



ANNUAL REPORT

2021

Mission: To enrich
the lives of all
Nebraskans by
protecting, restoring
and utilizing
Nebraska's tree and
forest resources.

University of
Nebraska
Lincoln

N INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

*Sunrise over Dismal River meandering
through Nebraska Sandhills at
Nebraska National Forest.*



A MESSAGE FROM THE NEBRASKA STATE FORESTER

Creating jobs and fostering rural development. Protecting life and property. Enhancing the health and vitality of our trees and forests. Creating a cleaner, more beautiful environment makes the Good Life even better. With a practical, can-do, hands-on approach, that is what the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) and our many partners work to accomplish every day.

In 2021, we witnessed another significant wildfire season. As these disasters become more prevalent, they serve as a reminder of the necessity for adequate resources and training to protect Nebraska communities and lives. Thanks to appropriate funding through legislation, like the Wildfire Control Act, the NFS continues to provide essential firefighter training; repurposed military equipment to volunteer fire departments across the state; and extended Single Engine Air Tanker bases and air support to Nebraska and its neighboring states.

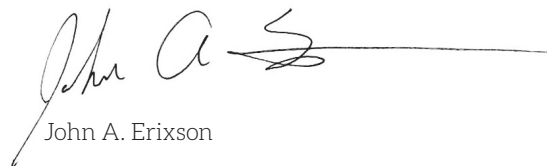
Our forest health specialists and community foresters are on the front line in identifying invasive threats to our trees—like the emerald ash borer—and advising Nebraska communities on cost-saving options and grant funding opportunities to replace lost green infrastructure.

As we continue to address the unique challenges that exist with trees and forests, we must also maintain the focus of providing more services to the people of Nebraska. In 2021, the NFS has solidified this commitment through many core initiatives:

- ▶ improving the capacity of hundreds of volunteer fire districts statewide to respond to wildland fires safely, rapidly, and effectively
- ▶ thinning thousands of acres of forests to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire to communities statewide
- ▶ helping to develop new markets and uses for our largely unused forest resources, creating jobs, and new opportunities
- ▶ working with community groups to plant thousands of trees, cleaning the air and water, saving energy, and making our cities and towns better places to live and work
- ▶ advising cities and towns across the state, dealing with the scourge of emerald ash borer while working to create healthier trees and forests

It is impacts like these that the NFS and our many partners strive to accomplish. I hope you will enjoy reading about the issues facing our tree and forest resources, and how the NFS and our partners are responding to those challenges.

Regards,



John A. Erixson

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ADDRESSING COMMUNITY FOREST CANOPY DECLINE

National Pilot Program Seeks to Address Canopy Decline

Throughout towns, trees planted on properties benefit both the residents and the neighborhood by contributing to improved air quality, reduced stormwater run-off, cooler temperatures, enhanced wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration. Well-located and managed trees on private property improve property values and provide cooling shade to homes. However, in many communities, the benefits of trees are not distributed equitably.

According to American Forests, “A map of tree cover in any city in the United States is too often a map of race and income.” An equity lens helps us look more critically at overall tree distribution, canopy quality, and access to tree management within our communities. Suppose we combine tree equity concerns and the issue of declining mature to over-maturing trees in our communities. One challenge is the expense of removing an at-risk tree, which can cost upwards of \$5,000—out of reach for many people. Unfortunately, at-risk trees can contribute to challenges such as public safety (from a tree falling), property values, neighborhood character, and sustaining a vital and viable urban forest.

We must create a diverse, multi-generational canopy across neighborhoods within our communities—investing in



The Trees-at-Risk Program is a national project designed to replace damaged trees in low and moderate income areas.

management and planting.

The Trees-at-Risk Program provides funding to assist low- and moderate-income property owners in addressing dead and dying trees on their property and planting replacement trees well-suited to the local climate. As part of a national pilot project, the US Forest Service provided the Nebraska Forest Service with \$150,000 for three years.



PARKING LOTS TO PLANTS

Green infrastructure projects like this one are popping up all around the City of Scottsbluff, replacing old parking lots.

For the past decade, the City of Scottsbluff has been making a seemingly unremarkable downtown parking lot renovation project, remarkable.

Working with Nebraska Forest Service landscape designers, city planners undertook a rigorous campaign to replace degraded, cracked concrete lots with newly paved “green” lots—consisting of native trees and pollinator plants. “Out” with the gray, and “in” with the green infrastructure.

And while few can argue against the aesthetic benefits of such a project, it’s perhaps what the average Scottsbluff citizen doesn’t see that creates a true impact.

“That comes down to the soil,” says Chrissy Land, NFS Western Nebraska Community Forester.

Certain soil properties determine how quickly and how much water can infiltrate, or permeate, the ground—preventing flooding, and the subsequent overloading of streams, drainpipes, and water treatment plants. Soil is also responsible for much of the filtering of contaminants in urban stormwater, which can otherwise lead to serious water quality issues. Parking lot water runoff is notorious for this.

“We wanted to make sure we did things differently with these lots,” says Jordan Dietrich, Scottsbluff Deputy Public Works Director. “We essentially pulled out the non-permeable soil and repurposed it for other city works projects. We wanted healthy ‘living’ soil.”

City administrators then utilized several NFS grants to produce matching funds for the projects. The Trees for Nebraska Towns program provides upwards of \$20,000 to support public space tree planting projects in communities throughout Nebraska; and the Bloom Box program offers landscape design guidance and Nebraska-native pollinator plants.

Fast forward to 2021, and the collaboration has produced 12 major green areas, including nine Bloom Box gardens. The project has also provided training for master gardeners and countless volunteers. Local businesses have responded well, as they’ve noticed an increase in foot traffic as patrons stop to look at plants, and visit shops.

“It slows down vehicle traffic,” says Dietrich. “The data from the police department shows there are less accidents down there, and it’s created a safer environment for pedestrians to walk around downtown.”

Other communities have taken notice. Valentine and Gordon have expressed interest in creating similar tree spaces and are in consultation with the Nebraska Forest Service. To Community Forester Chrissy Land, the project sells itself.

“We’ve got stormwater mitigation, healthy soils, and shaded parking lots; All of these are different dynamics of community forests. And most importantly, it’s people pleasing,” says Land.

Citizens, NFS Foresters Team Up to Save Gordon's City Trees



The City of Gordon was awarded free trees to plant through Nebraska Forest Service and Nebraska Statewide Arboretum grants.

When the Gordon, Nebraska, City Council voted to remove all the downtown trees and concrete over the tree pits, a group of citizens rose up and asked “why?” These citizens created a Tree Committee and began to seek out resources to help with shaping the future of the trees on Main Street. The Gordon City Administrator, Glen Spaugh, and City Public Works Director, Dan Bishop, joined the citizen-led Tree Committee and recruited NFS foresters Doak Nickerson and Chrissy Land to provide expert insight on the current status of the trees and what the future might look like. Nickerson and Land visited the community and completed a tree assessment as they walked the downtown area with a few of the committee members to get a firsthand look. Nickerson noted in the meeting that it was incredible to have trees live in such growth-limiting conditions for 35 years. On average, trees in downtown tree pits usually only live in the 8-15 year range.

Land engaged the Tree Committee and the Gordon City Council through multiple visits and assisted with the task of reinstating the tree board. Land and Spaugh presented

a summary of the tree assessment findings to the City Council members. Land fielded questions from the Council and provided insight into how the Tree Board will work and some of their duties. The Council approved an ordinance to re-establish the Gordon Tree Board. The City invited citizens to apply for openings on the tree board.

The City Council appointed members to the board: Tim Brewer, Doris Brown, Jerry Hardin, Sharon Harris, Jean Hensley, Ellen Yusten, and either Dan Bishop, or Glen Spaugh, representing the City of Gordon. At their first meeting, tree board members elected officers and went to work right away by identifying goals and agreeing on trainings or programs they wanted to attend. The Tree Board Excellence Series by Dr. Paul Ries, hosted by the Nebraska Forest Service, was at the top of their list. They also agreed to apply for the ‘Free Trees for Fall’ grant offered by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and the Nebraska Forest Service, which provided ten free trees to be planted in Gordon City Parks. The Board plans to finalize the remainder of the tree-related ordinances and intends to apply for Tree City USA recognition for 2021.



RESTORATION & UTILIZATION CREATE PARTNERSHIPS

Returning the Pines to the Ridge

While it can take 100 years for a forest to grow, it can take only a couple of years for it all to burn.

In 2006 and 2012, tens of thousands of acres of trees in the iconic Pine Ridge forests were lost to the massive Spotted Tail, Douthit, West Ash, and Wellnitz Fires wildfires, respectively. Inventories showed the trees of northwest Nebraska had shrunk to less than half their historic range.

“That was the reckoning,” says NFS District Forester Doak Nickerson. “100 years ago, we had a quarter million acres of ponderosa pine forest—after those fires, we were down to 100,000.”

In the years that have followed, the Nebraska Forest Service has worked with partnering agencies to bring ponderosa pines back to the ridge. Alongside the Middle Niobrara and Upper Niobrara White Natural Resource Districts, NFS developed a cost-share program that allows woodland owners an opportunity to replant at least 10 acres of ponderosa woodland.

The planting stock of the ponderosa pine seedlings comes from Nebraska's own Bessey Nursery in Halsey.

“We’re planting by hand in a lot of these wildfire footprints that wouldn’t have had naturally growing ponderosa pines for decades, if not a couple hundred years,” says Nickerson.

In addition, Chadron State College, which saw a complete liquidation of the pines located on its landmark C-Hill



underwent a major replanting project with NFS this year, planting close to 10,000 saplings.

All told, nearly 425,000 seedlings have been planted on private and state lands. And that’s just the beginning.

With continued funding, Nickerson says crews have plans to expand on cost-share incentives to private and public landowners, while also cleaning out dead trees and further reducing potential future fire hazards.

“There’s still a long way to go. At the end of the day, we hope they can continue to regenerate and someday get to where they once were.”

THE WINDS OF CHANGE



The Nebraska Forest Service's new Windbreak Short Courses are designed to help natural resource professionals and students show landowners why windbreaks still matter.

On a brisk mid-October afternoon at the Nebraska National Forest in Halsey, Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) Lower Platte South Forester Jay Seaton stands before a small group of landowners. What he's about to say comes from 15 years experience as a forester:

Windbreaks are crucial to Nebraska.

"It all boils down to how we can incorporate these trees, shrubs, and woody vegetation on the Great Plains to shore up agricultural and livestock productions," says Seaton. "It's what keeps us here on this land."

