



Wachiska
Audubon Society

Wachiska Audubon Society's vision: To share the experience and love of nature—that life may sustainably flourish in all its natural diversity

The Babbling Brook

Our 50th Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2023

APRIL 2023

Volume 32 - Issue 4

Wachiska Program and General Meeting — Thursday, April 13, 7:00 p.m., Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, and also via YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_lT9eGAQ4c

Incredible Diversity: The Superpower of Nebraska's Prairies

by Chris Helzer, Director of Science, The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska

Nebraska's prairies face a tremendous array of challenges. Habitat fragmentation, loss of diversity, invasive species, and climate change top the list, but there are plenty more. Fortunately, grasslands are built for this.

The astonishing diversity of plants, animals, and other life forms in prairies give them the ability to survive and adapt to just about anything that is thrown at them. When some species are knocked back by drought, fire, or grazing, plenty of others are waiting on the bench to step in and fill essential roles. Diversity facilitates resilience, and resilience is crucial for the future of prairies (and humans).

While diversity has functional value, however, it also supplies wonder and beauty. Every prairie species also has its own individual story, and each one is captivating. There are flowers that rely on a series of accidents to be pollinated, beetles that



Chris Helzer

hitch rides on bees, birds that sing like Star Wars characters, and caterpillars that disguise themselves like flowers. How can you not love prairies?

This presentation by a favored friend of Wachiska will offer photographic descriptions of our native habitat. This pictorial is intended to offer a relaxed evening of gorgeous images so come to soak in the beauty of our state's natural diversity.

Chris Helzer is director of science for The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska where he conducts research and evaluates prairie management and restoration work. He is also dedicated to raising awareness about the value of prairies through his photography, writing, and presentations. Chris is the author of "The Prairie Ecologist" blog and two books: *The Ecology and Management of Prairies in the Central United States* and *Hidden Prairie: Photographing Life in One Square Meter*. He is also a frequent contributor to *NEBRASKALand* magazine and other publications. Chris and his family live in Aurora, Nebraska.

Join Wachiska Audubon for this pictorial presentation on Thursday, April 13, at 7:00 p.m. We are meeting in person at the Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, in Lincoln. This free public talk will also be live streamed on [YouTube at youtube.com/live/j_lT9eGAQ4c](https://www.youtube.com/live/j_lT9eGAQ4c). Copy this link into your browser before the program begins. No registration will be necessary. Invite family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join us either in person or online. The program can also be viewed at a later date. Check the Wachiska website for links to view past programs.

By popular demand, we will continue to show the short slide presentations on wetlands introduced at last month's program. Stay after the main program for a 22-minute viewing of "Urban Wetlands," by Dakota Altman, producer of this segment of the Platte Basin Timelapse's new series "Wetlands of Nebraska." Learn about a variety of research and work being done to protect our urban wetland spaces for future generations. Witness the often-overlooked wildlife and plant species having a direct connection to our urban spaces and their associated wetlands.

Calendar

April

- 1 "Return of the Thunderbirds," Lincoln's Indian Center, 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. (page 2)
- 3 Education/Outreach Committee via Zoom, 6:00 p.m.
- 10 Conservation Committee via Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
- 13 General Meeting, "Incredible Diversity: The Superpower of Nebraska's Prairies," by Chris Helzer, 7:00 p.m. in-person at Unitarian Church and also live-streamed; (no registration (see above))
- 15 Field Trip to PPNC, 9:00 a.m. (page 2)
- 15 EARTH DAY, Innovation Campus, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (page 2)
- 15 Newsletter deadline, Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 18 Board Meeting via Zoom, 7:00 p.m.
- 23 Earth Day at Lincoln Children's Zoo, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Executive Director's Message

by Mark Brohman

Boy, what a month it has been. I have been fortunate to see some of the spring migration from the beautiful sandhill cranes to hundreds of thousands of snow geese, dozens of tundra swans, numerous other waterfowl and shorebirds. I also lost my mother in March. It is a strange feeling to be an orphan with my father passing a little over six years ago. It is part of life, but it gives a person a reason to reflect on our own mortality.



