and those resources.*

To accomplish that purpose, the Commission strives to plan and implement its policies and programs efficiently and objectively; maintain a rich and diverse environment in Nebraska's lands and waters; provide outdoor recreation opportunities; manage wildlife resources for the maximum benefit of the people, and strive to help Nebraskans appreciate their roles in the natural world.

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This publication condenses individual division annual reports. A complete version of any division report may be obtained by contacting that division at The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, 2200 N. 33rd St., P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370.

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[www.outdoornebraska.org](http://www.outdoornebraska.org)

# ADMINISTRATION

The administration division provides support to all divisions through personnel, internal audit, in-service training, Lincoln office maintenance, maintenance of district offices, drug / alcohol testing and reporting, telephone switchboard and district staff assistants. Serving as a liaison with the Nebraska Legislature is a major duty, as is providing assistance to the Director's office and settling claims against the Commission. There were 21 claims filed with the State Claims Board in 2004.

## LEGISLATION

In 2004, the Legislature passed LB 826 authorizing the Department of Natural Resources to map boundaries and promulgate regulations for the State's game refuges, thus settling ongoing disputes over the boundaries of the Garden County Refuge. LB 916 was passed, granting additional protection of Class A coldwater streams, known as trout-producing streams. LB 962 was also passed by the legislature. It contained many reforms in the State's water law and implemented many recommendations made by Governor's Water Policy Task Force. Many of these changes pertain to the Republican and Platte Rivers. LB 1149 was enacted during 2004 that establishing a nonresident spring turkey permit and allowing for road kill elk to be salvaged like deer.

There were two legislative resolutions allowing the commission to accept land gifts in 2004, one from the Wehrs family in Seward County and one from the Stewart family in Knox County. A number of interim hearings were held, including hearings examining our hunting permits, the protection of Class A coldwater streams, and the eligibility requirements for veterans' benefits ( which included hunting and fishing permits).

## IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Ten employees took advantage of advanced college courses, taking classes at Chadron State College, Nebraska Wesleyan University-Lincoln, Southeast Community College-Lincoln, Peru State College, Western Nebraska Community College-Alliance, University of Nebraska-Kearney and University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In-service training is designed to meet specialized needs of staff members who enroll in various short courses, seminars and workshops to improve performance and prepare employees for higher responsibility. Broad-based training needs are met

through in-house workshops for employee groups.

## MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

Commission employees were involved in 16 motor vehicle accidents, which was nine less than 2003, and one half of the record high of 32 in 2001.

## PERSONNEL

Functions of Personnel include administration of payroll, workers compensation, retirement, insurance, performance planning, personnel records and preparation of the personal services portion of the agency's operational budget.

The Labor Contract between the State of Nebraska and the Nebraska Association of Public Employees, Local 61, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (NAPE/AFSCME) represents approximately 251 agency employees. The Labor Contract between the State of Nebraska and the State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council (SLEBC) represents approximately 48 agency employees. The Personnel Office acts as liaison to the Employee Relations and State Personnel Divisions of the Department of Administrative Services.

The agency hired 21 permanent employees in 2004, and 12 employees were promoted/reclassified. Total turnover for 2004 was 5.6% (27 employees).

Numerous inquiries regarding employment possibilities and career information were received and answered. Replies were made to surveys regarding salary, benefits and personnel turnover.

The Workers Compensation assessment for calendar year 2004 was \$716,106.18.

### PAYROLLS:

Permanent Employees:  
Total gross wages paid: \$17,604,620.20

Temporary Employees:  
Total gross wages paid: \$4,855,101.26

# BUDGET & FISCAL

This division has four sections, whose duties include:

**1. Permits and Customer Service Section** issues big game permits; consigns hunting, fishing, park permits and stamps to agents; receives, receipts, deposits and accounts for all monies collected.

**2. Accounts Payable and Cost Accounting** Budget and Fiscal Section processes payments of

operating expenses, employee expense documents; conducts audits; prepares monthly reports for Commission review; prepares all tax forms required by the Department of Revenue; distributes costs to appropriate areas for internal cost accounting, and maintains financial records for miscellaneous federal grants.

**3. Purchasing and Fixed Assets Section** procures or coordinates

procurement of materials, equipment, supplies, services and maintains a fixed assets system for agency owned-equipment.

**4. Budget Section** prepares the budget, monitors financial resources, assesses fiscal impact of proposed legislation, insures expenditures are in accord with the budget and applicable rules and regulations, and maintains financial records of capital projects.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### PERMIT AND APPLICATION FEES:

PARK ENTRY PERMITS	
Type of Permit	Fee
Annual Park Entry	\$17.00
Duplicate Annual Park Entry	\$8.50
Daily Park Entry	\$3.00

BIG GAME PERMITS	
Type of Permit	Fee
Resident Deer	\$25.00
Nonresident Deer	\$175.00
Resident Landowner Deer	\$12.50
Nonresident Landowner Deer	\$87.50
Resident Antelope	\$25.00
Nonresident Antelope	\$130.00
Resident Landowner Antelope	\$12.50
Resident Wild Turkey	\$20.00
Nonresident Wild Turkey	\$65.00
Resident Landowner Wild Turkey	\$10.00
Resident Elk	\$130.00
Resident Landowner Elk	\$26.00

APPLICATION FEES	
Type of Application	Fee
Resident Elk	\$7.00
Resident Bighorn Sheep	\$20.00
Paddlefish	\$5.00

FISHING AND HUNTING STAMPS	
Type of Stamp	Fee
Aquatic Habitat	\$5.00
Habitat	\$13.00
Lifetime Habitat	\$260.00

FISHING AND HUNTING PERMITS	
Type of Permit	Fee
Resident Annual Fish	\$15.00
Nonresident Annual Fish	\$45.00
Lifetime Fish	\$300.00
Resident 3-Day Fish	\$10.00
Nonresident 3-Day Fish	\$14.00
Resident Annual Fish & Hunt	\$25.00
Lifetime Fish & Hunt	\$520.00
Resident Annual Hunt	\$11.00
Nonresident Hunt	\$67.00
Nonresident Youth Hunt	\$11.00
Lifetime Hunt	\$260.00
Resident Fur Harvest	\$15.00
Nonresident Fur Harvest	\$224.00

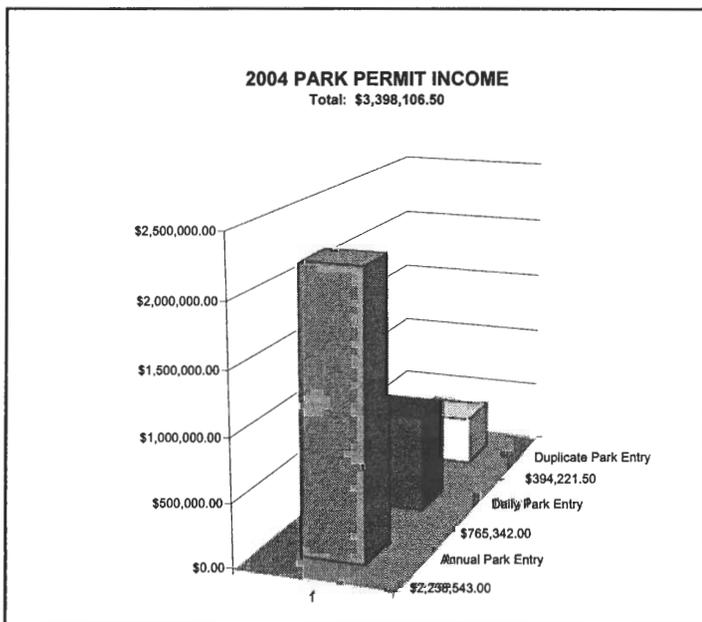
2004 PERMITS AND STAMPS SOLD		
Permit Name	Quantity Sold	Amount
Resident Fish	114,850	\$1,722,750.00
Resident 3-Day Fish	2,936	\$29,360.00
Resident Hunt & Fish	39,303	\$982,575.00
Resident Hunt	50,165	\$551,815.00
Resident Fur Harvest	7,023	\$105,345.00
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>214,277</b>	<b>\$3,391,845.00</b>
Nonresident Hunt	19,636	\$1,315,612.00
Nonresident Fish	5,583	\$251,235.00
Youth - Nonresident Hunt	841	\$9,251.00
Nonresident 3-Day Fish	16,979	\$237,706.00
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>43,039</b>	<b>\$1,813,804.00</b>
Aquatic Habitat Stamp	173,452	\$867,260.00
Habitat Stamp	140,980	\$1,832,740.00
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>314,432</b>	<b>\$2,700,000.00</b>

2004 PERMITS AND STAMPS SOLD (Cont'd)		
Annual Park Entry	131,679	\$2,238,543.00
Daily Park Entry	255,114	\$765,342.00
Duplicate Park Entry	46,379	\$394,221.50
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>433,172</b>	<b>\$3,398,106.50</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,004,920</b>	<b>\$11,303,755.50</b>

\*2004 Calendar year figures based upon data available as of March 14, 2005

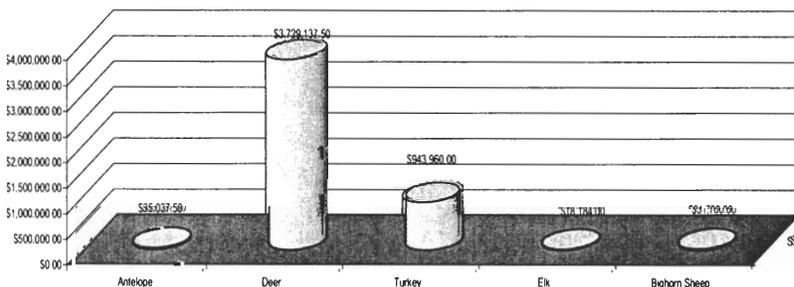
### Park Entry Permit Income

Permit Name	Amount
Annual Park Entry	\$2,238,543.00
Daily Park Entry	\$765,342.00
Duplicate Park Entry	\$394,221.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,398,106.50</b>



### Total Deer / Antelope / Elk / Turkey / Bighorn Permit Sales Income

Type of Permit	Income
Antelope	\$35,037.50
Deer	\$3,729,137.50
Turkey	\$943,960.00
Elk	\$18,184.00
Bighorn Sheep	\$31,700.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,758,019.00</b>



### Deer / Antelope / Elk / Turkey / Bighorn Permit Sales

Type of Permit	Non-resident	Resident	Total Permits	Income
<b>Antelope</b>				
Archery	55	302	357	\$14,700.00
Firearm		600	600	\$15,000.00
Landowner Archery		2	2	\$25.00
Landowner Firearm		105	105	\$1,312.50
Landowner Muzzleloader		10	10	\$125.00
Muzzleloader		155	155	\$3,875.00
<b>Total Antelope</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>1,229</b>	<b>\$35,037.50</b>

Type of Permit	Non-resident	Resident	Total Permits	Income
<b>Deer</b>				
Archery	1,699	12,603	14,302	\$612,400.00
Weapon of Season	200	16,193	16,393	\$439,825.00
Firearm	3,756	49,256	53,012	\$1,888,700.00
Landowner Archery	6	134	140	\$2,200.00
Landowner Weapon of Season	1	237	238	\$3,050.00
Landowner Firearm	122	10,780	10,902	\$145,425.00
Landowner Muzzleloader	6	217	223	\$3,237.50
Muzzleloader	926	15,647	16,573	\$553,225.00
Shotgun-Muzzleloader	0	36	36	\$900.00
Youth Deer, Any Legal Weapon	27	3,018	3,045	\$80,175.00
<b>Total Deer</b>	<b>6,743</b>	<b>108,121</b>	<b>114,864</b>	<b>\$3,729,137.50</b>

Type of Permit	Non-resident	Resident	Total Permits	Income
<b>Elk</b>				
Landowner Firearm		23	23	\$598.00
Firearm		81	81	\$10,530.00
Applications (\$7.00)		1,008	1,008	\$7,056.00
<b>Total Elk</b>		<b>1,112</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>\$18,184.00</b>

Type of Permit	Non-resident	Resident	Total Permits	Income
<b>Bighorn Sheep</b>				
Applications (\$20.00)			1,585	\$31,700.00
Firearm Bighorn Sheep		1	1	\$0.00
<b>Total Bighorn Sheep</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$31,700.00</b>

**Deer / Antelope / Elk / Turkey / Bighorn  
Permit Sales (Cont'd)**

Type of Permit	Non-resident	Resident	Total Permits	Income
<b>Turkey</b>				
Fall Turkey Archery	116	971	1,087	\$26,960.00
Fall Turkey Landowner Archery		37	37	\$370.00
Fall Turkey Landowner Shotgun		405	405	\$4,050.00
Fall Turkey Shotgun	395	6,403	6,798	\$153,735.00
Spring Turkey Archery	960	3,750	4,710	\$137,400.00
Spring Turkey Landowner Archery		47	47	\$470.00
Spring Turkey Landowner Shotgun		722	722	\$7,220.00
Spring Turkey Shotgun	3,787	18,380	22,167	\$613,755.00
<b>Total Turkey</b>	<b>5,258</b>	<b>30,715</b>	<b>35,973</b>	<b>\$943,960.00</b>

**2004 REVENUE**

<b>Cowboy Trail Fund</b>				
Interest Earned on Investments				\$5,930.92
Trail Fees				\$0.00
Land Leases/Crop Income/Easements				\$3,739.00
Concessions				\$2,158.67
Cash Gifts				\$77.00
<b>Total Cowboy Trail Fund</b>				<b>\$11,905.59</b>
<b>Environmental Trust Funds</b>				
Transferred Income				\$6,146,740.52
Interest Earned on Investments				\$452,901.47
Cash Gifts				\$6,642.96
Other Revenue				\$4,082.06
<b>Total Environmental Trust Funds</b>				<b>\$6,610,367.01</b>
<b>State Game Cash Fund</b>				
Hunting Activities	<i>Lifetime Hunt</i>	\$177,540.00		\$7,407,567.30
Fishing Activities	<i>Lifetime Fish</i>	\$146,520.00		\$3,076,982.23
Big Horn Sheep Application Fee				\$31,720.00
Elk Application Fee				\$6,874.00
Boating Registrations				\$767,627.50
Entrance Admissions				\$9,406.11
Federal Reimbursements				\$4,418,706.05
State and Local Reimbursements				\$240,651.34
NEBRASKA Land Magazine	<i>Subscriptions</i>	\$502,683.69		
	<i>Advertising</i>	\$13,854.31		\$516,538.00
Calendars, books, Slides, etc.				\$157,040.20
Interest Earned on Investments				\$466,131.41
Land Lease, Crop and Pasture Income				\$53,983.23

<b>State Game Cash Fund (Cont'd)</b>				
Cash Gifts				\$132,111.45
Liquidated and Property Damage				\$78,017.56
Sales of Surplus Property				\$97,358.48
Other Revenue				\$28,353.43
<b>Total State Game Cash Fund</b>				<b>\$17,489,068.29</b>
<b>State Park Cash Fund</b>				
Park Entry Permits				\$3,444,605.35
Resale Income				\$950,087.49
Food Services				\$1,429,110.50
Catering				\$365,998.82
Camping				\$2,452,833.53
Lodging and Facilities, Misc Rentals				\$3,947,559.32
Marina Lease				\$40,507.92
Concessions				\$89,209.10
Swimming Pool Admissions				\$467,372.82
Trail Rides				\$282,724.08
Boats/Golf Recreation Equipment				\$311,462.23
Land Lease, Crop and Pasture Income				\$182,411.54
Vending Machines				\$53,373.03
Admissions				\$283,349.01
Federal Reimbursements and Grants				\$65,882.46
Interest Earned on Investments				\$175,403.01
Cash Gifts				\$234,875.34
Liquidated and Property Damage				\$2,575.34
Sale of Surplus Property				\$186,234.01
Other Revenue				\$58,047.87
<b>Total State Park Cash Fund</b>				<b>\$15,023,622.77</b>
<b>Habitat Cash Fund</b>				
Habitat Stamps				\$1,839,652.00
Lifetime Habitat				\$101,660.00
Waterfowl Stamp				\$87.00
Federal Reimbursements				\$634,625.91
Grants				\$43,075.00
Interest Earned on Investments				\$67,718.33
Crop and Pasture Income				\$135,908.07
Cash Gifts				\$74,901.73
Sale of Surplus Property				\$13,753.04
Other Revenue				\$6,552.30
<b>Total Habitat Cash Fund</b>				<b>\$2,917,933.38</b>
<b>Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund</b>				
Federal Reimbursements				\$48,561.14
Interest Earned on Investments				\$13,196.01
Transferred Income				\$74,277.35
Cash Gifts				\$3,467.46
Grants Other State Agencies				\$0.00
Sale of Surplus Property				\$1,606.45
Other Revenue				\$2,153.52
<b>Total Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund</b>				<b>\$143,261.93</b>
<b>Game Law Investigation Fund</b>				
Cash Gifts				\$1,000.00
Interest Earned on Investments				\$108.34
Other Revenue				\$232.44
<b>Total Game Law Investigation Fund</b>				<b>\$1,340.78</b>

**2004 REVENUE (Cont'd)**

<b>Snowmobile Trail Fund</b>		
75% of Registration Fee, Less Issuing Fee		\$6,955.81
Interest Earned on Investments		\$6,561.94
<b>Total Snowmobile Trail Fund</b>		<b>\$13,517.75</b>
<b>NORDA (Nebraska Outdoor Recreation Development Act) Fund</b>		
Portion of Nebraska Tobacco Products Tax		\$1,309,038.72
Interest Earned on Investments		\$95,785.84
Cash Gifts		\$3,826.81
Sale of Surplus Property		\$3,713.81
Other Revenue		\$6,586.00
<b>Total NORDA Fund</b>		<b>\$1,418,951.18</b>
<b>Trail Development Assistance Fund</b>		
Interest Earned on Investments		\$8,170.44
Transferred Income		\$140,000.00
<b>Total Trail Development Assistance Fund</b>		<b>\$148,170.44</b>
<b>Aquatic Habitat Cash Fund</b>		
Aquatic Stamp		\$877,359.00
Federal Reimbursements		\$71,763.53
Grants		\$500,000.00
State and Local Reimbursements		\$0.00
Interest Earned on Investments		\$135,961.14
Other Revenue		\$225.89
<b>Total Aquatic Habitat Cash Fund</b>		<b>\$1,585,309.56</b>
<b>Niobrara Council Fund Income</b>		
Interest Earned on Investments		\$407.19
Cash Gifts		\$3,000.00
Grants		\$5,500.00
<b>Total Niobrara Council Fund</b>		<b>\$8,907.19</b>
<b>Environmental Endowment Funds</b>		
Interest Earned on Investments		\$15,688.78
Transferred Income		\$130,915.48
Cash Gifts		\$1,059.65
<b>Total Environmental Endowment Funds</b>		<b>\$147,663.91</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>		
Miscellaneous Grants		\$6,176,032.34
National Recreation Trails Fund, etc.		\$332,189.65
Niobrara Council Fund, etc.		\$0.00
Environmental Trust Fund		\$0.00
<b>Total Federal Funds</b>		<b>\$6,508,221.99</b>
<b>Total Cash and Federal Revenue Received during 2004</b>		<b>\$52,028,241.77</b>

**2004 OPERATING EXPENDITURES**

<b>Program 162 Environmental Trust</b>		<b>\$7,858,938.47</b>
Environmental Trust Cash Fund	\$7,858,938.47	
<b>Program 330 Habitat Development</b>		<b>\$3,967,907.69</b>
Game Cash Fund	\$40,402.46	
Habitat Cash Fund	\$3,148,132.04	
Federal Fund	\$779,373.19	

**2004 OPERATING EXPENDITURES (CONT'D)**

<b>Program 336 Wildlife Conservation</b>		
SubProgram 01 Law Enforcement		\$4,138,181.93
General Fund	\$626,291.60	
Game Cash Fund	\$2,909,430.42	
Park Cash Fund	\$600,459.91	
Game Law Investigation Cash Fund	\$2,000.00	
SubProgram 02 Information & Education		\$2,326,903.27
Game Cash Fund	\$1,881,677.38	
Park Cash Fund	\$425,336.03	
Federal Fund	\$19,889.86	
SubProgram 04 Game		\$4,448,223.09
Game Cash Fund	\$4,138,039.46	
Federal Fund	\$310,183.63	
SubProgram 05 Fish		\$4,939,825.09
General Fund	\$3,696.64	
Game Cash Fund	\$3,855,208.93	
Aquatic Habitat Fund	\$81,509.08	
Federal Fund	\$999,410.44	
SubProgram 010 Outdoor Education		
Boating Education		\$285,564.76
Game Cash Fund	\$285,564.76	
Hunter Education		\$393,475.34
Game Cash Fund	\$267,771.77	
Federal Fund	\$125,703.57	
Aquatic Education		\$381,451.83
General Cash Fund	\$594.82	
Game Cash Fund	\$380,857.01	
SubProgram 10 Outdoor Education Summary		\$1,060,491.93
General Fund	\$594.82	
Game Cash Fund	\$934,193.54	
Federal Fund	\$125,703.57	
SubProgram 16 Nongame & Endangered Species		\$1,136,724.46
General Fund	\$373,105.02	
Nongame & Endangered Species Cash Fund	\$114,958.84	
Federal Fund	\$648,660.60	
<b>Program 336 SUMMARY</b>		<b>\$18,050,349.77</b>
General Fund	\$1,003,688.08	
Game Cash Fund	\$13,718,549.73	
Park Cash Fund	\$1,025,795.94	
Game Law Investigation Cash Fund	\$2,000.00	
Nongame & Endangered Species Cash Fund	\$114,958.84	
Aquatic Habitat Cash Fund	\$81,509.08	
Federal Fund	\$2,103,848.10	

**2004 OPERATING EXPENDITURES (CONT'D)**

<b>Program 337 Agency Administration</b>		
Administration Division		\$849,091.70
General Fund	\$202,970.35	
Game Cash Fund	\$516,282.50	
Park Cash Fund	\$129,697.67	
Habitat Cash Fund	\$141.18	
Budget & Fiscal Division		\$1,499,341.08
General Fund	\$167,010.36	
Cowboy Trail	\$12.75	
Game Cash Fund	\$721,401.99	
Park Cash Fund	\$590,399.05	
Habitat Cash Fund	\$10.42	
Aquatic Habitat Fund	\$20,506.51	
Realty & Environmental Services Division		\$349,816.52
General Fund	\$115,930.28	
Game Cash Fund	\$133,401.06	
Park Cash Fund	\$3,734.16	
Habitat Cash Fund	\$96,751.02	
Personnel Section		\$241,599.22
General Fund	\$77,785.20	
Game Cash Fund	\$74,679.01	
Park Cash Fund	\$89,135.01	
Federal Aid		\$200,303.44
Game Cash Fund	\$191,507.28	
Federal Fund	\$8,796.16	
Director's Office		\$422,199.85
General Fund	\$70,385.58	
Game Cash Fund	\$186,322.42	
Park Cash Fund	\$165,491.85	
Information Technology		\$168,540.04
Game Cash Fund	\$84,239.33	
Park Cash Fund	\$84,300.71	
Commissioners		\$17,723.28
General Fund	\$17,723.28	
<b>Program 337 SUMMARY</b>		<b>\$3,748,615.13</b>
General Fund	\$651,805.05	
Cowboy Trail	\$12.75	
Game Cash Fund	\$1,907,833.59	
Park Cash Fund	\$1,062,758.45	
Habitat Cash Fund	\$96,902.62	
Aquatic Habitat Cash Fund	\$20,506.51	
Federal Fund	\$8,796.16	
<b>Program 338 Niobrara Council</b>		<b>\$207,156.12</b>
General Fund	\$67,871.39	
Niobrara Council Cash Fund	\$16,848.85	
Federal Fund	\$122,435.88	

**2004 OPERATING EXPENDITURES (CONT'D)**

<b>Program 549 Park Administration &amp; Operation</b>			
	SubProgram 012		\$1,309,281.20
	General Fund	\$1,309,281.20	
	<b>SubProgram 013</b>		<b>\$14,909,140.42</b>
	General Fund	\$3,139,374.55	
	Park Cash Fund	\$11,719,395.12	
	NORDA Cash Fund	\$16,616.42	
	Federal Fund	\$33,754.33	
	<b>Program 549 SUMMARY</b>		<b>\$16,218,421.62</b>
	General Fund	\$4,448,655.75	
	Park Cash Fund	\$11,719,395.12	
	NORDA Cash Fund	\$16,616.42	
	Federal Fund	\$33,754.33	
<b>Program 550 Planning &amp; Trails Coordination</b>			
	SubProgram 017		\$117,505.41
	General Fund	\$117,505.41	
	SubProgram 019		\$92,892.94
	General Fund	\$8,050.22	
	NORDA Cash Fund	\$84,842.72	
	<b>Program 550 Summary</b>		<b>\$210,398.35</b>
	General Fund	\$125,555.63	
	NORDA Cash Fund	\$84,842.72	
<b>Program 617 Engineering, Area Maintenance &amp; Snowmobile</b>			
	SubProgram 008		\$250.00
	Snowmobile Cash Fund	\$250.00	
09	0	Area Maintenance	\$2,302,449.70
	General Fund	\$453,657.49	
	Game Cash Fund	\$10,181.88	
	Park Cash Fund	\$1,823,236.78	
	NORDA Cash Fund	\$15,373.55	
09	1	Construction	\$1,781,077.22
	General Fund	\$1,441,291.05	
	Game Cash Fund	\$18,709.23	
	Park Cash Fund	\$278,373.19	
	Aquatic Habitat Fund	\$42,703.75	
14	0	Engineering	\$676,971.37
	General Fund	\$676,971.37	
	<b>Program 617 SUMMARY</b>		<b>\$4,760,748.29</b>
	General Fund	\$2,571,919.91	
	Game Cash Fund	\$28,891.11	
	Park Cash Fund	\$2,101,609.97	
	NORDA Cash Fund	\$15,373.55	
	Aquatic Habitat Cash Fund	\$42,703.75	
	Snowmobile Cash Fund	\$250.00	
	<b>Program 628 Credit Card Discount</b>		<b>\$288,841.95</b>
	Environmental Trust Cash Fund	\$690.36	
	Game Cash Fund	\$163,114.56	
	Park Cash Fund	\$125,037.03	
<b>TOTAL OPERATING COSTS</b>			<b>\$55,311,377.39</b>