As Seaton continues his discussion with the landowners, over a dozen extension agents, natural resource district (NRD) staff, and University of Nebraska agricultural students look on, taking notes.


This is but one of the Nebraska Forest Service's new Windbreak Short Courses. They're geared toward NRDs

with hands-on training toward dendrology (Tree/Shrub ID), and windbreak renovation design and implementation. The capstone is this practicum, where attendees are put into groups and given a scenario, and then must design a windbreak according to what the landowner wants—drawing on all they have learned from both the on-line and in person sections of the course. The pièce de résistance convincing the landowner to keep, renovate, or plant windbreaks on their properties.

"These were designed to teach the new generation of natural resource technicians and foresters on the proper technique of designing, implementing, and promoting windbreaks across the state of Nebraska," says Pam Bergstrom, NFS Forest Management & Rural Forestry Forester.

The new generation has its work cut out for it.

In 2018, with funding from the US Forest Service, agencies from the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas collaborated to evaluate the health and benefits of



“ 72 percent of windbreaks in the Midwest are in poor to fair condition. ”

existing windbreaks in the Plains. The Great Plains Initiative 2 revealed 72 percent of the existing windbreaks throughout the Midwest are in poor to fair condition. Many others have been removed entirely to accommodate the rise of commodity farming and center pivot irrigation— encouraging farmers to remove sections of their shelterbelts.

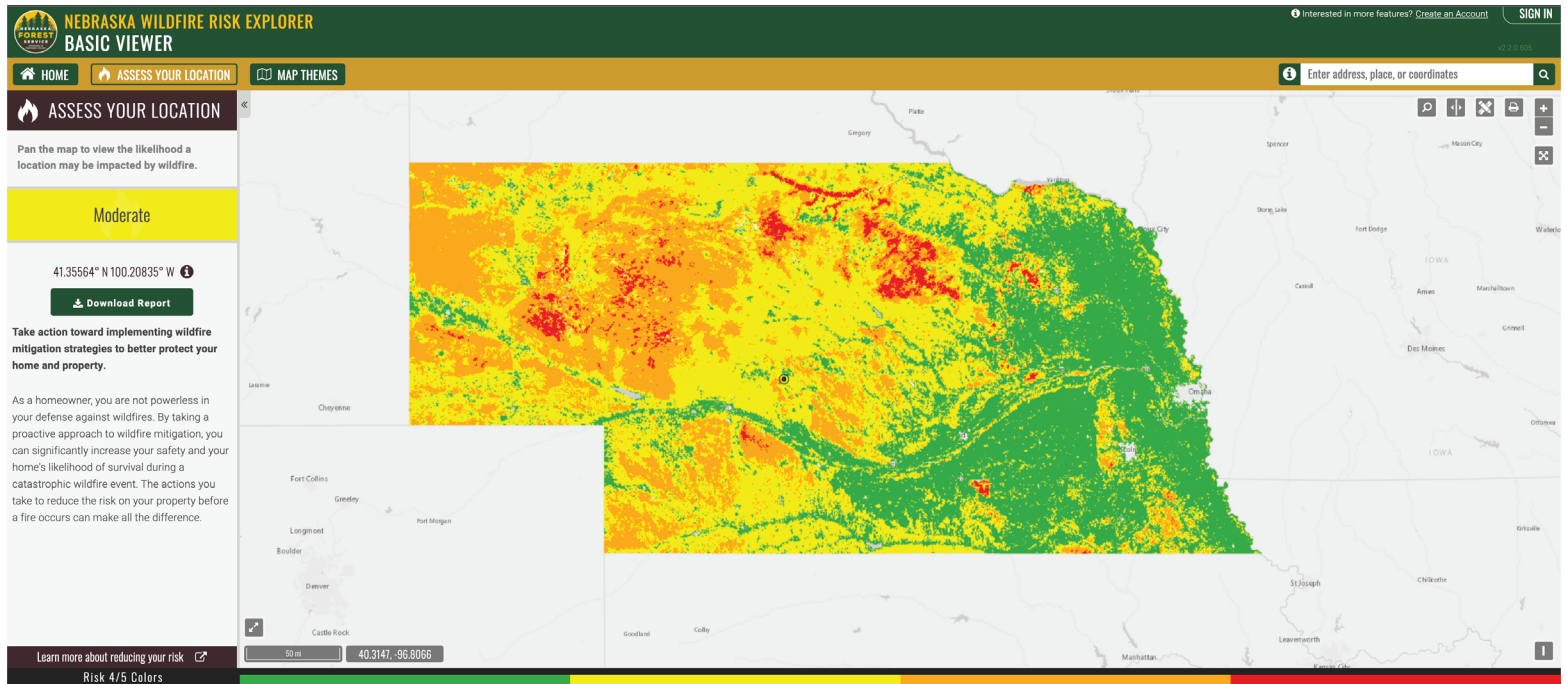
Increasing plant disease and extreme weather events throughout Nebraska are showing a critical need for new or renovated windbreaks to protect agricultural lands, livestock, and provide much needed wildlife habitat.

“A windbreak is only as good as its design,” stresses Bergstrom. “That comes back to the natural resource technician or forester who needs to know what they are doing, why they are designing the windbreak a particular way, and how to incorporate the windbreak into the landscape.”



NFS Forester Pam Bergstrom describes the benefits of different tree species in windbreaks.

NEBRASKA WILDFIRE RISK EXPLORER IS ONLINE



The Nebraska Wildfire Risk Explorer is an interactive, online mapping tool intended to provide comprehensive wildfire risk information to Nebraska landowners and fire and natural resource professionals throughout the state. You can find more at wrap.nebraskawildfirerisk.com

Although Nebraska may not be as well known for megafires as the western United States, each year wildfires do occur within the state. Understanding wildfire risk and mitigating it in highly susceptible areas is key in order for our state's communities, forests, and wildlife to thrive. This past year, the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) has taken action to better understand wildfire risk and to spread awareness about wildfires with the launch of a comprehensive wildfire risk explorer web application.

Created through a partnership with Timmons Group, Inc., the Nebraska Wildfire Risk Explorer is an interactive, online mapping tool intended to provide comprehensive wildfire risk information to Nebraska landowners and fire and natural resource professionals throughout the state. The NFS officially released the app to the public during the summer of 2021. The development of the



tool and the data it presents is part of the larger-scale Westwide Wildfire Risk Assessment conducted by the Oregon Department of Forestry on behalf of the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) and the Western Forestry Coalition. The CWSFs' Wildland Urban Interface grant program provided funding for the project.

Two versions of the risk explorer tool exist: the Basic viewer and the Advanced viewer. The Basic viewer is intended for landowners and the general public and allows the user to search for an address and view the wildfire risk at that location. Users can also view information such as anticipated wildfire intensity, average wildfire frequency, crown fire potential, and real-time fire weather forecast data. Additionally, users can export a report that summarizes the wildfire risk at a specified location and includes resources with information about how to mitigate risk and protect structures.

The Advanced viewer contains more complex data and is intended for fire and natural resource professionals

or anyone who wants an in-depth risk analysis. In the Advanced view there is an option to create an exportable report for a custom area of interest. It includes a spatial analysis of wildfire risk, historical fire occurrences, landscape characteristics, and much more. The report contains maps and charts that summarize the data and can be copied and pasted into other files such as planning documents and proposals.

The NFS intends for the app to be widely used across the state. Fire and natural resource professionals will find it useful for conservation and fuels reduction project planning. This tool makes it easy to find areas most at risk from wildfire and with high likelihood of experiencing intense crown fires in areas difficult to access by firefighters. Numerous people from fire departments and natural resource agencies across the state have already viewed the application. We hope that landowners across the state will use it to understand their risk and learn how to take action to prepare their property for wildfire.



CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT FIRE

Scientific study of the relationship between weather conditions and fire activity can help fire and natural resources professionals be proactive as our changing climate demands new approaches. The NFS conducted an in-house, scientific analysis to determine which months experience the most wildfire activity in Nebraska (i.e., the fire season) as well as the relationship between fire weather variables and wildfire activity.

Fire professionals are likely familiar with the spring fire season in the state—when grasses and brush are dry and easily ignited due to winter dormancy—and the summer fire season characteristic of many western states. They know that abnormally warm and dry weather typically creates the perfect conditions for wildfire activity. Inspired by a similar study by Darren Clabo and the state of South Dakota, the NFS wanted to look at the fire season and the relationship between weather conditions and wildfire activity in observed data specific to our state. Additionally, we were interested in whether the relationships are uniform in space and time across the state.

For the analysis, NFS divided the state into nine regions and collected wildfire data and observed weather data for the years 1992-2015. For each region they conducted an in-depth analysis of the distribution of wildfire activity throughout the year and the relationships between average fire size and the observed weather variables. Results indicate that in the Panhandle, North Central, and Southwest parts of the state, fire activity peaks in the summer and early fall. In the other regions, there is a peak in fire activity in the spring. Most spring fires in Nebraska occurs before the 'green-up' period since grasses and brush are typically still very dry when they emerge from the winter dormant season and can easily ignite. Historical fire data also shows that the extent of the fire season in terms of acres burned varies significantly throughout the state. Approximately 20 times more area has burned in the Panhandle region compared to regions in central and eastern Nebraska during the 1992-2015 period.

In the Panhandle, North Central and Southwest regions of Nebraska, maximum temperatures showed the strongest relationships with large fire size. This shows that the most significant factor in these regions leading to large fire size is high summer daily temperatures.




“ NFS intends to use this study to help in decision making for prepositioning resources during the peak fire seasons ”

– John Erixson



Strong relationships were also seen between precipitation and fire size. As precipitation decreases in the weeks proceeding a fire start, the average size of fires increases.

These results indicate that fire activity in Nebraska is at least partially impacted by current weather conditions and are generally consistent with the widely accepted belief that warm and dry conditions are ideal for wildfire activity. However, it is important to remember that other factors such as human influence, topography, vegetation health, and much more also impact fire activity.



THINKING SEVERAL STEPS AHEAD: A STATEWIDE NETWORK OF FIRE PROTECTION PLANS

Until 2003, there were no Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) at all in the state of Nebraska. CWPPs identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, recommend the types and methods of treatment to protect at-risk communities and essential infrastructure, and recommend measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community. A CWPP addresses topics such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, and structure protection.

The federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 addressed broad standards for fuel reduction activities under its authorities and brought national attention to the role of CWPPs in addressing fire protection in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Bringing CWPPs to Nebraska started in a somewhat piecemeal fashion. Nebraska's Pine Ridge experiences extreme wildfire seasons on a regular basis, so in 2003 the Chadron and Crawford VFDs worked with NFS, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), and local planning and emergency response entities to create the state's first CWPP for those fire districts. In 2008, NFS worked with the Gering VFD and the NGPC to prepare a CWPP for the Wildcat Hills Estates, a rural subdivision in the Wildland Urban Interface near Gering.

Also in 2008, the US Forest Service initiated State and Private Forestry fire assistance funding that can be used for forest fuels reduction at the discretion of the states. That year the NFS applied for and received its first grant to fund cost share assistance for private landowners to reduce

woody fuels in the WUI. Landowners in jurisdictions with a CWPP were eligible to participate, so Nebraska's first WUI fuels treatment projects were in the panhandle.

In 2009 NFS collaborated with the North Central Nebraska Fire Advisory Council and the National Park Service to create a CWPP for the Niobrara Valley, and soon another WUI grant began funding projects around Valentine and other WUI communities near the Niobrara National Scenic River.

Recognizing the role of CWPPs in obtaining funding for fuels reduction in WUI areas, in 2013-2014 NFS updated and expanded the Pine Ridge, North Central/Niobrara, and Loess Canyons CWPPs and received additional grants to expand fuels work in these areas. In 2015 NFS updated the Wildcat Hills plan and created a new one for the Missouri River Northeast region.

In 2018, NFS decided to establish a network of CWPPs and created fourteen CWPP regions statewide. Two more grants funded the effort, and by 2021, twelve were completed or updated, with the remaining two expected to be finished in 2022.

Gering Fire Chief Nathan Flowers is pleased to have the CWPP as a community resource. "We've had a CWPP in our district since the early 2000s. This document assists fire departments and local landowners with implementing fire protection mitigation measures. We have been successful in gathering critical information from landowners and developing ways to respond. Our CWPP builds a foundation for all of us to work together. Fire is everyone's fight!"



CONSERVATION EDUCATION MAKES THE GRADE

Creating a Statewide Network of Conservation Educators

The mission of the Nebraska Forest Service is to enrich the lives of all Nebraskans by protecting, restoring and utilizing Nebraska's tree and forest resources. One way NFS enacts this mission is through a variety of conservation education programs focused on connecting Nebraska's youth and members of the public to these resources. Throughout the tumultuous time of COVID-19, NFS has innovated and re-imagined these programs in order to inspire the next generation of tree planters and forest stewards all across our great state.

A core aspect of the NFS Conservation Education program is being the state-coordinating agency for Project Learning Tree and Project WET (Water Education Today) environmental education curricula. Project Learning Tree uses forests as a "window to the world" to increase understanding of our complex environment. Project WET advances water education to understand global challenges and inspire local solutions. Both programs are internationally utilized and nationally award-winning. By managing these programs



in Nebraska, NFS cultivates awareness and appreciation for Nebraska's natural resources, stimulates the ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues, the commitment to take responsible action, and the aptitude to select sustainable choices in order to conserve these resources for future generations.

As the state-coordinating agency for these programs, NFS works with a state-wide network of trained facilitators



After attending an NFS Conservation Education workshop, educators are empowered to integrate environmental education focused lessons into their day-to-day work with Nebraska's youth.

and partners to provide educators with professional development opportunities focused on each curriculum. After attending an NFS Conservation Education workshop, educators are empowered to integrate environmental education focused lessons into their day-to-day work with Nebraska's youth.

As a result of the Covid crisis, traditional in-person educator workshops were not possible due to university and local guidelines as well as public safety. Jack Hilgert, NFS Conservation Educator, worked to re-imagine these

experiences in a virtual zoom-based format. As a silver lining to the pandemic, these workshops have been able to reach a broader, geographically diverse range of educators from all corners of the Cornhusker State—and even beyond. In the past driving distances and other logistical issues hindered educators from the rural and western portions of the state to receive access to NFS professional development. By pivoting into a virtual format, NFS was not only able to keep these programs running but expand their reach and audience across the tree-planters state.



The Nebraska Forest Service and several organizations have entered a new partnership promoting environmental education throughout the state (Photo courtesy of Fremont Tribune).

BRANCHING OUT INTO THE CLASSROOM

Along with the addition of virtual workshops, NFS has piloted a new Affiliate Education Centers program in order to further expand partnerships and NFS' educational reach across the state.

Keep Omaha Beautiful, University of Nebraska State Museum—Morrill Hall, Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Ponca State Park, Nebraska Extension, ESU 7, and Hastings Museum have each entered a new partnership to bring the best in environmental education to Nebraska's citizens.

Each organization has signed on to become an "Affiliate Education Center," providing Project Learning Tree and Project WET (Water Education Today) materials to their respective regions. The partners have agreed to house various activity kits—aptly coined "Tree Trunks"—for checkout by local teachers, educators, and the public. Each kit includes curricula and materials to lead environmental education lessons with students. In addition to these kits, each center will host NFS-sponsored educator professional development opportunities annually focused on helping educators

implement hands-on environmental education with their students.

"Our goal is to provide unique environmental learning opportunities for both teachers and their students, in order to inspire the next generation of tree planters in our great state," says Jack Hilgert, Conservation Educator at NFS. "This partnership aligns this goal with the excellent educational programming each partner already provides to youth, educators, and general public."

During the inaugural year of the program, the NFS plans to establish several of these regionally focused partnerships thanks to grant funds provided by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Nebraska Environmental Trust. Eventually, the agency hopes to have a community-level presence in all regions of the Cornhusker State.

This regionally focused model is a new innovative approach. Nebraska is only the third state in the country to pilot this style of curricula facilitation and many other states are interested in hearing about this program's success. NFS has become a model for program implementation across the country.

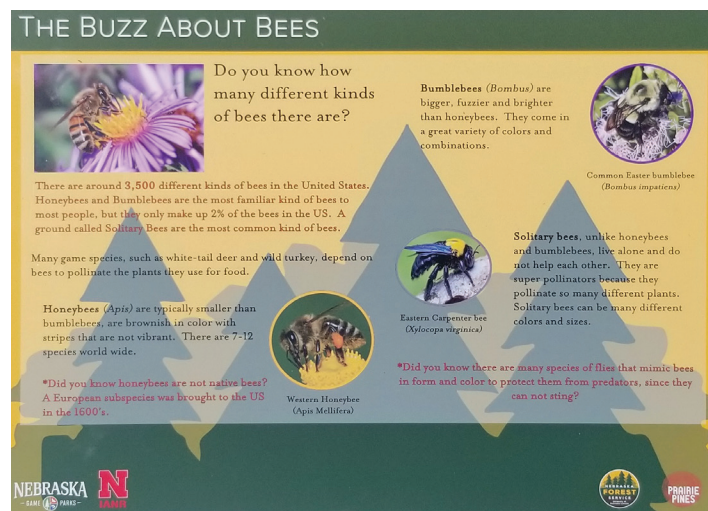
WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

The Watchable Wildlife Small Grants are funded through the Wildlife Conservation Fund, administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and develop wildlife-viewing and nature-based experiences in Nebraska.

NFS received a \$2,000 grant to install signage to highlight wildlife species often observed at two of the NFS properties, Prairie Pines Nature Preserve, near Lincoln, and Horning Farm Demonstration Area near Plattsmouth: white-tail deer, wild turkey, migratory birds, and bees. The signage was designed to educate both children and adults about what they are experiencing and encourage further exploration of the natural world. The additional signage greatly enhances the properties' mission to promote conservation, habitat, and natural experiences. The signs are intended to engage the readers to think about how that species/group relates to them, and human impact on the habitat.

The Watchable Wildlife Small Grants are funded through the Wildlife Conservation Fund, administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and develop wildlife-viewing and nature-based experiences in Nebraska. The intent of these grants is to help people build appreciation and stewardship for natural resources through practical experience. The project was required to have a majority focus on game species, have a net positive impact on natural resources and wildlife, and promote stewardship and appreciation of local natural resources.

The white-tailed deer sign relates how a deer communicates to how we communicate, and asks engaging questions, such as "How do deer 'tell' you that they've



been around?" The wild turkey sign reveals how turkeys are very adaptable and can live "even in back-yards." The migratory bird sign tells what birds eat, how migratory birds are protected and how we can help them. The bee sign describes the different kinds of bees, and their importance in pollination.

Each sign encourages the reader to think about some aspect of that species or group and encourages participation by asking a thought-provoking question. The signs provide interesting facts that encourage curiosity and a desire to continue to participate in nature-based activities.



THE FIGHT FOR A HEALTHY FOREST

Weathering the Storm

Bayard, Nebraska wears its Tree City USA status proudly because it didn't come easily.

In June 2017, two tornados touched down in and around the small city of 1,000 people, causing widespread property damage. The storms also did a number on the area's trees.

"We lost 30 in our cemetery alone," says Renne Dabney, Deputy Clerk and Treasurer for the City of Bayard. "It was pretty devastating."

Neighborhoods, parks, and schools also sustained heavy losses. Couple that with the looming arrival of the emerald ash borer, and it was a bleak outlook for the western Nebraska town's greenery. But while some might have thrown in the towel, Bayard made trees the priority.

"They're a part of our town's identity and we want them to be here for the next generation," says Dabney.

Working with the Nebraska Forest Service, city workers and volunteers set out to accomplish several tasks in a short amount of time: complete a tree inventory, develop an EAB Response Plan, and apply for funding to replace the community's lost trees.

"We started collecting data on their trees," says Chrissy Land, Nebraska Forest Service Western Nebraska Community Forester. "Ash numbers were a priority, and that's where the response plan was key."



In June 2017, two tornados touched down in and around the small city of 1,000 people, causing widespread property damage. The storms also did a number on the area's trees (photo courtesy of Star-Herald).

Ash trees can be treated, removed or replaced, but they can't be ignored. Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) inventories estimate communities will need to commit more than \$275 million to protect themselves from infested, publicly-owned ash trees.

The "EAB Readiness and Response Plan" is a dynamic document designed for preparing and responding to the



NFS Western Nebraska Community Forester Chrissy Land runs through a planting lesson with Bayard students.

“Trees are a part of our town’s identity, and we want them to be here for the next generation.”

– Renne Dabney, Deputy Clerk and Treasure for the City of Bayard.

introduction of the tree pest. Nebraska municipalities work with NFS staff to develop the plan, then move forward with a community-tailored strategy to mitigate the impacts to budget and overall canopy health. It then acts as a resource to navigate what can be a multi-year response effort.

