

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Grants Available to Help Revitalize School Landscapes, Provide Environmental Education

LINCOLN, Neb. – Nebraska schools have an opportunity to revitalize their landscapes while educating students about the environment through a grant from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) in partnership with the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS). Funds are provided by the Nebraska Environmental Trust, a beneficiary of the Nebraska Lottery.

Grants will be available to Nebraska elementary, middle and high schools through the Sustainable Schoolyards Partnership (SSP) program. Six to 10 schools will be selected in 2014. **Deadline to apply for 2014-15 funds is April 25.**

Educators will receive environmental education training from NSA and, using Project Learning Tree's *GreenSchools!* curriculum, will help students with environmental investigations to discover ways they can make their school grounds more sustainable. The information gathered from these studies will help develop and implement service-learning landscape projects that showcase sustainability and conservation.

The SSP program was developed in response to research showing that most schoolyards do not have enough vegetation to make available any of the social, physiological or ecological benefits nature can provide. Through the SSP, schools can transform their landscapes into beautiful, ecological places that foster learning and healthy mental and physical development. By the end of 2015, a total of 20 or more schools will have improved their schoolyards through this three-year initiative, which started in spring 2013.

The Nebraska Forest Service, an affiliate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, works to enrich, protect, restore and utilize Nebraska's tree and forest resources. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum works to create sustainable landscapes for healthy homes and communities.

For more information or to apply for the SSP program, see [outdoorlearning.unl.edu](http://outdoorlearning.unl.edu), or contact Lacey Westerby, Conservation Education Coordinator, at [lwesterby2@unl.edu](mailto:lwesterby2@unl.edu) or 402-540-9636.

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