We recently had 15 volunteers at our tree-cutting event at the prairie adjacent to Arnold Elementary School in northwest Lincoln. Mostly we were after the eastern red cedars invading the prairie, but we also cut several hardwoods like locust and elm that required treating the stump with herbicide to prevent regrowth. A big thanks to those volunteers and it looks like we will need at least one—if not two—more events to complete the task. If you would like to help with the next cut, contact me. We will try to get notice out to members with dates and times of future cuts. We meet at the parking lot west of Arnold Elementary School, 5000 Mike Scholl Street, near NW 48th and West Cuming streets).

Wachiska will be participating in “Return of the Thunderbirds” celebration April 1, Nature Night at the Weeping Water School on April 4, Lincoln Earth Day April 15, Lincoln Children’s Zoo’s Earth Day on April 23, and Nature Night at Saratoga Elementary School on April 25. It won’t be long before the prairies start greening up, and we will be having activities on some of our prairies. We have had a couple of successful prescribed burns and have more planned in the near future.

Planning our 50th anniversary celebration continues, and we want everyone to mark your calendar for December 3, 2023, at Innovation Campus (the old State Fairgrounds). It will be fun celebrating the 50 years of great work done by the chapter.

Thank you so much to everyone who purchased birdseed at last month’s event and to the volunteers who helped with this event. A report will appear in next month’s *Babbling Brook*.

The Nebraska Legislature is past the halfway mark of this 90-day session that will end in early June. Wachiska is tracking several pieces of legislation. Very little legislation has moved the past few weeks because of constant filibusters mounted by the minority faction of the body trying to prevent passage of legislation they oppose. We continue to watch bills pertaining to natural resources, energy efficiency, climate change, and public power. Spring is coming, so let’s rejoice!

“Sing out, my soul, thy songs of joy such as a happy bird will sing beneath a rainbow’s lovely arch in early spring.”
— William Henry Davies

Environmental Candidate Forum: Your Vote is Imperative this Spring

According to the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 75 percent of Lancaster County residents in 2021 believed global warming is happening, and 72 percent believed it will harm plants, animals, and future generations; yet in an environmental candidate forum for all Mayor and City Council candidates on March 9, there were candidates who did not believe climate change was an issue. You will be able to notice who chose not to participate. If you were unable to attend the forum and would like to learn more about candidates’ positions on environmental issues, you can see a recording of it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5XJ05g0qM>. Be sure to vote on April 4 (primary) and May 2 (general) elections.

Earth Day 2023

by Bruce Mellberg, Co-chair, Education and Outreach Committee

For Lincoln’s annual Earth Day on Saturday, April 15, Wachiska’s display will host family-friendly nature activities on bird migration, a nature quiz, and hands-on activities at the UNL Innovation Campus courtyard at 2021 Transformation Drive in Lincoln from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

We can still use 2-3 volunteers for an hour or two during the event. Please call me for details at 402-570-3681 if you can help. Join us and others for a day of shared fun and learning!

Return of the Thunderbirds

by Bruce Mellberg

Wachiska's education and outreach committee will join Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, other presenters, vendors, and the local Indigenous community for "Return of the Thunderbirds" to welcome the return of Spring. It will be held at the Indian Center, 1100 Military Road in Lincoln on Saturday, April 1, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

This gathering will be the second annual cross-cultural community event with Native peoples to honor and celebrate the return of Thunder Beings with rebirth, rain, and thunder. We also celebrate the wonder of migratory birds returning to the Nebraska landscape. Audubon and the Indian Center will be celebrating together with music, dance, food, arts, kids games and activities, and much more. We invite the public to join us at our table for an afternoon of sharing and celebration!

Field Trip to Pioneers Park Nature Center

by Esa Jarvi

Spring should be in the air for a field trip to Pioneers Park Nature Center on Saturday, April 15. Meet at the parking lot at 9:00 a.m. We will cover the prairie first, so we should be visible as a group. I will have a phone; if anyone comes late, they can call 402-440-6357. We will look for sparrows and other early migrants. Lincoln’s Earth Day is being celebrated this same day, but there will be time to take in both events for those who desire.