Land worked with Dabney and the City of Bayard to develop a response plan. Upon completion of the plan, they were able to leverage the strategy to apply for and receive the Community Tree Recovery grant from the Arbor Day Foundation, which provides free trees to communities affected by natural disasters.

The 2022 Arbor Day should be a special one for Bayard, as they will receive 180 trees, which will be dispersed through large volunteer planting project. They also received and planted ten trees this Fall through the NFS Free Trees for Fall Planting grant.

“We really like trees,” smiles Dabney. “Now we’ll have enough to provide to members of our community, schools, the cemetery, and important commerce areas. We have the Nebraska Forest Service and Arbor Day Foundation to thank for that.”

2021 Fall Mini-Grant Program

The purpose of our fall mini-grant programs, a collaborative effort of the Nebraska Forest Service and Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, is to help celebrate and enable the planting of trees in fall. That includes providing educational opportunities for people to learn more about trees and their proper selection, siting, planting, and care.

- ▶ **634 trees planted this year**
- ▶ **NFS and NSA worked with 54 communities**
- ▶ **You can find out more online at [NFS.UNL.EDU](https://nfs.unl.edu)**

HERBICIDE DAMAGE TO TREES IS A GROWING CONCERN

Herbicide injury to trees is an urgent and growing concern across Nebraska and the Midwest. Foresters and other tree professionals have noticed a dramatic increase in such injury in recent years with the damage coming from two primary sources: farming practices and lawn care practices. The herbicides used in both instances can be caught in the wind and move directly into trees as spray droplets or mist. And some commonly used herbicides can also volatilize after application becoming a gas that mixes with the atmosphere and which can move into nearby trees and vegetation. There is some evidence that volatilized chemicals can even move for a few miles.

Right now, evidence suggests the biggest driver of the increase in herbicide injury to trees is farming related. Most farmers now use low-till or no-till methods that help reduce soil erosion and rely on herbicides to kill weeds. Because of herbicide-resistant weeds, farmers are now forced to use an ever-expanding arsenal of herbicides and at higher rates to get the job done. These herbicides are sprayed in early spring to clean up fields before planting. And now with genetically modified crops, herbicides are also routinely sprayed post-emergent over young corn and soybean plants. This creates a window from April into June in which herbicides are being routinely sprayed on crop ground with the possibility of moving off site and into trees.

Herbicide damage to trees is most likely to occur early in the season when trees are waking up from winter dormancy and when their emerging leaves are most tender and susceptible. Injury is usually expressed as cupped and curled leaves, thin canopies and twisting small branches (epinastic growth). Oaks and legumes are especially hard hit, but damage occurs to a wide range of species, including most species grown in Nebraska. NFS staff have noticed this damage in both rural and urban areas and on planted trees as well as in natural woodlands. Most trees can tolerate minor and occasional injury. However, the bigger concern is repeated injury year after year, and we are now noticing some trees in decline due to repeated injury.


NFS has been working in recent years to help document herbicide-related tree injury and to help raise



NFS has been working in recent years to help document herbicide-related tree injury and to help raise awareness of the problem.

awareness of the problem. In cooperation with other states in the region, hundreds of leaf samples have been taken of impacted trees and were analyzed for herbicides revealing the most common chemicals used. NFS has also organized a working group of people brought together from across the region to share information and to join in round-table discussions on how to address the problem.

Recently, NFS joined a coalition of organizations from other corn belt states to develop an advocacy network that shares information, and which will help raise awareness of the problem on a regional level. The ultimate goal is to find solutions that help reduce the impact of herbicide injury to trees and landscapes. Farming is the lifeblood of Nebraska and most people also value weed-free lawns. The trick is to help find a way to do both farming and lawn care that won't cause unnecessary harm to our trees. We're confident we can find those solutions, but we have a long way to go.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN JUNIPER AND CERCOSPORA IN WINDBREAKS

Loss of foliage in diseased windbreak trees impairs their function.

Eastern redcedar is a resilient species adapted to the harsh conditions of the plains and widely used in windbreaks. However, several landowners have turned to Rocky Mountain juniper as an alternative windbreak species. This western cousin to redcedar performs well in the drought-stricken areas of the panhandle and is less likely to spread into pastures and unmanaged areas compared to redcedar.

No tree is perfect, though, and in recent years problems with Rocky Mountain juniper in central Nebraska began to surface. Trees were losing needles and thinning out. The culprit: a fungal disease known as *Cercospora* needle blight.

“Diseased trees lose their ability to block wind effectively,” said Rachel Allison, District Forester and Forest Health Specialist for Western Nebraska. “This is more of a problem when you have only a couple of tree rows to begin with.”

The blight develops when conditions within the windbreak allow moisture to remain on the trees for long periods.

Tightly spaced trees, for example, have limited air circulation, which slows the drying of dew and rain and gives fungal pathogens more time to infect tree tissues.

Due to its disease susceptibility, Rocky Mountain juniper had been recommended in the past only for the drier western half of the state. “Our changing weather patterns toward longer and more humid summers may require that we shift westward our planting recommendations for this tree,” Allison said.

To better understand the status of *Cercospora* needle blight, Allison is conducting windbreak surveys throughout central Nebraska looking for correlations between disease incidence and factors such as tree and row spacing, orientation, location and site condition. The goal is to develop new guidelines for designing and planting windbreaks utilizing Rocky Mountain juniper with other species, and ultimately improve windbreak health and performance.



BLAZING THE TRAIL

Last year, after a decade of work between the Nebraska Forest Service, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, and The State Fire Marshal's Office, Nebraska announced the creation of a fully operational Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT). The new IMT would provide improved coordination and leadership during extended emergencies—particularly wildfires.

It was a hallmark achievement. And one that was about to be put to the test.

Hackberry Fire

(August 5th, 2021. 7:00 PM MT)

When the clouds gathered in the skies over Banner County that evening, most residents expected some much-needed rain. Unfortunately, what they got was lightning.

Lightning struck 20 miles east of Harrisburg creating a fast-moving grass fire. Over the next several days, with the help of high winds, the blaze would burn some 6,000 acres.

"It was an eye opener for all of us," recalls Tim Newman, Region 22 Emergency Manager.

Twenty volunteer fire departments with 120 fire engines from around the state responded to the fire. The Type 3 IMT and the Wildland Incident Response and Assistance Team (WIRAT), both comprising members of the Nebraska Forest Service, were soon called in to assist with mitigating resources and offering strategies to support local efforts.

"They helped us make sense of the chaos," says Newman. "Coordinating the volunteer fire departments and even helping manage the sheer number of resources we had was huge."





The Post and Vista Trend Fires

(September 16th, 2021. Late afternoon and evening, respectively)

It would be Nebraska's notorious winds that would leave several communities battling two simultaneous wildfires. The first—designated the Post Fire—was reported to the Crawford Volunteer Fire Department as high winds in the area reached close to 50 mph. Overnight, what began as a small grass fire south of town would stretch to over a thousand acres. Dozens of buildings outside of Crawford were soon evacuated.

Less than 100 miles away, a similar situation was unfolding.

The Vista Trend Fire also began as a grass fire, albeit south of Gering, Nebraska. Officials believed it started with an arcing or downed power line due to the same high winds.

Both fires would total just over 8,000 acres burnt and the Nebraska Type 3 IMT and WIRAT were deployed to assist in the response and operations. Along with the Type 3 IMT, more than 450 people from dozens of local, state, and federal agencies helped fight the Post and Vista Trend fires, making resource management all-the-more essential.



NFS Fire Operations Leader Matt Holte would act as Incident Commander on the Post Fire. “Having a state IMT is a cost-effective way to respond to these incidents,” says Holte. “The team proved to be an invaluable resource in keeping Nebraskans safe during this year’s active fire season.”

For additional support, several flights, or sorties, were flown by single engine air tankers (SEATs) from bases operated by the Nebraska Forest Service out of Chadron and Scottsbluff. They were critical in assisting ground crews battling the fires by dropping flame retardant.

“A gift from heaven,” is how Crawford Mayor Connie Shell described the SEAT support and outside help in a column published in The Crawford Clipper. “We could not have fought this fire by ourselves.”

2021 GRANT AWARDS & FINANCIALS

The Nebraska Forest Service pursues a variety of traditional and nontraditional funding sources to facilitate the agency's reach across Nebraska. Through grant funding and leveraging its role within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, we are able to enrich the lives of Nebraskans by increasing the value, condition, and use of the state's trees and forests.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

Niobrara/Central

Amount: \$300,000

Awarded by: USDA Forest Service

Project Scope: The grant provides cost-share to landowners for thinning and removing ladder fuels in coniferous and mixed deciduous-coniferous forests in/adjacent to WUI areas and key access routes in the Niobrara Valley. The goal is to protect residents, recreational visitors, firefighters, and structures in the Niobrara Valley. Our focus of this grant is to thin areas with insect and disease-killed trees to protect healthy ponderosa pine in groups and maintain crown separation between groups of trees to reduce the risk of crown fires. In deciduous stands with redcedar the goal is to thin the cedar to reduce density and remove ladder fuels.

Missouri River Northeast

Amount: \$300,000

Awarded by: USDA Forest Service

Project Scope: This grant provides cost-share to landowners for thinning and removing ladder fuels in Northeast Nebraska. Our focus in managing the trees in coniferous and mixed deciduous-coniferous forests in/adjacent to WUI and along key access routes to protect residents, recreational visitors, firefighters, homes and infrastructures. Thinning will remove cedar trees from hardwood stands to reduce density and remove ladder fuels. In cedar monocultures removing cedar trees to reduce cover by as much as 80% is planned.

South Central West/Southeast

Amount: \$300,000

Awarded by: USDA Forest Service

Project Scope: This grant is for a fuels reduction program in South Central Nebraska. This project will provide cost-share to landowners for thinning and removing ladder fuels from coniferous and mixed deciduous-coniferous forests in/adjacent to WUI areas and key access routes to protect residents, recreational visitors, firefighters, and structures.

Community Assistance Funds Adjacent to National Forests Lands (CAFA)

Pine Ridge

Amount: \$300,000

Awarded by: USDA Forest Service

Project Scope: This project continues to focus the work along the US Highway 385 (most densely populated WUI in the geographic Pine Ridge area and Priority One) and the Deadhorse county road travel corridors. Work along both corridors has successfully reduced the risk to this wildland/urban interface; however, more work is needed. This grant funds fuel breaks in strategic locations on private and state lands near the Pine Ridge Job Corps and other communities within the Pine Ridge Community Wildland Fire Protection Plan (Update 2020).

Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR)

Pine Restoration

Amount: \$300,000

Awarded by: USDA Forest Service

Project Scope: This project expands the ongoing effort by the Nebraska Forest Service and United States Forest Service to reforest state and private forestlands in the Pine Ridge and Niobrara Valley. For the past 20 years, unprecedented, catastrophic wildfires have scarred the landscape, resulting in an effective conversion of nearly 150,000 acres of forests to grassland. Natural regeneration is not occurring. The Pine Ridge and Niobrara Valley are unique forested regions that represent the easternmost reaches of ponderosa pine in the US and are home to 90% of Nebraska's pine forests plus all the state's native remnant aspen and birch stands. The goal is to reverse the trend, increasing the acres of forests across the landscape by planting 300,000 trees.

Small Project, Wide Reach

Amount: \$98,000

Awarded by: USDA Forest Service

Project Scope: This is a statewide effort led by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum to improve long-term rural community forests targeting 46 of the 93 counties in Nebraska. The state's trees are seriously challenged by a wide range of threats, including weather extremes and pest/disease outbreaks. With the decline in community tree canopy, a loss in these social, economic, and environmental benefits is inevitable. This project focuses on the community forests and looks to engage 60 rural communities to plant over 1500 trees with the goal of effecting communities in a positive way.

Oak Decline Multi-State**Amount:** \$343,640**Awarded by:** USDA Forest Service

Project Scope: Bur oak is native throughout the central US and planted in rural landscapes. This grant funds a program to improve bur oak resiliency by examining injury & damaging of bur oaks. The grant will focus on 20 priority landscapes in Nebraska and Kansas. Documentation and tissue tests will provide baseline data currently on the effects and causes of damage in bur oaks. Seed sources that are potentially resistant to galls and other damage will be identified. Test/demo plots will be established with a long-term outcome of improved bur oak lines.

Other Grants

Hazard Trees Pilot**Amount:** \$150,000**Awarded by:** USDA Forest Service

The purpose of the Dead and Dying Tree Removal Pilot Program is to assist low- and moderate-income homeowners with grant funding to remove dead or dying tree(s), including ash trees in any condition, from private properties. This program applies to hazardous trees, defined as dead, fatally diseased or structurally weak trees, or a tree that has a structural defect that makes it likely to fail in whole or in part. The program is focused on replacing each tree removed with one suitable for that site. The program is unique because funding is provided to remove trees located on private property.

Watchable Wildlife**Amount:** \$2,382**Awarded by:** NGPC

This grant installed signs geared toward children and adults that highlight both game species and non-game species, specifically wild turkey, white-tailed deer, migratory birds, and bees. The signs educate people about commonly present wildlife species/groups and inspire people to think about how wildlife benefits the environment and our experience of the environment. Each sign encourages the reader to think about some aspect of that species/group. The signs also give interesting facts to encourage curiosity and a desire to continue to participate in nature-based activities.

Multi-State Urban Forest Resilience**Amount:** \$250,000**Awarded by:** USDA Forest Service

Great Plains community forests thrive in a tough environment fraught with invasive pests and disease, drought, floods, intense storms, and wildly fluctuating temperatures. As the climate continues to change, and our mature to over-mature canopy continues to age, these environmental stressors and their effects will intensify, making urban and community forestry more critical than ever for ensuring that our cities and towns are livable and that the benefits of trees are distributed equitably. This project engages four states – Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota, and Wyoming – in a collaborative effort to proactively respond to threats and sustainably manage community forests for the benefits of nearly 6.3 million people in more than 1,500 cities and towns.

Volunteer Fire Assistance**Amount:** \$292,000**Awarded by:** USDA Forest Service

Through the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program, the Nebraska Forest Service provides grants to local fire districts for the purchase of materials or equipment to increase their capacity to effectively respond to fires and provide education about fire prevention to their communities. Fire districts may apply for up to 50% of the project cost and must be able to match the award with local funds. If qualified, volunteer fire departments may receive up to 50% cost-share toward the purchase of 2-way radios, protective clothing, breathing apparatus, and/or firefighting equipment.

National Agroforester**Amount:** \$122,000**Awarded by:** USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

In the Great Plains, agroforestry plays a critical role in the protection of soil, water quality, livestock, and energy conservation through a network of windbreaks and riparian forest buffers. Yet these systems are being threatened by changing climates, aging trees, herbicide drift, invasive plants and insects, and expanded row crop production. This grant provides funding to a National Agroforester providing critical tech transfer to the public to expand agroforestry system across the Great Plains and the United States.

Arbor Day Reforestation**Amount:** \$13,500**Awarded by:** Arbor Day Foundation

The Arbor Day Foundation has provided the Nebraska Forest Service funding to plant at least 9,000 trees for the Chadron State College 'C-Hill' Reforestation Project. Trees were grown at Bessey Nursery in Halsey and later purchased from the Upper Niobrara White Natural Resource District. A professional tree planting crew completed planting in April of this year (2021).

Project Learning Tree Education Affiliates**Amount:** \$6,850**Awarded by:** Sustainable Forestry Initiative

This grant provides the Nebraska Forest Service the opportunity to develop certified Affiliate Education Centers in Nebraska. The Nebraska Forest Service partners with museums, nature centers, and other educationally invested organizations that are primarily focused on environmental and STEM education. The Nebraska Forest Service is rolling out this special designation program and partnership with several partners, including the Hastings Museum, University of Nebraska State Museum (Morrill Hall) in Lincoln, and Keep Omaha Beautiful, an Omaha-area nonprofit.

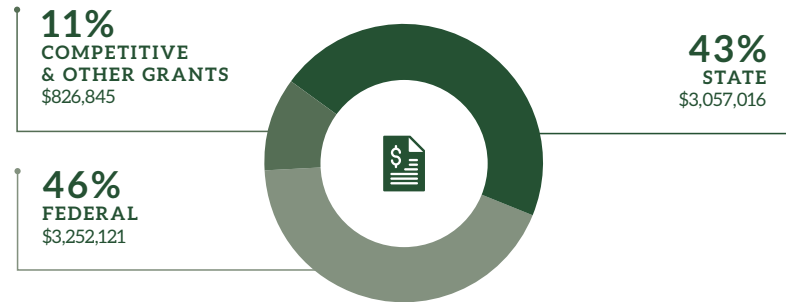
Windbreak Technology**Amount:** \$10,000**Awarded by:** USDA Forest Service

This grant funds various outreach events related to sharing the latest technology associated with windbreak development and design. Events are focused on landowners and natural resource professionals.

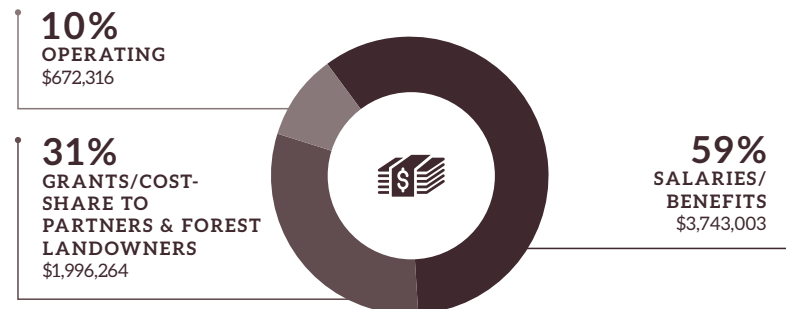
Agroforestry Demonstration Sites**Amount:** \$10,000**Awarded by:** USDA Forest Service

The purpose of this grant is to provide for the development of three sites to describe the importance of agroforestry alley cropping and silvopasture demonstrations. Locations include renovating declining tree trials to convert the site to a demonstration of silvopasture, including providing tree care and installing animal control fencing and demonstrations of alley cropping using hybrid hazelnuts and various nut-producing tree species.

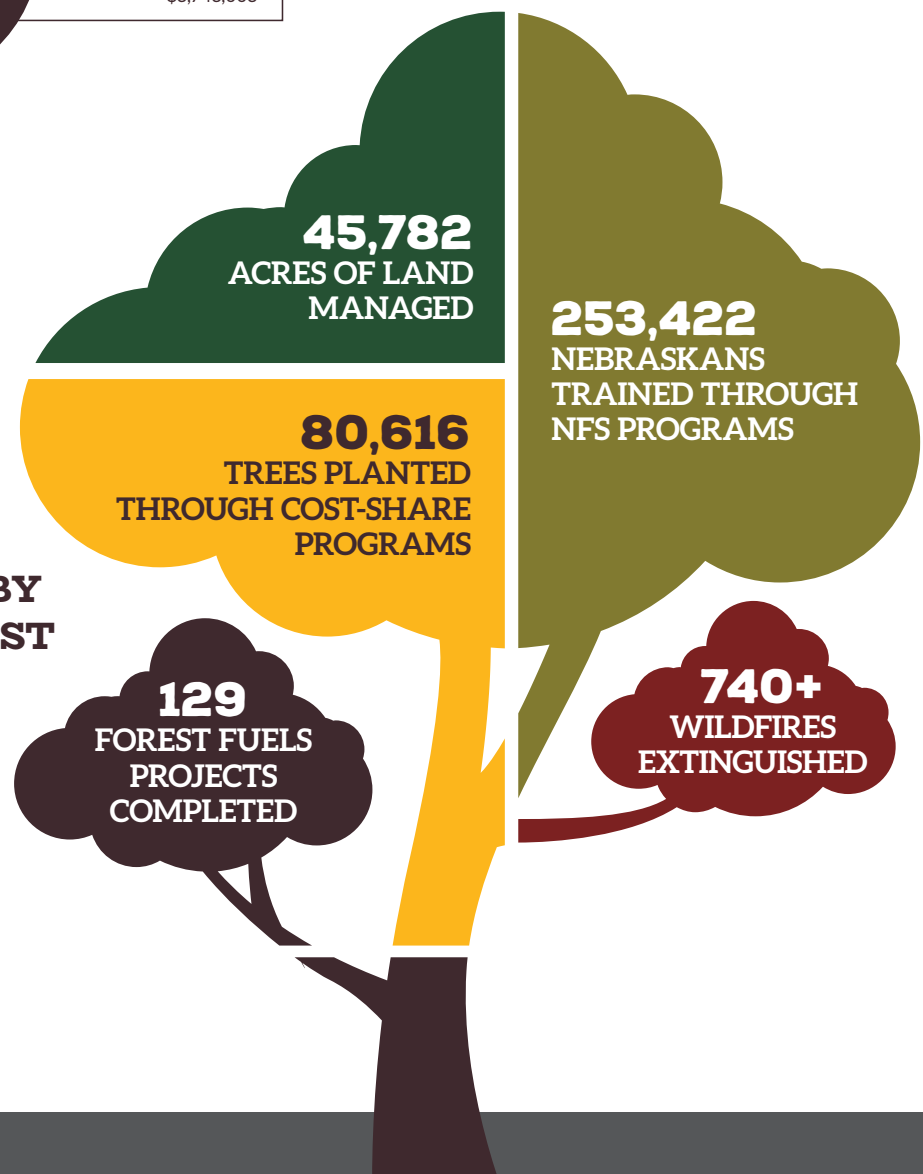
FUNDING SOURCES



EXPENDITURES



A SNAPSHOT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE NEBRASKA FOREST SERVICE IN 2021