## 2004 CAPITAL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

AREA NAME	TOTAL EXPENSE	23280	23320	23330	23340	23380	23390	23410	33000	43320	43330
<b>LAND ACQUISITION</b>											
Chadron Creek Ranch Land Acquisition	791,209.42									791,209.42	
Recovery Land Acquisition for Salt Creek Tiger Beetle	276,000.00									276,000.00	
Recovery Land Acquisition of the Messersmith Tract	486,700.75				12,000.00					474,700.75	
<b>TOTAL LAND ACQUISITION</b>	<b>1,553,910.17</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,541,910.17</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>IMPROVEMENTS, RENOVATIONS AND REHABILITATION</b>											
Alexandria	\$1,287.92					\$1,287.92					
Arbor Lodge	\$21,127.59					\$7,441.11				\$13,686.48	
Ash Hollow	\$465.00					\$465.00					
Ashfall	\$93,961.75			\$93,961.75							
Ayr Lake Wildlife Management Area	\$13,781.21		\$13,781.21								
Beatrice Homestead Conservation Corridor Acquisition	35,000.00									35,000.00	
Big Alkali	\$6,859.34		\$6,859.34								
Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Tier 1	\$100,000.00									\$100,000.00	
Bobcat	\$8,570.75		\$8,570.75								
Box Butte Reservoir Electrical Hookups	\$3,040.20									\$3,040.20	
Branched Oak	\$5,200.00					\$5,200.00					
Calamus Hatchery	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00								
Central Office Building	\$56,492.50		\$42,369.38	\$14,123.12							
Chadron	\$56,816.78					\$56,816.78					
Champion Mill	\$782.00					\$782.00					
Cornhusker	\$5,903.00		\$5,903.00								
Cowboy Trail	\$102,053.78	\$498.00								\$101,555.78	
Dead Timber	\$417.00					\$417.00					
Southwest Reservoirs Enhancements	\$43,234.80									\$43,234.80	
Emerson Bathhouse Replacement	\$137,911.37									\$137,911.37	
Enders	\$480,430.76							\$448,759.50		\$31,671.26	
Falls City Ballfield Lighting	\$5,977.36									\$5,977.36	
Flathead	\$142.76		\$142.76								
Fordyce Park Renovation and Improvements	\$66,000.00									\$66,000.00	
Fort Atkinson	\$1,850.00					\$1,850.00					
Fort Kearny	\$78,595.70					\$78,595.70					
Fort Robinson	\$1,084,341.63			(\$18,712.81)		\$1,044,118.62			\$250.00	\$58,685.82	
Fremont	\$753.00					\$753.00					
Gifford Woodland	\$22,448.75		\$22,448.75								
Goose Lake	\$119,337.57							\$119,337.57			
Grant Park Improvements Phase 1 and 2	\$15,501.40									\$15,501.40	
Grove Lake	\$13,404.27							\$13,404.27			
Grove Trout Rearing Station	\$1,250.00		\$1,250.00								
Hamburg Bend	\$24,000.00		\$24,000.00								
Holmes Lake Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation	\$562,382.31							\$562,382.31			
Howells Baseball Field Renovation	\$1,476.04									\$1,476.04	

**2004 CAPITAL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES (Cont'd)**

AREA NAME	TOTAL EXPENSE	23280	23320	23330	23340	23380	23390	23410	33000	43320	43330
Indian Cave	\$10,717.00					\$10,717.00					
Jack Sinn	\$27,900.00				\$27,900.00						
Johnson Park Acquisition and Development	\$8,647.05									\$8,647.05	
Lake Maloney	\$2,895.49					\$2,895.49					
Lake McConaughy	\$70,043.81		\$3,662.19	\$50,169.37		\$16,212.25					
Lake Minatare	\$4,822.74					\$4,822.74					
Lake Ogallala Restoration	\$26,141.80							\$26,141.80			
Lake Wanahoo	\$229,306.67									\$229,306.67	
Lewis and Clark	\$6,355.28					\$6,355.28					
Lewis and Clark Bicentennial	\$8,102.31					\$8,102.31					
Lincoln Holmes Park Access Pathways	\$14,500.00									\$14,500.00	
Long Pine	\$3,300.00		\$3,300.00								
Louisville	\$2,675.09					\$2,675.09					
Loup City Acquisition and Ballfield Development	\$100,000.00									\$100,000.00	
Lower Elkhorn NRD Maskenthine Lake Improvements	\$50,000.00									\$50,000.00	
Mahoney	\$139,542.30			\$25,016.00		\$114,526.30					
Medicine Creek	\$3,535.94					\$3,535.94					
Merritt	\$16,171.06		\$7,485.21	\$7,485.20						\$1,200.65	
Mitchell Trap Field Development	\$10,800.00									\$10,800.00	
Myrtle Hall	\$1,780.20		\$1,780.20								
National Recreation Trails	\$72,523.80			\$2,675.25							\$69,848.55
Newcastle Ballfield Lighting	\$27,155.00									\$27,155.00	
Niobrara	\$3,924.67					\$3,924.67					
North Platte Hatchery	\$166,253.02		\$166,253.02								
Oak Valley	\$4,300.00		\$4,300.00								
Pawnee	\$12,925.00					\$12,925.00					
Pawnee Prairie	\$3,000.00		\$3,000.00								
Platte River	\$14,098.53					\$14,098.53					
Ponca	\$28,428.73		\$9,275.00	\$1,331.50		\$14,715.54				\$3,106.69	
Pressey	\$3,138.85		\$3,138.85								
Recreation Areas - General	\$3,300.00					\$3,300.00					
Restoration of Eastern Nebraska Saline Wetlands	\$730.00		\$730.00								
Riverview Maintenance Facility	\$18,983.77		\$15,309.25			\$3,674.52					
Rock Creek Hatchery	\$5,000.00		\$5,000.00								
Rock Creek Lake	\$9,610.00		\$480.00					\$9,130.00			
Rock Creek Station	\$224.50					\$224.50					
Rockford Lake	\$812.34					\$812.34					
Sacramento-Wilcox	\$6,730.57		\$6,730.57								
Schramm Park	\$1,300.00					\$1,300.00					
Schuyler Soccer Field Development	\$30,500.00									\$30,500.00	
Sherman	\$2,641.40		\$2,641.40								
Sherman Aquatic Habitat Assessment	\$13,933.79							\$13,933.79			
Smith Falls	\$2,775.17					\$2,775.17					
Spikerush	\$32,901.45		\$32,901.45								
Statewide Boating Access Coordination	\$40,333.36									\$40,333.36	

## 2004 CAPITAL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES (Cont'd)

AREA NAME	TOTAL EXPENSE	23280	23320	23330	23340	23380	23390	23410	33000	43320	43330
Stuart Park Shelter Development	\$29,838.00									\$29,838.00	
Summit	\$520.00					\$520.00					
Swanson	\$962.64					\$962.64					
Trail Development	\$97,880.00						\$97,880.00				
Twin Lakes	\$650.00		\$650.00								
Two Rivers	\$6,893.60					\$6,893.60					
Victoria Springs	\$9,385.48					\$9,385.48					
Wagon Train	\$11,275.00			\$0.00		\$11,275.00					
Wahoo Smith Park Playground Renovation	\$30,457.11									\$30,457.11	
Wakefield Ballfield Light Improvements	\$4,000.00									\$4,000.00	
Walgren Lake	\$4,234.75					\$4,234.75					
West Sacramento	\$1,128.37		\$1,128.37								
Wildcat Hills	\$5,874.41			\$55.00		\$5,819.41					
Wildcat Hills Maintenance	\$5,000.00					\$5,000.00					
Windmill	\$6,001.37					\$6,001.37					
Yankee Hill	\$683,978.31		\$100,025.36					\$583,952.95			
<b>TOTAL IMPROVEMENTS, RENOVATION AND REHABILITATION</b>	<b>5,316,636.27</b>	<b>498.00</b>	<b>498,116.06</b>	<b>176,104.38</b>	<b>27,900.00</b>	<b>1,475,412.05</b>	<b>97,880.00</b>	<b>1,777,042.19</b>	<b>250.00</b>	<b>1,193,585.04</b>	<b>69,848.55</b>
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>6,870,546.44</b>	<b>498.00</b>	<b>498,116.06</b>	<b>176,104.38</b>	<b>39,900.00</b>	<b>1,475,412.05</b>	<b>97,880.00</b>	<b>1,777,042.19</b>	<b>250.</b>	<b>Annual Park Entry \$2,055,114.00</b>	<b>69,848.55</b>

67%

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### January 1, 2004, General Fund Appropriations and Cash on Hand:

Fund 23280, Cowboy Trail	\$170,100.14
Fund 23290, Environmental Trust Fund	\$13,511,330.88
Fund 23291, Environmental Trust Fund	\$3,285.89
Fund 23320, Game Cash	
Includes Lifetime Hunt	\$2,508,001.00
Includes Lifetime Fish	\$1,942,759.75
Other	<u>\$8,533,950.93</u>
	\$12,984,711.68
Fund 23330, Park Cash	\$4,650,970.01
Fund 23340, Habitat Cash	
Includes Lifetime Habitat Stamp	\$490,945.00
Other	<u>\$1,841,382.77</u>
	\$2,332,327.77
Fund 23350, Nongame and Endangered Species	\$368,479.30
Fund 23360, Game Law Investigation	\$4,537.81
Fund 23370, Snowmobile Trail	\$186,803.81
Fund 23380, Nebraska Outdoor Recreation Development Act (NORDA)	\$2,899,806.77
Fund 23390, Trail Development Assistance	\$207,385.96
Fund 23410, Aquatic Habitat	\$4,266,807.24
Fund 23420, Niobrara Council	\$8,072.33
Fund 23430, Environmental Endowment	\$172,242.28
Fund 23431, Environmental Endowment	\$223,095.40
Fund 43320, Land and Water, Grants	\$1,173,869.30
Fund 43330, Recreational Trail Federal Fund	\$0.00
Fund 43340, Niobrara Council Federal Fund	\$159,699.44
Fund 43350, Environmental Trust Federal Fund	\$0.00
Fund 33000, State Building Fund	\$250.00
Fund 10000, General Fund	<u>\$4,067,486.41</u>

### Total General Fund Appropriation & Cash January 1, 2004

\$47,391,262.42

### General Fund Appropriations & Cash Received during 2004

Fund 23280, Cowboy Trail	\$11,905.59
Fund 23290, Environmental Trust Fund	\$6,655,830.14
Fund 23291, Environmental Trust Fund	-\$45,463.13
Fund 23320, Game Cash	
Includes Lifetime Hunt	\$177,540.00
Includes Lifetime Fish	\$146,520.00
Other	<u>\$17,165,008.29</u>
	\$17,489,068.29
Fund 23330, Park Cash	\$15,023,622.77
Fund 23340, Habitat Cash	
Includes Lifetime Habitat Stamp	\$101,660.00
Other	<u>\$2,816,273.38</u>
	\$2,917,933.38
Fund 23350, Nongame and Endangered Species	\$143,261.93
Fund 23360, Game Law Investigation	\$1,340.78
Fund 23370, Snowmobile Trail	\$13,517.75
Fund 23380, Nebraska Outdoor Recreation Development Act (NORDA)	\$1,418,951.18
Fund 23390, Trail Development Assistance	\$148,170.44
Fund 23410, Aquatic Habitat	\$1,585,309.56
Fund 23420, Niobrara Council	\$8,907.19
Fund 23430, Environmental Endowment	\$16,748.43
Fund 23431, Environmental Endowment	\$130,915.48
Fund 43320, Land and Water, Grants	\$6,176,032.34
Fund 43330, Recreational Trail Federal Fund	\$332,189.65
Fund 43340, Niobrara Council Federal Fund	\$0.00
Fund 43350, Environmental Trust Federal Fund	\$0.00
Fund 10000, General Fund (New Authority)	\$9,009,552.00
Fund 38000, Capital Construction Fund	<u>\$19,000.00</u>

### Total General Fund Appropriations & Cash Received during 2004

\$61,056,793.77

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT (Cont'd)**

**Expenditures by Fund Type during 2004**

Fund 23280, Cowboy Trail	\$510.75
Fund 23290, Environmental Trust Fund	\$7,849,628.83
Fund 23291, Environmental Trust Fund	\$10,000.00
Fund 23320, Game Cash	\$16,357,066.62
Fund 23330, Park Cash	\$16,210,541.78
Fund 23340, Habitat Cash	\$3,284,934.66
Fund 23350, Nongame and Endangered Species	\$114,958.84
Fund 23360, Game Law Investigation	\$2,000.00
Fund 23370, Snowmobile Trail	\$250.00
Fund 23380, Nebraska Outdoor Recreation Development Act (NORDA)	\$1,592,244.74
Fund 23390, Trail Development Assistance	\$97,880.00
Fund 23410, Aquatic Habitat	\$1,921,761.53
Fund 23420, Niobrara Council	\$16,848.85
Fund 23430, Environmental Endowment	\$0.00
Fund 23431, Environmental Endowment	\$0.00
Fund 43320, Land and Water, Grants	\$5,661,266.99
Fund 43330, Recreational Trail Federal Fund	\$69,848.55
Fund 43340, Niobrara Council Federal Fund	\$122,435.88
Fund 43350, Environmental Trust Federal Fund	\$0.00
Fund 10000, General Fund	\$8,869,495.81
Fund 33000, State Building Fund	\$250.00
Fund 38000, Capital Construction Fund	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenditures during 2004</b>	<b>\$62,181,923.83</b>

**End of the Year Fund Balances for 2004**

Fund 23280, Cowboy Trail		\$181,494.98
Fund 23290, Environmental Trust Fund		\$12,317,532.19
Fund 23291, Environmental Trust Fund		-\$52,177.24
Fund 23320, Game Cash		
Includes Lifetime Hunt	\$2,685,541.00	
Includes Lifetime Fish	\$2,089,279.75	
Other	\$9,341,892.60	\$14,116,713.35
Fund 23330, Park Cash		\$3,464,051.00
Fund 23340, Habitat Cash		
Includes Lifetime Habitat Stamp	\$592,865.00	
Other	\$1,372,461.49	\$1,965,326.49
Fund 23350, Nongame and Endangered Species		\$396,782.39
Fund 23360, Game Law Investigation		\$3,878.59
Fund 23370, Snowmobile Trail		\$200,071.56
Fund 23380, Nebraska Outdoor Recreation Development Act (NORDA)		\$2,726,513.21
Fund 23390, Trail Development Assistance		\$257,676.40
Fund 23410, Aquatic Habitat		\$3,930,355.27
Fund 23420, Niobrara Council		\$130.67
Fund 23430, Environmental Endowment		\$188,990.71
Fund 23431, Environmental Endowment		\$354,010.88
Fund 43320, Land and Water, Grants		\$1,688,634.65
Fund 43330, Recreational Trail Federal Fund		\$262,341.10
Fund 43340, Niobrara Council Federal Fund		\$37,263.56
Fund 43350, Environmental Trust Federal Fund		\$0.00
Fund 10000, General Fund		\$4,207,542.60
Fund 33000, State Building Fund		\$0.00
Fund 38000, Capital Construction Fund		\$19,000.00
<b>Total General Fund Appropriation &amp; Cash Balance December 31, 2004</b>		<b>\$46,266,132.36</b>

# ENGINEERING DIVISION

The Engineering Division is responsible for the evaluation, design, construction document development and contract administration for all engineering-, architecture- and surveying- related capital construction projects and major facility repairs for the Game and Parks Commission. Engineering plays a supporting role to all Commission entities, by providing professional, technical and planning assistance. The majority of work accomplished by the division requires the seal of a professional engineer, architect or land surveyor in order to comply with Nebraska state statutes. When necessary, the division obtains appropriate permits, code compliance and plan review from various Federal and State agencies. The division initiates emergency and materials-only funding requests from the Nebraska Task Force for Building Renewal and administers the Building Renewal Program for the Commission. Engineering hires and works with a wide variety of professional consultants as needed or required by the State of Nebraska Procedural Manual for Capital Construction Projects. The division also maintains the agency's building inventory system.

## DIVISION PERSONNEL

The Engineering Division has 10 full-time positions. We also utilize temporary staff to assist our full time staff.

## 2004 PROJECTS

<p><b>HEADQUARTERS</b></p> <p><b><u>Ak Sar Ben:</u></b>          - Collected samples from the aquarium discharge to be analyzed by a laboratory to determine the quality of waste discharge and submitted report to Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality.</p> <p><b><u>Central Office (Lincoln):</u></b>          - Completed the resurfacing of existing parking lots, expanding two parking areas and installing a new ADA ramp.</p> <p><b><u>Federal Aid Division (Lincoln):</u></b>          - Designed an additional office with construction completed in 2004.</p>	
<p><b>FISHERIES DIVISION</b></p> <p><b><u>Ansley City Park Pond:</u></b>          - Designed and installed a new boat ramp for the Urban Fisheries program and the City of Ansley.</p> <p><b><u>Goose Lake Wildlife Management Area:</u></b>          - Topographic survey completed for fish barrier as built.          - Designed and constructed two fish screen structures and two fish barriers.</p> <p><b><u>Grove Trout Rearing Station:</u></b>          - Oil shed repairs (309 funding - materials only).          - Storage garage repairs (309 funding-materials only).          - Reviewed consultant's proposal for the bypass system.</p> <p><b><u>Lake Maloney State Recreation Area:</u></b>          - Observation and recommendation of the Pond #1 seepage due to renovation construction.</p> <p><b><u>North Platte Hatchery:</u></b>          - Completed repairs to many buildings due to the 2003 severe weather (mostly hail damage).          - Designed well pumps, pump controls, control building and transmission lines to connect the new wells to existing water supply line.          - Topographic survey completed to stake waterline.          - Coordinated the emergency drilling of two water wells.</p>	<p><b><u>Red Willow Reservoir State Recreation Area:</u></b>          - Designed new wave protection jetty and additional boat ramp lane.          - Topographic survey completed for the jetty construction.</p> <p><b><u>Rock Creek Hatchery:</u></b>          - Completed repairs to many buildings due to 2003 severe weather (mostly hail damage).</p> <p><b><u>Smith Lake Wildlife Management Area:</u></b>          - Design, specification and cost estimate completed for the replacement of existing boat ramp.</p> <p><b><u>Statewide Private Water:</u></b>          - Designed dam/pond release system.</p> <p><b><u>Sunshine Bottoms Wildlife Management Area:</u></b>          - Boundary survey completed.          - Topographic survey completed for boat ramp and parking.</p> <p><b><u>Swanson State Recreation Area:</u></b>          - Developing design for the wave attenuation system.</p> <p><b><u>Yankee Hill Wildlife Management Area:</u></b>          - Provided construction oversight during lake rehabilitation.</p>

<p><b>COWBOY TRAIL</b></p> <p><b><u>Atkinson to O'Neill:</u></b> - Topographic survey completed.</p> <p><b><u>Clearwater Bridge Dike:</u></b> - Topographic surveys completed.</p>	<p><b><u>Stuart to Mile Marker 168.4:</u></b> - Under construction and completed in 2004.</p> <p><b><u>O'Neill to Mile Marker 168.4:</u></b> - Under construction in 2004 with four of the eleven completed. Completion scheduled for 2005.</p>
<p><b>PARKS DIVISION</b></p> <p><b><u>Arbor Lodge State Historical Park:</u></b> - Designed maintenance building remodel and provided oversight for construction. - Designed and constructed a secondary water source (well for water supply at fish pond). - Designing the reconstruction of brick entry walls.</p> <p><b><u>Ashfall State Historical Park:</u></b> - Contracted design and construction for the Visitor Center addition. - Conceptual design for new Rhino barn.</p> <p><b><u>Branched Oak State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Survey, cost estimate and project oversight for new access road. - Topographic survey completed for the walking bridge.</p> <p><b><u>Calamus State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Inspected, designed and repaired the failure of the existing leachfield serving the fish cleaning station at the Homestead Knolls public use area.</p> <p><b><u>Chadron State Park:</u></b> - Boundary survey in progress. - Design completed for new well. - Construction completed for new septic tank and absorption treatment system. - Provided oversight of consultant design, bidding and construction observation of the sewer system replacement. - Provided oversight of consultant design, bidding and construction observation of new underground electric primary system. - Storage building sketch plan for park staff to utilize for facility construction. - Designed and provided project oversight for the existing Park office remodel.</p> <p><b><u>Cottonwood State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Evaluated the water system and provided recommendations for compliance.</p> <p><b><u>Enders Reservoir State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Boundary survey completed for Cow Beach. - Topographic survey completed for access road. - Topographic survey completed for a picnic shelter and beach access. - Contracted consultant and contractor for the two jetties and boat access ramp with parking.</p> <p><b><u>Eugene T. Mahoney State Park:</u></b> - Designed the Call Center at the Peter Kewitt Lodge with construction completed in 2004. - Topographic survey completed for cabin stakeout. - Topographic survey completed for laundry septic system. - Topographic survey completed for campground. - Completed design and project oversight for the water and sewer repair at the laundry building.</p>	<p><b><u>Eugene T. Mahoney State Park (continued):</u></b> - Designed campground electrical and septic lift station for campground improvements.</p> <p><b><u>Fort Kearny State Historical Park:</u></b> - Designed and constructed water line to replace hand pump. - Water system evaluation, modeled water system network and developed a report for the various options. - Designed and constructed shower building addition.</p> <p><b><u>Fort Robinson State Park:</u></b> - Topographic survey completed for park lagoon system. - Topographic survey completed for swimming pool lateral system. - Tested and worked with consultant to determine the condition of the existing wells regarding the water and sewer system. - Investigated and started design of new sewer lagoons. - Provided oversight with the consulting engineer during the design, bidding and construction of the water and sewer replacement.</p> <p><b><u>Lake Maloney:</u></b> - Topographic survey completed for maintenance building. - Design and specifications completed for new maintenance building.</p> <p><b><u>Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Boundary survey completed for concession area. - Topographic survey completed for visitor center heat pump system. - Design completed for Martin Bay new septic tank and leachfield system to replace existing failed system. - Contracted consultant to continue with design and construction of water displays at the visitor center.</p> <p><b><u>Lake Minatare State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Design and specifications completed for new office complex with ADA restrooms.</p> <p><b><u>Medicine Creek State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Evaluation and installation of chlorine generator. - Boundary survey completed for concession area. - Evaluated existing well system at the superintendent's residence and installed a chlorine generator at well site.</p> <p><b><u>Merritt State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Boundary survey in progress. - Contracted consultant and contractor for the boat access facility improvements at Beeds Landing and Cedar Bay.</p> <p><b><u>Mormon Island State Recreation Area:</u></b> - Design completed for new sewage lift station.</p> <p><b><u>Niobrara State Park:</u></b> - Boundary survey completed.</p>

**PARKS DIVISION (continued)**

**Ponca State Park:**

- Designed the renovation of the Superintendent's Residence.
- Topographic survey completed for canoe launch.
- Topographic survey completed for proposed cabins.
- Topographic survey completed for Tree Savannah.
- Oversight and observation of the sewer treatment system.
- Design new cabins using log, straw and conventional construction.

**Red Willow State Recreation Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for concession area.

**Rockford Lake State Recreation Area:**

- Topographic survey completed for campgrounds.

**Sherman State Recreation Area:**

- Interviewed/hired consultant for lake restoration project.

**Smith Falls State Park:**

- Topographic survey completed for deck extension.
- Designed the observation deck addition.
- Designed the latrine addition to the park office.
- Topographic survey completed for bank stabilization.
- Completed the design and project oversight for the repair of existing river banks along Niobrara River.
- Topographic survey completed for concession area.

**Smith Lake State Recreation Area:**

- Topographic survey completed for boat ramp.

**Swanson State Recreation Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for concession area.

**Two Rivers State Recreation Area:**

- Topographic survey completed for Cottonwood campground.
- Completed project bidding and construction oversight for water system improvements at Cottonwood campground.

**Windmill State Recreation Area:**

- Design completed for new sewer lift station.
- Completed evaluation of water system pressure problems.

**Victoria Springs State Recreation Area:**

- Designed accessible parking slab and walkway for picnic shelter.
- Topographic survey completed for creek bridge and walking path.
- Topographic survey completed for picnic shelter and parking.

**WILDLIFE DIVISION**

**Burchard Wildlife Management Area:**

- Provided cost estimates for repair of overflow structure.

**Cornhusker Farm Wildlife Management Area:**

- Contracted furnace/air conditioning replacement at residence.

**Arnold Trupp Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Ayr Lake Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for fencing.

**Bobcat Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for fencing.

**Bruce Cowgill Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**De Fair Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**East Blue Hole Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Flathead Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Frenchman Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Gadwall Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for fencing.

**Gifford Point Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.
- Topographic survey completed for access road.

**Kissinger Basin Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Little Blue Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Little Blue East Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Long Pine Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for fencing.

**Myrtle Hall Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Pine Glen Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for fencing.

**Randall W. Schilling Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Rock Glen Wildlife Management Area:**

- Design and bidding completed for two livestock wells, tanks and controls.

**Rose Creek Wildlife Management Area:**

- Design and bidding completed for two livestock wells, tanks and controls.

**Sora Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed.

**Straightwater Wildlife Management Area:**

- Boundary survey completed for fencing.

# FEDERAL AID

Federal Aid coordinates the Commission's U.S. Fish and Wildlife federal aid grant programs and oversees the agency's in-house library.

Federal Aid is received by our agency because of the Sport Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson Act) of 1950 and the Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Roberson Act) of 1937, which are companion programs that provide financial assistance to states for fish and wildlife restoration activities.

A 10% manufacturer's excise tax on fishing supplies and a 3% excise tax on pleasure boats and sonar devices funds the Sport Fish Program. An 11% manufacturer's excise tax on hunting firearms, ammunition, handguns and archery equipment funds the Wildlife Program.

The USFWS annually apportions the excise tax funds to the states using a formula based on the states total land/water mass and the number of hunting and fishing permits sold. In 2004 these programs provided approximately \$6.5 million to Nebraska. The programs reimburse up to 75% of state projects such as fish and wildlife surveys, research, land acquisition, development and maintenance, technical assistance and aquatic resource education. An additional \$338,000 was allocated to the state for hunter education and shooting range enhancement projects. Each certified hunter and angler returned \$19 and \$17, respectively, to the state in federal aid assistance.

A special allocation from the Sport Fish Restoration program was made available again in 2004. The Boating Infrastructure Grant program is a nationally competitive grant program with awards typically going to coastal states. Nebraska received a federal award of \$930,000 for a project at N.P. Dodge in Omaha.

The Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP) funding awarded in 2000, has been expended with grants completed by partners including Wachiska Audubon, National Wildlife Federation, Fontenelle Forest, Rowe Sanctuary and the UNL Extension program. The State Wildlife Grants Program (SWG), and the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) continued to receive funding from Congress. In 2004, Nebraska received an additional \$180,000 for the Landowner Incentive Program and \$738,500 for State Wildlife Grants. A match of non-federal money is required for these funding programs, varying in amount from 25 percent to 50 percent of the program. Nebraska expends the majority of these funds on pass-through grants to partners and individuals.

Section 6, Endangered Species traditional and recovery land acquisition grants have been awarded to the state in the amount of approximately \$220,000.

## Library

The Commission's library continued to grow, adding books and other materials. Periodic notification to staff of new and additional items continued. Searching and retrieval continued with intense demand from a variety of Commission personnel. Demand also came from outside the agency, including requests from UNL students and faculty, and the public. In addition to program sessions and workshops, the contacts and networking this provided were invaluable.

