

# WACHISKA AUDUBON SOCIETY 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Wachiska means “stream” or “creek” in the languages of indigenous people of eastern Nebraska, the Omaha and Ponca.

**The Mission of the Wachiska Audubon Society is to bring people together to preserve and restore tallgrass prairies and other natural ecosystems, promote birding, support native wildlife, provide nature education, and advocate for the sustainability of our natural community.**

# THE BOARD IS REVIEWING WACHISKA'S VISION STATEMENT

- **CURRENT VISION**

*TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE AND LOVE OF NATURE – THAT LIFE MAY SUSTAINABLY FLOURISH IN ALL ITS NATURAL DIVERSITY.*

- **DRAFT 2024 VISION**

*WACHISKA AUDUBON SOCIETY'S VISION IS TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE AND LOVE FOR NATURE AND HELP PROTECT ITS DIVERSITY.*

Comments to any Board member by Monday, Nov. 18th

# WACHISKA AUDUBON SOCIETY (WAS) SERVICE AREA

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## Counties

Butler

Pawnee

Cass

Polk

Fillmore

Richardson

Gage

Saline

Jefferson

Saunders

Johnson

Seward

Lancaster

Thayer

Nemaha

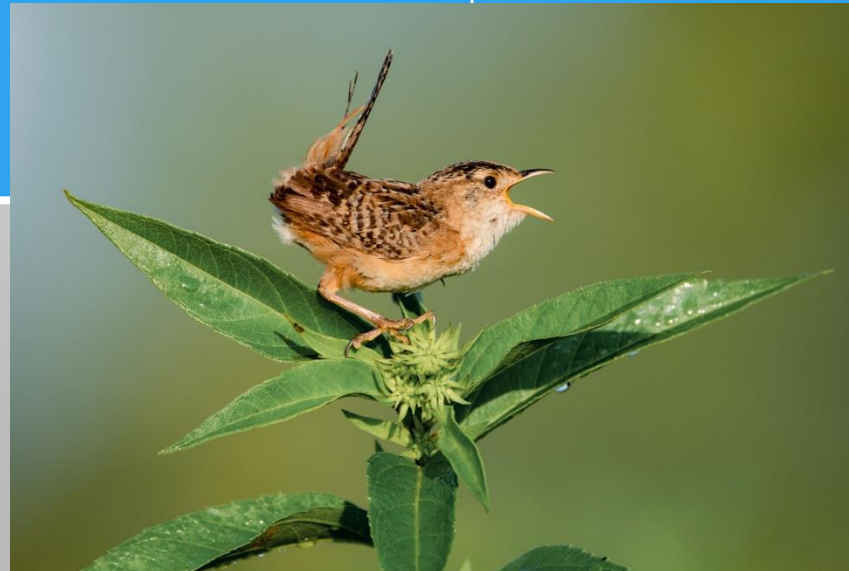
York

Otoe

# 2024 BOARD

**Theresa Pella - President**  
**Andrea Faas – Vice President**  
**April Stevenson - Secretary**  
**Carol Bodeen – Treasurer**  
**Ross Scott – Conservation Committee  
Chair**  
**Tim Knott – Education/Outreach  
Committee Chair**

**Directors**  
**Ethan Freese**  
**Kris Powers**  
**Dakota Altman**  
**Ann Briggs**  
**Doug Campbell**  
**Stu Luttich**  
**Mercy Manzanares**  
**Tom Lynch**



# WACHISKA OPERATIONS

## Staff:

- Mark Brohman, Executive Director
- Arlys Reitan, part-time Office Administrator

## Administrative/Management Partners:

- Nancy Hamer/Terry Workentine - Bookkeeper
- Rediger & Company, LLC - CPA Support
- HBE - Tax filing Support and Audit
- Stingray Technologies - IT Support
- Northern Prairies Land Trust - management of WAS owned prairies
- Prairie Legacy Inc. - support for work to improve prairies owned by WAS partners
- Zulkoski Weber - legislative relations

# GRANT PARTNERS AND EVENTS SPONSORS

## NEBRASKA ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANT:

- LOWER PLATTE SOUTH NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT (NRD)
- LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD
- NEMAHA NRD
- NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION (NGPC)