GRANTS/COST-SHARE AWARDED TO NEBRASKA FOREST SERVICE PARTNERS IN 2021

County	Community	Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Adams	Ayr	Hastings Rural Fire District		35,000
Adams	Hastings	Hastings Rural Fire District	5,000	197,000
Adams	Holstein	Holstein Rural Fire District	2,400	497,000
Adams	Juniata	Juniata Rural Fire District		225,000
Adams	Roseland	Roseland Rural Fire District		659,000
Adams Total			7,400	1,613,000
Antelope	Brunswick	Brunswick Rural Fire District	2,262	7,000
Antelope	Clearwater	Clearwater Rural Fire District		190,000
Antelope	Elgin	Elgin Rural Fire District		651,000
Antelope	Neligh	Neligh Rural Fire District		370,000
Antelope	Oakdale	Oakdale Rural Fire District		320,000
Antelope Total			2,262	1,538,000
Arthur	Arthur	Arthur Rural Fire District		190,000
Arthur Total			0	190,000
Banner	Harrisburg	Banner Rural Fire District		92,000
Banner Total			0	92,000
Blaine	Brewster	Brewster Rural Fire District		499,300
Blaine	Dunning	Dunning Rural Fire District		650,600
Blaine	Purdum	Purdum Rural Fire District		356,000
Blaine Total			0	1,505,900
Boone	Albion	Albion Rural Fire District	2,000	215,000
Boone	Cedar Rapids	Cedar Rapids Rural Fire District	5,000	523,000
Boone	Petersburg	Petersburg Rural Fire District		22,000
Boone	Primrose	Primrose Rural Fire District	2,725	1,502,000
Boone	Saint Edward	Saint Edward Rural Fire District	5,000	256,000
Boone Total			14,725	2,518,000
Box Butte	Alliance	Alliance Rural Fire District	1,500	366,000
Box Butte Total			1,500	366,000
Boyd	Lynch	Lynch Rural Fire District		414,000
Boyd	Spencer	Boyd County EM/Spencer Rural Fire District		31,000
Boyd	Spencer	Spencer Rural Fire District		406,000
Boyd		Landowners**	52,371	
Boyd Total			52,371	851,000
Brown	Ainsworth	Ainsworth Fire & Rescue Department	5,000	
Brown	Ainsworth	Brown County Rural Fire District		334,300
Brown	Long Pine	Brown County Rural Fire District		92,000
Brown		Landowners**	49,120	
Brown Total			54,120	426,300
Buffalo	Amherst	Amherst Rural Fire District		640,000
Buffalo	Elm Creek	Elm Creek Rural Fire District		350,000
Buffalo	Gibbon	Gibbon Rural Fire District		55,000
Buffalo	Pleasanton	Pleasanton Rural Fire District		468,000

County	Community	Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Buffalo	Shelton	Shelton Rural Fire District		250,000
Buffalo Total			0	1,763,000
Burt	Craig	Craig Rural Fire District		7,000
Burt Total			0	7,000
Butler	Abie	Abie Fire District	1,166	22,000
Butler	David City	David City Volunteer Fire District	3,000	7,000
Butler	Dwight	Dwight Rural Fire District		504,600
Butler		East Central NE Fire Prevention Coop	250	
Butler	Linwood	Linwood Volunteer Fire District	3,058	18,000
Butler	Rising City	Rising City Rural Fire District		60,000
Butler	Rising City/ Surprise	Rising City/ Surprise Rural Fire District		81,000
Butler	Ulysses	Ulysses Rural Fire District		25,000
Butler Total			7,474	717,600
Cass	Alvo	Eagle/Alvo Rural Fire District		663,600
Cass	Avoca	Avoca Rural Fire District		1,287,000
Cass	Cedar Creek	Cedar Creek - Louisville Rural Fire District		350,000
Cass	Eagle	Eagle Fire & Rescue	5,000	
Cass	Greenwood	Greenwood Rural Fire District		95,000
Cass	Murdock	Murdock Rural Fire District		481,000
Cass	Nehawka	Nehawka Rural Fire District		457,000
Cass	Plattsmouth	Plattsmouth Rural Fire District	5,000	267,300
Cass	Union	Union Rural Fire District		139,300
Cass	Weeping Water	Weeping Water Manley Rural Fire District		240,000
Cass Total			10,000	3,980,200
Cedar	Belden	Belden Rural Fire District		403,800
Cedar	Randolph	Randolph Rural Fire District		48,000
Cedar	Wynot	Wynot Fire District		331,000
Cedar		Landowners**	18,236	
Cedar Total			18,236	782,800
Chase	Imperial	Imperial Rural Fire District	4,820	288,000
Chase	Wauneta	Wauneta Rural Fire District		116,000
Chase Total			4,820	404,000
Cherry	Cody	Barley Rural Fire District		216,000
Cherry	Cody	Cody Rural Fire District	2,500	544,300
Cherry	Kilgore	Kilgore Rural Fire District		131,000
Cherry	Merriman	Merriman Rural Fire District	2,462	1,136,000
Cherry	Nenzel	Mid-Cherry Rural Fire District		1,544,000
Cherry		Region 24 Emergency Management District		50,000
Cherry	Valentine	Valentine Rural Fire District		236,000
Cherry	Wood Lake	Wood Lake Rural Fire District		335,000
Cherry		Landowners**	33,578	

County	Community Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Cherry Total		38,540	4,192,300
Cheyenne	Dalton Dalton-Gurley Rural Fire District		327,000
Cheyenne	Potter Potter Rural Fire District	4,433	1,045,000
Cheyenne	Region 21 Emergency Management District		316,000
Cheyenne	Sidney Sidney Rural Fire District		395,000
Cheyenne Total		4,433	2,083,000
Clay	Clay Center Clay Center Rural Fire District	5,000	487,000
Clay	Clay Center Clay County Emergency Management District		305,000
Clay	Edgar Edgar Rural Fire District	5,000	201,000
Clay	Glenvil Glenvil Fire & Rescue	5,000	
Clay	Harvard Harvard Rural Fire District		273,000
Clay	Sutton Sutton Rural Fire District		706,500
Clay	Trumbull Trumbull Volunteer Fire Department	4,231	
Clay	Landowners**	22,950	
Clay Total		42,181	1,972,500
Colfax	Clarkson Clarkson Rural Fire District		25,000
Colfax	Leigh Leigh Rural Fire District		116,000
Colfax Total		0	141,000
Cuming	Beemer Beemer Rural Fire District		104,000
Cuming Total		0	104,000
Custer	Anselmo Anselmo Rural Fire District		970,000
Custer	Ansley Ansley Rural Fire District		174,000
Custer	Arnold Arnold Rural Fire District		307,000
Custer	Broken Bow Broken Bow Rural Fire District		48,000
Custer	Comstock Comstock Rural Fire District		250,000
Custer	Mason City Mason City Rural Fire District		510,300
Custer	Sargent Sargent Rural Fire District		619,000
Custer Total		0	2,878,300
Dakota	Dakota Dakota-Covington Rural Fire District		133,000
Dakota Total		0	133,000
Dawes	Chadron Chadron Rural Fire District	5,000	141,000
Dawes	Landowners**	471,586	
Dawes Total		476,586	141,000
Dawson	Eddyville Eddyville Rural Fire District		47,000
Dawson	Farnam Farnam Rural Fire District		220,000
Dawson	Sumner Sumner Rural Fire District		350,000
Dawson	Landowners**	11,251	
Dawson Total		11,251	617,000
Deuel	Chappell Chappell Rural Fire District		300,000
Deuel Total		0	300,000
Dixon	Allen Allen-Waterbury Fire District		238,000
Dixon	Dixon Dixon Rural Fire District		117,600
Dixon	Martinsburg Martinsburg Rural Fire District		545,000
Dixon	Newcastle Newcastle Rural Fire District		190,000
Dixon	Ponca Ponca Rural Fire District		306,000
Dixon	Landowners**	20,918	
Dixon Total		20,918	1,396,600
Dodge	Dodge Dodge County Emergency Management District		11,000

County	Community Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Dodge	Dodge Dodge Rural Fire District		57,000
Dodge	Fremont Fremont Rural Fire District	2,776	431,600
Dodge	Hooper Hooper Rural Fire District		300
Dodge	Ingelwood/ Fremont Ingelwood/Fremont Rural Fire District		489,000
Dodge	Nickerson Nickerson Rural Fire District		240,000
Dodge	North Bend North Bend Rural Fire District	5,000	349,500
Dodge	Scribner Scribner Rural Fire District		349,000
Dodge	Snyder Snyder Rural Fire District	4,500	18,000
Dodge	Uehling Uehling Rural Fire District		350,300
Dodge	Winslow Winslow Rural Fire District	5,000	783,500
Dodge	Landowners**	7,406	
Dodge Total		24,682	3,079,200
Douglas	Bennington Bennington Rural Fire District	4,200	48,000
Douglas	Valley Valley Rural Fire District		1,300,000
Douglas	Waterloo Waterloo Rural Fire District		107,000
Douglas Total		4,200	1,455,000
Dundy	Benkelman Benkelman Rural Fire District	1,250	184,000
Dundy	Haigler Haigler Rural Fire District		350,000
Dundy Total		1,250	534,000
Fillmore	Fairmont Fairmont Rural Fire District		190,000
Fillmore	Milligan Milligan Rural Fire District		220,000
Fillmore	Ohiowa Ohiowa Rural Fire District		220,000
Fillmore	Shickley Shickley Rural Fire District		26,000
Fillmore Total		0	656,000
Franklin	Campbell Campbell Rural Fire District		763,000
Franklin	Franklin Franklin Rural Fire District		49,000
Franklin	Hildreth Hildreth Rural Fire District		124,300
Franklin	Riverton Riverton Rural Fire District		329,000
Franklin	Upland Upland Rural Fire District		165,000
Franklin Total		0	1,430,300
Frontier	Curtis Curtis Rural Fire District	4,978	254,000
Frontier	Eustis Eustis Rural Fire District		571,000
Frontier	Maywood Maywood-Wellfleet Rural Fire District		205,000
Frontier	Landowners**	8,820	
Frontier Total		13,798	1,030,000
Furnas	Arapahoe Holbrook-Edison-Arapahoe Rural Fire District		175,600
Furnas	Beaver City Beaver City Volunteer Fire Department	4,500	
Furnas	Cambridge Cambridge Rural Fire District		49,000
Furnas	Edison Edison Volunteer Fire District		49,000
Furnas	Holbrook Holbrook-Edison-Arapahoe Rural Fire District	4,750	190,000
Furnas	Oxford Oxford Rural Fire District	5,000	463,600
Furnas Total		14,250	927,200
Gage	Barneston Barneston Rural Fire District		359,300
Gage	Blue Springs Blue Springs Rural Fire District		237,000
Gage	Clatonia Clatonia Rural Fire District		40,500
Gage	Odell Odell Rural Fire District		31,000