Wachiska's Birdathon Fast Approaching

by Tim Knott

The Birdathon is Wachiska's traditional way for members and Friends to support the chapter's activities for the year. In 2023, we will mark the 35th annual event. Soon you will be receiving our fundraising letter. We hope you will decide to contribute as much as you can—every dollar counts when combined with others. As in the recent past, there are several ways to take part: send your check directly to Wachiska, donate online via our website, or participate in the annual Give to Lincoln Day campaign sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation anytime during May. The official Give to Lincoln Day is May 24. Wachiska's traditional bird hikes will be May 13 and 14 with locations/times to be announced in next month's *Babbling Brook*. Be looking for your Birdathon letter soon!

Climate Signs Available from Wachiska Audubon



Join friends and neighbors to show your concern about our climate and our elected officials. Stop by the Wachiska office and pick up your Climate yard sign.

Yard signs that say "VOTE with CLIMATE in Mind" are available for \$10 each. They

are made of material that will hold up well to the elements and come with a metal holder to push into the ground. You are encouraged to put your signs out now for the April and May elections. These signs can be kept in your yard year 'round as they are durable and could easily last three or four years.

Spring 2023 Water Seminar Series

This year's Water Seminar Series theme is "Hot Topics in Nebraska Water." The location is Hardin Hall auditorium on the UNL East Campus beginning at 3:30 p.m. or on Zoom. Details at watercenter.unl.edu. Dates and remaining lecture topics are:

April 5 - "Point of Use - Drinking Water Research Portfolio" by Paul Bradley, USGS (Kremer Lecture)

April 19 - "Ecological Subsidies as Framework for Assessing Contaminant Fate, Transport, and Exposure across Ecosystem Boundaries" by David Walters, USGS

May 3 - "The Role of Environmental Chemistry in Pesticide Risk Assessment: The Path to Registration and Real World Case Studies" by Laura McConnell, Bayer Crop (Williams Lecture)

Transitioning to Audubon Great Plains

by Amanda Booher, Audubon Dakota Communications Manager
and Melissa Amarawardana, Audubon Nebraska
Communications Manager

Our flock is growing! This past year our Audubon Dakotas and Audubon Nebraska teams began a merger with a regional office. Together, we expanded our approach beyond state borders at a Great Plains scale. Through a united Great Plains office, we have greater opportunity to make an impact on habitat critical to our grassland bird population, including the western meadowlark, the state bird for North Dakota and Nebraska, which desperately needs grasslands for survival.

Everything you found before on Audubon Dakota and Audubon Nebraska websites is refreshed and renewed on the new Audubon Great Plains site. Learn more about our region, explore the Great Plains, you can learn about threats, solutions, and programs we offer, and much more!

Through this transition, we continue to serve all three states, making strides in conservation and restoration work for bird and wildlife habitat. Our work in North Dakota and South Dakota prioritizes the prairie potholes where some of the best remaining grassland and wetland habitats support an incredible diversity of waterfowl and avian species. In Nebraska, our nature centers at Rowe Sanctuary and Spring Creek Prairie are the heart of our mission, but we are building on the success of our statewide programs. In February, we launched the final phase of our largest-ever fundraising campaign: more than \$30 million for nature center expansion and renovations, outreach and education programs, conservation of grasslands, the Platte River Initiative, and our work with private ranchers and landowners.

Many species are at risk and show declines correlated to the loss and degradation of this unique prairie landscape. The Great Plains provide exceptional breeding and stop-over habitat for millions of ducks, geese, and a wide array of avian species. Over 370 species of birds depend on the states' grasslands, wetlands, and forests for survival. Migratory birds like sandhill cranes traveling thousands of miles stop through as they continue their journey to faraway destinations. Millions depend on our states for nesting, breeding, and foraging, and it is our priority to protect these critical habitats. With 60 percent of the nearly five million wetland acres converted to croplands or lost, and over 72 percent of native prairie converted, the chance for survival becomes increasingly difficult for many species already facing peril. Since 1970, there has been an alarming 53 percent population loss in grassland birds, roughly totaling 720 million birds, like the highly vulnerable Baird's sparrow, whose rangeland is completely lost.