## PRAIRIE DISCOVERY DAYS:

- PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD

## ASIAN COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTER:

- PRAIRIE PINES PARTNERS

## TOUR THE WILD SIDE:

- U-STOP
- NEBRASKA NURSERY
- RUNZA
- CAMPBELL'S NURSERY
- WILD BIRD HABITAT STORE
- MIDWEST NATIVES NURSERY
- LES POLLINATOR PROGRAM
- SCHRADER LANDSCAPE DESIGN
- UNION BANK & TRUST
- RAPTOR CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

# 2024 REVENUE SOURCES

Operating Budget -  
\$245,069

- General Operations - \$151,200
- Conservation Committee - \$93,869

Membership, Birdathon and Give to Lincoln Day continue to be integral components of revenue.

Cooper Foundation grant for \$15,000 to help fund staff.

Lincoln Community Foundation (LCF) \$3,000 grant for strategic planning.

Will Sheehan beneficiary grants from LCF and Nebraska Community Foundation for \$2,500.

M. Rosalind endowment from LCF for \$1,228.

Open Harvest "Round it Up" Campaign recipient for \$1,350.

Generous donations from individuals supplement the basic revenues.

The three-year grant from Nebraska Environmental Trust, NGPC and NRDs to improve native prairie habitat will end June 2025.

NRCS and CRP programs, haying, grazing and native prairie seed sales – approx. \$50,000/yr.





# 2024 EXPENSE CATEGORIES

## GENERAL OPERATIONS:

- PERSONNEL AND CONTRACTUAL SUPPORT – \$104,775
- OFFICE, UTILITIES, SUPPLIES - \$21,945
- FUNDRAISERS - \$10,420
- EDUCATION & OUTREACH - \$5,075
- NEWSLETTER - \$4,400
- MEMBERSHIP - \$1,150

## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE:

- PRAIRIE RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE - \$71,300
- PROPERTY TAXES, INSURANCE, SIGNAGE - \$17,500
- SUPPORT SERVICES (BOOKKEEPING, LEGAL, TRAVEL MILEAGE) - \$9,500



# ASSETS (AS OF OCT. 31, 2024)

## GENERAL OPERATIONS:

- LINCOLN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (LCF)  
GENERAL OPERATING RESERVE - \$284,019
- LCF SPECIAL PROJECTS - \$215,645
- LCF UNRESTRICTED ENDOWMENT - \$20,485
- TWO CDS - \$65,000
- GENERAL OPERATIONS CHECKING ACCOUNT -  
\$24,600

## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (CC):

- LCF PRAIRIE MANAGEMENT - \$456,586
- LCF LAND PURCHASE - \$321,036
- LCF PRAIRIE DEFENSE - \$111,736
- TWO CDS - \$65,000
- CC CHECKING ACCOUNT - \$21,777
- PRAIRIES (NON-PRAIRIE PINES) VALUE –  
APPROXIMATELY \$1,152,221

# MEMBERS AND DONATIONS (AS OF OCT.)

- 366 WACHISKA AUDUBON SOCIETY FRIENDS
- 999 NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERS (MANY ARE ALSO FRIENDS)
- 405 DONORS <\$100 (\$14,480)
- 179 DONORS \$100 TO \$499 (\$24,734)
- 14 DONORS \$500 TO \$999 (\$7,750)
- 13 DONORS \$1,000 AND ABOVE (\$71,635)
- UNCOUNTABLE HOURS OF VOLUNTEER WORK BY MANY!



# 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN (UPDATED 2024) FOUR FOCUS AREAS

## 1) BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ONLINE MEMBERSHIP DATABASE
- CONTINUED TO BUILD A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OTOE-MISSOURIA AND OTHER INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

VISITS TO WACHISKA PRAIRIES

REPRESENTATION ON RECONCILIATION PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

MONTHLY MEETING PRESENTATION BY TOM GANNON ON “BIRDING WHILE INDIAN”