The librarian did searches via the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), Wildlife Worldwide, Fish and Fisheries Worldwide, Fish and Wildlife Reference Service, Library of Congress and many others. Information provided through searches by the librarian are invaluable to research projects at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, UNL and related research projects with partnering groups.

## Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Program History of Apportionments to Nebraska

Federal Fiscal Year	Wildlife Restoration Apportionment	#Certified Hunters*	FA Return Per Hunter	Sport Fish Restoration Apportionment	#Certified Anglers*	FA Return Per Angler	Combined Total
1939	\$20,428.51						\$20,428.51
1940	\$32,134.73	N/A	-				\$32,134.73
1941	\$54,047.58	N/A	-				\$54,047.58
1942	\$54,155.19	N/A	-				\$54,155.19

Federal Fiscal Year	Wildlife Restoration Apportionment	#Certified Hunters*	FA Return Per Hunter	Sport Fish Restoration Apportionment	#Certified Anglers*	FA Return Per Angler	Combined Total
1943	\$23,959.06	N/A	-				\$23,959.06
1944	\$18,855.40	N/A	-				\$18,855.40
1945	\$16,698.95	N/A	-				\$16,698.95
1946	\$18,261.25	N/A	-				\$18,261.25
1947	\$48,283.54	N/A	-				\$48,283.54
1948	\$175,329.46	N/A	-				\$175,329.46
1949	\$235,251.41	N/A	-				\$235,251.41
1950	\$208,314.76	N/A	-				\$208,314.76
1951	\$186,604.27	N/A	-				\$186,604.27
1952	\$348,248.26	N/A	-	\$44,703.56	N/A	-	\$392,951.82
1953	\$207,687.26	N/A	-	\$41,850.32	N/A	-	\$249,537.58
1954	\$238,861.56	N/A	-	\$68,501.93	N/A	-	\$307,363.49
1955	\$197,417.97	N/A	-	\$70,389.12	N/A	-	\$267,807.09
1956	\$286,593.19	N/A	-	\$81,312.78	N/A	-	\$367,905.97
1957	\$308,928.94	N/A	-	\$78,841.23	N/A	-	\$387,770.17
1958	\$311,882.68	N/A	-	\$68,050.88	N/A	-	\$379,933.56
1959	\$296,991.01	N/A	-	\$68,673.04	N/A	-	\$365,664.05
1960	\$274,876.58	N/A	-	\$74,045.23	N/A	-	\$348,921.81
1961	\$260,536.93	N/A	-	\$77,045.65	N/A	-	\$337,582.58
1962	\$254,843.26	N/A	-	\$83,265.23	N/A	-	\$338,108.49
1963	\$257,835.74	195,630	\$1.32	\$80,604.92	206,669	\$0.39	\$338,440.66
1964	\$308,285.86	192,741	\$1.60	\$92,850.58	221,301	\$0.42	\$401,136.44
1965	\$314,347.75	196,138	\$1.60	\$105,004.13	218,801	\$0.48	\$419,351.88
1966	\$364,896.98	203,181	\$1.80	\$102,794.92	229,627	\$0.45	\$467,691.90
1967	\$440,569.76	197,765	\$2.23	\$111,253.97	219,710	\$0.51	\$551,823.73
1968	\$493,861.29	199,182	\$2.48	\$135,562.86	218,566	\$0.62	\$629,424.15
1969	\$571,159.68	205,384	\$2.78	\$127,907.07	223,329	\$0.57	\$699,066.75
1970	\$585,508.99	197,020	\$2.97	\$161,945.12	221,018	\$0.73	\$747,454.11
1971	\$553,585.20	184,274	\$3.00	\$187,464.79	233,818	\$0.80	\$741,049.99
1972	\$580,157.30	179,542	\$3.23	\$184,459.96	224,335	\$0.82	\$764,617.26
1973	\$704,299.80	194,952	\$3.61	\$166,354.50	236,265	\$0.70	\$870,654.30
1974	\$836,703.65	203,108	\$4.12	\$200,361.32	240,255	\$0.83	\$1,037,064.97
1975	\$934,298.36	198,223	\$4.71	\$231,041.37	242,876	\$0.95	\$1,165,339.73
1976	\$1,004,385.60	200,444	\$5.01	\$271,280.83	237,423	\$1.14	\$1,275,666.43
1977	\$1,437,203.63	204,925	\$7.01	\$341,923.21	257,426	\$1.33	\$1,779,126.84
1978	\$1,034,503.80	182,212	\$5.68	\$333,190.97	259,798	\$1.28	\$1,367,694.77
1979	\$1,349,389.17	178,625	\$7.55	\$369,391.38	253,980	\$1.45	\$1,718,780.55
1980	\$1,403,750.26	151,132	\$9.29	\$359,853.39	202,210	\$1.78	\$1,763,603.65
1981	\$1,319,069.00	167,505	\$7.87	\$387,097.00	197,296	\$1.96	\$1,706,166.00
1982	\$1,891,206.00	175,101	\$10.80	\$378,330.00	207,762	\$1.82	\$2,269,536.00
1983	\$1,718,986.00	184,005	\$9.34	\$420,146.00	226,011	\$1.86	\$2,139,132.00
1984	\$1,427,541.00	187,653	\$7.61	\$408,643.00	239,283	\$1.71	\$1,836,184.00
1985	\$1,251,613.00	173,926	\$7.20	\$457,062.00	240,330	\$1.90	\$1,708,675.00
1986	\$1,745,692.00	173,634	\$10.05	\$1,434,018.00	236,164	\$6.07	\$3,179,710.00
1987	\$1,661,042.00	146,709	\$11.32	\$1,790,427.00	229,295	\$7.81	\$3,451,469.00
1988	\$1,730,376.00	153,116	\$11.30	\$2,059,188.00	257,665	\$7.99	\$3,789,564.00
1989	\$1,868,225.00	157,071	\$11.89	\$2,378,100.00	260,378	\$9.13	\$4,246,325.00
1990	\$1,862,972.00	165,963	\$11.23	\$2,366,226.00	256,063	\$9.24	\$4,229,198.00
1991	\$2,477,826.00	169,199	\$14.64	\$2,543,660.00	242,883	\$10.47	\$5,021,486.00
1992	\$2,595,714.00	169,888	\$15.28	\$2,626,293.00	244,926	\$10.72	\$5,222,007.00
1993	\$2,473,073.00	168,311	\$14.69	\$2,496,402.00	231,774	\$10.77	\$4,969,475.00
1994	\$2,867,020.00	169,933	\$16.87	\$2,214,794.00	224,430	\$9.87	\$5,081,814.00
1995	\$3,361,042.00	170,059	\$19.76	\$2,543,552.00	222,873	\$11.41	\$5,904,594.00
1996	\$3,206,529.00	170,225	\$18.84	\$2,474,115.00	211,483	\$11.70	\$5,680,644.00
1997	\$2,739,478.00	185,329	\$14.78	\$3,526,327.00	233,841	\$15.08	\$6,265,805.00
1998	\$2,874,532.00	191,006	\$15.05	\$3,651,577.00	225,114	\$16.22	\$6,526,109.00
1999	\$2,774,906.00	189,364	\$14.65	\$2,704,525.00	222,635	\$12.15	\$5,479,431.00
2000	\$3,217,946.00	180,684	\$17.81	\$3,014,134.00	211,248	\$14.27	\$6,232,080.00
2001	\$3,345,022.00	186,452	\$17.94	\$3,000,164.00	213,332	\$14.06	\$6,345,186.00
2002	\$2,720,051.00	184,903	\$14.71	\$3,708,665.00	219,649	\$16.88	\$6,428,716.00
2003	\$3,518,769.00	177,757	\$19.80	\$3,343,038.00	222,141	\$15.05	\$6,861,807.00
2004	\$3,284,266.00	174,927	\$18.78	\$3,213,424.00	193,951	\$16.57	\$6,497,690.00
2005	\$3,829,113.00	176,502	\$21.69	\$3,630,946.00	190,794	\$19.03	\$7,460,059.00

# FISHERIES DIVISION

## ADMINISTRATION

- Represented the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) on a Platte Basin Water Policy study, facilitated by Congressman Tom Osborne.
- Participated on NGPC committees that developed and proposed new fishing and hunting permits and examined ways to improve boating safety and enjoyment.
- Issued 2,462 Master Angler Awards, including 764 hybrid striped bass (wipers), 444 largemouth bass, 355 channel catfish, 169 walleyes and 146 bluegills.
- Recognized new state hook-and-line records for grass carp and longnose sucker; new state bow and arrow records for smallmouth bass and green sunfish; and new state underwater spearfishing records for black crappie, wiper, black bullhead, freshwater drum, river carpsucker, grass carp and gizzard shad.
- Registered 107 fishing tournaments.
- Issued the following permits: 57 private aquaculturist; 81 commercial fishing (including seven non-residents), 20 nonresident fish dealer, one commercial put-and-take, 208 bait dealer (including one nonresident), and 379 special (disabled) fishing.

## AQUATIC HABITAT REHABILITATION AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

- Completed a project at Enders Reservoir that included construction of three jetties and five per-

pendicular (to shoreline) rock reefs to reduce lateral movement of sediment and provide habitat for fish and invertebrates.

- Partnered with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), who financed a project at Gracie Creek Pond that doubled the volume and increased the mean depth from three to six feet by excavating 9,000 cubic yards of sediment.
- Completed everything but outlet modifications for a Yankee Hill Reservoir project that included construction of sediment/nutrient dikes, offshore breakwaters, jetties, outlet modification, excavation, and a fish renovation and restocking.
- Completed everything but some hydraulic dredging at a Holmes Lake project that included construction of several jetties, offline sediment basins, wetlands, offshore breakwaters and excavation of approximately 400,000 cubic yards of sediment from the lake basin.
- Used BOR drought mitigation funds (secured by Congressman Tom Osborne) to replace the bubble aeration system in the north basin of Lake Ogallala with a system that will maintain thermal stratification and oxygenate the cold water at the bottom of the lake.
- Continued hydraulic dredging at Grove Lake, with about 75% of the desired amount of sediment (120,000 cubic yards) now removed.
- Conducted a pre-design site evaluation and hired a consultant for a project at Sherman Reservoir.
- Began discussion with the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department and the Lincoln

Airport Authority on rehabilitating Bowling Lake; hired a consultant.

- Waited for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) to decide on the feasibility of constructing sediment dikes and breakwaters and their financial involvement in a project at Glenn Cunningham Reservoir.

## FISHING ACCESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- Completed construction of a handicap-accessible wood fishing pier at Holmes Lake, in conjunction with an Aquatic Habitat Program project.
- Completed construction of three jetties at Enders Reservoir, in conjunction with a BOR low water mitigation program.
- Constructed several jetties at Yankee Hill lake, in conjunction with an Aquatic Habitat Program project.

## NEW RESERVOIR CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

- Completed planning and design for angler and boating access at Little Sandy Site #61.
- Completed designs for boating access and in-lake enhancements at Lake Wanahoo and completed the first phase of construction on offshore wave attenuation structures.
- Continued planning in-lake aquatic habitat enhancements and angler and boating access features

for a proposed impoundment near Leigh.

## **MOTORBOAT ACCESS PROGRAM**

- Completed improvements at the boat launch facility at Ironhorse Trail, which included a new dock, comfort station and water hydrants (all handicap-accessible).
- Completed construction of motorboat access improvements at Yankee Hill Reservoir, Hunter Cove Park on Harlan County Reservoir, Red Willow Reservoir and a Missouri River facility at Ponca State Park.
- Extended boat ramps at Martin and Diver Bays on Lake McConaughy; reconstructed, installed and removed a floating wave attenuation structure at the Martin Bay facility.
- Completed planning, survey and design for rehabilitation of boat ramp facilities at Smith, Timber Point and Cottontail Lakes and a new facility at Meadowlark Lake.
- Completed a survey and began designing a new boat launch facility at Sunshine Bottoms on the upper Missouri River.
- Initiated planning for improved boating access at Swanson Reservoir (financed with BOR drought mitigation funds) and Cedar Point on Harlan County Reservoir (in cooperation with the USACOE).
- Worked with Cherry County to plan a rock boat ramp at Rat Lake.

## **FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

- Assessed fish communities in 124 reservoirs, lakes and ponds plus five cold water streams and the

Missouri River to document smallmouth bass and flathead catfish populations.

- Conducted angler creel surveys at Harlan County Reservoir, Lake McConaughy, Lake Ogallala, the North Platte River below Lake Ogallala, the Sutherland Supply Canal, and Pelican, Wehrspann and Zorinsky Lakes.
- Collected water quality and zooplankton samples from a variety of waterbodies, with emphasis on drought-impacted reservoirs.
- Collected walleyes from Lake McConaughy and rainbow trout from Lake Ogallala to monitor changes in fish health as water levels receded in Lake McConaughy.
- Helped install a hypolimnetic liquid oxygen system in the north basin of Lake Ogallala.
- Operated and maintained aerations systems in 19 waterbodies.
- Operated fish feeders in 11 waterbodies.
- Renovated fish communities in 14 waterbodies.
- Participated in lake rehabilitation projects at Skyview and Ta-Ha-Zouka Lakes.
- Constructed dikes and carp barriers at Goose Lake.
- Conducted special studies to evaluate walleye stocking in small reservoirs and gizzard shad population dynamics; crappie length limits with a special one-month open harvest (no length limit) on two reservoirs; white perch control at Branched Oak Reservoir; statewide catfish population dynamics; Nebraska licensed angler survey; and a comparison of adult and fingerling largemouth bass and bluegill stocking effectiveness at Fremont State Recreation Area (SRA) Lakes 4 and 5.

- Completed a draft contingency plan for Platte River Reservoirs dealing with fisheries management issues during drought conditions.

- Served on a multi-agency Surface Water Monitoring Committee.
- Served as state representatives to the pike, catfish and sunfish technical committees of the North Central Division, American Fisheries Society (AFS).
- Coordinated development of changes in fishing regulations for 2005 and the 2005 Nebraska Fishing Guide.

## **URBAN FISHERIES PROGRAM**

- Completed Community Lake Enhancement and Restoration Program (CLEAR) projects at Fremont's Johnson Park, where the lake was expanded and shallow water habitat, islands and jetties were created; Norfolk's Ta-Ha-Zouka Park, where the lake was drained and excavated; Henderson's Lakeview Park, where the lake was drained, excavated and sediment nutrient input was reduced with a sediment basin; McCook's Barnett Park, where the lake was dredged; Bellevue's Haworth Park, where an aeration system was installed to prevent fish kills; and Weeping Water's City Park, where two lakes were drained, excavated, connected, and inlet and outlet structures were improved.
- Provided technical assistance and advice on lake rehabilitation techniques to several cities through the CLEAR program
- Constructed a boat ramp at Johnson Park in Fremont.
- Attended several meetings in

South Sioux City to discuss a USACOE project at Crystal Cove.

- Continued the fishing tackle loaner program at eighteen state park areas; added at the city park in David City.
- Coordinated and assisted with 13 fishing events attended by approximately 750 youth and adults.
- Updated Urban Fisheries Program information the NGPC website.

## **MARKETING PROGRAM**

- Co-chaired the NGPC Marketing Committee.
- Contracted and worked with Snitily-Carr to develop TV commercials, billboards, movie theater slides and newspaper ads to promote fishing during Spring 2004.
- Developed a federal aid document for the Fisheries Marketing program to secure reimbursement from the Sport Fish Restoration program.
- Reviewed and provided comments on the 2004 Nebraska Tourism Industry Development Plan.
- Served as Fishing Sport Director for the Cornhusker State Games, which now includes fishing.
- Provided management assistance to owners of private waters, involving 436 telephone calls, 88 on-site visits, 74 emails, 67 walk-ins and three letters.
- Received 46 applications for fish stocking in private waters and approved 40 of these, following site inspections.
- Issued 27 Private Waterbody Management Authorizations, including four for fish renovations,

nine for selective fish removals and 14 for fish sampling.

- Sampled fish populations in two private sandpits via electrofishing and submitted analysis to association chairpersons.
- Updated the list of consultants who provide services to the private sector.
- Wrote a pond management handbook that is now in the layout and design phase.
- Secured support from the Department of Agriculture to restore Nine Mile Creek, funded through an Environmental Trust Fund grant.
- Secured a federal cost-share grant for private waters activities.
- Secured a grant from the Southern Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers to make repairs on the trails and angler access points along Long Pine Creek SRA, with students from the Ainsworth public schools providing most of the labor.

## **PRODUCTION**

- Produced and stocked approximately 14.3 million fish (20 species) in 271 public and 69 private Nebraska waterbodies including: 20,634 catchable-size (12") channel catfish for the Urban Fishing Program and Free Fishing Day; 12,300 catchable-size (10"+) rainbow trout for a special First Day of Spring Trout Stocking project at eight urban lakes and ponds; 81,593 catchable-size (10"+) rainbow trout for the Urban Fishing and Winter Trout programs; 5,713 advanced (6"-12") largemouth bass and 18,440 advanced (3"-7") bluegill for the Urban Fisheries Program; 70,000 rainbow trout for

Lake Ogallala and the Sutherland Canal; 819,760 white bass fingerlings including 170,000 for Lake McConaughy; 11 million walleye stocked across the state (including 7.4 million fry and 30,613, 5"-9" fingerlings at Harlan County Reservoir); 132,012 wipers; and 6,694 advanced (12"+) muskellunge.

- Provided assistance to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with the renovation of Hackberry Lake on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.
- Worked with the USFWS to collect, spawn, and produce paddlefish.
- Built and repaired specialized trawls for use on the Missouri River Mitigation Project.
- Monitored feral fish populations, private aquaculture facilities and state fish hatcheries for whirling disease and the other prohibited pathogens.

## **AK-SAR-BEN AQUARIUM**

- Hosted tours for 222 groups, consisting of 8,668 students and adults.
- Held 136 fishing clinics, assisted by 625 volunteers, attended by 8,648 students.
- Provided 135 education aides to 45 different schools.
- Organized and held Water Works for the 16th year.
- Sold 2,412 big game permits and 2,821 general permits.
- Operated a deer check station from September 15 through January 8 and checked 1,200 deer.
- Held an antler scoring workshop, with nearly 100 racks scored.
- Hosted monthly meetings of the Cornhusker Fly Fishers, the

Schramm Park Photo Club and the Central Flyway Decoy Collectors and Carvers Club.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

- Supported language and review of legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Doug Bereuter (NE) to establish a Missouri River Environmental Assessment Program.
- Worked on restoring form and function of the Missouri River, as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences.
- Helped develop a Master Manual Biological Opinion default flow regime resembling elements of Master Manual environmental alternatives to serve a jeopardy opinion for pallid sturgeon.
- Collaborated, developed and presented a white paper, poster and oral presentation on Missouri River navigation at the 8th Missouri River Natural Resources Conference.
- Assisted with a field review of the Niobrara River delta with Assistant Director Nelson, John Cooper (Director, South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks), W. Don Nelson (Chief of Staff for Senator Ben Nelson), South Dakota Congressional staff and the National Park Service.
- Assisted in procuring a \$930,692 Boating Infrastructure Grant for improvements to the Omaha N.P. Dodge Marina to improve docking and accommodate transient boaters.

## **WATER RESOURCES PROGRAM**

- Served as NGPC representative on the Lake McConaughy Environmental Account to advise the USFWS on flow releases to augment flows for federally listed species in the central Platte River.
- Helped the Lower Platte River Pallid Sturgeon and Sturgeon Chub Task Force find continued funding for Dr. Ed Peters (UNL) Platte River studies to identify flows necessary to maintain pallid sturgeon and sturgeon chub habitats in the lower river.
- Successfully defended the NGPC instream flow appropriation on Long Pine Creek for rainbow and brown trout, for a 15-year review by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.
- Advised Governors Water Policy Task Force members about fish and wildlife needs in their effort to update surface and groundwater legislation (that led to passage of LB962).

## **MISSOURI RIVER PROGRAM**

- Sampled channel catfish from the South Dakota state line to Lewis and Clark Lake.
- Sampled flathead catfish in cooperation with District III biologists between Gavins Point Dam and the Big Sioux River, as well as from the Big Sioux River to the Kansas state line.
- Tagged over 300 adult paddlefish as part of a Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) study.
- Recovered tags from the archery and snagging seasons in coopera-

tion with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

- Trawled young-of-year paddlefish in the old river channel in Lewis and Clark Lake to provide trend evidence of reproduction and year-class strength.
- Conducted an April to June roving angler creel survey between Bellevue and Camp Creek.
- Conducted a post card survey as part of the archery and snagging seasons for paddlefish.
- Conducted a recreational use survey on the Missouri River from Gavins Point Dam to St. Louis, Missouri in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation.
- Participated in a USACOE-funded pallid sturgeon population assessment program.

## **RESEARCH**

- Assisted South Dakota State University (SDSU) with research on panfish year-class variability and factors influencing recruitment in Sandhill lakes, northern pike winter food habits, and how the presence or absence of various fish populations influence invertebrate abundance in these lakes.
- Served on graduate committees for two MS students at the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK), one MS student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and one PhD student at SDSU; oversaw two UNK senior research projects.
- Provided funding for a cooperative project with U.S. Geological Survey, UNL Water Center and the University of Nebraska-Omaha to examine the potential impacts of

andropogenic growth promoters on native minnows in the Elkhorn River.

- Continued participation with the Platte River Fisheries Management Project aimed at documenting sturgeon habitat use and associated species, conducted by UNL.
- Continued participation on a USFWS- funded project to evaluate channel catfish stockings in the Middle Loup River Basin above two irrigation diversions.

- Continued participation in the development of the Milburn Diversion Dam fish bypass structure on the Middle Loup River, jointly funded with the Sargent Irrigation District.

## **LAKE MAPPING PROGRAM**

- Posted ten new lake maps on the NGPC website.
- Completed mapping projects on newly created Missouri River backwaters and a bank stabilization project on Nine Mile Creek.
- Provided lake mapping data to numerous engineering and construction firms in support of future and ongoing Aquatic Habitat Program projects.
- Created a new map for the Sherman Reservoir SRA pamphlet.
- Promoted the program by developing informational posters and maps displayed at the Nebraska State Fair, an American Fisheries Society meeting, a Wagon Train Lake Expo, and in the NGPC headquarters lobby.
- Contributed to an article in NEBRASKAland magazine about the program.
- Assisted UNK with a crappie production study at Sherman

Reservoir.

- Assisted the USFWS with renovation planning on Hackberry Lake at the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

## **LAKES AND RESERVOIRS PROGRAM**

- Assisted UNK with a limnological assessment of Harlan County Reservoir; developed future plans, focusing on temporal and spatial relationships between larval gizzard shad and zooplankton communities.
- Initiated and implemented an assessment of adult crappie use and larval crappie production in coves at Sherman Reservoir, as well as evaluation of fish loss through irrigation releases at Sherman Reservoir, in conjunction with UNK.
- Represented NGPC in the development of a Platte-Republican River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program grant request; authored the proposal sent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Assisted with a UNK project, funded by State Wildlife Grant funds, designed to assess interspecific competition between plains topminnow and mosquitofish.
- Co-authored a State Wildlife Grant request with UNK, designed to assess the current distribution of plains topminnow.
- Collected and processed data designed to evaluate the introduction of glass shrimp into select Interstate-80 lakes.
- Collected and processed data on flathead catfish food habits during mid-July in Sherman and Harlan County Reservoirs.

- Marked over 7.4 million walleye fry with oxytetracycline (OTC) as part of continuing walleye stocking evaluations; shipped over 600 walleyes for analysis of OTC marks.

## **RIVERS AND STREAMS PROGRAM**

- Continued a statewide stream fishery survey (funded with State Wildlife Grants), revisiting sites sampled by Raymond Johnson between 1939 and 1942; also evaluated habitat, water quantity and quality, and invertebrates.
- Served as chair of the Education and Outreach Committee and coordinating committee for the Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species.
- Continued work on a Belmont Diversion Fishway evaluation, collecting and tagging channel catfish in North Platte River above Lake McConaughy to determine if tagged fish in the river above the diversion are passing through the fishway.
- Continued working with the Sargent Irrigation District and their consultant with the construction of a supplemental spillway through Milburn Diversion Dam to allow run-of-the-river flows through the dam site in the non-irrigation season and provide channel catfish and other fish free access to the Dismal and upper Middle Loup Rivers for the first time in several decades.
- Initiated contact with the Middle Loup Public Power and Irrigation District regarding construction of a rock-ramp fish passage over their diversion weir south of Sargent.
- Provided information to a consultant to modify a private dam on Medicine Creek, above Medicine

Creek Reservoir.

- Completed 21 fish distribution database queries for the: U.S. Forest Service (1), USFWS (2), NGPC (7), National Park Service (1), The Nature Conservancy (2), Natural Resources Districts (1), universities (4), utility companies (1), private consultants (1) and private individuals (1).

## **COMPUTER PROGRAMING AND SUPPORT**

- Provided ongoing computer support for Fisheries Division, including software and hardware assistance, email and internet troubleshooting and end-user utility development.
- Continued to coordinate the Fisheries Division computer budget, orders, upgrades and surplus, as well as the computer inventory database for Fisheries.
- Updated the Library database which contains summary information from the standard survey (fish population sampling) database.
- Continued to develop programming skills by completing courses at Southeast Community College and meeting with a database consultant regarding a variety of database and programming questions.

## **MULTIPLE SECTIONS**

- Participated in the process to evaluate the proposed Title Transfer of Merritt Reservoir, surrounding lands, canals and water rights, from the BOR to the Ainsworth Irrigation District.
- Participated in the development of Natural Resource District "Integrated Management Plans" (IMPs) to address the management

of declining surface and groundwater supplies in the panhandle and southwest Nebraska.

- Participated on a multi-agency planning group that considered watershed issues, planning and solutions to groundwater pollution and other environmental issues for the East Branch of Verdigre Creek.
- Participated on an interagency workgroup organized to address the impacts, monitoring and evaluation of toxic bluegreen algal blooms in Nebraska waters.
- Served on the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund technical advisory committee and reviewed 2004 project applications.
- Contributed to the development of the NGPC long-range plan by serving on and chairing program and doctrine committees, serving on the editorial committee and coordinating development of the planning document.
- Contributed to the development of the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project comprehensive plan by serving on the Outreach Committee, the Science Team, the Internal Support Team, and the State Wildlife Grant Technical Advisory and Steering Committees.
- Provided information to the public and promoted NGPC programs via the NGPC website, radio and TV appearances, magazine and newspaper articles and at several events, including Free Fishing Day and Take Pride in America celebrations across the state, the State Fair, and both in-state and out-of-state sport shows.
- Made presentations at NGPC events, including the Law Enforcement, Wildlife Division and Section meetings, a Project WILD workshop, the National Recreation and Park Convention

and Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshop.