Our programs support birds and wildlife by restoring and protecting critical bird habitat, conserving places where birds thrive, and people prosper. What's good for the herd is good for the bird.

Our Time for Climate Decision – the Critical Decade

by Chuck Francis, Education/Outreach Committee

We have entered the most critical decade of human existence on planet Earth, according to Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (see *Time* magazine, Jan. 30/ Feb. 6, 2023, p. 50). Over 12,000 years since the last Ice Age, we have developed current civilizations during an era of relatively stable climate, including rainfall and temperatures favorable for growing crops. In this period, up until about 1950 when the human population reached 2.5 billion people, we lived in relative balance with the environment and its complex and inter-related ecosystems.

Then in about the middle of the 20th century, we began to see clear examples of the impacts of human greed on the planet and its complex natural systems. The cumulative effects of the Industrial Revolution and exploitation of fossil fuels in combustion engines began to cause a rise in the Earth's temperature, while growth of the human population surged at an unprecedented rate and our footprint came to be felt on every square foot of the planet. We quickly grew to a population of eight billion people, and in January of 2023, there were 4.3 births and 2.0 deaths every second of every day. Documented human greed has since destroyed any semblance of balance with the restorative capacity of natural systems. We have exploited non-renewable resources and passed a tipping point where worshipping a capitalist "growth economy" has far surpassed the potentials of human ingenuity to produce and equally distribute enough food and dispose of waste generated in the process.

In a short-sighted approach to assess our well-being with measures such as per capita national income and the daily value of stocks on the NYSE, we have relied on these artificial metrics of human financial behavior that discount the future using neoclassical economics, and which totally fail to internalize all the long-term costs to the environment. In pricing our food and most of what many people consider desirable but unneeded consumer objects that we crave, the environmental costs are often externalized geographically or charged to future generations, or totally ignored by many citizens, as they shop in bulk at the latest sale or consume twice their needed calories in restaurant buffets or fast-food outlets. In many cultures in the developed North, there are rates of obesity today that greatly exceed the rates of undernutrition. In the U.S. these rates have climbed from 30 percent in 2000 to nearly 45 percent today, and the consequent heart diseases, diabetes, and other preventable diseases have caused health care costs to soar.

Although globally we produce enough food for every one of the eight billion current population, food losses up to 20 percent in the South and food waste up to 40 percent in the North exacerbate human nutrition. Unequal distribution of food and grossly skewed incomes in most countries further complicate

access to food and cause a global undernutrition rate of about 10 percent. During the COVID-19 crisis, the number of undernourished people grew by almost 150 million, due to complex issues related to climate change, political conflict, and displacement of large human populations. The current unnecessary strife in Ukraine caused by expansionist ideas of a few people seems to escape peaceful solution in spite of our world governance activities of the United Nations, electronic surveillance capabilities, and ability to communicate with anyone on the globe in real time. We seem to be incapable of using our large brains to find solutions.

According to Dr. Figueres in the *Time* article, "We are in the decisive decade. We must be guided by the firm conviction that humans can meet (these current) challenges. We must change the unfolding story of the Anthropocene from one of overconsumption, inequality, and destruction to one of repair, regeneration, and reconnection—against all apparent odds."

There is no greater gift that we could provide for our children and their children than a healthy planet and a human population in balance with an ecosystem that includes millions of other species. In fact, we owe them no less than our best efforts to achieve this change in human behavior.

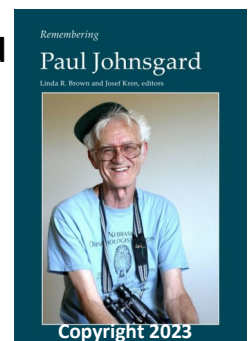
Remembering Paul Johnsgard

edited by Linda R. Brown and Josef Kren

Paul A. Johnsgard (1931–2021) was a friend of many, an artist, prolific author, teacher, and humble admirer of all living creatures. It was impossible to find someone at Nebraska Audubon or Nebraska Ornithologists' Union meetings who did not know Dr. Johnsgard. His more than 100 published books made him known not just in a community of ornithologists, birdwatchers, and bird lovers in the U.S. but also abroad. He was a world-renowned ornithologist and naturalist who remained deeply embedded in his local culture and its prairie environment.