County	Community Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Gage	Wymore Wymore Volunteer Fire & Rescue District	1,396	11,000
Gage Total		1,396	678,800
Garden	Lewellen Blue Creek Rural Fire District		453,000
Garden	Oshkosh Garden County Rural Fire District		466,000
Garden	Rackett Rackett Rural Fire District		426,000
Garden Total		0	1,345,000
Garfield	Burwell Burwell Rural Fire District		297,000
Garfield Total		0	297,000
Gosper	Elwood Elwood - Gosper Volunteer Fire Department	5,000	
Gosper	Elwood Gosper County Rural Fire District		571,000
Gosper Total		5,000	571,000
Grant	Hyannis Sandhills Rural Fire District	3,000	297,000
Grant Total		3,000	297,000
Greeley	Greeley Greeley Rural Fire District	5,000	388,000
Greeley	Scotia Scotia Rural Fire District		22,000
Greeley	Spalding Spalding Rural Fire District		151,000
Greeley	Wolbach Wolbach Rural Fire District		116,000
Greeley Total		5,000	677,000
Hall	Cairo Cairo Rural Fire District		221,000
Hall	Doniphan Doniphan Rural Fire District		320,000
Hall	Grand Island NSVFA - Fire School		6,500
Hall Total		0	547,500
Hamilton	Aurora Aurora Rural Fire District	5,000	1,349,000
Hamilton	Giltner Giltner Volunteer Fire District		1,300,000
Hamilton	Hampton Hampton Volunteer Fire District	3,779	190,000
Hamilton	Hordville Hordville Rural Fire District	3,055	320,000
Hamilton	Marquette Marquette Rural Fire District	5,000	604,100
Hamilton	Phillips Phillips Rural Fire District	4,652	320,000
Hamilton	Landowners**	8,010	
Hamilton Total		29,496	4,083,100
Harlan	Alma Alma Rural Fire District		299,000
Harlan	Orleans Orleans Rural Fire District		890,000
Harlan	Republican City Republican City Rural Fire District		11,000
Harlan	Stamford Stamford Rural Fire District		437,000
Harlan Total		0	1,637,000
Hayes	Hayes Center Hayes County Rural Fire District		435,000
Hayes Total		0	435,000
Hitchcock	Palisade Palisade Rural Fire District		331,000
Hitchcock	Stratton Stratton Rural Fire District		232,600
Hitchcock Total		0	563,600
Holt	Atkinson Atkinson Rural Fire District	4,600	5,000
Holt	Chambers Chambers Rural Fire District		163,000
Holt	Ewing Ewing Rural Fire District		15,000
Holt	Holt County Rural Fire District		52,000
Holt	O'Neill O'Neill Rural Fire District	5,000	506,500
Holt	Page Page Rural Fire District		247,000
Holt	Stuart Stuart Rural Fire District	3,000	163,000

County	Community Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Holt	Landowners**	60,773	
Holt Total		73,373	1,151,500
Hooker	Mullen Mullen Rural Fire District		232,000
Hooker Total		0	232,000
Howard	Boelus Boelus Rural Fire District		715,000
Howard	Dannebrog Dannebrog Rural Fire District		215,000
Howard	Elba Elba Rural Fire District		64,500
Howard	Farwell Farwell Rural Fire District		255,000
Howard Total		0	1,249,500
Jefferson	Diller Diller Rural Fire District		31,000
Jefferson	Jansen Jansen Rural Fire District #9	5,000	
Jefferson	Plymouth Plymouth Rural Fire District		124,000
Jefferson Total		5,000	155,000
Johnson	Cook Cook Rural Fire District		47,000
Johnson	Sterling Sterling Rural Fire District		127,000
Johnson Total		0	174,000
Kearney	Axtell Axtell Rural Fire District		1,766,000
Kearney	Minden Minden Volunteer Fire Department	5,000	
Kearney	Wilcox Wilcox-Ragan Rural Fire District	4,000	282,000
Kearney Total		9,000	2,048,000
Keith	Brule Brule Rural Fire District	5,000	282,000
Keith	Keystone Keystone-Lemoyne Volunteer Fire & Rescue	2,250	
Keith	Keystone Ogallala Rural Fire District		857,300
Keith	Paxton Paxton Rural Fire District		377,000
Keith Total		7,250	1,516,300
Keya Paha	Springview Keya Paha Rural Fire District		357,000
Keya Paha	Landowners**	124,591	
Keya Paha Total		124,591	357,000
Kimball	Bushnell Bushnell-Johnson Rural Fire District	2,500	143,000
Kimball	Dix Dix Rural Fire District		59,000
Kimball Total		2,500	202,000
Knox	Brunswick Brunswick Volunteer Fire Department	2,262	
Knox	Creighton Creighton Rural Fire District	2,675	212,000
Knox	Crofton Crofton Rural Fire District		294,000
Knox	Niobrara Niobrara Rural Fire District		277,000
Knox	Verdigre Verdigre Volunteer Fire Department	5,000	
Knox	Landowners**	313,813	
Knox Total		323,750	783,000
Lancaster	Bennet Bennet Rural Fire Department	3,975	
Lancaster	Firth Firth Rural Fire District		48,000
Lancaster	Hickman Hickman Rural Fire District		269,000
Lancaster	Lincoln Southeast Rural Fire District		262,000
Lancaster	Waverly Waverly Rural Fire District		616,000
Lancaster Total		3,975	1,195,000
Lincoln	Hershey Hershey Rural Fire District	5,000	58,000
Lincoln	Maxwell Maxwell Rural Fire District		529,000
Lincoln	Sutherland Sutherland Rural Fire District		286,000
Lincoln	Wallace Wallace Rural Fire District		1,309,000

County	Community Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Lincoln	Landowners**	134,172	
Lincoln Total		139,172	2,182,000
Logan	Stapleton Stapleton Rural Fire District		1,011,000
Logan Total		0	1,011,000
Loup	Region 26 Emergency Management District		145,000
Loup	Taylor Loup County Rural Fire District		236,000
Loup Total		0	381,000
Madison	Battle Creek Battle Creek Volunteer Fire Department	3,863	
Madison Total		3,863	0
McPherson	Tryon McPherson County Rural Fire District		131,000
McPherson Total		0	131,000
Merrick	Central City Central City Rural Fire District		197,000
Merrick	Chapman Chapman Rural Fire District		609,000
Merrick	Clarks Clarks Volunteer Fire Department	4,000	
Merrick	Palmer Palmer Rural Fire District		124,000
Merrick	Silver Creek Silver Creek Rural Fire District		141,000
Merrick	Landowners**	12,414	
Merrick Total		16,414	1,071,000
Morrill	Bridgeport Bridgeport Rural Fire District		652,000
Morrill	Broadwater Broadwater Rural Fire District		690,000
Morrill Total		0	1,342,000
Nance	Belgrade Belgrade Rural Fire District		736,000
Nance	Fullerton Fullerton Rural Fire District		445,000
Nance	Genoa Genoa Fire Department	5,000	
Nance	Nance County Emergency Management Fire District		49,000
Nance	Landowners**	12,432	
Nance Total		17,432	1,230,000
Nemaha	Julian Brock-Julian Rural Fire District		267,000
Nemaha	Nemaha Nemaha Rural Fire District		342,000
Nemaha	Peru Peru Volunteer Fire Department	5,000	
Nemaha	Landowners**	25,000	
Nemaha Total		30,000	609,000
Nuckolls	Hardy Hardy Rural Fire District		320,000
Nuckolls	Lawrence Lawrence Rural Fire District		306,600
Nuckolls	Ruskin Ruskin Rural Fire District		361,000
Nuckolls	Superior Superior Rural Fire District		350,000
Nuckolls Total		0	1,337,600
Otoe	Douglas Douglas Volunteer Fire District	2,082	11,000
Otoe	Dunbar Dunbar Rural Fire District		190,000
Otoe	Syracuse Syracuse Rural Fire District		145,000
Otoe	Unadilla Unadilla Rural Fire District		49,000
Otoe Total		2,082	395,000
Pawnee	Burchard Burchard Rural Fire District		220,000
Pawnee	DuBois DuBois Rural Fire District		871,000
Pawnee	Pawnee City Pawnee City Rural Fire District		220,000
Pawnee Total		0	1,311,000
Perkins	Grant Grant Fire District	5,000	190,000