- Participated in professional activities, by attending and making presentations at American Fisheries Society (AFS) meetings, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, editing manuscripts for the AFS and other professional organizations, and serving as Associate Editor of the North American Journal of Fisheries Management.
- Served on selection committees for the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Leader and the UNL School of Natural Resources fisheries professor; attended candidate seminars and interview sessions at NGPC.
- Assisted the Wildlife Division with various chronic wasting disease projects, deer check stations and elk trapping projects.

# INFORMATION & EDUCATION

The Information and Education Division provides services to other divisions in preparing printed material, art and graphic displays and presentations, news dissemination and audio and video services for internal and external use. Additionally, I&E represents the Commission to the public, and assists in understanding the Commission's functions and roles by providing informational guides and brochures and serving as a direct conduit of information to the news media and professional organizations.

I&E staff also produce NEBRASKALand Magazine, the Outdoor Nebraska tabloid, Outdoor Outlook and Outdoor Report radio programs, the Turpin Time television segments and have several regular television appearances. The division provides crucial outreach to young audiences through the production of Trail Tales, a four-color magazine that is distributed to fourth graders throughout the state and plays a key role in fostering an understanding of nature and an interest in the outdoors.

## ART DEPARTMENT

The Art Department provides assistance to all divisions by creating drawings, graphics, displays and other types of artwork as needed for internal and external use. Projects range from simple line drawings to multimedia presentations portraying the Commission's activities, accomplishments and mission.

Among the major projects that the Art Department undertakes annually are designing and developing the Commission's annual hunting, fishing and boating guides, the CRP-MAP Atlas, the Trail Tales educational series, the NEBRASKALand calendar, and a wide range of brochures and flyers related to our parks, fishing and wildlife resources. Several new pages were added to the fish guide this year, and the county-by-county maps in the CRP-MAP Atlas were changed a bit to be easier to navigate and print off when posted to the Commission's web site.

New projects included the creation of a full-color brochure promoting Nebraska Natural Legacy Project; design and layout of the Commission's "Focusing on the Future - A Plan for Nebraska Resources 2004 - 2010" publication; brochures on feral pigs and planning a grouse hunt in Nebraska; a new look for the Nongame wildlife newsletter; an identifying graphic for the Parks Division's reservation system; a new logo for the Lake McConaughy Visitors Center and a T-shirt design featuring a jumping swift fox for the Nebraska Nongame Conservation Fund.

Several four-color parks brochures were redesigned in 2004, along with a host of updates on other brochures and printed pieces. Informational sheets and maps for all of Nebraska's canoe trails received an update, both graphically and in the information they contained.

In addition to smaller printed pieces, the Art Department created and produced a 6 by 7-foot tall "Contributor Board" listing donors

from across the state for the Lake McConaughy Visitors Center, as well as seven "Water Works Wonders" promotional signs for the Fisheries Division's fish stocking trucks around the state.

Graphics and exhibits for the Nebraska State Fair, five out-of-state sport shows and three major in-state sports shows were also produced, along with a number of smaller exhibits and presentations. A considerable amount of time was devoted by the Art Department, and other I&E staff, in preparing for the Lewis and Clark National Signature Event at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park in late July and an exhibit at the Pheasants Forever "Pheasant Fest" event, which was scheduled for early January, 2005.

## NEBRASKALand MAGAZINE

NEBRASKALAND Magazine published nine 52-page issues in 2004, which included articles on wildlife, hunting, fishing, parks, outdoor recreation and resource management, and its largest-ever special, a 180-page issue titled "Birding Nebraska, Where to find hundreds of species on the Great Plains."

In 2004 the magazine was honored with fourth place among state conservation magazines in the Association for Conservation Information's annual national competition. Eric Fowler won first place for his wildlife story about the Commission's Focus on Pheasants initiative. Throughout

the year NEBRASKAland detailed Commission projects and resources with in-depth stories. Wildlife and fishing subjects included topics such as increasing the white bass population, the history and management of Canada geese, the longterm study of white-tailed deer and trapping in Nebraska. Stories concerning activities and resources on Commission parklands included biking on park trails, geocaching in parks, historical reenactments at Fort Kearny State Historical Park, camping at Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area, the Lewis and Clark National Signature Event at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park, a photo essay of Indian Cave State Park, exploring the Missouri River canoe trail, celebrating Halloween at parks, hunt camps using park facilities and sledding at Mahoney State Park.

In addition to their regular tasks, the magazine staff edited and designed a four-color, magazine-sized brochure titled "Want More Pheasants? Here's How to Get Them!" for distribution throughout the state. Magazine staff also expanded their use of digital photography, reducing production costs while maintaining its high-quality standards for images.

NEBRASKAland averaged 33,499 subscribers and newstand distribution was 1,652 copies per issue.

Outdoor Nebraska, a tabloid that carries timely information and features, was included in the May and August-September issues of NEBRASKAland. It is also distributed through permit agents and other outlets. The October issue

of NEBRASKAland included the annual NEBRASKAland gift catalog.

## PHOTO LIBRARY

2004 marked the first full year with Sarah Johnson at the helm of the photo library. She spent a number of months realigning the image request process as well as the internal accounting system run by ProStock, the library's computer-based image management system. This included reconciling many past-due image loans and contacting clients with outstanding balances.

At the end of 2004, the ProStock database held 618 different clients, a 50 percent increase from last year. This represents all the various people and organizations that have utilized images from the Photo Library. New clients requesting images included the Eagle Publishing Company (Florida), South Dakota Game Fish and Parks, various US Fish and Wildlife Service offices, the St. Louis Zoo, the Lied Center for Performing Arts, US Strategic Air Command, the Civil War Veterans Museum in Nebraska City, the Kansas chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Returning clients included the National Park Service, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, many newspaper organizations across the state and various Nebraska state agencies.

Throughout the year, 247 image requests were made by clients, NEBRASKAland magazine staff, and other agency staff which developed into 3,643 images loaned out in various formats. As of December 31, the ProStock database had a total of 52,286 images, with 5,102 images input

during the year. Slowly but surely, the estimated half million images in the photo library are being cataloged and indexed. In 2004, more requests were processed than images were cataloged, which explains the dramatic increase in requests and the 48 percent decrease in cataloging.

The photo library invoiced \$3553 to clients for research fees, digitizing, and/or one-time, non-exclusive publishing rights. As in years past, no agency personnel were charged fees for the use of NGPC images. The second full year of offering high-quality photo prints through the online NEBRASKAland Gift Catalog generated \$1460, a decline in comparison to last year. This may be due to the lack of advertising of this particular product. One avenue that will be explored in 2005 will be marketing photo prints in the printed 2005 NEBRASKAland Gift Catalog.

The photo library provided half of the agency's divisions with print and slide film in 2004. A total of 374 rolls of various slide film and 113 rolls of various print film were distributed, and 551 rolls of film were processed by a local commercial business. The number of rolls of slide film distributed saw a sharp decline with the advent of digital cameras in various divisions, but in contrast the number of print film rolls distributed rose approximately 50 percent. More regional park areas and law enforcement officials took print film in 2004.

## **PUBLICATIONS AND PRINTING**

Printing and publishing manages the production of more than 450 different brochures and pamphlets, various other agency publications and myriad forms for a variety of uses. Publications range from full-color brochures to one and two-color pamphlets, stationery and short-run technical publications. I&E staff also provides assistance to other divisions to determine the best way to produce a project.

The agency print shop produced 844 jobs, involving 3,742,075 press impressions. Jobs included pamphlets, booklets, envelopes, surveys, post cards, park tickets, camping registrations, various forms and numerous other items. This required 2,044,593 sheets of paper; 26,385 cards; 318,350 envelopes totaling 2,389,328 items. This included 49 jobs requiring two or three colors. Print runs ranged from as few as 100 to 75,000. 28 books were printed and assembled.

## **MAIL ROOM**

The mail room is responsible for handling all incoming and outgoing mail for the agency. In addition, the mail room is tasked with maintaining databases for all permit buyers and generating mailing lists for targeted outreach and information efforts.

Mail room staff are responsible for disseminating informational brochures and guides to state parks and recreation areas, district offices and permit vendors statewide on behalf of the Commission. Mail room staff also fulfill customer requests for information about Commission resources. In 2004, the mail room provided information upon request to 3,616 individuals and organizations. More than 469,000 individual pieces of presorted bulk mail

were sent; 92,537 first class mail items were sent and 9,920 UPS shipments were sent for a total of \$52,583.00. In total, more than 223,700 pieces of mail were metered though the mail room.

## **MARKETING EFFORTS**

The Information and Education staff worked with other divisions in a number of marketing efforts. Staff members worked with the NGPC marketing committee to coordinate graphics, staffing and promotional efforts for five major out-of-state sports shows, as well as numerous in-state shows, expos and the 2004 state fair. Several cross-promotional "e-mail blasts" were done to boost sales of various hunting permits, promote spring trout stocking efforts and fishing permit sales, encourage the purchase of park permits and subscriptions of NEBRASKAland magazine. Efforts to evaluate and increase the agency's in-house e-mail databases continued, with an emphasis on evaluating the results of this low-cost vehicle.

Staff also worked closely with other divisions to evaluate and place advertisements for park and recreation areas, as well as fishing and hunting activities across the state in local, regional and national publications. In addition, agency staff sold advertising space in NGPC fishing and hunting guides, as well as classified ads in NEBRASKAland magazine.

A variety of promotional signage were developed, including "Take Me Fishing" signs for hatchery trucks, posters for Free Park Entry/Free Fishing Day and Take Pride in America and banners for NEBRASKAland publications. A wide range of flyers, advertisements and logos were created for various groups within the agency as well as conservation organizations working with agency staff.

Direct mail efforts undertaken by the division include nonresident mailings for all hunting seasons prior to sale of permits. Resident marketing efforts included blanketting media outlets statewide with timed new releases before permits sales opened or seasons began, as well as during the seasons themselves. In addition, I&E staff statewide made regular appearances on local radio and television states to promote the seasonal opportunities available within the state.

Coordination and production of three issues of Outdoor Nebraska help keep the public informed on a number of outdoor topics and provided seasonal outlooks for hunting, fishing, park activities and other outdoor events. These efforts were supplemented by the weekly Outdoor Report, which is sent out electronically to news media and individuals across the state, as well as being posted on the NGPC web site. The division also maintained the fishmac.org web site, to provide details on the current conditions at Lake McConaughy.

Evaluation of the success of our efforts continues to be an important part of our planning process, and we have placed added emphasis on reviewing the cost and effectiveness of our marketing efforts. In addition, we continue to look for ways to cross-promote the various offerings of NGPC.

## **NEWS PROGRAM**

During 2004 more than 350 news releases and 52 weekly outdoor reports were provided to the media. The news release program was expanded from its "strictly news" format to include timely features aimed at helping to create interest in fishing by informing new and veteran anglers about how to fish for various species and where to find them.

All news releases and outdoor reports were sent electronically to print and online media and to radio and television stations as well as being posted on the agency's web site, where they could be read by a worldwide audience. Electronic delivery saves time as well as paper, printing and postage costs. Dated information can be sent while it is still fresh and received immediately by the media for their dissemination to the public. Photos and maps accompany some articles.

GPC News, the employee newsletter, is published once a month and updates staff on news from all parts of the agency. Most articles are written by employees from various divisions.

## **OUTDOOR EDUCATION & HUNTER OUTREACH**

In 2004, 175 Nebraska youth attended the Outdoor Skills Camps under a joint venture between the Commission and University of Nebraska 4-H. Both camps were expanded to accommodate the growing number of youth who desire to participate. Students were introduced to archery, rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader, fishing, camping, canoeing and map and compass workshops. The camps required the assistance of 35 Commission staff and volunteers.

The Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program (BOW) was held at the state 4H camp near Halsey in October. During the workshop, 111 women were provided with introductions into many outdoor skills including shooting sports, canoeing, map and compass, fishing, camping, ecology and many others.

A continued partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation provided for continued efforts with the Women in the Outdoors Program. Several programs were offered across the state by NWTf volunteers utilizing Commission equipment to provide outdoor skills education to Nebraska Women ages 14 and older.

The STEP OUTSIDE Program continued with two youth programs at the Lincoln and Seward Izaak Walton League shooting ranges in Lincoln and Seward. Both workshops allowed area youth to participate in many outdoor skills including rifle, shotgun, archery, muzzleloader and wildlife ethics. During these workshops, 50 youth were introduced to many shooting sports for the first time. Roughly 30 volunteer instructors supported these events.

A UNL Shooting Lab was conducted to assist UNL Animal Damage Control students in understanding firearm use for lethal control methods of wildlife. Roughly 13 students were involved.

Efforts continued for the Nebraska Envirothon, resulting in reaching several hundred high school youth from across the state for regional and state competition.

The Outdoor Skills Workshop Guide was developed in 2004, providing a manual for any organization wishing to provide Outdoor Skills Workshops. Other outreach efforts resulted in education to several hundred citizens through hunting seminars and outdoor education workshops in 2004.

## **National Archery in the Schools Program**

The NASP Program started in October of 2004, and resulted in more than 20 schools providing quality archery education to youth grades 4-12. Efforts will continue to provide for program expansion.

## **Ranges**

The Shooting Range Grant Assistance Program was developed and provided funding for 11 shooting range projects in 2004. Funds from the program were utilized for safety enhancements as well as access enhancements, facility upgrades and much more.

## **Mentored Youth Hunts**

The Commission continued a partnership allowing youth hunt access at the Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge. In 2004, 18 youth and eight mentors took part in the second year of this new program that provides firearm mentored hunting to Omaha youth.

The Commission was also very successful in many other youth hunts in 2004. In partnership with Pheasants Forever, nearly 1,000 Nebraska youth were introduced to pheasant hunting and participated in actual hunts with more than 900 mentors, with several new chapters participating this year.

The Mentored Youth Archery Deer Hunting Program increased in size in 2004, thanks in part to a continued partnership with the Nebraska Bowhunters Association, and the addition of the UNL's Horning Tree Farm and other private property near Lincoln and Grand Island to the growing program. The Kearney program continued to grow, with several mentors and roughly 10 youth partnering with the Nature Conservancy and the Whooping Crane Trust. In total, 85 youth and 26 mentors were involved in this program with

more than 2,000 hours donated.

The Nebraska Duck Callers Association partnered with the Game and Parks Commission to provide mentored waterfowl hunting to youth (seven youth and nine mentors). The Republican Valley Sportsmen Club also provided mentored hunting opportunities to youth. A partnership with the Great Plains Houndsmens Club provided small game hunting opportunities for 14 youth in eastern Nebraska with 42 volunteers participating.

A new partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation resulted in five new chapters offering youth hunts in 2004. Nearly 24 youth hunted with 16 volunteers during this program. A new partnership also began with Nebraska Ducks Unlimited to provide for new youth hunt offerings for waterfowl hunting.

## HABITAT STAMP CONTEST

Armando Villarreal of Imperial won the 27th annual Habitat Stamp Art Contest with an illustration of two white-tailed deer. His artwork is featured on the 2005 habitat stamp. It was his fourth win.

Nearly 900 students entered the three sections of the youth division. Selections of their art are featured in an exhibit at locations across the state. The Omaha Fish and Wildlife Club, co-sponsors of the contest since its inception, donated \$300 to the adult winner and \$100 to each of the three youth divisions. Mackenzie Olson of Tekamah won the elementary division (grades K through 4), Yvonne Lin of Lincoln won the junior division (grades 5 through 8) and Michelle Koenig of Omaha took the top spot in the senior division (grades 9 through 12).

## REGIONAL REPS

### District I – Alliance

The Panhandle public information officer's duties include NEBRASKAland Magazine assignments, production of statewide and local news releases and media contacts with the region's 17 newspapers, 14 radio stations and two TV stations.

Other responsibilities included programs, information requests, workshops and annual news director assignments for the National Cornhusker TrapShoot and the Pressey High School State Championship Silhouette Shoot. Instructional workshops included rifle marksmanship at Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, Outdoor Skills Camps, scheduling permitting, and judging of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Services Nebraska Junior Duck Stamp entries.

District I PIO duties include assistance to the district Wildlife and Fisheries divisions, ongoing assignments include photography and news releases on Fort Robinson and Cedar Canyon bighorn herds and CWD management efforts.

### District IV - North Platte

The public information officer in District IV manages the district office and supervises the staff assistant. The PIO also provides support to the front office with public information and permit sales. Over the counter sales have remained stable, but more constituents are issuing their own permits through the agency's Internet web site. The PIO contributes photos and text to NEBRASKAland Magazine, directs district news releases and supports other agency publications.

The District IV PIO is responsible for coordinating and directing the National Cornhusker Trapshoot. More than 1,300 shooters attended the 35th annual event,

representing five states and setting a record attendance. The entire event is pre-registered in North Platte by the staff assistant. Other activities include the production of a weekly TV show on location at the end of the 6 p.m. news on KNOP-TV. Regular television and radio and press interviews and sound bites are also provided to area broadcast and newspaper media. Other responsibilities include coordination of youth outdoor events, serving on the shooting range grant awards committee, assisting with educational programs, promoting conservation organizations and youth shooting activities.

### Omaha Metro Office

This busy, customer-friendly office shares space with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development Travel and Tourism Division in the Information Center at 1212 Bob Gibson Blvd. in southeast Omaha.

The office facility is open seven days a week most of the year. An estimated average of 326 people per day visited or made contact with the center.

Metro office sales were up 8% over last year and totaled \$286,572.79, with big game hunting permits accounting for just over half of that figure. Much staff time was spent assisting the public with natural resources information, promoting recreational resources in the state and assisting other divisions of the agency.

Staff continues proactive local, regional and statewide public relations efforts through media avenues and the Internet. Some 34 stations carried radio, TV and press-related programs each week, ranging from news sound bites to "live" appearances. The public information officer based in the office provided support for the Outdoor Nebraska radio program in the form of weekly, taped seg-

ments on timely outdoor tips. Periodic contact was made with Omaha World-Herald staff writers with regard to story ideas. In addition, the "Omaha Area Outdoor News" section on the Commission's Internet web site was updated weekly if not more frequently as needed with crucial information.

Metro staff represented the agency in other ways, too. They made various presentations to groups and organizations such as Pheasants Forever and Trout Unlimited. School programs were done at Omaha Public and Catholic Schools such as Bancroft and St. Cecilia's, respectively. Metro staff coordinated exhibits for the agency at the River City Hunting and Fishing Expo, Omaha Sports Show and Nebraska Safari Club Expo. Staff also worked with various bookstore vendors such as Borders and Barnes and Noble, keeping them well supplied with special issues of NEBRASKAland Magazine re-sale materials. Much divisional support was provided though checking in bobcats and deer, collecting animal parts and banding resident Canada Geese for Wildlife Division. Assistance was given to fisheries division helping to coordinate and conduct fishing-oriented events for youth, physically challenged individuals and senior citizens.

## TV AND RADIO

I&E staff efforts to inform the public about Commission activities and news included weekly live or taped appearances on television stations in Omaha, Lincoln, North Platte and Kearney. Agency staff worked to continue the weekly syndicated segments of Turpin Time, a 60-second vignette featuring retired NGPC employee Dick Turpin. This program is produced by I&E staff and distributed free-of-charge to stations across the

state. It is carried on stations based in Lincoln, North Platte, Scottsbluff and Sioux City, Iowa.

Other efforts included the filming and development of several individual hunting and fishing stories that were produced and submitted to the Outdoor Channel's Fish and Wildlife Journal program. These programs should air during the appropriate seasons in 2005.

In the radio arena, I&E staff made a number of live appearances and provided pre-recorded news sound bites as part of the Outdoor Outlook and Outdoor Nebraska radio show. New in 2004, Outdoor Outlook is picked up and aired weekly by more than 40 stations. It is a one-minute capsule of outdoor information that can be run as a public service announcement or as a regularly scheduled feature. A weekly 10-minute program, Outdoor Nebraska airs on approximately 30 stations.

I&E staff also provided video services for the other divisions within the agency. In 2004, special videos that were created include a conservation officer video for the Law Enforcement division, a soldier training video for Fort Hartsuff and an updated video for the kiosk at the Calamus hatchery. Video was shot during the year for a number of other upcoming projects as well.

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Our agency has been a national leader among fish and wildlife agencies in the use of information technology since the first inception of the world wide web in 1994. We were the first state agency in Nebraska to have a significant web presence, the first agency to implement e-commerce and the first fish and wildlife agency to offer online permit applications and purchases. We continue to strive to be a trendsetter in designing, developing and implementing new applications and services to better serve our customers and employees.

## AWARD-WINNING WEB SITE

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's web site won first place honors in the annual Association of Conservation Agencies (ACI) awards program in 2003. The award is based on quality of information offered; effective use of graphics; clear, intuitive, easy-to-use navigation and creative use of media, such as photos, videos and web cams.

The annual ACI Awards Program is the only nationwide competition exclusively for conservation education, information and public relations professionals at state and federal agencies and conservation organizations.

The Commission's web site is designed to provide easily accessible, accurate information to online users. Among its features are clear "paths" leading users to information about the state's wildlife, parks, habitat, hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. Information about the agency itself, including special programs and services, is also available.

## NGPC WEB SITE STATISTICS

During a typical month the NGPC web site receives more than 200,000 visitors. On peak days more than 10,000 people access our online information service. Approximately 49% of our visitors find their way to us by using a browser bookmark or entering our URL ([www.outdoornebraska.org](http://www.outdoornebraska.org)) in their web browser directly. Another 46% reach us via a link provided on another web site. The remaining visitors find us by using an Internet search engine such as Google or Yahoo. Seventy percent of our online visitors are from the USA with the other 30% coming from foreign countries.

## OTHER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Along with the agency's award-winning web site, Information Technology (IT) also provides and supports other mission-critical applications and services to enhance the productivity and efficiency of ongoing business operations.

## E-MAIL SERVICES:

IT manages e-mail services for more than 325 commission staff. This service includes managing software to intercept e-mail viruses, spam and spyware at the server, preventing it from being delivered to staff e-mail inboxes.

## DATABASE APPLICATIONS AND APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

IT manages and supports database applications for maintaining NEBRASKAland Magazine subscriptions; Hunter Education students, instructors and classes; Boater Education students, instructors and classes; lifetime and fee-exempt permitting systems; the NEBRASKAland Magazine products catalog system; big game trophy records; master angler records; fish stocking data; internal credit card records management; First National Bank of Omaha credit card redemptions and many other database applications. Most of the database management applications are accessed by agency staff through the agency's Intranet (internal web site system).

## NETWORK ADMINISTRATION AND GENERAL COMPUTER SUPPORT

IT is responsible for managing and maintaining the local area network of the Lincoln headquarters, which consists of more than 150 computer users, network hardware, switches, routers and other related hardware and software. IT provides general computer support for the Administration Division and assists other division-level IT staff on an ongoing and as-needed basis.

# LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

2004 was another eventful year for the Law Enforcement Division. It saw the continued assimilation of the Hunter Education Program and the Boating Safety Program as well as the retirement of two very senior Conservation Officers and the hiring of one new officer. Continued heavy commitments to Homeland Security and a major Lewis and Clark Bicentennial signature event provided challenging focuses for the year, but, at the same time, helped infuse the year with a sense of special accomplishment beyond the norm - another good year for the Law Enforcement Division.

## STAFFING

John D. "Jack" Henderson retired at the end of February after 41 years of dedicated service to the agency. Dwight R. Allbery retired effective November 1st after 40 years of service. Their eighty combined years of experience and expertise have been sorely missed already. One new officer was hired on November 1st - he will complete his training period during the first half of 2005 and be assigned to a priority duty station. With the recent retirements and the number of officers that we have hired from the last list of qualified applicants, we are planning to conduct Conservation Officer assessments in 2005 to establish a new list from which to hire additional replacement officers.

We again had two officers who were called to active military duty during 2004 - one for a major portion of the year and one for the entire year. The division ended the year with the same authorized complement as we had at the end of 2003:

1 Division Administrator, 2

Assistant Division Administrators, 1 Staff Conservation Officer Supervisor, 1 Administrative Secretary, 1 Staff Assistant, 1 Staff Conservation Officer, 5 District Conservation Officer Supervisors, and 47 field Conservation Officer positions with one vacancy; 1 Hunter Education Coordinator; and, in Boating Safety, 1 Boating Law Administrator, 2 Public Information Officers, 1 Accounting Clerk, and 1 Office Clerk for a total of 65 positions.

We have included several additional Conservation Officer positions in the budget request for 2005 - 2007, and are hoping that at least a portion of those will be authorized to allow us to more appropriately address our many responsibilities and the calls for service from our various constituent groups.

## AN OVERVIEW OF 2004

A focus on Key Issues related to the agency operational plan was a major emphasis for 2004 with the Law Enforcement Division accomplishing or making substantial progress on all of its identified Key Issues during the year. The Key Issues have allowed divisions to accomplish specific projects in furtherance of addressing goals, issues and strategies in the agency long range plan "Focusing on the Future."

## HOMELAND SECURITY

Homeland Security was a primary focus again in 2004 with the Law Enforcement Division leading the agency involvement at all levels. Agency personnel from several

divisions participated in exercises to test our preparedness for a terrorist attack, including the 2004 State TEREX Homeland Security functional exercise, which involved the theoretical terrorist breach of Kinsley dam at Lake McConaughy and a resultant major flooding event downstream. Parks, Operations and Construction and Districts 4 and 6 personnel took part in the role-playing related to the exercise along with Law Enforcement Division field and supervisory staff. In June, a tabletop exercise was held to discuss NGPC's capabilities to assist with a Mass Casualty event. Our personnel responded to the threats in professional and capable fashion.

Some of the equipment funded by 2003 Homeland Security grants arrived and was distributed to field locations during 2004, including 10 thermal imaging cameras for use in Homeland Security law enforcement and infrastructure security activities. Additional equipment from the '03 grants is scheduled to arrive early in 2005. In addition, 2004 Homeland Security grant funds helped pay for several training sessions on topics related to enhancing our law enforcement and security capabilities in support of the state and agency emergency operations plans.

## OTHER MAJOR FOCUSES

Other major focuses/issues for the Law Enforcement Division during 2004 included:

- Response to mountain lion reports and sightings including assisting in the dispatch of one young male lion in South Sioux

City.

- Continued response to Chronic Wasting Disease in newly identified areas (the occurrence of a CWD positive deer near Grand Island was of particular note) and in the endemic area in the Panhandle.
- Adjusting budget allotments to address markedly increasing fuel costs.
- Holding the biennial Law Enforcement Division meeting and training session at Niobrara State Park in April.
- Provided substantial support to the Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial celebration and signature event held at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park.
- Continued strong emphasis on educational programs and public contacts by all division personnel, including implementation of the new Conservation Officer Youth-Oriented Training and Education (COYOTE) program.

- Assistance to the Fisheries Division with surveying anglers to assess the success of spring trout stocking in generating additional or renewed permit sales and/or fishing interest. This involved at least 10 visits to each site by officers within a three-week period after stocking.

These tasks, combined with all the other ongoing and unique operations, events and incidents, made for a challenging year.