We invited about 75 people to write a short memory of Paul; about 40 responses were received, which are published in this book along with Paul Johnsgard's own writing on his life. Contributors to this volume include George Archibald, Cherrie Beam-Callaway, Jo D Blessing, Charles Brown, Linda Brown, Jackie Canterbury, John Carlini, Ron Cisar, David Duey, Richard Edwards, Michael Forsberg, Karine Gil, Sue Guild, Twyla Hansen, Chris Helzer, John Janovy, Allison Johnson, Michelle Johnson, Joel Jorgensen, Fujiyo Koizumi, Josef Kren, Thomas Labeledz, Kam-Ching Leung, Thomas Mangelsen, Martin Massengale, Julie Masters, Marilyn McNabb, W. Don Nelson, Neal Ratzlaff, Arlys Reitan, James Rosowski, Paul Royster, William Scharf, Rachel Simpson, Tiffany Talbot, Rick Wright, and Christy Yuncker Happ.

The electronic (pdf) edition is available for free online at <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/zeabook/>. The print edition can be ordered from [Lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com) for \$29 at <https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/unllib>.



In the Past Half Century

by Arlys Reitan

When Spring Creek Prairie was established in the late 1990s, it was noted that the purchase consisted of prairie and wetlands. In 2000, Wachiska bought a 16-acre wooded parcel from Lyle and Acie Shearer, neighbors to the north of the prairie, and then donated it to Spring Creek Prairie in 2003. Wachiska purchased the land to protect Spring Creek Prairie from future development and to keep the prairie area as contiguous as possible. Adding this wooded parcel afforded more diversity to the entire area. Wachiska held a dedication in May of that year (see photo). Thus, Wachiska Woods came to be.



**Marian Langan,
Don Pepperl, and
Tim Knott**

Today, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center is an 850-acre tallgrass prairie nature preserve located southwest of Lincoln, Nebraska, near Denton. Established in 1998, it is home to 222 bird species, 30 mammal species, 53 butterfly species, 35 dragonfly/damselfly species, and over 370 plants. Roughly three miles of walking trails run through the prairie where 19th-century wagon ruts from the Nebraska City-Fort Kearny Cutoff to the Oregon Trail can be observed.

National Audubon Society to Retain Name

by Theresa Pella, Central Flyway North Director

During a recent Zoom meeting, the National Audubon Society (NAS) Board voted to retain the name of the organization. This was a complex issue and the Board had a thorough process and robust discussion to ensure the decision would be an informed one and based on what best positions Audubon to carry out its mission and actualize equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging values in its work. "The name has come to represent not one person, but a broader love of birds and nature. And yet we must reckon with the racist legacy of John James Audubon, the man," said Chair Bell.

Founded in 1905, the NAS played a key role in managing wildlife refuges, sounding the alarm on the pesticide DDT and campaigning for the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. That advocacy helped cement the link between birds and the Audubon brand.

Audubon chapters are independent entities with the authority to make their own naming decisions. Some have elected to change their names and others will undoubtedly follow. Audubon's CEO Elizabeth Gray said, "What's really important for me to underscore here and for them to know is that we're going to continue to work with all chapter leaders as a unified community moving forward. We're all committed to the same mission."

For more information: <https://www.audubon.org/news/frequently-asked-questions-about-audubon-name>

North American Porcupine

by Richard Peterson

The North American porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) is the second largest rodent in North America after the beaver. It lives in coniferous and mixed forest areas. It was exterminated in areas clear-cut or turned into farmland. The subspecies *E. d. bruneri* is found from Arkansas to Montana and is common in the northwest part of Nebraska. Porcupine ancestors crossed from Africa to Brazil 30 million years ago before the continents separated. They kept migrating north after the Isthmus of Panama rose above sea level three million years ago.