- SURVEYED MEMBERS AND OTHERS REGARDING INTEREST IN CONTINUING BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

ATTENDANCE FOR FIELD TRIPS IN EARLY 2024 NOT WELL ATTENDED

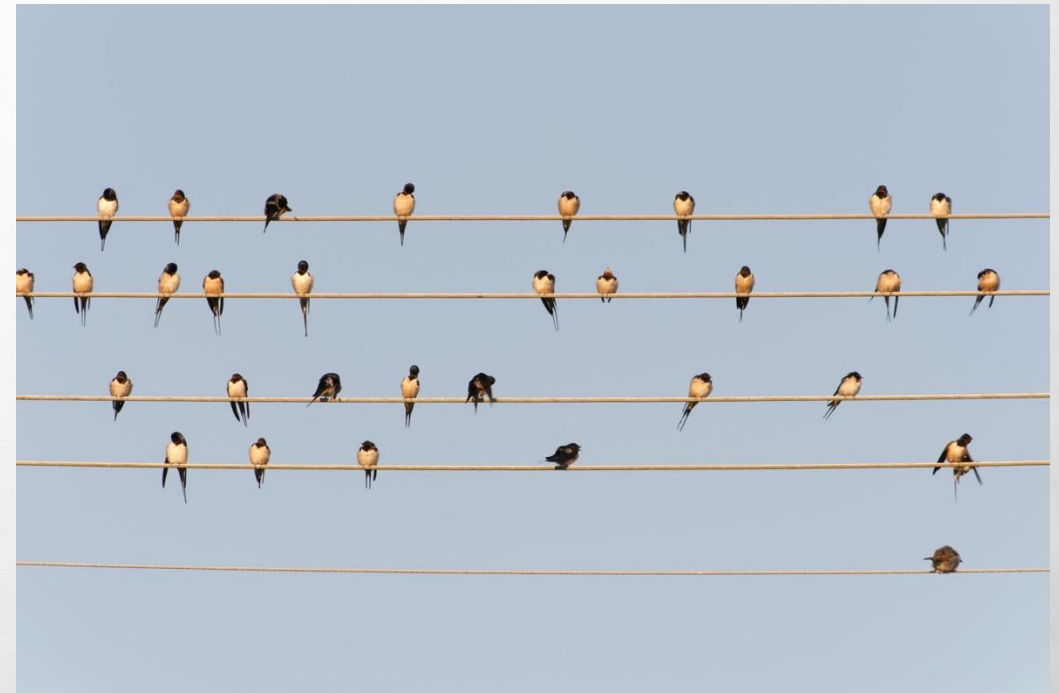
2024 STRATEGIC PLAN SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES INDICATE NEED FOR SHIFT IN HOW BIRDING CAN BE INCLUDED IN WAS WORK





# 2) ADVOCATING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- CONTINUED COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION WITH AUDUBON GREAT PLAINS, AUDUBON KANSAS, AND AUDUBON SOCIETY OF OMAHA TO STAY INFORMED AND WORK ON SIMILAR ISSUES.
- EDUCATION/OUTREACH EFFORTS INCLUDED BIRD ENCOUNTER, EARTH DAY, RETURN OF THE THUNDERBIRDS, NATURE NIGHTS, PRAIRIE DISCOVERY, TOUR THE WILD SIDE, ARBOR DAY, SPRING CREEK PRAIRIE'S HOOT 'N OWL, BRINGING RAPTORS TO AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS – CONNECTED WITH OVER 2,000 INDIVIDUALS, MOST OF WHOM ARE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS.
- COMMENT LETTERS TO OPPOSE A FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICES PROPOSED RULE, ADVOCATING FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAIRIES FOR THE REGAL FRITILLARY; ENCOURAGED LINCOLN TO INCLUDE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN A NEW CONVENTION CENTER; OPPOSED A JOHNSON COUNTY POULTRY FARM; OPPOSED AN INTERBASIN TRANSFER PROPOSAL FOR THE PLATTE RIVER; TESTIMONY ON NEBRASKA LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS FOR SUPPORT OF POLLINATOR TASK FORCE (LB828), SUPPORT REGULATION FOR PLANS THAT HAVE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON ECOLOGY (LB1413), OPPOSE TARGETED FUNDS SWEEP (LB1335), OPPOSE TRANSPORTATION PROJECT EXEMPTIONS FROM ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (LB1243), SUPPORT CONTROLLED BURNS (LB1243); SUPPORT ALDRSGATE CHURCH'S APPLICATION TO BE A NEBRASKA STATEWIDE ARBORETUM ACCREDITED GARDEN; SUPPORT PRAIRIE PINES PARTNERS NGPC GRANT APP.