## 2004 KEY ISSUES

The Law Enforcement Division accomplished many of its Key Issue focus projects for 2004 and made substantial progress on the few that weren't totally completed. Some of the highlights of these accomplishments:

- Oversight, coordination and participation as primary agents in drafting the agency Emergency

Operations Plan, a required part of our Homeland Security involvement in support of the State Emergency Operations Plan. The plan has been disseminated to agency personnel and has been implemented in two functional exercises in 2004, including the State TEREX exercise in November.

- Acquisition of 10 decibel meters and rangefinders and training of 18 primary officers in decibel meter use for enforcement of newly passed motorboat noise restriction statutes. The equipment was used on three airboat details on the Platte River in early fall.
- Training for specialized boat



accident investigation was provided to eight officers and advanced boat accident training to seven officers who will form the core of an enhanced boat accident investigation capability in the division.

- Attendance by five officers at the National Hunting Incident Investigation Academy to augment the division capability in investigating hunting accidents and similar incidents. One of the officers utilized the new training to good effect in an investigation involving a non-fatality shooting in eastern Nebraska during the firearm deer season. The investigative techniques from the academy allowed the officer to disprove several statements by the involved parties and to determine the actual chain of events, which resulted in possi-

ble charges being forwarded to the county attorney.

- Success of the Water Safety Task Force in making substantial progress and in completing an employee survey as well as a general boater survey regarding boating activity and problems on waters statewide. The task force efforts will continue into 2005 with the goal of determining if any changes in regulations are warranted based upon the input received during the initial phase of the project.

- Generation of the Conservation Officer Youth-Oriented Training and Education (COYOTE) basic program materials and implementation of the program beginning in September. COYOTE is a new program that includes information on goals and objectives of the agency, the value of outdoor recreation, and the duties of Conservation Officers. COYOTE is primarily geared to younger audiences although it can be presented to older audiences as well. The program is designed to be expanded as appropriate additional compo-

nents are identified. A Key Issue project for 2005 is to add a new component to COYOTE. In its first six months COYOTE has been presented over 85 times to more than 2,500 youth.

- Use of a video component of the COYOTE program showing and describing the duties of Conservation Officers, several agency programs and facilities, and showing many of the forms of outdoor recreation that can be enjoyed in Nebraska. The video, available in both VHS and DVD formats, has been well received by all audiences, both young and old.

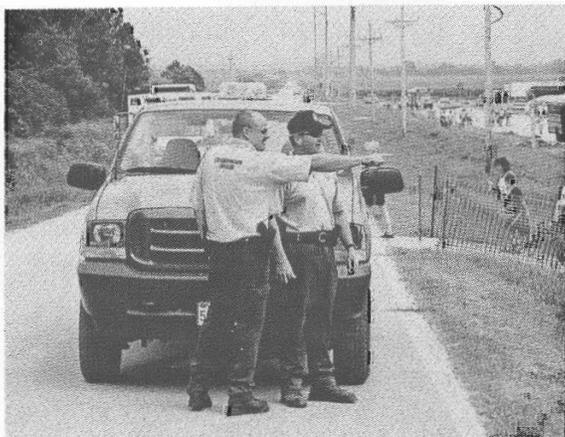
- Achievement by the Boating Safety Program of its training and outreach goals for 2004 by attend-

ing eight boat shows and certifying more than 1,880 boating safety students during the year.

- Success of the Hunter Education Program in meeting its Key Issue training and program goals by providing training to over 250 volunteer instructors and certifying over 6,300 firearm hunter education students and 980 bowhunter education students.

Overall, the Key Issue focus projects for 2004 were a source of inspiration and a strong sense of accomplishment for the Law Enforcement Division and we are looking forward to more progress in 2005.

## LEWIS AND CLARK



## BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

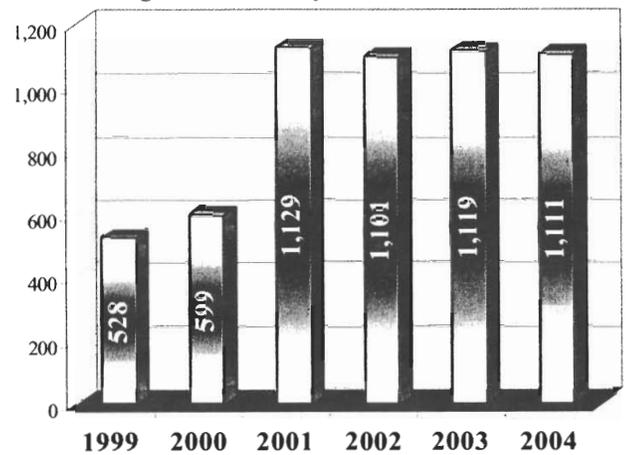
Eighteen officers were assigned to provide coverage during the Lewis and Clark Signature Event at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park, July 30th through August 3rd. The Boating Safety section provided two officers to cover the substantial increase in boat traffic on the Missouri River related to the event. The remaining officers were imported from across the state and were assigned to work the actual event site at Fort Atkinson.

Projected figures indicate that over 65,000 people attended this four-day event. Officers were

heavily involved for several months in the event pre-planning, setup and organization. Several meetings were attended to coordinate our security efforts with the Nebraska State Patrol, Washington County Sheriff's Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service, event coordinators and Civil Air Patrol. Our primary focus was to provide an overall safe environment for the attendees. In doing so, Conservation Officers from the Law Enforcement Division provided roving security and emergency assistance patrols on the event grounds utilizing all-terrain vehicles for transportation and, along with multiple personnel from the Parks Division, dealt with the large volume of vehicle traffic and parking. Extreme heat during the event, multiple reports of missing children and a few disruptive attendees helped to add to the day-to-day challenges. In the end, all missing children were found, the attendees were hydrated, and everyone went home enjoying this highly successful history-making event.

The Law Enforcement Division also provided on-water security and emergency support escort to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial flotilla, consisting of a keel boat and two pirogues which made its way up the Missouri River in Nebraska over a seven week period from mid-July through August. This involved many officers and many hours on the water to insure that the flotilla

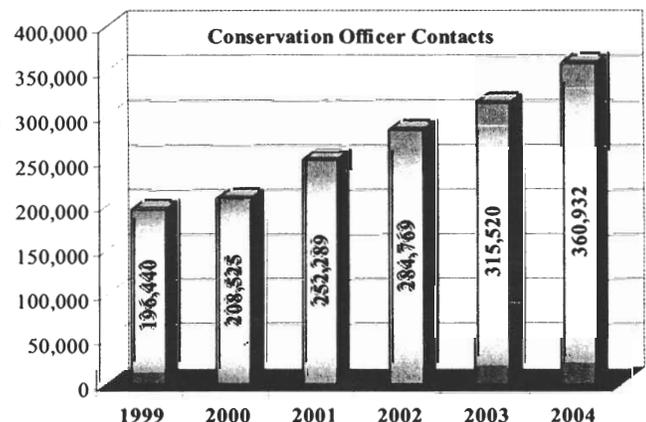
Programs Given by Conservation Officers



re-enactment was accomplished without problems.

## EDUCATION AND CONTACTS

Conservation Officers presented or assisted with 1,111 programs in 2004. As usual, many of the programs were youth-oriented such as the COYOTE program previously mentioned. And we continued to support the other agency educational programs that have been developed and enhanced over the years: the Cornhusker High School TrapShoot at Doniphan, the High School Silhouette Shoot at Pressey Wildlife Management Area, the Youth Outdoor Skills Camps at Halsey and Gretna; the Becoming an Outdoor Womans workshop at Halsey; school programs including the new COYOTE program, Hunter Education programs and Boating Safety programs among others.



Conservation Officers contacted 360,932 people while performing all their duties including 29,935 hunters; 62,015 anglers; 24,386 boaters; 121,115 park and recreation area users and 1,125 trappers. Officers also contacted 122,356 people for other reasons such as traffic, drugs, Homeland Security, other government representatives, media representatives of all kinds and the wide variety of others that they routinely come in contact with in the course of their duties. In addition, they responded to 6,032 complaints in 2004. Officers drove 1,317,349 miles to accomplish their duties and spent 620 nights away from home.

Conservation Officers are the Game and Parks Commission to many of our constituents and are relied upon to provide up-to-date information on all agency programs and initiatives. The officers live in the local communities across the state and are viewed as part of the communities, which makes them a primary contact for information about all things involving the agency. This local involvement and availability is extremely important in the promotion of the agency goals and objectives to the majority of our constituents.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

While contacting the many people in the performance of their varied duties Conservation Officers initiated 2,836 criminal prosecutions involving 3,560 individual charges against defendants. Of these, 350 involved deer violations; 851 fish/bullfrog violations; 133 furbearer; violations 242 migratory bird charges; 1,145 parks-related charges; 138 small game violations; 59 turkey violations; 40 non-game violations and

452 boating violations among others. The cases resulted in \$262,285 in fines and court costs and \$72,336 in liquidated damages for animals taken or possessed illegally, which was returned to the agency Game Fund. Officers also issued 5,372 official warnings for lesser violations.

As always, special law enforcement details were utilized to address specific problems or to enhance law enforcement presence for specific occasions or in specific areas. The use of these special details improves the perceived presence of officers statewide and helps curtail illegal activity in target areas. Some of the special law enforcement details and investigations that were conducted in 2004 were:

- A District 1 waterfowl detail in Scotts Bluff county in February which involved officers patrolling by kayak, foot and 4-wheel drive vehicles over a three day period with the goal of contacting as many hunters as possible. The officers contacted 317 hunters and wrote 10 citations and 8 warnings for violations. The hunters were very supportive of the effort.
- Special details at Lake McConaughy focused on over-bagging of fish, especially wipers. Over Memorial Day weekend 19 individuals were cited for exceeding the daily bag limit, and, over the course of the summer, there were more than 50 over-bag cases prosecuted. These cases required many hours of surveillance by officers to bring them to conclusion.

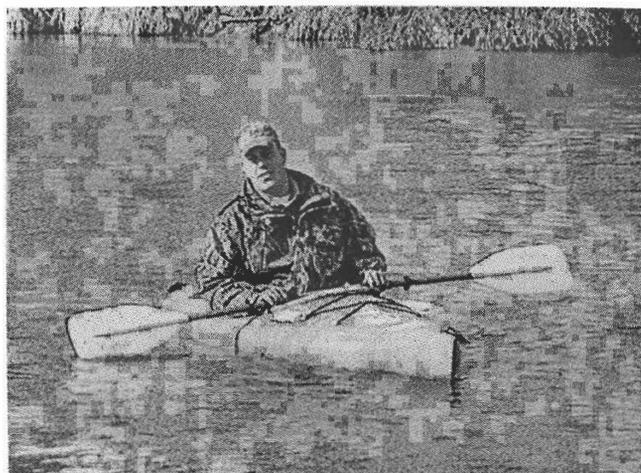
- Officer Frank Miller investigated a rash of wildlife illegally killed in August and September

which ultimately resulted in over 100 violations being levied against 10 individuals and over \$8,000 in fines, costs and liquidated damages. The defendants in the cases ranged in age from 15 to 21.

- A long-term cooperative guide and outfitter investigation, "Operation Stateline," in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was culminated in May. The prosecution process continues with defendants identified from as far away as New York state.

- Undercover law enforcement details were again utilized at Gavin's Point dam in October to monitor the paddlefish snagging season. Due to the use of undercover and uniformed officers, compliance with snagging regulations was good, with only two over-bag cases made and several for failure to tag fish and fishing without a permit.

- District 4 conducted a large waterfowl enforcement detail again in 2004 involving six Conservation Officers and two USFWS Special Agents. Violations were written for possession of lead shot, over-bag of ducks and no hunting permits. There was good support from area



hunters for this type of detail.

- District 4 officers participated in several Nebraska Law Enforcement Intelligence Network (NeLEIN) operations including a

search for two prison escapees in Red Willow county and assisting with capturing two individuals involved in a crime spree in south central Nebraska. NeLEIN is a law enforcement organization that promotes cooperative efforts by all law enforcement agencies and which coordinates assistance to agencies in need of additional officers to address specific problems. We have utilized NeLEIN assistance in turn on some of our special details to augment area Conservation Officers.

- District 5 officers provided assistance at a large highway safety road check conducted by the Nebraska State Patrol and the Otoe County Sheriff's Department. There were a number of good hunting contacts and cases written by our officers while assisting with this road check.

- District 6 officers and Boating Safety Officer Daryl Teter provided enhanced coverage at Calamus reservoir due to the substantial increase in its popularity among boaters and campers. Camping areas and boat dock parking facilities are commonly full on nice weekends resulting in a number of issues for the officers to deal with.

## **BOATING LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Law enforcement officers from various agencies enforce boating laws, including city and county officers. However, Game and Parks Commission Conservation Officers perform approximately 98% of the boating law enforcement efforts throughout the state. Boating law enforcement was again a focal point for the division law enforcement operations for 2004 with several special details employed to address boating safety issues including:

- A special boating under the influence of alcohol (BUI) detail

was conducted on Lewis and Clark reservoir by District 3 officers and South Dakota Game Fish and Parks officers. Two boat operators were arrested for BUI and a number of additional field sobriety tests were administered. There is strong public support for these BUI details.

- District 4 officers conducted a project named "Flotation Rotation" which had four Conservation Officers and two Boating Safety Officers rotating among five reservoirs on a regular basis to maximize law enforcement presence. The effort was very successful in curtailing violations and received good support from boaters contacted.

- A special boating enforcement detail at Lake McConaughy resulted in over 50 citations during one of the normal July weekends.

The Boating Safety section of the Law Enforcement Division has provided augmented boating law enforcement capabilities in the form of the Boating Law Administrator and the two Boating Safety Officers (Public Information Officers) who are credentialed as Conservation Officers for boating law enforcement. They were available to provide concentrated assistance on high activity boating waters such as Fremont State Recreation Area, the Missouri River and Lake McConaughy. They were also among the officers who received advanced boat accident investigation training and provided substantial assistance in investigating boat accidents during the year.

## **NEBRASKA WILDLIFE CRIMESTOPPERS**

Nebraska Wildlife Crimestoppers enjoyed another productive year assisting with uncovering wildlife violations. This joint program with

the civilian Nebraska Wildlife Protectors Association (NWP), which solicits and pays rewards for information resulting in prosecutions, has been in existence since 1982 and has resulted in over 710 cases, over \$81,900 fines and court costs, and liquidated damages of over \$177,600, which was returned to the Game Fund. NWP has paid rewards of nearly \$38,000 for cases where reporting parties requested a reward. Most who provide information on violations are not interested in a reward.

Involvement by concerned citizens providing information to the NWC hotline resulted in 55 investigations being initiated in 2004 with 19 cases finalized so far and another 16 still under investigation. Fines and court costs from the completed cases has amounted to \$6,566 with liquidated damages of \$9,330 being assessed and paid into the Game Fund. Total reward payments by the NWP board during 2004 were \$2,700.

## **TRAINING**

2004 kept the Conservation Officers responsible for training very busy. The Field Training Officers are in the process of training the new officer hired in November. He will be ready to become a "solo" officer in 2005 and will be assigned to a duty station. In preparation for the new officer, the entire Field Training Manual was revised to accommodate changes in the Game Law and additions to the training. Over a dozen Conservation Officers were provided with advanced training in boat and hunting accident investigation skills. This training took the officers to several out-of-state locations. We have continued to take advantage of free law enforcement training offered by other agencies and training institu-

tions such as the Regional Training Center in Sioux City, Iowa, and the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center (NLETC). Attendance at the many training sessions keeps Conservation Officers up-to-date with current law enforcement training trends and requirements.

## **FIREARMS AND DEFENSIVE TACTICS TRAINING**

2004 saw the senior Firearms Instructor, George Sund, retire from his voluntary training duties after serving his fellow officers in that capacity for over 20 years. The Firearms Instructors qualified all Conservation Officers on the mandatory state qualifications courses and other courses of fire. They incorporated drills that tested officer skills using their handgun, carbine and shotgun. Courses were developed to challenge the officers' speed and accuracy under stress. In addition to qualifying our own officers, Firearms Instructors assisted with qualifying USFWS officers and other law enforcement agencies. They are also frequently called upon to act as guest instructors at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island. Our Armorers kept our weapons functioning and were available to assist in the event a weapon had a mechanical problem.

## **DEFENSIVE TACTICS**

Instructors (DT) taught officers the basics of the PPCT Management Systems skills. They focused on reviewing the basic elements of the force continuum to ensure that officers understand what level of force they are justified in using to control a use of force encounter. In addition to

training our Conservation Officers, DT instructors assisted with instructing several outside law enforcement agencies. They were frequently called upon to act as guest instructors at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center.

## **FIELD TRAINING OFFICERS**

Field Training Officers spent the majority of 2004 preparing for a new officer to arrive in the fall. During these preparations, the Field Training Manual was completely revised to include new law changes, information on boating and hunting accident investigations and other updates. In addition to these preparations, the FTOs assisted with scenario training for all officers during the fall training sessions. The new officer arrived in November and will keep the FTOs busy well into 2005. FTOs will ensure that the new officer is prepared to become a "solo" officer; ready to handle any situation that comes his way.

## **OUTSIDE TRAINING**

Conservation Officers continue to take advantage of specialized training provided by organizations outside of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. One of the most popular locations for outside training is at the Regional Training Center in Sioux City, Iowa, where training is provided free due to a federal grant to the training center. Officers have received training in the REID Method of Interview and Interrogation, Spanish for Law Enforcement and Field Interviewing. In addition, many officers have received numerous hours of instruction from the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center. Computer training continues to be a focus of in-

service training. Eight Conservation Officers and Boating Safety Officers attended the National Boat Accident Investigation Course hosted by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators. These officers make up the first ever Boat Accident Investigation Team for Nebraska and will respond to assist with boat accident investigations throughout the state. In addition, five officers attended the National Hunting Incident Investigation Academy in Missouri in 2004 and constitute the new Hunting Incident Investigation Team. They will be available to assist with hunting incident investigations throughout Nebraska.

For the first time in many years, Game Law is being taught at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center to all Basic Course law enforcement trainees. The four hour block of training covers the most common laws that sheriffs, deputies and police officers might encounter in the field. Cooperative working relations is stressed as a key factor in curtailing wildlife violations in Nebraska.

## **DIVISION MEETING**

The Law Enforcement Division held our bi-annual meeting and training at Niobrara State Park April 20-22. The meeting was packed with a wide variety of training and agency updates. Homeland Security issues were a relatively new focus on the meeting agenda. As members of a state law enforcement organization, our officers will be called upon to respond to terrorist or weapons of mass destruction events. The division's responsibilities for Homeland Security response were addressed during this meeting. The Law Enforcement Division welcomed back two sections to the

division - the Hunter Education and Boating Safety sections re-joined the division after several years in the now disbanded Outdoor Education Division. We are very pleased to have both programs back in the division, and look forward to our enhanced cooperative efforts. Other presentations and training that occurred at the meeting included:

- Director Rex Amack and Assistant Director Kirk Nelson brought us up-to-date on several current topics including the new Mountain Lion Action Plan and the agency permit task force efforts among others.
- Hunter Education (HE) Coordinator Mike Streeter updated staff on the HE program and its 30 year anniversary. Officers wore a commemorative pin on their uniforms during 2004 recognizing this program milestone.
- NLETC Attorney Dave Stolz presented a legal update and training on courtroom testimony and criminal investigations.
- Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) Sgt. Jud McKinstry provided training on explosive device recognition and first responder safety for such calls.
- Conservation Officers Tim Williams and Sean McKeehan and Boating Safety Officer Scott Eveland presented training on boat accident investigation based on the training they received at the National Boat Accident Investigators Course.
- Boating Law Administrator Herb Angell and Boating Safety Officer Daryl Teter provided a boating under the influence legal update.
- Assistant Law Enforcement Administrator Craig Stover provided computer and GPS mapping



training.

- NLETC Instructor **Dave Harnly** provided classroom and field training on high risk vehicle stops.
- Nebraska Emergency Management Agency representative Sara Hartzell and Staff Law Enforcement Division Supervisor Dana Miller provided an orientation on the State Emergency Operations Plan and the NGPC Emergency Operations Plan.
- NSP Sgt. Lynn Williams provided training on death scene investigations, evidence collection and documentation.
- Conservation Officers Rick Seward, Ray Dierking and Mark Reeves presented Spanish for Law Enforcement and REID Method of

Interview and Interrogation training including a demonstration high risk vehicle stop conducted in Spanish.

And there were several interesting field sessions for hands-on training including:

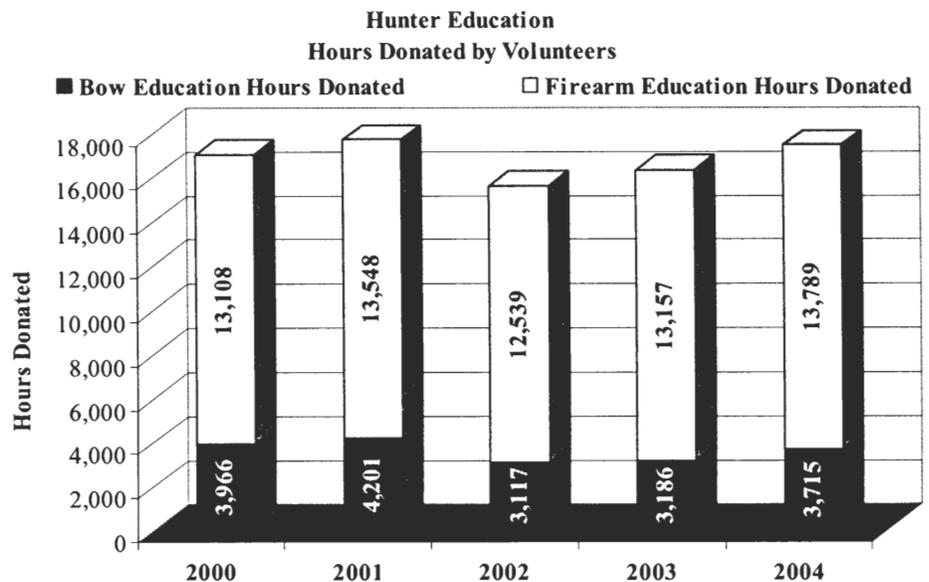
- "Snake Man" Wayne Simmerman discussed snake identification and demonstrated safe poisonous reptile handling with live rattlesnakes as subjects.

• COs Bill Krause and Eric Wiebe demonstrated a variety of trap sets and equipment for fur harvesting, and related several "tricks of the trade" and how to spot sets in the field.

• COs Jeff Clauson, Gary Ralston and Russell Mort conducted hands-on waterfowl identification training.

• The high risk vehicle stop scenarios by Dave Harnly of NLETC mentioned previously.

There were other presentations on a reptile search warrant, wildlife rehabilitator inspections, the Fisheries Division marketing plan, elk mortality reporting, EHD and the new COYOTE youth education program. Overall, it was a



busy and informative meeting and training session.

## HUNTER EDUCATION

The Hunter Education program was re-integrated into the Law Enforcement Division, its historical home division, in 2003. Assimilation of the program and its budget continued into 2004 very successfully. Hunter Education is a good fit for the division and the cooperative relationship between it and the Conservation Officer Corps is very beneficial to both.

During 2004, Hunter Education trained 7,284 students; 6,301 in firearm and 983 in bow hunter education. All instruction was provided by volunteers who conducted 494 classes with 101 offered in bowhunter education and 392 in firearm hunter education. During the year classes were offered across the state in every month of the year. However, most classes are offered in the fall from August through November with an additional effort in March for those wishing to participate in spring turkey hunting.

The dedicated volunteer instructors donated 17,504 hours toward meeting the program goals of insuring the future of hunting, and that hunting and the shooting sports in Nebraska are safe and conducted in an ethical manner. These donated volunteer instructor hours provided \$325,575 in matching agency funds for the USFWS PR grant which is more than the total grant allotment to the Commission of \$287,000 per year. Which means that the volunteer instructor hours alone more than provided our entire grant match requirement to receive full federal funding for the Hunter Education Program.

In 2004 the public was offered an alternative to the traditional firearm hunter education class through the use of an independent study course. This course incorporated both personal instruction by certified instructors during 13 field day exercises and web-based study allowing the student, at their own pace on their own schedule, to gain the knowledge to become a safe, ethical hunter.

## HUNTING ACCIDENTS

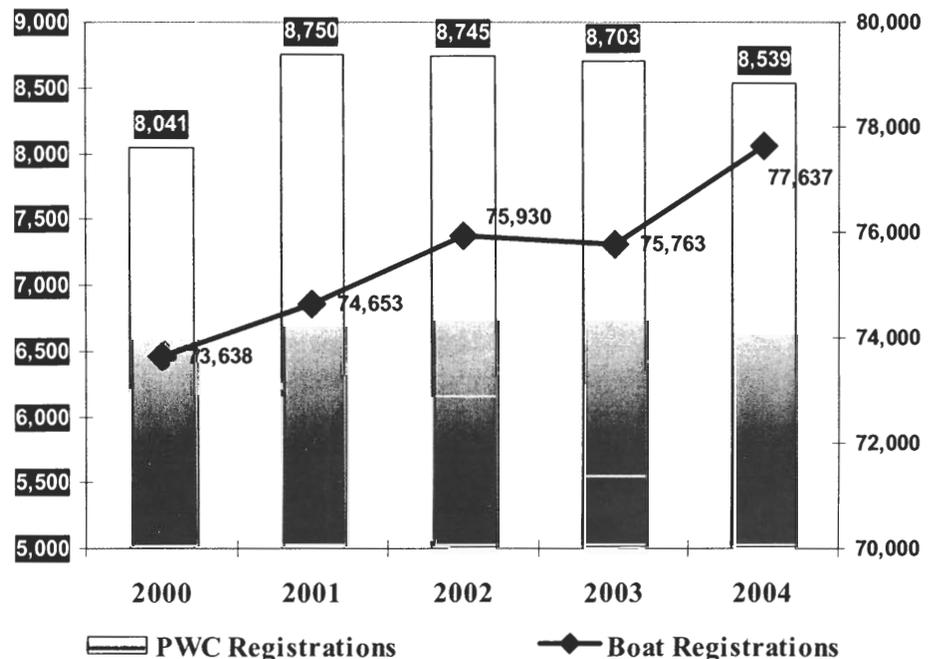
Last year a total of 13 accidents involving injury or death of a hunter were reported to the Commission. The two fatalities in 2004 involved a hunter who drowned and one who was killed in a vehicle accident wherein a vehicle was being used to chase wildlife. This compares to 18 accidents resulting solely from the discharge of a firearm or bow in 2003, with no fatalities. In 2004 five accidents involved a shotgun and four a rifle; one was an injury from a knife being used to clean a deer, one a fall from a tree stand; plus the one drowning, and the hunter killed in a vehicle accident

while chasing a coyote. Injuries were self-inflicted in seven incidents; the victim was injured by someone else in six incidents. This year the major cause of the accidents was the shooter stumbling and falling followed by carelessness with a firearm such as the shooter swinging on game. This reinforces the need to follow the basic rules for safe gun handling taught to all students.