Porcupines are herbivores and eat tree buds, nuts, berries, pine needles, and the inner bark of trees in winter. In the spring, they will browse ground vegetation and shrubs. They relish salt and are infamous for chewing on ax handles, canoe paddles, outhouses, plywood, and even radiator hoses. They will also gnaw on road-salt-covered boots left outside hikers tents.

These herbivores are excellent climbers, moving slowly but surely up or down any size tree. Weighing more than 30 pounds, they appear, with all their hair and quills, as big as a large raccoon. They make their dens in hollow trees or in rocky areas. The gestation period is about seven months—long by rodent standards. A single young is born, and the quills harden soon after birth. Moving slowly and being nearsighted makes crossing roads hazardous. They can live as long as 30 years.

When the porcupine becomes agitated, there are four main displays: quill erection, teeth clattering, odor emission (described as similar to strong human body odor), and if all else fails, they will attack by running sideways or backwards into the threat. The quill-covered tail can be swung back and forth to get the predator's attention. Each quill contains microscopic barbs which stick into the flesh of an attacker. Quills cover the entire body except the underbelly, face, and feet. Porcupines do not shoot their quills at the predator. Their predators include bobcats, mountain lions, coyotes, wolves, black bears, etc. But killing one is not an easy task, and the predator may die in the end from infection caused by the embedded quills.

Quills were used by Native Americans in their embellishments. They were dyed a limited range of colors by boiling different parts of native plants. Red could come from buffalo berry, black from grapes or walnuts, yellow from sunflower or cone flowers; which plant was used depended on what was available. The quills were spliced together and sewn, wrapped, or applied onto their tanned leather shirts, leggings, moccasins, carry bags, baskets, the handles of their clubs and bows, as well as on their horse attire. The sinew used to sew came from tendons taken from the backbone of the bison or deer. Tendons were dried, then pulled apart for the desired thin diameter for sewing. With the arrival of aniline dyes, colorful trade beads, and cotton thread to replace the sinew, quill work declined.

Climate Change Update

by Marilyn McNabb

We have the results from a new study, the best one by far, about the effects of offshore wind turbines on seabirds. It used radar and cameras for two years in the North Sea on the east coast of Scotland. Herring gulls, gannets, kittiwakes, and great black-backed gulls were studied from April to October when bird activity was at its height.

So, what are the results of the most comprehensive and technologically advanced study to date? Not a single collision between a bird and a rotor blade was recorded.

“The results show that birds’ patterns of movement adapt to rotor blades from approximately 120 metres and become increasingly precisely adapted the closer the birds come to the rotors. There were also some variations between seabirds studied. The herring gulls and kittiwakes showed horizontal avoidance further away from rotor blades, 90 - 110 metres and 140 - 160 metres respectively, while the gannets and great black-backed gulls only exhibited avoidance behavior at 40 and 50 metres from the tips of rotor blades.”

<https://group.vattenfall.com/press-and-media/newsroom/2023/unique-study-birds-avoid-wind-turbine-blades>

The project’s leader, Henrik Skov, concludes that the species they tracked “seem highly capable of surviving in a wind power environment.”

The new method combined radar data with cameras to identify species and create a three-dimensional image of birds’ flight patterns at intervals of 2.5 seconds. Using radar and cameras could set a new standard for collision risk calculations and be applied to additional species and onshore wind power.

Full disclosure for this next subject: I try to align my financial investments with my values.

Recently there has been an eruption of attacks at the state and federal level on investment strategies that consider climate change. Senate action that would stop managers from offering retirement funds that take climate change into account may get President Biden’s first veto.

In December, the Nebraska Attorney General’s office produced a report claiming to expose selection of investments on the basis of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices as “a threat to our democratic form of government.”

<https://ago.nebraska.gov/news/nebraska-attorney-general%E2%80%99s-office-releases-esg-report>

The report asserts that ESG climate goals aim to reject “cheap, reliable fossil fuels” in favor of “expensive intermittent renewable energy sources” (p. 29). The report made no effort

to refute academic studies such as the one showing that over an 11-year period, a fossil fuel-free broad market portfolio outperformed a traditional portfolio (MSCI ACWI ex Fossil Fuels Index (USD Feb. 2023).