# 3) CARING FOR TALLGRASS PRAIRIES

- CONTINUE CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION WITH NORTHERN PRAIRIES LAND TRUST TO MANAGE THE PRAIRIES WACHISKA OWNS
  - CROPLAND ON WILDCAT PRAIRIE WAS RESEEDED TO NATIVE PLANT HABITAT
  - PERIMETER FENCELINE REPLACEMENT CONTINUES ON KLAPKA PRAIRIE
  - NEW WATER TANKS BEING INSTALLED ON KLAPKA PRAIRIE TO ENABLE SEASONAL GRAZING
  - APPROXIMATELY 1.5 MILES OF BRUSH AND TREES REMOVED FROM PRAIRIES
    - SEEDING AND RESEEDING DISTURBANCE AREAS TO BE DONE FALL AND EARLY WINTER 2024
- CONTINUED CONTRACT WITH PRAIRIE LEGACY, LLC TO WORK WITH LANDOWNERS TO CONTROL NOXIOUS AND INVASIVE SPECIES AND TREE AND BRUSH ENCROACHMENT
  - ONE OF THE 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN SURVEY QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT INTEREST IN CONTINUING EASEMENTS
- DETERIORATED WOOD PRAIRIE SIGNS WERE REPLACED FOR TWO EASEMENT PROPERTIES AND ONE OWNED PRAIRIE
- SEVERAL SEED COLLECTIONS DONE TO HELP FURTHER DIVERSITY FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE PRAIRIES
- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND VICE PRESIDENT PARTICIPATED IN THE PROCESS FOR FIVE-YEAR REVIEW OF NGPC'S LEGACY PROJECT TO DETERMINE IF SPECIES NEED TO BE ADDED, REMOVED, OR RECLASSIFIED AS SPECIES OF CONCERN



# 4) STRENGTHENING INTERNAL OPERATIONS

## 1) APPROVED AN UPDATED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2025-2029 PERIOD

- FOCUS AREA #1 - CONTINUE MOVEMENT TO BECOME A SOLID, SMOOTH OPERATING ORGANIZATION
  - WHY – NEED A WELL-FUNCTIONING ORGANIZATION TO BE ABLE TO FULLY SUPPORT BIRDS AND PRAIRIES
- FOCUS AREA #2 – HAVE IN PLACE A SUSTAINABLE LONG-TERM PLAN FOR OWNED PRAIRIES AND CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROPERTIES
  - WHY – TALLGRASS PRAIRIE IS STILL ONE OF THE MOST ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEMS IN THE WORLD
- FOCUS AREA #3 – BECOME A KNOWN ENTITY THROUGHOUT SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA WHERE ANY INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP CAN COME TO LEARN ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TALLGRASS PRAIRIES AND BECOME ADVOCATES TO PROTECT THIS RARE ECOSYSTEM
  - WHY – HAVING OTHERS KNOW AND UNDERSTAND OUR WORK WILL ENCOURAGE SIMILAR EFFORTS

## 2) APPROVED UPDATES TO THE FINANCIAL OPERATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES



# PRAIRIE PINES NATURE PRESERVE

On October 15<sup>th</sup> the Board voted to accept the Preserve

- *Consists of tallgrass prairies, woodlands and wetlands*

Partnership with Prairie Pines Partners to share responsibilities and opportunities

Expect to continue work with Community Crops, Nebraska Forest Service and Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

Office will move late 2024/early 2025

Pledges to date to help with new expenses – approximately \$43,000



# DONATIONS GIVEN IN MEMORY OF:

- DON PEPPERL
- ARNOLD MENDENHALL
- BOB (GUS) FREDICKSON
- DICK GRAY
- SUZY TAYLOR
- EUNICE LEVISAY
- MARGUERITE C. TITTERINGTON
- LEONA BRAZIEL
- TOM GREGORY