In 2004 the Hunter Education program trained 88 firearm hunter education instructors and 46 bowhunter education instructors. During the year 46 new volunteers became certified firearm instructors and 27 became bow instructors. These were added to the list of approximately 1,200 active instructors.

The Hunter Education program costs the citizens of Nebraska absolutely nothing in additional taxes. The funds expended for the Hunter Education Program are reimbursed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from federal tax dollars collected on the sale of firearms, archery equipment and ammunition.

The Hunter Education program funding and staff resources assist-



ed with the Cornhusker State Trapshoot at Doniphan, the Nebraska High School Small Bore Metallic Silhouette Championship at the Pressey WMA south of Broken Bow, youth skills camps at Gretna and Halsey, several youth days at local gun clubs, the National Wild Turkey Federation "Woman in the Outdoors Program," youth mentored hunting for upland game, small game and big game and the Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program. The program was also spotlighted at this year's State Fair, providing a learning experience to attendees with the .22-caliber shooting booth and the Laser Shot simulation shooting system. Both of these were huge hits with folks attending the Fair.

## BOATING SAFETY

The Boating Safety Program in the Law Enforcement Division has a wide range of duties and responsibilities. The three major areas are:

1. Administration - boat registration data entry and monitoring, new legislation and regulations for boating safety and general oversight of the program budget.
2. Boating Safety Education - certification of instructors, distribution of education materials, certification of students, and providing adequate education classes.
3. Boating Law Enforcement - assisting Conservation Officers with boating safety law enforcement patrols, accident investigation and boat safety equipment examinations.

Boat registration is accomplished by the County Treasurers, who then report the registrations to the Game and Parks Commission as the central repository. Nebraska became a state that requires titling of boats on January 1, 1997. Boating registrations have

increased from 59,755 in 1991 to 77,637 in 2004, with a gradual increase each year. Personal watercraft (PWC) registrations increased from 1,427 in 1991 to 8,539 in 2004. The national average of PWC registrations in 2004 was 10% of the total boat registrations. In Nebraska, PWC registrations make up 11% of the total boat registrations. Nebraska ranks 38th nationally in total boat registrations.

Partnerships with the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles and the County Treasurers continued in 2004 with registration fee remittances and on-line boat registration renewal. All County Treasurers continue to remit registration fees electronically directly to the State Treasurer. The electronic method of direct deposit has allowed a considerable number of boating and agency staff hours to be devoted to other growing tasks. Online boat registration renewals, via the agency's web site, gained popularity in 2004 with boat owners. We believe that the number of renewals online will continue to increase as the general public becomes more familiar with this process. These changes have also helped free up staff time, allowing them to direct their efforts more to Boating Safety Education.

The boating administrative duties include making recommendations to the Commission concerning statute and regulation changes pertaining to boating. In 2004 regulations were modified to allow boating on a number of restricted open waters in the state, and to change the passing score for the Boating Safety Education exam from 70% to 75%.

In 2004 the Nebraska's Boating Safety Education program certified 1,881 students compared to 1,317 in 2003. Twenty four new instructors were certified in 2004 (9 in 2003), bringing the total active boating safety instructor corps to 151. The instructors conducted 96 classes around the state (compared to 83 in 2003). Most of the instructor group is selected from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadron, law enforcement officers and public school teachers.

## BOATING ACCIDENTS

The U.S. Coast Guard and the American Red Cross have estimated that only 10-15% of the non-fatal boating accidents that occur are reported to state programs due to ignorance of the reporting law or difficulty enforcing it. The reporting of minor property dam-



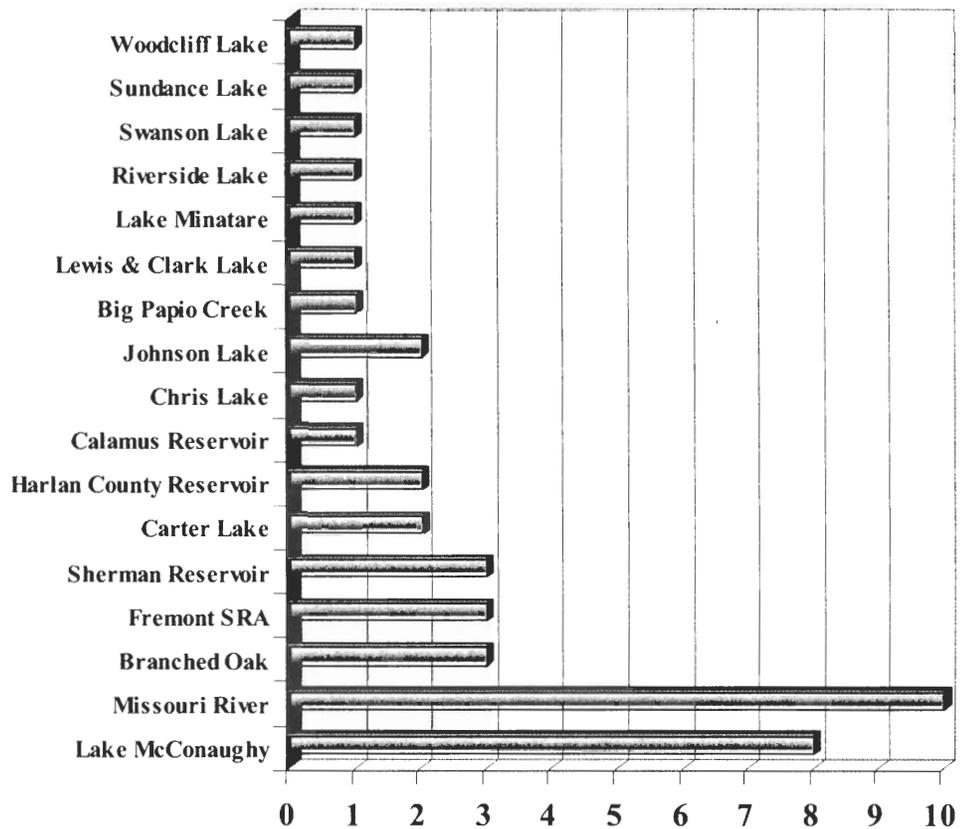
age accidents is especially low. However, we believe that all fatal, and the vast majority of serious injury, boating accidents are reported in Nebraska.

There were 42 accidents in 2004 (46 in 2003) involving 60 boats (54 boats in 2003), which resulted in 26 personal injuries requiring medical assistance (38 in 2003), and 6 fatalities (5 in 2003). At least one personal watercraft was involved in 16 of the 42 accidents, representing 38% of the total accidents (45% in 2003). Of the 59 boat operators involved in accidents, only two reported they were certified in boating safety education. None of the boat operators in the fatality cases had completed a boating safety education class at the time of the accident. The Missouri River is again the most dangerous place for recreational boating, with ten of the reported accidents occurring there. As boat registrations continue to rise there is also an upward trend in boating accidents in the State. There also seems to be a migration of boaters to the Missouri River; possibly due to user conflict and crowded conditions at area lakes.

## SAFE KIDS PARTNERSHIP

In 2004 the Boating Safety Program became involved with the Safe Kids program in the Ogallala area. Safe Kids is a Department of Health and Human Services program geared to promoting child safety in many areas, such as wearing seat belts, home safety, and now boating. For the 2004 Safe Kids pilot project, 400 boating safety T-shirts were provided to kids by Conservation Officers and the western Boating Safety Officer. Posters promoting child boating safety were also distributed as part of our program part-

2004 Boating Accidents by Body of Water



nership. The inclusion of the Safe Kids component to the Boating Safety Program was so successful in 2004, we are planning to implement it statewide in 2005. Another great step in youth education and safety!

## IN SUMMARY

2004 was a good and productive year for the Law Enforcement Division. As can be seen by the wide variety of projects and accomplishments, it was also a busy year. Even with the uncertain budget picture, division staff were able to complete important projects such as hunting and boating accident investigation training, Homeland Security preparedness, provide support for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial signature event and flotilla re-enactment; and to initiate new and exciting educational programs like COYOTE and Safe Kids for boating.

The Law Enforcement Division along with the re-incorporated Hunter Education and Boating Safety programs, looks forward to 2005 and more cooperative accomplishments.

# OPERATIONS AND CONSTRUCTION

The Operations and Construction Division is a service division providing administration, engineering, construction, maintenance and other related work for which special skills and equipment are required. Division work includes the repair, renovation and construction of buildings, roads, parking lots, lakes and underground utilities, and the daily supervision and maintenance of the unmanned recreation areas assigned to the Lincoln Maintenance District.

The work of the Operations and Construction Division can be separated into six general categories:

1. Recreation Area Maintenance: mowing, painting, building repair, garbage pickup, landscaping and tree planting.

2. Recreation Area Management: Campground registration, permit sales, collection and deposit of money, regulation enforcement and visitor information.

3. Utilities: Construction and repair of electric, water and sewer services.

4. Heavy Equipment: Road maintenance, lake dredging, dam building, material and equipment hauling, welding and fabricating.

5. Building and Trades: Building construction and repair, cabinet making, concrete work and roofing.

6. Purchasing and Contract: Specification writing for material and equipment purchase and the letting of small contracts to complement force account work.

## PERSONNEL

The Operations and Construction Division has budget authority for 31 full-time positions. At the end of 2004 there was one vacant position, a Groundskeeper Leader at Lincoln Maintenance. During 2004, 75 seasonal or temporary employees were hired, for which \$531,009.00 was expended.

### Permanent Personnel Hired During 2004

None

### Resignation

Derrick Niederklein at Lincoln Maintenance

## TRANSPORTATION AND EQUIPMENT

The Operations and Construction Division provided a wide variety of equipment such as air compressors, water pumps, tree spades, stump cutters, tractors, trucks and loaders to area superintendents for temporary use to complete numerous needed projects. Bulk purchases of maintenance supplies were delivered to the Lincoln Maintenance Shop, inventoried and transported to the major areas of the park system. Gasoline and diesel fuel were provided for Division vehicles and equipment from pumps at 3001 Y@ Street. During 2004, 11,752 gallons of gasohol, 19,867 gallons of diesel, 16 quarts of oil and 36 gallons of antifreeze were dispensed to Division vehicles and equipment. Average cost per gallon was \$1.659 for gasohol and \$1.379 for diesel. Equipment repair costs for 2004 were \$46,704.00. The average cost of a gallon of gasohol increased \$.3284 and diesel increased \$.3554 in 2004.

## EQUIPMENT

### PURCHASED IN 2004

Volvo 140 hp motor grader with scarifier; fixed-thumb attachment for track excavator; Gehl Model SL5640 skid-steer loader; 3 ea. 1-ton 4x4 pickups with utility boxes and without dual wheels; 1-ton 4x4 pickup with dual wheels and without utility box; 3/4-ton 4x4 pickup; 2-ton 4x4 extended cab pickup; 2 ea. 2-ton 2x4 pickups 40-ton rigid goose neck trailer; 3 ea. tandem-axle tilt-bed trailers; 4 ea. 72" 4-WD, front-mount riding mowers; 5' rotary mower; 16 hp trash pump; 40-ton ironworker; 9,500 watt generator; 7.5 hp air compressor; 2 ea. 8-channel portable radios; 2 computers, 2 printers, copier/scanner/fax office machine; computer software.

## PROJECTS

### COMPLETED IN 2004

#### ARBOR LODGE

Contracted drilling of well and installation of submersible pump to supply non-chlorinated water to the fish pond.

#### ARNOLD TRUPP

Demolished rock house, cleaned area of concrete slabs, and refuse, buried dead trees and debris.

#### BASSWAY STRIP

Assisted with burning and burying brush piles.

#### BIG ALKALI

Upgraded the electrical service in 11 cabins, a fish cleaning station and a concession building.

### **BOWRING RANCH**

Repaired windows, upstairs ceiling, back door sill, garage and driveway on the historical ranch house with funds provided by Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation.

### **BRANCHED OAK**

Prepared site for Area 11 trailer dump station, constructed a 3,200' x 24' crushed-rock-surfaced road between Areas 10 and 11 across Crappie Bay, constructed two 100' x 50' crushed-rock-surfaced parking lots and one 160' x 50' crushed-rock-surfaced parking lot adjacent to newly constructed road; placed 670 tons of Type B riprap for shoreline stabilization at Crappie Bay crossing, completed removal of trees and vegetation for pheasant habitat improvement replaced Horticulture's cold storage unit.

### **CALAMUS SRA & FISH HATCHERY**

Hauled approximately 200 cubic yards of broken concrete riprap from the Twin Loup's Irrigation District Canal and placed riprap along approximately 180 feet of shoreline for stabilization and placed approximately 50 cubic yards of broken concrete riprap at the effluent discharge site of the Fish Hatchery.

### **CHADRON**

Purchased materials for a deck and subcontracted for the utilities for the superintendent's residence; assisted with pouring footings and concrete slab for a storage building

### **CHAMPION MILL**

Contracted the replacement of the wheelhouse roof with funds provided by LB 309.

### **CRYSTAL LAKE**

Repaired fireplaces and replaced roofs on picnic shelters Nos. 2243 and 2308 with funds provided by LB 309.

### **DEEP WELL**

Set up the stage and assisted with April 3, 2004 dedication.

### **ENDERS COW BEACH AREA**

Constructed a 1.5 mile x 24' gravel-surfaced road and one 110' x 150' gravel-surfaced parking lot, contracted for the installation of approximately 13,000 lineal feet of fencing, and contracted for the seeding and mulching of approximately 11.5 acres of land along the road.

### **EUGENE T. MAHONEY**

Made improvements to the Lauritzen Administration Building including: converted storage area to conference room, replaced sidewalk with pavers, replaced counters and sinks in restrooms, repaired/replaced windows, replaced existing HVAC unit with a heat pump system, added light fixtures and outlets; kiosk repairs including replaced exterior door, AC/heater unit, replaced main window and awning, and addition of exterior lights; and constructed theatre sets for productions at Kountze Memorial Theatre.

### **FAIRGROUNDS**

Cleaned, painted, and repaired Agency's complex in preparation for 2004 State Fair; provided night security and ground maintenance during State Fair; repaired the shooting target, counters and walls of the shooting gallery.

### **FORT KEARNY**

Installed two yard hydrants and water line using funds provided by the Agency and LB 309.

### **FORT ROBINSON**

Refurbished stagecoach; installed footings, floor joists, sub-floor and flooring in Cabin 45; repaired/replaced concrete sidewalks as identified by park superintendent; painted Officer's cabins 42, 43 and 44 and Adobes 7, 8, and 9; painted designated Lodge rooms; installed new flooring in Lodge rooms 205 -217.

### **FREMONT**

Removed large rocks from the channel between Lakes 10 and 15; demolished concession stand and hauled rubble to landfill.

### **GROVE LAKE**

Completed third year of a four-year dredging project funded by the Aquatic Habitat Program. It is estimated 49,200 cubic yards of material were pumped from the lake.

### **INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

Assisted with set up and tear down of Sports Shows in Omaha, Lincoln and Council Bluffs, Iowa.

### **JOHNSON LAKE**

Replaced roofs on machine storage building, restroom and boat storage building and replaced electrical panel in the maintenance building using funds provided by LB 309.

### **KIOWA**

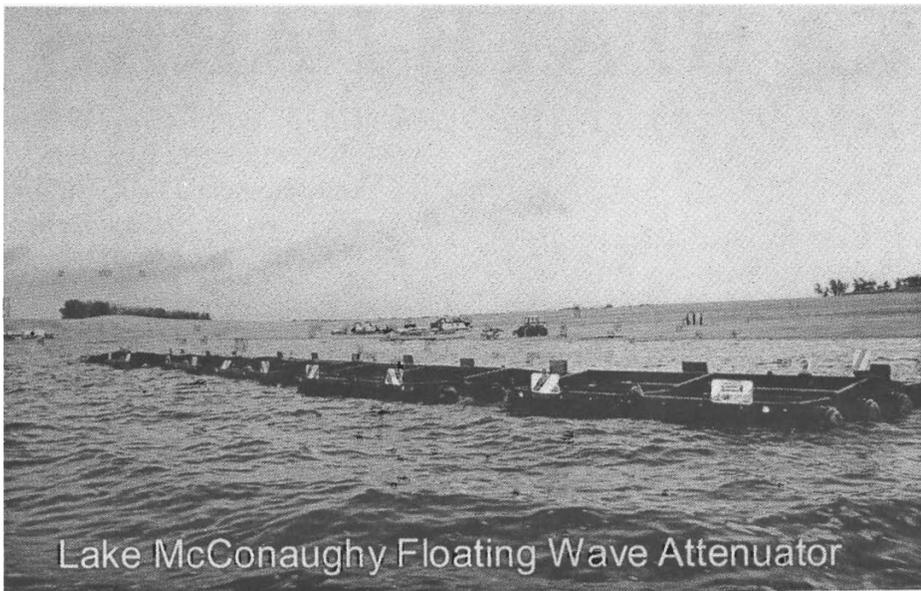
Demolished and buried farm house.

### **LAKE McCONAUGHY**

Constructed and installed wave attenuator for Martin Bay boat ramp; installed lightning arrester on well at Sandy Beach.

### **LAKE MINATARE**

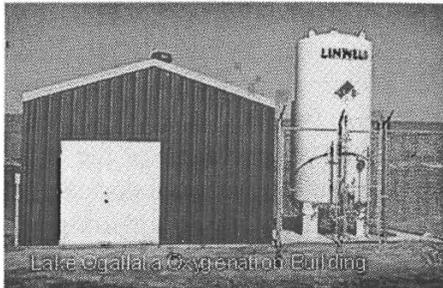
Installed lightning arrester on well.



Lake McConaughy Floating Wave Attenuator

**LAKE OGALLALA**

Installed lightning arresters on two wells; purchased materials and erected two buildings to house lake oxygenation equipment and installed piping to connect diffuser lines. This project was funded by the Bureau of Reclamation.



Lake Ogallala Oxygenation Building

**LEWIS AND CLARK**

Replaced existing PVC rails with stainless steel and installed an electric winch to remove pumps on the sewage lift station; modified and illuminated entrance sign.

**MERIDIAN**

Repaired the large window and porch of superintendent's residence.

**NORTH LAKE BASIN**

Set up the stage and assisted with October 27, 2004 dedication; disked approximately 42 acres of reed canary grass for wetland restoration.

**PARKS**

Constructed and placed 12 ADA toilets in the following locations: one at Branched Oak, one at Fremont, two at Indian Cave, one at Lewis and Clark, one at Louisville, one at Medicine Creek-Trail One, two at Memphis, two at Two Rivers and one at Stagecoach.

**PLATTE RIVER**

Made improvements to pasture for erosion control and repaired check dams; corrected erosion problems along Lied Bridge Trail.

**PONCA**

Constructed and set two new ADA toilets using funds provided by LB 309.

**ROCK CREEK STATION**

Replaced roofs on Visitor Center and shower latrine building using funds provided by LB 309.

**SHERMAN RESERVOIR**

Recovered riprap that had washed into lake and re-stabilized shoreline.

**SIGN SHOP**

Replaced approach to overhead door.

**STAGECOACH**

Installed lightning arrester on well.

**TWO RIVERS**

Relocated swimming beach from Lake Two to Lake Four and set new toilet for beach; installed lightning arrester on well; replaced existing toilet and replaced doors on Cottonwood shower building using funds provided by LB 309.



Victoria Springs ADA Footbridge

**VICTORIA SPRINGS**

Constructed and installed 110' x 8' footbridge; poured a concrete ADA accessible parking pad 30' x 20', a 70' x 5' sidewalk from the parking lot to the shelter, and an 86' x 5' sidewalk from the bridge to the campground.

**WINDMILL**

Rebuilt the wheel, repaired and painted the main and top towers of the 70' windmill and replaced the tower and rebuilt the wheel on the 25' windmill.

# NEBRASKA STATE PARKS

The Division of State Parks is responsible for the administration and operation of Nebraska's system of state park areas. These responsibilities include visitor contact functions, day to day park housekeeping chores, planning and programming improvements, and providing the necessary resource protection and enhancement measures to assure quality outdoor recreation experiences for current and future generations of park users.

State park areas are located throughout Nebraska and offer a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to all residents of the state. Opportunities vary from area to area. Some parks contain modern campgrounds, cabins and swimming pools, and offer supervised trail rides, while at others, visitors may enjoy the cultural interpretation of a historic site or structure. Still other opportunities include boating and fishing at Nebraska's many lakes, primitive camping in the Pine Ridge country, backpacking along the Missouri River and hiking throughout units of the State Park System.

The 87 areas comprising the State Park System fall into the following four classifications:

## STATE PARKS

are public use areas containing statewide significant scenic, scientific and/or historical values and being of sufficient size to allow adequate development without infringing upon the primary values.

## STATE RECREATION AREAS

possess resource values primarily associated with the active outdoor recreation pursuits, day use activities and camping. All the state's major water-oriented areas are of this classification.

## STATE HISTORICAL PARKS

are sites that are of notable historical significance to the State of Nebraska.

## STATE RECREATION TRAILS

are linear corridors of statewide or regio significance, of value for non-motorized recreational use, and which may be equipped with amenities and support facilities appropriate to their intended use.

## PARK PLANNING

Planning provides the ideas and information necessary to solve particular park needs and prepare capital budgets. This is done by providing facility cost estimates, graphic designs and descriptive narratives on park development.

Digital maps on campgrounds as well as overall area maps were

completed on Fort Kearny, Willow Creek, Johnson Lake, Bluestem, Box Butte, Branched Oak, Buffalo Bill, Dead Timber, Enders, Keller, Lake McConaughy, Lake Maloney, Medicine Creek, Memphis, Merritt, Oliver and Pawnee State Recreation Areas for the online reservation system and/or a campground inventory.

## SIGN SHOP

Parks Division: Signs silk-screened this year included camping fee regulation signs, price change decals for the new camping fee rates, swimming pool passes, employee vehicle passes, symbol decals for men and women's barrier free restrooms, camping, hiking, biking and others.

### Arbor Lodge SHP

A new routed sign was created for the new maintenance-building complex at Nebraska City. A 4'x 8' construction site sign for the Save America's Treasures historical restorations at the Arbor Lodge mansion and carriage house. We are currently working on three new routed entrance signs with cut out letters for the main area.

### Eugene T. Mahoney State Park

New interior routed signs were constructed for Little Creek and Lakeside Campgrounds, Livers Family Memorial Shelter and for

AREAS	QUANTITY	WATER OR MARSH	LAND ACRES	TOTAL ACREAGE
State Parks	8	309	30,689	30,757
Recreation Areas	66	66,863	33,952	100,815
Historical Parks	11	0	2,387	2,387
Recreation Trails	2	0	4,144	4,144
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>67,172</b>	<b>71,172</b>	<b>138,103</b>

the renamed Qwest Lake. Theatre marquee signs were created throughout the year for new plays at the Kountze Theatre.

#### **Fort Atkinson SHP**

The old paint on the 3'x 6' Fort Atkinson Federal Historical Marker was stripped, spray-painted and re-lettered for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Celebration.

#### **Fremont SR**

New routed R.V. camping signs were made and installed.

#### **Lewis & Clark SRA**

A new routed sign was created for the Weigand - Burbach Area.

#### **Pelican Point SRA**

A new routed entrance sign was created for the area.

#### **Platte River State Park**

New Nebraska Game and Parks Commission logos were created for the entrance signs at the park. Aluminum lettering was installed on the new park office building.

#### **Ponca State Park**

Routed interior park signs were constructed for the park.

#### **Summit Lake SRA**

A new routed entrance sign was created for the area.

#### **Two Rivers SRA**

New trout lake regulation signs were designed and created with the Fisheries Division for Lake Number 5. Interior routed signs were constructed for the area.

#### **State Fair**

Buildings in "Old Town" were repainted and lettering touched up. New signs were created for "Outdoor Alley."

## **SNOWMOBILE TRAIL CASH FUND**

In 1981, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission established a Snowmobile Land Leasing program using the Nebraska Snowmobile Trail Cash Fund to provide additional lands for public snowmobiling to supplement those trails established on state recreation areas. The land leasing program is administered in cooperation with the Nebraska State Snowmobile Association. N.S.S.A. affiliated clubs initiate contact with landowners for proposed land sites. Applications for lease sites are then reviewed by the Snowmobile Advisory Board. The Board presents its recommendations to the Commission for those applications which should be funded or rejected.

Private lands are leased for the period beginning December 1 through April 30 and the current rates have been established at a maximum of \$2 per acre or \$100 per corridor mile trail 100 feet in width. For the 2004-2005 season, no acres of private land were leased.

## **PARK HORTICULTURE AND LANDSCAPE PROGRAM**

The mission statement of Park Horticulture and Landscape Program is "To promote the planting and proper care of trees, shrubs and wildflowers in landscapes of Nebraska State Park System."

Staff of Parks Landscape Services (PLS) made much progress with tree trimming and related arboriculture work at the following parks during 2004:

Indian Cave, Mahoney and Platte River state parks; Branched Oak, Louisville, Schramm, Fremont Lakes, Lewis and Clark, Victoria Springs, Pawnee, Pibel and Two Rivers state recreation areas; Bowring Ranch, Fort Hartsuff, Fort Kearny and Arbor Lodge state historical parks. Permanent and seasonal staff from PLS traveled to various parks listed and worked with area staff to perform 1,500 hours of tree trimming and repair work.

Early in the year the staff of PLS redefined and streamlined the Parks Hazard Tree Inspection and Management Program, in place since 1989. Staff developed a manual for Park Superintendents, which describes methods, tools and purpose for inspection and identification of hazard trees. In addition the manual provides forms, methods and protocol for documenting the corrective or removal work used to manage hazard trees in State Parks and Recreation Areas. In-service training to implement the manual was provided to all Superintendents at Regional Park Meetings during the year.

Again this year many trees and shrubs were produced in the Park Landscape Nurseries and distributed to various park areas. During 2004 the following quantities were produced and shipped: 1,300 shade trees grown in "root control bags," 1,200 landscape grade shrubs and 200 shade tree seedlings grown in containers. This year the following parks utilized trees and shrubs from the landscape program nursery: Chadron, Mahoney and Platte River state parks; Windmill, Memphis, Keller, Lewis and Clark, Wagon Train, Rockford, Bluestem, Pawnee, Branched Oak, Lake McConaughy, Lake Minatare, Johnson Lake, Fremont, Medicine Creek, StageCoach and

Louisville State Recreation Areas and Arbor Lodge State Historical Park.

Throughout the year PLS staff assisted several parks with installation or renovation of landscapes. Work continued in 2004 on the landscape installation at the Ponca State Park Missouri River Educational Center. Additional trees and shrubs were planted in the campground at Keller Park State Recreation Area, and renovation of the grounds at the Lincoln Central Office continued with help from the Take Pride in America volunteers.