Meanwhile, the European Union regulators are assessing Europe’s climate risk management practices against the goal to reduce greenhouse gases by at least 55 percent by 2030. Also, Canada’s chief financial regulation office announced new guidelines on climate risk management for banks and insurance companies.

One bill in the Nebraska Legislature on this subject, LB67, has been voted out to the floor. Two others, LB743 and LB730, have met opposition from Nebraska bankers.

If you are interested in learning more about climate-related investments, you might start with fossilfreefunds.org.

National Audubon Approves 2023 - 2028 Strategic Plan

by Theresa Pella, Central Flyway North Director

The National Audubon Society’s (NAS) mission sounds simple – protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. Focusing the organization’s resources for that to happen is not so simple, but NAS staff has developed a plan that can move the needle so more bird species will have success. We all know when birds thrive, so do people and the planet.

The drivers the NAS will use are: 1) a concentrated hemispheric approach to conservation to provide the habitats that birds need as they move between Canada, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean; 2) help address climate change by advocating for responsibly focused renewable energy sources and natural climate solutions; and 3) build a diverse organization and birding community that strives for equality, diversity, inclusion, and belonging because there is not one group that can do it all; it will take all groups in a coordinated manner working smarter, not necessarily harder, for success.

The updated strategic plan builds on Audubon’s reputation as an organization that follows the science, embraces nonpartisanship, and advocates for birds at the hemispheric, national, regional, and local levels.

Wachiska Audubon Society’s board of directors will consider these drivers as it reviews and updates priorities for the focus areas in the Chapter’s Strategic Plan for 2023 - 2024. As a reminder, the focus areas are:

- 1) Building Relationships
- 2) Advocating and Educating for the Environment
- 3) Caring for Tallgrass Prairies
- 4) Strengthening Internal Operations

If you have suggestions/concerns/comments on any part of the Plan, please let a Board member know.

Public Officials

President Joe Biden

1600 Pennsylvania Av NW, Washington DC 20500-0001
Comment line: 202-456-1111
Phone: 202-456-1414 Fax: 202-456-2461
E-mail at website: <http://whitehouse.gov/contact>

Senator Pete Ricketts

1128 Lincoln Mall Ste 305, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-476-1400 Fax: 402-476-0605
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-4224 Fax: 202-224-5213
E-mail at website: <http://ricketts.senate.gov>

Senator Deb Fischer

1248 O St Ste 1111, Lincoln NE 68508
Lincoln phone: 402-441-4600 Fax: 402-476-8753
Wash. DC phone: 202-224-6551 Fax: 202-228-0012
E-mail at website: <http://fischer.senate.gov>

Congressman Mike Flood

301 S 13th St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508 (1st District)
Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4806 Fax: 202-225-5686
E-mail at website: <http://flood.house.gov>

Congressman Don Bacon (2nd District)

13906 Gold Cir Ste 101, Omaha NE 68144
Omaha phone: 888-221-7452
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4155 Fax: 202-226-5452
E-mail at website: <https://bacon.house.gov>

Congressman Adrian Smith (3rd District)

416 Valley View Dr Ste 600, Scottsbluff NE 69361
Scottsbluff phone: 308-633-6333 Fax: 308-633-6335
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-6435 Fax: 202-225-0207
E-mail at website: <http://adriansmith.house.gov>

Capitol Hill Switchboard

888-436-8427 or 202-224-3121

Governor Jim Pillen

Capitol Bldg, PO Box 94848, Lincoln NE 68509-4848
Phone: 402-471-2244 Fax: 402-471-6031
E-mail at website: <http://governor.nebraska.gov>

State Senator _____

District ____ State Capitol, PO Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

State Capitol Switchboard

402-471-2311

Lancaster County Commissioners

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10th St Rm 110, Lincoln NE 68508
Phone: 402-441-7447 Fax: 402-441-6301
E-mail: commish@lancaster.ne.gov

Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10th St Rm 301, Lincoln NE 68508-2828
Phone: 402-441-7511 Fax: 402-441-7120
E-mail: mayor@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln City Council

402-441-7515
E-mail: councilpacket@lincoln.ne.gov

Lincoln Journal Star

Letters to the editor, 21st and N St, Lincoln NE 68508
E-mail: oped@journalstar.com

Join now! Become a Friend of Wachiska Audubon Society!