County	Community Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Perkins	Madrid Madrid Rural Fire District		535,000
Perkins	Venango Venango Rural Fire District	1,636	180,000
Perkins Total		6,636	905,000
Phelps	Bertrand Bertrand Volunteer Fire Department	5,000	
Phelps	Funk Funk Rural Fire District		306,600
Phelps Total		5,000	306,600
Pierce	Hadar Hadar Rural Fire District	2,500	516,000
Pierce	Plainview Plainview Volunteer Fire Department	5,000	
Pierce Total		7,500	516,000
Platte	Columbus Columbus Rural Fire District		5,000
Platte	Duncan Duncan Fire Department	4,499	
Platte	Monroe Monroe Rural Fire District		940,000
Platte	Platte Center Platte Center Rural Fire District		50,000
Platte	Platte County Rural Fire District		145,000
Platte Total		4,499	1,140,000
Polk	Osceola Osceola Rural Fire District		456,000
Polk	Polk Polk Rural Fire District	3,000	839,000
Polk	Stromsburg Stromsburg Rural Fire District	4,816	2,041,000
Polk Total		7,816	3,336,000
Red Willow	Bartley Bartley Rural Fire District		80,000
Red Willow	Danbury Danbury Rural Fire District		180,000
Red Willow	Indianola Indianola Rural Fire District		250,000
Red Willow	Lebanon Beaver Valley Rural Fire District		168,000
Red Willow	McCook Red Willow Western Rural Fire District	3,434	547,500
Red Willow Total		3,434	1,225,500
Richardson	Falls City Falls City Rural Fire District		284,000
Richardson	Humboldt Humboldt Rural Fire District		364,000
Richardson	Landowners**	25,000	
Richardson Total		25,000	648,000
Rock	Bassett Gracy Rural Fire District		422,000
Rock	Bassett Rock County Rural Fire District		405,000
Rock	Newport Newport Rural Fire District		562,000
Rock	Landowners**	19,608	
Rock Total		19,608	1,389,000
Saline	DeWitt Saline County Rural Fire District		94,000
Saline	Dorchester Saline County Rural Fire District		496,000
Saline	Friend Saline County Friend Fire District	4,904	296,000
Saline	Tobias Saline County Rural Fire District		72,000
Saline	Wilber Saline County Rural Fire District		446,000
Saline Total		4,904	1,404,000
Saunders	Ashland Ashland Rural Fire District	5,000	1,305,000
Saunders	Cedar Bluffs Cedar Bluffs Rural Fire District	2,900	897,500
Saunders	Ceresco Ceresco Rural Fire District		25,000
Saunders	Colon Colon Rural Fire District		440,000
Saunders	Ithaca Ithaca Rural Fire District		139,000
Saunders	Malmö Malmö Rural Fire District	5,000	996,000
Saunders	Mead Mead Rural Fire District	5,000	535,000
Saunders	Morse Bluff Morse Bluff Rural Fire District		179,000

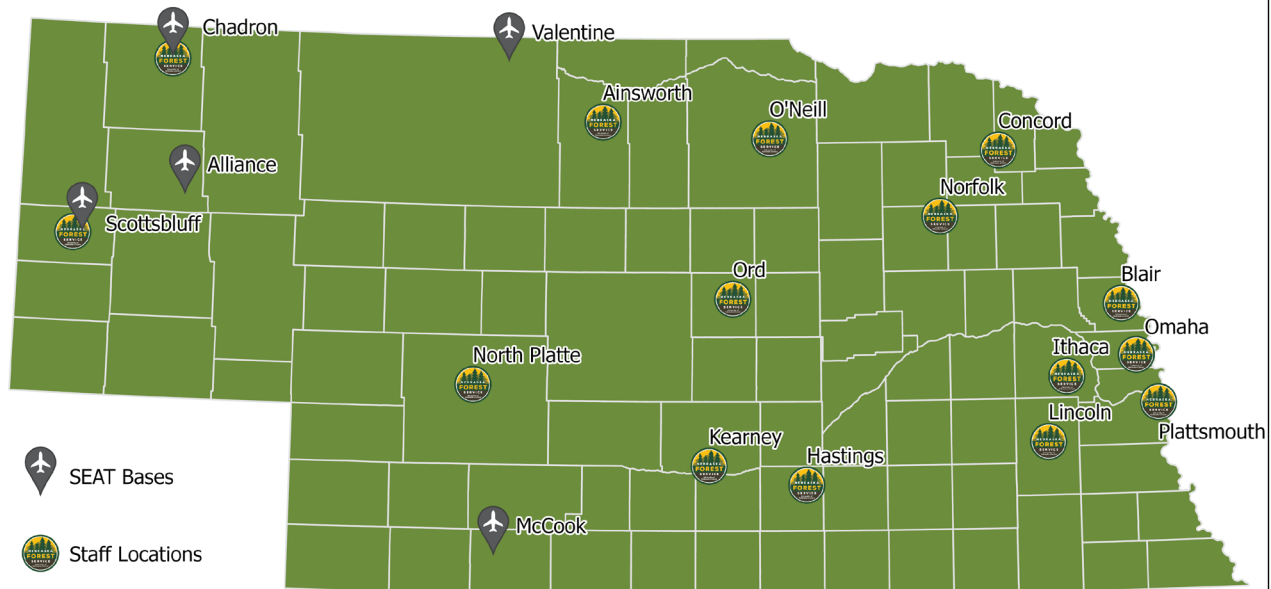
County	Community	Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Saunders	Prague	Prague Rural Fire District	5,000	
Saunders	Valparaiso	Valparaiso Rural Fire District		178,000
Saunders	Wahoo	Wahoo Volunteer Fire Department	5,000	
Saunders	Yutan	Yutan Rural Fire District		321,000
Saunders Total			27,900	5,015,500
Scotts Bluff	Gering	Gering Valley Rural Fire District	2,917	124,000
Scotts Bluff	Lyman	Lyman Volunteer Fire District		31,000
Scotts Bluff	Lyman	Lyman-Kiowa Rural Fire District		333,000
Scotts Bluff	Minatare	Minatare-Melbeta Rural Fire District	4,500	429,000
Scotts Bluff	Mitchell	Mitchell Rural Fire District	2,704	220,000
Scotts Bluff	Morrill	Morrill Fire District		190,000
Scotts Bluff	Scottsbluff	Scottsbluff County Mutual Aid	2,500	
Scotts Bluff	Scottsbluff	Scottsbluff Rural Fire District		216,000
Scotts Bluff Total			12,621	1,543,000
Seward	Bee	Seward County Rural Fire District		18,000
Seward	Cordova	Seward County Rural Fire District		190,000
Seward	Goehner	Seward County Rural Fire District		227,000
Seward	Pleasant Dale	Seward County Rural Fire District		22,000
Seward	Staplehurst	Seward County Rural Fire District		153,500
Seward	Tamora	Seward County Rural Fire District		15,000
Seward	Utica	Seward County Rural Fire District		116,000
Seward Total			0	741,500
Sheridan	Gordon	Gordon Rural Fire District	1,613	225,000
Sheridan	Hay Springs	Hay Springs Rural Fire District	1,770	698,000
Sheridan	Lakeside	Heart of the Hills Rural Fire District		948,000
Sheridan	Rushville	Rushville Rural Fire District	3,763	574,000
Sheridan		Landowners**	61,797	
Sheridan Total			68,943	2,445,000
Sherman	Ashton	Ashton Rural Fire District		130,000
Sherman	Loup City	Loup City Rural Fire District		129,000
Sherman Total			0	259,000
Sioux	Harrison	Harrison Rural Fire District	5,000	1,297,600
Sioux		Landowners**	205,586	
Sioux Total			210,586	1,297,600
Stanton	Pilger	Pilger Fire District		190,000
Stanton	Stanton	Stanton Rural Fire District		317,000
Stanton Total			0	507,000
Thayer	Alexandria	Alexandria Rural Fire District		50,000
Thayer	Belvidere	Belvidere Rural Fire District		33,000
Thayer	Byron	Byron Rural Fire District		269,000
Thayer	Carleton	Carleton Rural Fire District		240,000
Thayer	Chester	Chester Rural Fire District		366,000
Thayer	Deshler	Deshler Rural Fire District		513,000
Thayer	Gilead	Gilead Rural Fire District		11,000
Thayer	Hebron	Hebron Rural Fire District		1,759,000
Thayer	Hubbell	Hubbell Rural Fire District		192,000
Thayer Total			0	3,433,000

*FEPP/FFP = Federal Excess Personal Property/Federal Firefighter Property currently loaned to Rural Fire Districts

** = Landowners receiving cost-share funds for forest fuels treatment, forest management activities and/or forest product development.

County	Community	Organization/Project	Grant Amount	FEPP/FFP* Replacement Value
Thomas	Halsey	Halsey Rural Fire District		292,000
Thomas	Thedford	Thedford Rural Fire District	2,211	309,000
Thomas Total			2,211	601,000
Thurston	Thurston	Thurston Rural Fire District		421,000
Thurston	Walthill	Walthill Rural Fire District		11,000
Thurston	Winnebago	Winnebago Area Emergency Management Fire District		305,000
Thurston	Winnebago	Winnebago Rural Fire District		66,500
Thurston Total			0	803,500
Valley	Arcadia	Arcadia Rural Fire District		140,000
Valley	Ord	Ord Volunteer Fire Department	1,358	
Valley Total			1,358	140,000
Washington	Arlington	Arlington Rural Fire District		154,000
Washington	Blair	Blair Volunteer Fire Department	4,140	
Washington	Herman	Herman Rural Fire District		116,000
Washington Total			4,140	270,000
Wayne	Hoskins	Hoskins Rural Fire District		220,000
Wayne	Winside	Winside Rural Fire District		47,000
Wayne Total			0	267,000
Webster	Bladen	Bladen Rural Fire District		171,000
Webster	Blue Hill	Blue Hill Rural Fire District		420,500
Webster	Guide Rock	Guide Rock Rural Fire District		560,000
Webster	Red Cloud	Red Cloud Rural Fire District	5,000	1,145,200
Webster Total			5,000	2,296,700
Wheeler	Bartlett	Bartlett Volunteer Fire Department	1,850	
Wheeler	Bartlett	Wheeler County Rural Fire District		455,000
Wheeler	Ericson	Wheeler County Rural Fire District		240,000
Wheeler		Landowners**	6,263	
Wheeler Total			8,113	695,000
York	Benedict	Benedict Rural Fire District		802,000
York	Bradshaw	Bradshaw Rural Fire District	5,000	250,000
York	Gresham	Gresham Rural Fire District		374,000
York	Waco	Waco Rural Fire District		118,000
York	York	York County Emergency Management Fire District		123,000
York Total			5,000	1,667,000
Nebraska Emergency Management				305,000
Nebraska Firefighters Museum			750	
Nebraska Game & Parks - Lake McConaughy				47,000
Nebraska Game & Parks - Lake Minatare				47,000
Nebraska State Fire Marshal			5,000	152,000
NSVFA Fire Prevention Team			1,000	
NSVFA Fire School			5,000	
Statewide SEAT Program				594,000
Statewide Fall mini-grants			22,000	
Grand Total			2,091,309	105,018,000

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Scottsbluff - Western Nebraska Regional Airport

Valentine - Miller Field

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