PLS Staff continued to assist Park Superintendents in 2004 with selected forest management projects. The second timber sale and harvest for the Chadron State Park Forest Fire Management Plan was initiated in the fall and will be completed April 30, 2005. A fuels reduction grant obtained from the U.S. Forest by staff of the Nebraska Forest Service will fund 50% of the final contracted thinning needed of unmerchantable, small diameter trees at the park during the remainder of 2005. At the close of 2004, planning was progressing well for an interpretative trail with educational signage to educate visitors at Chadron State Park about the forest management projects of the Chadron Forest Fire Management Plan.

## **EVENTS, IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

State Parks and Recreation areas across the state all suffered from the fifth year of drought conditions with extreme drought conditions in the southwest portion of the state. Boat ramps at several reservoirs have been extended by area staff.

The State of Nebraska converted to a new computer operated system known as Nebraska Information Systems (NIS) in 2002. Payroll, cash deposits, payables, fixed assets and all existing contracts including service contracts were entered into the system during 2003. In 2004, procurement and employee self-help were added.

The Great Lodge-supported web-based reservation system was launched in 2003 at five "pilot areas." During 2004, an additional 19 areas have been added to the reservation system.

A number of lakes experienced blooms of Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, resulting in the closure or partial closure of affected water bodies. Toxins produced by Cyanobacteria can cause human and animal health problems. The most significant impacts were experienced at Pawnee Lake and Lake #20 at Fremont, two heavily visited water-based recreation areas. Other SRAs affected included: Alexandria, Branched Oak, Enders, Fremont 9 and 10 and Victory Lake, Lake McConaughy, Louisville, Merritt, Mormon Island, Red Willow, Schramm, Two Rivers and Windmill.

The Commission participated in "Take Pride in America" program in partnership with the US

Department of Interior as the coordinating agency at the request of Governor Mike Johanns. More than 800 supporters volunteered at 31 parks, historical parks, recreation areas and wildlife management areas across the state in May.

Fort Atkinson hosted the 7th Signature Event of the Lewis & Clark Bi-centennial Commemoration. The event "First Tribal Council" was held July 31 - August 3.

Construction was completed on a water and septic system replacements for the Fort Robinson complex. Cabins L10, L11, 45 and Bricks 15 and 16 were the recipients of major renovations as part of the ongoing facility renewal program.

## **PERSONNEL**

Park's Administration, Horticulture, Landscape, Sign Shop and Planning have a staff of 21 permanent and seven seasonal employees. The 87 park areas are maintained by a permanent staff of 141 people.

Forty-five park and recreation areas are staffed with resident personnel and these areas utilize 121 of the permanent field positions. Staffed areas also maintain eight satellite areas. The remaining 20 field positions are assigned to other recreation areas and park maintenance crews to perform maintenance on the remaining 32 unstaffed areas and two recreation trails. Some 874 temporary seasonal employees assisted the permanent parks' staff during the main recreation season. Several areas used the volunteer services of local groups, military units and campground hosts in addition to seasonal employees. Lewis and Clark enjoyed the benefits of an inmate labor crew.

The Southwest reservoirs and Buffalo Bill State Historical Park utilized crews from the McCook Work Ethic Camp.

## STAFF CHANGES

### New Hires

Patricia Martinez, OC III, ETM  
 Robert Grosvenor, Fac Maint  
 Spec, Ponca

### Promotions

Rebecca Serres, Supt I, Ft Rob  
 Gerald Mahoney, Fac Maint  
 Spec, ETM  
 Jean Nelson, OC III, Ponca

### Resignations

Tiffany Spickelmeier, Supt I, Ft Rob  
 Sarah Winfrey, Supt I, Wildcat Hills  
 Stephanie Doran, Custodian, ETM  
 Steven Schiltz, GKL, Valentine Maintenance  
 Caleb Morgenson, Supt I, Indian Cave  
 Colleen Staman, OC II, Ft Rob  
 Morgan Harris, GKL, Enders  
 Aaron McKinney, OC III, Chadron  
 Derrick Niederklein, GKL, Lincoln Maintenance  
 Ed Leeling, Fac Maint Spec, Ft Rob

### Retirements

Cliff Oakley, Supt I, Red Willow

### Deceased

Larry Roper, Supt III, Johnson Lake

REGION	# OF AREAS	MANNED AREAS	UNSTAFFED AREAS	PERMANENT EMPLOYEES	SEASONAL POSITIONS
Northwest Region	18	7	11	19	201
Central Region	46	23	23	40	199
Eastern Region	21	15	6	82	472
Trails	2		2		2
Total	87	45	42	141	874

# VISITATIONS

Accurate counts of park visitors are difficult to achieve. Most areas have multiple accesses and over 2/5 of the park and recreation

areas within the state are unstaffed. There are 53 reporting areas in the system that contribute most of the total visitor count. Thirty-one areas are credited with conservative lump sum visitor

estimates. One area was closed to public access for development purposes during this reporting period. The following tables show visitation by area and the annual camping and lodging report.

VISITATION 2004	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
ARBOR LODGE SHP	500	500	500	15,000	20,000	11,000	15,000	15,000	20,000	30,000	1,000	600	129,100
ASHFALL SHP	265	335	488	947	2,308	2,945	4,003	2,918	1,888	1,093	491	320	18,001
ASH HOLLOW SHP	550	550	700	1,100	1,500	1,226	1,307	2,600	400	500	700	1,000	12,133
BLUESTEM SRA	1,341	1,696	2,472	4,797	11,692	14,920	20,283	14,784	9,567	5,536	2,490	1,623	91,201
BOWRING RANCH SHI	0	0	140	84	623	1,849	1,474	1,334	357	70	84	942	6,957
BOX BUTTE SRA	120	100	250	300	900	1,000	1,500	1,200	800	200	150	200	6,720
BRANCHED OAK SRA	22,015	44,863	23,195	47,292	144,333	119,035	161,634	92,656	59,815	37,734	25,522	22,246	800,340
BRIDGEPORT SRA	600	350	1,400	795	1,750	2,789	5,400	2,700	1,211	879	1,300	1,100	20,274
BUFFALO BILL SHP	300	326	425	486	3,509	1,593	4,642	3,000	2,024	908	897	2,020	20,130
CALAMUS SRA	5,250	5,250	5,425	4,554	48,136	76,370	103,654	85,920	85,920	4,997	4,997	4,997	435,470
CHADRON SP	2,800	2,700	2,800	13,587	26,445	32,124	45,819	34,227	21,453	10,500	10,500	2,700	205,655
CHAMPION MILL SHP	105	105	140	210	1,575	1,575	1,575	1,575	438	260	175	175	7,908
CONESTOGA SRA	3,321	4,872	9,642	33,897	28,029	33,816	50,679	15,132	14,148	6,312	3,528	3,315	206,691
DEAD TIMBER SRA	500	500	500	1,500	2,500	3,000	2,500	3,500	3,500	2,500	1,200	500	22,200
ENDERS SRA	1,400	1,050	1,312	1,750	6,650	8,750	6,300	4,200	5,250	1,400	1,050	700	39,812
EUGENE T. MAHONEY	43,300	42,400	49,800	56,100	89,800	118,000	165,100	158,300	90,200	86,800	56,200	59,600	1,015,600
FORT ATKINSON SHP	125	202	645	1,000	5,850	7,750	40,000	49,000	4,500	5,250	875	425	115,622
FORT HARTSUFF SHP	0	10	400	1,000	3,900	3,900	3,900	4,250	2,500	1,250	100	50	21,260
FORT KEARNY SHP	100	250	5300	1900	8200	11000	16000	10000	2600	425	350	75	56,200
FORT KEARNY SRA	225	575	6,500	6,400	12,500	28,000	33,000	16,000	15,000	1,800	350	200	120,550
FORT ROBINSON SP	849	1,405	2,067	4,138	35,547	55,753	155,798	45,791	37,945	4,101	4,983	3,687	352,064
FREMONT SRA	10,100	9,300	30,150	32,100	121,000	150,100	150,350	146,350	91,410	60,000	19,350	7,000	827,210
INDIAN CAVE SP	300	300	1,300	7,000	22,750	12,950	15,750	14,000	23,000	59,500	7,700	2,500	167,050
JOHNSON LAKE SRA	1,500	1,500	1,582	4,500	43,968	49,084	52,539	47,943	25,608	5,922	1,531	500	236,177
LAKE MALONEY SRA	600	2,000	3,000	3,600	20,000	36,000	48,000	35,000	17,500	1,500	1,000	1,000	169,200
LAKE MCCONAUGHY	2,561	4,230	5,665	7,120	98,570	107,905	208,025	104,885	102,250	12,594	738	827	655,370
LAKE MINATARE SRA	400	1,000	2,700	3,000	12,300	13,000	17,150	9,000	3,500	500	0	0	62,550
LEWIS & CLARK SRA	6,310	5,644	8,042	14,905	30,396	42,366	63,109	56,080	20,575	11,049	8,235	5,974	272,685
LOUISVILLE SRA	2,250	3,600	9,600	21,000	60,000	93,000	120,000	114,000	78,000	63,000	22,500	2,400	589,350
MEDICINE CREEK SR/	2,485	2,135	2,712	2,730	7,788	7,350	7,510	7,000	2,975	1,085	4,095	2,170	50,035
MERRITT SRA	2,300	1,900	1,900	2,200	17,000	15,600	42,480	10,800	9,656	2,370	4,500	1,500	112,206
MORMON ISLAND SR/	500	750	4,500	5,000	20,000	40,000	40,000	25,000	25,000	5,000	4,000	1,000	170,750
NIORARA SP	2,625	1,750	3,587	15,000	17,500	24,500	21,000	26,250	18,500	15,800	9,450	3,500	159,462
OLIVE CREEK SRA	220	278	405	786	1,917	2,446	3,325	2,423	1,568	907	408	266	14,949
OLIVER RES SRA	475	475	1,620	863	1,825	3,560	6,075	3,200	1,875	923	1,475	1,230	23,596
PAWNEE SRA	5,331	5,235	11,964	59,430	64,830	83,526	119,073	25,917	21,381	14,835	6,081	5,148	422,751

NIOBRARA SP	2,625	1,750	3,587	15,000	17,500	24,500	21,000	26,250	18,500	15,800	9,450	3,500	159,462
OLIVE CREEK SRA	220	278	405	786	1,917	2,446	3,325	2,423	1,568	907	408	266	14,949
OLIVER RES SRA	475	475	1,620	863	1,825	3,560	6,075	3,200	1,875	923	1,475	1,230	23,596
PAWNEE SRA	5,331	5,235	11,964	59,430	64,830	83,526	119,073	25,917	21,381	14,835	6,081	5,148	422,751
PLATTE RIVER SP	7,032	9,458	17,945	15,762	42,315	111,135	92,767	76,388	37,830	30,313	19,885	10,670	471,500
PONCA SP	800	4,000	4,500	13,000	65,000	100,000	125,000	130,000	40,000	60,000	9,200	7,000	558,500
RED WILLOW SRA	150	1,500	1,500	2,400	12,600	5,862	7,116	18,865	16,135	612	1,052	309	68,101
ROCK CREEK STAT SHI	700	525	875	2,275	4,200	5,775	4,620	4,725	4,725	4,340	945	875	34,580
SCHRAMM SRA	1,073	1,358	1,978	3,840	9,359	11,943	16,235	11,833	7,658	4,431	1,993	1,299	73,000
SHERMAN SRA	1,050	3,500	1,400	7,665	10,500	3,325	3,815	9,450	3,850	2,100	2,275	2,100	51,030
SMITH FALLS SP	50	75	176	475	2,262	13,210	27,890	26,371	2,532	210	125	45	73,421
STAGECOACH SRA	1,114	1,410	2,054	3,987	9,718	12,401	16,858	12,287	7,951	4,601	2,069	1,349	75,799
SUMMIT SRA	500	500	2,000	7,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	7,500	9,000	2,500	0	69,000
SUTHERLAND SRA	300	1,400	2,200	2,000	6,000	6,000	8,000	6,000	3,000	500	1,250	700	37,350
SWANSON SRA	225	600	1,200	2,145	2,535	2,730	4,290	2,535	3,120	1,170	1,350	750	22,650
TWO RIVERS SRA	3,600	4,000	17,200	58,208	40,808	35,312	38,712	32,848	26,292	2,048	4,440	2,800	266,268
VICTORIA SPRINGS SR	50	35	200	400	3,500	6,000	7,000	6,000	1,600	400	120	50	25,355
WAGON TRAIN SRA	1,470	1,860	2,710	5,260	12,820	16,360	22,240	16,210	10,490	6,070	2,730	1,780	100,000
WILDCAT HILLS SRA	737	275	720	575	500	1,600	1,675	570	2,096	583	1,000	576	10,907
WILLOW CREEK SRA	2,275	2,275	8,750	10,850	24,500	38,500	32,200	28,000	22,750	5,700	4,900	1,000	181,700
WINDMILL SRA	1,000	900	1,600	1,800	6,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	7,000	3,000	1,600	1,500	50,400
31 UNMANNED AREAS	4,101	5,189	7,561	14,675	35,768	45,644	62,050	45,226	29,267	16,935	7,617	4,966	278,999
<b>MONTHLY TOTAL</b>	<b>147,850</b>	<b>186,996</b>	<b>277,397</b>	<b>528,389</b>	<b>1,294,474</b>	<b>1,652,079</b>	<b>2,242,922</b>	<b>1,637,743</b>	<b>1,056,111</b>	<b>609,513</b>	<b>273,056</b>	<b>179,261</b>	<b>10,085,789</b>

FEE CAMPGROUNDS 04	REGISTRATIONS	PARTICIPANTS	CAMPING DAYS	AVE PART/REG	AVE DAYS/PART
ALEXANDRIA SRA	1,000	2,716	8,542	2.72	3.15
ARNOLD SRA	86	212	572	2.47	2.70
ATKINSON SRA	129	320	758	2.48	2.37
BLUESTEM SRA	1,250	4,394	12,918	3.52	2.94
BOWMAN LAKE SRA	49	169	512	3.45	3.03
BOX BUTTE SRA	722	2,088	4,380	2.89	2.10
BRANCHED OAK SRA	9,471	86,037	254,328	9.08	2.96
BRIDGEPORT SRA	628	1,867	4,789	2.97	2.57
BROWNVILLE SRA	48	124	397	2.58	3.20
BUFFALO BILL SRA	691	1,680	3,853	2.43	2.29
CALAMUS SRA	5,000	17,358	118,535	3.47	6.83
CHADRON SP	2,068	7,964	15,936	3.85	2.00
CHAMPION LAKE	36	114	317	3.17	2.78
CHEYENNE SRA	79	215	454	2.72	2.11
CONESTOGA SRA	2,348	5,374	16,826	2.29	3.13
COTTONWOOD LAKE SRA	264	911	2,760	3.45	3.03
CRYSTAL LAKE SRA	275	630	1,510	2.29	2.40
DEAD TIMBER SRA	428	1,435	3,794	3.35	2.64
E T MAHONEY SP	6,816	25,552	90,124	3.75	3.53
ENDERS SRA	1,171	3,568	11,082	3.05	3.11
FORT KEARNY SRA	4,397	11,552	25,518	2.63	2.21
FORT ROBINSON SP	2,425	7,249	19,201	2.99	2.65
FREMONT SRA	7,355	26,628	89,581	3.62	3.36
GALLAGHER CANYON SRA	486	1,236	2,472	2.54	2.00
INDIAN CAVE SP	5,552	16,866	49,313	3.04	2.92
JOHNSON LAKE SRA	5,682	17,234	33,654	3.03	2.11
KELLER PARK SRA	538	1,425	3,662	2.65	2.57
LAKE MAC SRA	8,864	27,311	84,761	3.08	3.10
LAKE MALONEY SRA	3,512	6,605	13,210	1.88	2.00
LAKE MINATARE SRA	1,877	6,291	23,690	3.35	3.77
LAKE OGALLALA SRA	4,643	13,646	33,211	2.94	2.43
LEWIS & CLARK SRA	4,417	16,984	58,984	3.85	3.47
LONG PINE SRA	382	1,324	3,579	3.47	2.70
LOUISVILLE SRA	9,883	29,917	72,185	3.03	2.41
MEDICINE CREEK SRA	2,021	6,534	22,033	3.23	3.37
MEMPHIS SRA	821	2,905	7,076	3.54	2.44
MERRITT SRA	3,117	9,475	30,102	3.04	3.18
MORMON ISLAND SRA	2,535	6,754	15,919	2.66	2.36
NIOBRARA SP	1,006	2,029	4,826	2.02	2.38
OLIVE CREEK SRA	231	692	1,614	3.00	2.33
OLIVER RES SRA	903	2,616	6,593	2.90	2.52
PAWNEE SRA	6,141	14,843	45,710	2.42	3.08
PELICAN POINT SRA	72	192	470	2.67	2.45
PIBEL LAKE SRA	291	985	2,985	3.38	3.03
PONCA SP	2,820	9,588	30,933	3.40	3.23
RED WILLOW SRA	479	871	2,525	1.82	2.90
RIVERVIEW MARINA SRA	414	1,428	4,327	3.45	3.03

ROCK CREEK LAKE SRA	76	166	518	2.18	3.12
ROCK CREEK STATION SHP	964	2,388	6,976	2.48	2.92
ROCKFORD LAKE SRA	347	1,164	3,317	3.35	2.85
SHERMAN SRA	1,895	5,180	10,892	2.73	2.10
SMITH FALLS SP	629	3,961	11,078	6.30	2.80
STAGECOACH SRA	453	1,365	3,365	3.01	2.47
SUMMIT SRA	249	872	2,065	3.50	2.37
SUTHERLAND SRA	602	1,309	2,618	2.17	2.00
SWANSON SRA	501	1,796	5,208	3.58	2.90
TWO RIVERS SRA	8,406	17,461	49,041	2.08	2.81
VERDON LAKE SRA	34	87	240	2.56	2.76
VICTORIA SPRINGS SRA	671	1,835	5,287	2.73	2.88
WAGON TRAIN SRA	1,037	3,425	9,358	3.30	2.73
WALGREN LAKE SRA	197	548	1,096	2.78	2.00
WAR AXE SRA	43	110	228	2.56	2.07
WILDCAT HILLS SRA	106	257	619	2.42	2.41
WILLOW CREEK SRA	2,314	8,372	24,471	3.62	2.92
WINDMILL SRA	2,075	5,655	14,444	2.73	2.55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>134,022</b>	<b>461,859</b>	<b>1,391,342</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>3.02</b>

<b>CABINS 04</b>	<b>REGISTRATIONS</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>CABIN DAYS</b>	<b>AVE PART/REG</b>	<b>AVE DAYS/PART</b>
CHADRON SP	892	4,462	9,698	5.00	2.17
ET MAHONEY SP CABIN	4,651	34,961	121,622	7.52	3.48
ET MAHONEY SP LODGE	3,518	19,224	60,292	5.46	3.14
FORT ROB SP CABINS	1,291	6,569	19,523	5.09	2.97
FORT ROB SP LODGE	1,272	2,558	5,979	2.01	2.34
LEWIS AND CLARK SRA	798	3,825	14,789	4.79	3.87
NIOBRARA SP	1,418	4,925	16,059	3.47	3.26
PLATTE RIVER SP	2,769	17,435	56,085	6.30	3.22
PONCA SP	1,505	4,553	14,546	3.03	3.19
TWO RIVERS SRA	672	1,674	4,888	2.49	2.92
VICTORIA SPRINGS SRA	57	171	1,172	3.00	6.85
FORT ROB SP LODGE	1,272	2,558	5,979	2.01	2.34
LEWIS AND CLARK SRA	798	3,825	14,789	4.79	3.87
NIOBRARA SP	1,418	4,925	16,059	3.47	3.26
PLATTE RIVER SP	2,769	17,435	56,085	6.30	3.22
PONCA SP	1,505	4,553	14,546	3.03	3.19
TWO RIVERS SRA	672	1,674	4,888	2.49	2.92
VICTORIA SPRINGS SRA	57	171	1,172	3.00	6.85
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18,843</b>	<b>100,357</b>	<b>324,653</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>3.23</b>



# REALTY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

## ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Environmental Services (ES) staff members interact with many federal and state agencies, Natural Resources Districts (NRDs), counties, municipalities and private individuals. ES staff are the principal liaisons with other government agencies to coordinate and plan environmental reviews affecting fish and wildlife resources.

ES staff evaluate potential impacts of project proposals by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Federal Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Roads, local governmental entities, consultants and private individuals. The staff also works closely with various Nebraska Game and Parks Commission specialists to coordinate many project reviews.

## 404 PERMIT REVIEW PROGRAM

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. The 404 Permit Program, administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, offers the Game and Parks Commission, as well as other agencies and individuals, the opportunity to evaluate proposed developments affecting streams and wetlands. Recommendations to reduce or eliminate adverse effects on fish and wildlife habitat are sent to the Corps for their consideration in the permit process.

In one case a landowner wanted to place seven large jetties and hundreds of feet of riprap on the bank. Although unnecessary, he wanted to "protect" his ground from future erosion. A site inspection and review by NGPC and USFWS influenced the applicant to withdraw the application.

In another case, the landowner wanted to use concrete (with rebar and garbage) to armor the banks and make jetties. Many times, the convenient dumping location for old concrete leads to unneeded 404 permits and another move toward a more controlled, unnatural river.

## THREE-STATE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Since 1998, staff has been very active with the cooperative agreement between Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and the U.S. Department of the Interior in the Platte River Endangered Species Partnership. The agreement addresses the needs of four threatened and endangered species that use the Central Platte River - the whooping crane, least tern, piping plover and pallid sturgeon. The agreement will lead to the development and implementation of a recovery program.

During the cooperative agreement, signed in 1997, committees are filling in framework details. To continue after the agreement ends, a final phased program will have to be adopted by all three states. ES staff has been most active on the New Depletions Committee, Water Action Plan and as a sponsor of a closely related program called the Cooperative Hydrology Study (COHYST). Other NGPC staff are active on the Technical

Committee and several subcommittees.

The New Depletions Program is set up to prevent or reduce the increase of new depletions or future consumptive use of water. The Water Action Plan is designed to get new water into the river or re-time the flow of existing water to achieve target flows at times when such flows are not normally there. The Land Committee is working toward a Phase One goal of acquiring 10,000 acres of suitable habitat for endangered species from willing participants.

Lastly, the COHYST program is a massive hydrological study designed to identify the location and magnitude of any interrelationship between groundwater, stream flows, and target flows of the Platte River.

## LOWER PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR ALLIANCE

Staff participated in the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance, an umbrella organization of state and local agencies that fosters development and implementation of locally drawn strategies, actions and practices to protect and restore the vitality of the Lower Platte River's resources.

NGPC also takes part in the Lower Platte River Feasibility Study. Main components include the Plattsmouth Chute Project (now under the Corps' Shallow Water Habitat Program), which the Commission sponsors; the Sand Creek Restoration Project (Lake Wanahoo) and the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Levee Project. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's role emphasizes

avoidance, minimization and mitigation of impacts to fish and wildlife resources.

Cumulative Impacts Study of the Lower Platte River

In June of 2003, a partnership was formed to complete a cumulative impact trend analysis of the Lower Platte River. The Lower Platte River features habitat for an exceptional amount of biodiversity and this project seeks to facilitate the protection of this ecosystem by understanding the riverine and landscape functions. This project is a unique, geographically based project aimed at protecting the critical environment in the river corridor by using geospatial analysis methods to assess long-term ecosystem changes and to determine the risk associated with large-scale infrastructure and development plans.

The Project is multi-media in nature, focusing on the interaction of the land and water and how changes have shaped the integrity of the Lower Platte River corridor. This proposal has the support of, and is coordinated with, federal, state and local agencies as well as non-government organizations in a regional attempt to provide a rational framework in which to understand and prioritize growth in the river corridor while protecting the region's ecological integrity. The main product of the study will be a state-of-the-art Geographic Information System (GIS) product that will show the trends for different habitats and structures (i.e. wetlands, grasslands, timber, channel width, sandbar complexes, levees, bank stabilization, sandpits, housing, etc.) Uses of the product include a long-term planning tool for all of the partners involved, better consultations for state and federal actions and a guide for mitigation of various project impacts.

## **LOWER PLATTE INTER-LOCAL AGREEMENT**

Considerable time was spent in 2004 on the implementation of the Inter-Local Cooperative Agreement for the pallid sturgeon/sturgeon chub study of the Lower Platte River. The agreement includes 15 parties - the Commission, eight NRDs, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD), Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID), Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), Loup Public Power District (LPPD), North Loup Public Power and Irrigation District (NLPP&ID), and Twin Loups Reclamation District. The agreement resulted from a large effort to determine to what extent depletions to the Lower Platte could be made without adversely affecting the pallid sturgeon and sturgeon chub. A five-year study of the pallid sturgeon and sturgeon chub by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is being funded by all partners (except NARD), plus the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It will identify habitat needs of the two species and determine if more development is feasible.

## **WETLAND MITIGATION BANK REVIEW TEAM (MBRT)**

ES staff also serves on the Wetland Mitigation Bank Review Team (MBRT), which includes representatives from the Commission, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Federal Highway Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service,

Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency. Regional mitigation banks encourage the development of larger-scale regional wetland complexes that can be managed better and maintained in perpetuity for the public benefit. MBRT meets bi-monthly with site tours and inspections as needed. ES works closely with the agency's Wetland Programs Manager on this team.

## **ONGOING PROJECTS**

Nebraska continues to participate in the Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project with Iowa, Kansas and Missouri to address environmental concerns related to the channelized Missouri River from Sioux City, Iowa to St. Louis, Missouri. ES staff is currently working on regulatory aspects of the projects, which includes the review and coordination of responses to the associated Section 10 and 404 Permit public notices along with the applicable National Environmental Policy Act documents.

In 1997, staff began reviewing preliminary zoning and other proposed developments from the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County planning department, providing comments for evaluation. This is a very early review, allowing developers to modify a project if potential impacts are pointed out.

Among ongoing activities requiring Commission participation are various actions by the Department of Natural Resources (small watershed projects and Natural Resource Development Fund projects), NRDs, power companies, consulting firms, airport authorities, power line corridor studies and airport facility development. Technical assistance was also provided to consulting engineering firms during preliminary design stages of wastewater treatment facilities and construction work

plans of rural electric cooperatives, plus many miscellaneous National Environmental Policy Act reviews.

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are a powerful set of computer mapping and analysis tools. The agency uses these technologies to create, manage, display and analyze a number of spatial databases. Realty/ES handles GIS support for the agency and represents the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at various GIS inter-agency groups, such as the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Cumulative Impacts Study of the Lower Platte, Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation and the Surface Water Framework Data Working Group. The Commission is a voting member on the GIS Steering Committee.

GIS services and technical support are provided to the Wildlife, Fisheries, Parks, Information and Education and Administration Divisions. Tasks include project coordination, data acquisition, technical support and software and hardware maintenance. Mapping Applications support the collection of deer and antelope survey information and assist in setting the dates for the various hunting seasons. The deer unit map has been especially useful for Permits and Wildlife Division staff. The agency acquired rectified color aerial photographs taken in April 2004 for the entire state. New data sets are being constantly acquired and every effort made to keep the data current.