This local chapter membership provides you with voting privileges and access to all our events, programs, and committees, **plus 100 percent of your membership donation goes directly to the Wachiska chapter. In addition, Friend members receive our monthly newsletter, *The Babbling Brook*, in their choice of print or electronic form.**

Friends of Wachiska (local membership)

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Phone _____

Email _____

- ___ \$25 Individual/Friend
- ___ \$35 Family Friend
- ___ \$50 Black-capped Chickadee Friend
- ___ \$100 Northern Cardinal Friend
- ___ \$250 Western Meadowlark Friend
- ___ \$500 Bald Eagle Friend
- ___ \$1,000 Peregrine Falcon Friend

Select the level of support that is right for you and make your check payable to **Wachiska Audubon Society**. All funds will remain with our local chapter and are tax deductible. Mail to:

Wachiska Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Committee
4547 Calvert St Ste 10
Lincoln NE 68506-5643



American Goldfinches

___ **I prefer to receive my newsletter by email.**

Please note: If you are already a member of National Audubon Society (NAS) you automatically become a member of Wachiska, but not a Wachiska Friend member. Only Wachiska Friends receive the printed newsletter each month. If you wish to join NAS or receive *Audubon* magazine, please contact the National Audubon Society directly.

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Send address changes to *The Babbling Brook*
Wachiska Audubon Society, 4547 Calvert St Ste 10
Lincoln NE 68506-5643



The Babbling Brook is printed on recycled and recyclable paper.



Reusable Bag Program



The Wachiska Audubon Society has been selected again to receive \$1 from every \$2.50 reusable red "My Heart" bag sold during March and April 2023 at the Hy-Vee at 6001 Village Drive in Lincoln. Just mention at check-out that you want to purchase a bag and to credit Wachiska Audubon with the purchase.

This is another way to support your chapter and help the planet at the same time!

WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2023

Executive Director..... Mark Brohman
Office Administrator Arlys Reitan

OFFICERS

President *Theresa Pella
Vice President..... *Andrea Faas
Secretary *April Stevenson
Treasurer *Dylan Aufdenkamp

STANDING COMMITTEES/POSITIONS

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Director at Large *Ann Briggs
Director at Large *Doug Campbell
Director at Large *Ethan Freese
Director at Large *Stu Lutlich
Director at Large *Mercy Manzanares
Director at Large *Kris Powers
Conservation..... *Ross Scott
Education..... *Tim Knott
*Bruce Mellberg

*Denotes voting Board member

For contact information of officers and committee chairs, call the Wachiska office at 402-486-4846.

Mission Statement of the Wachiska Audubon Society

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.

Wachiska Audubon Society
4547 Calvert St Ste 10
Lincoln NE 68506-5643
402-486-4846
office@WachiskaAudubon.org
www.WachiskaAudubon.org

If you missed a monthly program or want to view one again, Wachiska Audubon's monthly programs are available on YouTube via the homepage at www.WachiskaAudubon.org.

AmazonSmile Discontinued

The *discontinued AmazonSmile program*, which allowed consumers to support a charity of their own choosing as they shopped, will be replaced with a more targeted program on disaster relief and food banks. This means Wachiska will no longer be receiving funds from our members' online shopping. Thank you to all who were participating in the former program to benefit Wachiska.

Wachiska Audubon Society's financial records are available for examination in the office.

A Gift to the Future

A bequest to Wachiska Audubon Society is a gift to future generations, enabling our natural heritage to continue. For wills, trusts, and gifts, our legal name is **Wachiska Audubon Society**. Our Federal Tax ID number is **51-0229888**.