Agency GIS databases are used to create maps for staff and public use. Bald eagle nest sites, wild turkey sightings and birding trail maps were plotted in the last year. The Heritage Program is currently

analyzing data to identify regions of interest that would help focus conservation efforts in the state. An advanced Internet mapping service that hosts agency properties is available for public use. The URL for this website is <http://mapserver.ngpc.state.ne.us/wbsite/gpcland/viewer.htm>. Maps for various brochures and other agency publications were also developed.

GIS is being used to create resource management plans for the Cumulative Impact Study of the Lower Platte. Data is being developed and gathered by the agency and its partners. In the coming years this data would be used to develop predictive models to assess long-term ecosystem changes and determine the risk and impacts associated with individual large-scale infrastructure and development projects, as well as the combined effect of the many activities in the Lower Platte River corridor.

Lake mapping efforts are under way and more bodies of water will be mapped in the coming months. Depth contour data was gathered by Fisheries at a number of sites and mapped.

Within the division, GIS is used to maintain property records, enter

databases, and the existing Nebraska Game and Parks Commission property map will be reprinted to meet the demands of the agency and the public. Over 500 copies of the GIS-produced Game and Parks Commission properties map have been sold since its introduction. The property map was updated in December 2004 to reflect the new properties acquired by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

## REALTY

The Realty section is involved in land acquisitions, appraisals, appraisal reviews, in-lieu-of-tax payments, lease renewals, lease payments and cancellations, negotiations and public hearings for the agency. Following is a list of the projects assisted with or accomplished in 2004.

## FISH & WILDLIFE

**Appraisals:** Four completed  
**Appraisal Reviews:** Four reviews complete

**Acquisitions:** In 2004, the Commission took title to the following tracts

2004 Land Acquisitions		
Area Name	County	Acres
Cedar Canyon WMA	Scotts Bluff	2,200.00
Chadron Creek Ranch WMA	Dawes	1,402.56

Little Salt Creek WMA	Lancaster	156.03
Shypoke WMA	Seward	160.00
Wapiti WMA	Lincoln	1,280.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,198.59</b>

survey data into digital databases and record new land acquisitions. These records are linked to a land database maintained by Realty. Maps for commission meetings are produced from GIS

2003 Taxes Paid in 2004		
Funding Source	Acres	Tax Amount
Federal	40,048.54	\$226,405.77
State	11,911.56	\$78,973.89
<b>Total</b>	51,960.10	\$305,379.66

## **LWCF - Parks**

### **Appraisal Reviews:**

Five completed

In-Lieu-of-Taxes

Paid on 421 Parcel IDs in 56  
counties

### **Leasing**

179 leases managed

# WILDLIFE

Wildlife Division efforts focus on four main areas in an effort to manage our wildlife resources: Research and inventory, resource management, habitat management, and education. Balancing the desires of the public with the limitations of the resource is a challenging endeavor.

**A total of \$8.7 million dollars was expended in 2004.**

## WHERE DID THE MONEY COME FROM?

Wildlife expenditures came from the Game Cash Fund (55%) and the Habitat Cash Fund (41%). Game Fund money comes primarily from license sales and federal aid reimbursements. Habitat Fund revenues come from Habitat Stamp sales and federal aid reimbursements.

Other funding sources included 3% from General Fund, primarily for salaries and benefits for nongame, threatened and endangered, and heritage staff and 1% from the income tax checkoff. Wildlife projects received about \$3.7 million in PR-DJ reimbursements, and approximately \$1.6 million from State Wildlife Grants, Wildlife Conservation Program Grants and Section 6 dollars.

In addition to our normal state dollars, the Environmental Trust added \$265,000 for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the Jack Sinn WMA wetland project, prescribed grazing, tallgrass prairie conservation, Platte River restoration, and WILD Nebraska. Federal grants accounted for \$523,000 for Chronic Wasting Disease, Bureau of Reclamation, Bighorn Sheep, and Least Tern projects.

## WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

**\$2.5million** was spent on maintaining and establishing habitat and public use facilities on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

**\$2.8million** went for private and other public land habitat and access enhancements. Partnerships were continued or established, such as CRP-MAP, Focus on Pheasants, wetland restoration and riparian restoration.

**\$1.6million** was used for research and resource management for game, nongame, natural heritage and threatened and endangered species. This includes federal grant dollars for research projects.

**\$806,000** was spent on administrative and vehicle support services, including regulation and permit coordination.

**\$523,000** was used for capital development on wildlife management areas, including habitat enhancements, maintenance buildings, fencing of areas, parking lots and access roads.

**\$309,878** is spent on payments In-Lieu of Taxes for many of the WMA's.

## RESEARCH, INVENTORY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Managing wildlife populations and their habitats depends on critical up-to-date research and monitoring. Surveys provide vital information about population sizes and distributions for regulating the harvest of game species and conservation of nongame species.

Surveys indicate public attitudes towards wildlife and also affect

management. Habitat assessments identify areas important to the survival and health of managed species, while targeted studies help identify why certain species are declining and how their populations may be increased or safeguarded. Tracking the incidence and spread of diseases contributes to effective resource management.

Many research and inventory projects, like these that follow, are done in collaboration with other natural resource-related organizations.

**Bighorn Sheep** - The Fort Robinson State Park herd continues to frequent the high rocky butte areas around the state park. Established viewing points allow park visitors opportunities to observe these sheep as they navigate the steep terrain. Twenty-two lambs were born in 2004, bringing the estimated population to 140. There are 16 sheep with working radio telemetry collars being monitored. These sheep continue to supply data for a graduate study being conducted in association with Iowa State University.

The bighorn population in the Wildcat Hills, south of Gering, has more than doubled in size since 22 sheep were released in 2001. There were 13 confirmed lamb births in 2004, bringing the estimated population to 49. We are continuing to monitor them and conduct research in association with Chadron State College into hoof deformities found within this herd. Hoof abnormalities have occurred in four female lambs born in 2001-2003. None of the lambs born in 2004 have shown signs of hoof deformities.

One sheep permit was authorized for the 2004 season. 1,585 people applied for the lottery permit bringing in \$31,700 to the sheep

program. A full-curl ram was harvested by an archer.

**Wild Turkey** - Wild turkey numbers have probably doubled in the past five years, resulting in significant increases in turkey hunting opportunity. Record numbers of Spring and Fall turkey permits were issued in 2004. In 2004, there were 27,650 Spring and 8,324 Fall turkey permits issued, for an estimated record harvest of 16,803 turkeys. Expanding turkey populations allowed for more liberalization of seasons with unlimited permits available in all turkey units. All Fall turkey permits were valid statewide for the first time. Permit sales increase 17% and harvest increased 23% in 2004.

In 2004, observers counted turkeys within 12 regions across the state from July 1 to August 15. These observers logged 6,546 miles recording 4,112 turkeys. The statewide average was 1.84 young per hen and .63 birds per mile.

**Deer** - NGPC has initiated two deer movement studies in response to the detection of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in mule deer and white-tailed deer in the Panhandle. Social behavior and deer movement patterns will be examined. We propose to develop models that predict the spread of CWD in this region, to provide information upon which we will base future disease surveillance and management decisions. This will be accomplished by radio-collaring and tracking approximately 60 male and female deer in Morrill county. This study is a cooperative effort between the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USDA Wildlife Services National Wildlife Research Center-Fort Collins, CO and the United States Geologic Survey. The study involves three graduate students

and four research technicians and will run for three years.

Another deer movement study was initiated with the discovery of four CWD positive mule deer east of Alliance. NGPC personnel trapped and radio collared 11 mule deer in March 2004. Movement and mortality of these deer are monitored every three to four weeks.

Hunters purchased 114,930 deer permits for 2004 seasons and harvested about 56,311 deer. Success rates were: archery 29%, muzzle-loader 28%, regular firearm 56%. Success for the firearm season was significantly higher than in 2003 as better weather prevailed during the firearm deer season and deer herds made some recovery in areas previously hurt by drought and EHD.

There were 3,046 statewide youth deer permits issued for the first time in 2004, allowing youths to hunt during the statewide archery, statewide muzzleloader and November firearm deer season. More than 28,000 antlerless tags were issued in 2004 and 20,228 antlerless deer were harvested. 10,321 mule deer and 45,919 whitetail deer were harvested.

**Pronghorn** - Harvest results indicate pronghorn numbers are declining in western units due to severe drought the past six years. Hunter demand exceeds permits available in all areas except archery. 1,230 permits were issued to hunters who took 502 pronghorns. Success rates were low: archery (10%), muzzleloader (41%), and firearm (57%). All permits except archery are buck only to allow for herd recovery when habitat conditions improve.

**Elk** - Nebraska's elk herd continues to expand so permit numbers

were increased and a new unit was added in the Pine Ridge in 2004. There were 1,007 applications for the 120 permits authorized in five units; 102 permits were issued to 22 landowners and 80 non-landowners. Hunters took 52 elk (24 bulls, 25 cows, 3 calves). Hunters success was 89% on either sex tags and 36% on antlerless.

A study is being conducted to learn more about the demographics of the Box Elder Canyon elk herd in eastern Dawson and southeastern Lincoln counties. Elk trapping began in March 2004. Six elk with radio-telemetry collars are being monitored by both plane and ground crews.

**Waterfowl Management**  
Nebraska's teal season became operational after approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Close to 200 spy blinds were conducted from 2000-2002 to assess the rate hunters shot at or took non-target species. Analysis of the evaluation of the effects on non-target species (other than blue-winged, green-winged and cinnamon teal) was completed and Nebraska hunters met the criteria. During the experimental phase, an average of 10,588 hunters harvested approximately 10,402 teal.

Data collection for the experimental light goose late-winter hunting season and Conservation Action (CA) was completed in spring 2003. Regulations were established in cooperation with the USFWS in accordance to results from the four-year study. Results indicated that Zone 2 could remain open under four day/week opening of CA activities, and that seven days/week could be allowed after the 23rd of March.

Canada geese were banded at various locations within the Sandhills

and Lancaster, Seward, Douglas, Sarpy, Gage and Jefferson counties. This was the first time for banding operations at Walnut Creek NRD and in Gage County. Over 1,250 Canada geese were captured, and of those, approximately 494 already had bands. Blood and tissue also were collected at Sandhills banding sites to assist in a genetic study of Canada geese being conducted by Michigan State University. Results of banding analysis of Nebraska Canada geese were published in the Proceedings of the 2003 International Canada Goose Symposium.

The first September Canada goose season was held in eastern Nebraska. The season was aimed at resident Canada geese in the Lincoln and Omaha metropolitan areas that have been increasing since restoration efforts began in the early 1970s. Currently, populations of Canada geese have led to increased number of complaints of property damage and potential conflicts with human health and safety. Harvest estimates are still pending.

Techniques to improve estimates obtained from the May Breeding Waterfowl Survey continued in 2004. Personnel from the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center assisted with double-observer data analysis and indicated that overall, only 67% of the ducks are actually observed on the survey. Thus, breeding populations estimates that are not corrected for visibility from the survey should be considered conservative.

A survey of the North and South Platte Rivers was conducted during spring migration to assess abundance and distribution of waterfowl and sandhill cranes. Mallards were the most abundant duck species encountered, with peak migration in late March. Approximately 24,000 sandhill cranes were counted. On average,

the Bridgeport - Broadwater, and Wyoming Line - Scottsbluff segments were the most important in numbers of migrating waterfowl on the North Platte River, and the Big Springs - Brule and Ogallala - Roscoe segments on the South Platte River were the most important.

**Upland Game-** Staff continued work on a 26-state mourning dove banding project to help discern national patterns in harvest rates and migration behavior. Nebraska banded 911 doves in 2003 and another 1,239 in 2004. So far, 65 of these have been reported shot by hunters or otherwise recovered; 45 in Nebraska, 9 in Texas, 5 in Mexico, 2 in Kansas, and 1 each in Oklahoma, Iowa, Tennessee, and Guatemala. We will band another 1,000 or so doves in 2005 to complete the study.

Staff also began a study of habitat use by pheasants in Stanton County. As part of the Focus on Pheasants initiative, over 2,000 acres of CRP have been disked and interseeded within a 32 square-mile focus area. Prior to the nesting season, we placed radiotransmitters on 20 hen pheasants in this area and monitored their subsequent use of upgraded habitats. Preliminary analyses showed that the hens preferred nesting in the disked and interseeded areas; analyses of habitats preferred for rearing broods are ongoing. A graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will continue the study in 2005 and 2006; at least 50 hens will be radio-tagged during each of those two years.

**Furbearers** - A total of 7,023 fur harvest permits were sold in 2004, up 3% from 6,846 in 2003. Of these, 5,877 were purchased from vendors and 1,146 were purchased online, down 32% from last year.

The 2004/2005 fur harvest and

fur buyer surveys have not returned at this time.

Preliminary data shows that the bobcat harvest will be near record highs again this year. The highest bobcat numbers occur in the south and southeast of Nebraska, followed by the northcentral and northwestern regions.

A good working relationship with the Nebraska Fur Harvesters Association remains an important component of NGPC's furbearer program. Fur harvesters are the main source of data for most furbearing species. Conducting harvest surveys and improving survey response remains essential for the collection of population indices.

## **NONGAME, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

### **Heritage Program**

The Heritage Program conducts inventories and research on ecological communities and rare, threatened and endangered species to better understand their abundance, distribution and habitat requirements. This information is critical for effective conservation decision-making.

Research continued on the state's endangered Salt Creek tiger beetle. Work included annual inventory, mark-recapture studies for use in population estimates, habitat used for egg oviposition and larval development, and development of techniques for rearing beetles in the lab. Work also included the development of a draft Recovery Plan for the Salt Creek tiger beetle. This work was funded a Section 6 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the

## Nongame Checkoff Fund.

A Section 6 grant was also received for research work relating to the state and federal endangered American burying beetle. The grant continued on-going research on the occurrence and distribution of the species in Nebraska. Research included mark-recapture studies, light impact studies and DNA studies.

The Heritage Program has been heavily involved in the development of the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project (Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy). With funding from State Wildlife Grants we were able to conduct (through contract biologists) inventory on a wide array of rare species and natural communities. Studies included surveys for: reptiles and amphibians in southeast Nebraska and the panhandle; small mammals, including bats, in the southeast, southwest and panhandle; long-billed curlews and black-necked stilts in the Sandhills; cerulean warblers along Missouri River bluffs in southeast Nebraska; and Platte River caddisfly along the central Platte. In addition there was a statewide stream survey of fish and aquatic invertebrates and an inventory of sand-sage prairie in southwest NE and tallgrass prairie in northeast Nebraska.

This information will be used to better understand the distribution and abundance of at-risk species and to identify priority areas to focus conservation efforts. The Heritage Program's Biotics database will be used to house the data for the Legacy Project and facilitate updating the strategy in the future.

Heritage Program staff completed a report on an inventory of Parks Division lands. The study

sought to identify those Parks' properties that contain suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species and high quality examples of natural communities. A number of natural treasures were found from high diversity forests, grasslands and wetlands to populations of rare species - including finding the first population of Northwest Territory sedge known to occur in the state at Dead Timber SRA. The full report is available on request.

### Nongame Bird Program

Various surveys determine the size and conservation status of populations, including threats that might be limiting their growth. They are also critical to developing management strategies for species recovery. Surveys conducted in 2004 included:

- Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey: Aerial routes flown along rivers and reservoirs revealed 1,149 bald eagles, the 5th highest number recorded in Nebraska since the surveys began in 1980. This represents a 12% increase in wintering populations compared to the 1998-2003 average.

- Bald Eagle Nesting Surveys: Of 60 nests checked for breeding activity, 34 active nests were found and a minimum of 58 young were fledged. Since breeding was first documented here in 1991, 306 young have fledged from surveyed nests.

- Whooping Crane Migration Monitoring: four sightings of nine different whooping cranes were confirmed in Nebraska during the spring migration, while two sightings of 12 different whooping cranes were confirmed during the fall migration.

- Least Tern and Piping Plover Population Survey: The mid-June census conducted on the Lower Platte River located 14 river sandbar nesting sites and 12 sandpit nesting sites: a total of 172 least

terns and 37 piping plovers were counted on the river, and 190 least terns and 42 piping plovers were counted at sandpits during the census. The Lower Platte total of 362 least terns and 79 piping plovers is comparative to last year's count of 406 least terns and 84 piping plovers.

- Peregrine Falcon Nesting: A pair nested successfully atop Woodmen Tower in Omaha. The same male returned for his ninth consecutive year and the female returned for her fourth straight year. The pair laid four eggs and hatched three young, all females. Twenty-seven young have been produced at the Woodmen Tower since 1992. A pair was also in attendance at the state capitol building in Lincoln, however nesting did not occur.

- Eagle Mortality: Thirteen eagle carcasses, 10 bald eagles and three golden eagles, were turned over the USFWS. Causes of death included electrocution, suspected lead poisoning, gunshot, collision and trap injury.

- The Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership was established to protect endangered least terns and threatened piping plovers in Nebraska in a way that reduced conflicts with private industry and educated and involved local communities. The Partnership currently includes the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, Lyman-Richey Corporation, Overland Sand and Gravel Company, Western Sand and Gravel, Millard Sand and Gravel, Arps Gravel and Concrete, Girl Scouts - Great Plains Council, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

Nebraska Prairie Partners is a cooperative project of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Rocky

Mountain Bird Observatory that addresses prairie bird conservation needs in western Nebraska. In 2004, the project again conducted prairie bird inventories to generate baseline data on species of conservation concern, including the Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk and Mountain Plover, and continued efforts in landowner outreach and education, habitat assessment and conservation planning.

#### *Diseases and Parasites -*

Monitoring diseases and internal parasites is vital, since they can contribute to species declines. Diseases tracked were West Nile virus (WNV), avian botulism, fowl cholera, epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD or blue-tongue) and chronic wasting disease (CWD) of cervids. Deer, crows, blue jays, raptors, prairie chickens and grouse have also been the focus of several investigations. Utilizing funding from the federal Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Commission created a term position to work on CWD and other disease issues full-time. CWD was one of our biggest concerns. Training sessions were given prior to rifle season for sample collection. Similar to last year, approximately 100 deer were collected from each management unit during our rifle season, with the exception of the units in the Panhandle where we collected as many samples as possible. We collected approximately 5,735 samples with 29 positives being found. New locations for CWD included one positive in Arthur County, one in Cherry County and one in Hall County. We anticipate that at least 7,000 deer will be checked for CWD in 2005. None of the wild elk examined had CWD.

The Commission initiated a Midwest-wide EHD study this year with eight Midwestern states participating. Blood samples were collected from across the state and results are pending.

West Nile virus was again tested for in birds: 384 samples were run and 94 were positive. The disease did not seem to affect our wild populations of game birds and mammals.

## **HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

Habitat management involves public and private lands to provide wildlife and natural communities with necessities for survival. Efforts are ongoing to improve habitat while optimizing recreational access. Nebraska encompasses about 49.4 million acres of land and water, of which about 97% is privately owned.

Management Section staff are responsible for the development, operation and maintenance of 282 wildlife management areas totaling 180,000 acres, as well as the administrative duties associated with these areas. Land management activities include prescribed burning to control invasive woody plants and to rejuvenate grass stands. Burning occurred in all portions of the state except for the panhandle and southwest where continued effects of drought precluded burning. Leases were negotiated with tenants to facilitate foodplots, grazing and haying. Drought conditions resulted in low water levels in reservoirs creating exposed shorelines, which are excellent seedbeds for noxious weeds such as Canada thistle and purple loosestrife. Staff worked closely with county weed superintendents to control these situations. Permanent grass and legume plant-

ings are undertaken annually, ranging from single species plantings of alfalfa to high diversity seedings of grass/forb mixtures of 30 - 200 species. Mechanical clearing of trees from grasslands continues throughout the state in an effort to reclaim grasslands lost or threatened by tree and shrub invasion.

A few of the habitat projects occurring around the state include: A wetland development and groundwater remediation project on North Lake Basin WMA in Seward, native prairie renovation and facilitated grazing on Burchard Lake WMA in Pawnee county, Platte River slough renovation and tree clearing project for waterfowl and sandhill cranes on the Bassway Strip WMA in Buffalo County and Blue Hole WMA's in Buffalo County, wetland development and floodplain habitat establishment on the Elk Point Bend WMA in Dixon County and wetland development and facilitated grazing on Wood Duck WMA in Stanton County.

Habitat Partners Section staff are involved in many regional partnerships that focus on ecologically important areas too. Examples include the Sandhills Task Force, Tallgrass Prairie Partnership, Shortgrass Prairie Partnership, Platte River Habitat Partnership, Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership, Playa Lakes Joint Venture, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture, Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project, Missouri River Futures Group, Wetlands Reserve Program Bio-Engineering Teams, USDA State Technical Committee and many other educational and public outreach efforts. In addition, several new partnership positions were initiated, including six with Pheasants Forever and NRCS and

NRCS. A sampling of other partnership efforts include mentored youth hunts, Tallgrass Prairie Partnership, the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Missouri River Life, Sandhills Task Force, Saline Wetland Partnership and WRP B-Team participation.

Focus on Pheasants (FOP) - FOP is a joint private and public land initiative spearheaded by the Wildlife Division in partnership with Pheasants Forever and NRCS to increase quality pheasant habitat in Nebraska. Pheasants require early successional habitats in which to raise their young, a type of habitat Nebraska has slowly been losing since the 50's.

There are now many private cooperators in FOP's expanded effort. NGPC's goal is to disk 20% of a field to improve habitat conditions for the entire field. Over 1,800 acres have been disked, which means over 7,400 acres have been impacted. We have received over \$22,000 in donations from local Pheasants Forever chapters. Approximately 250 acres of upgrades have been done on CRP-MAP sites through an agreement with the One-Box Foundation.

Habitat Management activities began at Branched Oak in late-fall of 2002. More than 3,500 acres have been impacted on three separate public properties-Branched Oak WMA, Branched Oak SRA, and Sherman County Reservoir. Work will continue next year to bring back appropriate pheasant habitat to Nebraska.

Wetlands - In 2004, wetland restoration/enhancement projects were completed on Hamburg Bend WMA, North Lake Basin WMA, Straightwater WMA and Gadwall WMA. A new hunter access road was constructed at Gifford Point

and a new wetland was created to mitigate for minor road construction impacts to temporary wetlands.

- Wetlands practices completed under Wild Nebraska - In 2004, Wetlands Initiative Program projects were completed in 1,200 acres for 11 landowners.

- Wetlands Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program - Nebraska was the first state in the nation to be approved for the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). Under this program, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and partners will provide up to \$26 million to restore 18,200 acres of wetland and associated floodplain along the Missouri River. In 2004, Nebraska was one of the top states in the nation in the number of WRP contracts signed.

- Saline Wetlands Conservation Partnership - This is a partnership among the Commission, City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, the Lower Platte South NRD, the Nature Conservancy and others to promote the conservation of saline wetlands. Since its inception in 2003, more than 500 acres of saline wetlands have been protected; restoration and management efforts are ongoing.

- Playa Lakes Joint Venture - 2004 was the first full year that Nebraska was a partner in the PLJV. Efforts in the past year have focused on evaluating the habitats and bird communities of this region and planning for conservation efforts. The PLJV helped fund a research project that evaluated waterfowl use of the North Platte River Valley and nearby playa wetlands.

- Sandhills Task Force - Game and Parks closely partners with the Sandhills Task Force and is represented on their Board. In 2004, the Sandhills Task Force completed 22 projects that enhanced 35,466

acres of grassland, 3,269 acres of wetlands and 19 miles of rivers and streams.

- Rainwater Basin Joint Venture- This partnership has continued to grow and put good habitat projects on the ground while working with private landowners. Partners have secured grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the North American Conservation Act to protect and restore wetlands and their associated grasslands. In 2004, the Little Blue NRD and Ducks Unlimited agreed to hold EPA funded positions that will work on private lands wetland projects.

CRP-MAP - Because of the demand for quality places to hunt and opportunities created by the USDA Conservation Reserve Program, NGPC joined with Pheasants Forever and the Nebraska Environmental Trust to establish the CRP-Management Access Program (CRP-MAP). The program has grown from 19,800 acres enrolled the first year (1997) to more than 185,000 acres in 2004, a jump of nearly 850%. The program, with its atlas of lands enrolled, is quite popular with hunters and landowners.

#### ***Landowner Incentives***

Program LIP is catching on in Nebraska. There are 80 projects underway or that have been completed, impacting over 38,281 acres.

#### ***Wildlife Diversity Funding***

Since 2001, Congress has provided more than \$4.5 million to the agency to conserve at-risk fish and wildlife. In federal fiscal year 2004, the Commission received \$738,529 through the State Wildlife Grants program. Slightly less than half of these funds were distributed to partners through competitive grants. Organizations receiving grants included Rocky

receiving grants included Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, University of Nebraska-Tern and Plover Partnership, Platte River Whooping Crane Trust, Oklahoma State University, Sandhills Taskforce, University of Nebraska-Panhandle Research, Ducks Unlimited/National Wild Turkey Federation,; Wayne State College, University of Central Arkansas, Pheasants Forever, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Crane Meadows Nature Center, University of Nebraska-Kearney and the Wachiska Audubon Chapter.

***Watchable Wildlife*** The Division provided financial and technical support to nearly a dozen watchable wildlife projects in 2004. These projects were principally funded through the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program and Nongame Tax Checkoff Program. Projects included Nature Center Exhibits (Fontenelle Nature Association), Wetland Diorama (Pioneer Park Nature Center), Tallgrass Prairie Exhibit (Audubon Nebraska), Common Birds Exhibit (Mahoney State Park), Crane Exhibit (Crane Meadows Nature Center), Native Garden (Ponca Tribe), Eagle Viewing (Calamus Reservoir), Native Wildlife Displays (Lincoln Folsom Zoo) and Forest Wildlife (Arbor Day Foundation).

### ***Educational Efforts***

Project WILD serves as the Division's core wildlife education program. In 2004, 30 Project WILD workshops were held reaching about 500 formal and nonformal educators. Advanced workshops on Nebraska prairies, eastern deciduous forests, and bird education were held. It's estimated that Project WILD reached 1800 students and educators through conferences, events, programs and workshops.

The agency also partnered with Projects WET, PLT and the Nebraska Department of Education to hold a weeklong Discover Nebraska Tour for fourth grade teachers. The program provided teachers with natural and cultural history experiences and training that will aid them in the classroom. Four issues of Trail Tales magazine were sent to fourth grade students in the state. Evaluations indicate that Trail Tales is a valuable resource and helpful teaching tool. A publication that contains correlations to Nebraska State Education Standards and Project Wild activities was completed. It was sent to educators across the state. Staff participated in numerous education efforts throughout the year, including but not limited to environmental festivals, outdoor skill camps, schools, youth groups and public events.

