



Wachiska  
Audubon Society

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

# The Babbling Brook

Our 47th Year of Protecting Nature 1973 - 2020

**JULY 2020**

**Volume 29 - Issue 7**

Wachiska Program — Thursday, July 9, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom web conference (registration required) at <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlsd-ihqDkuEtJUyPmmKkBpqXOWLGqycOTD>

## Louisiana Waterthrushes Might be Nebraska's Most Enigmatic Breeding Birds

by Shari Schwartz and John Carlini

Louisiana waterthrushes are not thrushes, and they have no special connection to Louisiana, so even their name is an enigma. Not only are they a warbler, they're also officially recognized by the Waterbird Society because of their reliance on streams for breeding habitat, and their diet is so similar to the fare of an aquatic species that they've been nicknamed the "feathered trout." The eastern edge of Nebraska is the periphery of their breeding range where occurrence is localized largely on the region's limited spring-fed headwater streams.



Louisiana Waterthrush

When we first started birding, we stumbled onto a small jackpot of Louisiana waterthrushes on Stone Creek at Platte River State Park and looked them up in our Peterson's warbler book only to find they were described as having formerly bred in Nebraska

which was worrisome because species that don't exist on the record can't be afforded proper protections. We set about to document breeding Louisiana waterthrushes on Nebraska's public lands that harbor appropriate riparian corridor habitat. We'll present a short photo travelogue of the highs and lows (literally) of our quests for nests and juveniles in areas so remote that there was no litter marring the landscape and no cell phone reception—just miles of gorgeous idyllic forested streams on precipitous terrain with flesh-piercing vegetation and paths that don't accommodate anything much larger than a raccoon. The number of territories on which we observed nests and juveniles significantly exceeded that previously identified. It wasn't difficult for us to understand the reason for this after having experienced firsthand the arduous treks required to properly survey this type of habitat. **Registration required at this link:** <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlsd-ihqDkuEtJUyPmmKkBpqXOWLGqycOTD>

## Strategic Planning Check-in Time and Your Opportunity to Ask the Board Questions

The Board invites you to participate in the July 9 general meeting to hear recommended action items and timelines developed during meetings with the consultant. There should be plenty of time for Q&A after the highlights. Then, if possible at the end of the meeting, we'd like to practice Zoom "break out rooms" to see how going into discussion groups and then coming back as one group could work for future get-togethers.

In last month's *Babbling Brook*, the results of the strategic planning process were summarized:

1. ensure that prairies currently under Wachiska's umbrella are preserved
2. strengthen lobbying and advocacy for preserving and enhancing natural areas
3. continue increasing Wachiska membership

During the June 6th retreat, the Board worked hard to identify focus areas for the priorities. Near-term and long-term actions were established for each:

(continued on page 2)

### Calendar

#### July

- 5 Knott Prairie Open House, 3:00 p.m. (page 3)
- 6 Education Committee, Wachiska office, 6:00 p.m.
- 9 General Meeting via Zoom teleconference, "Louisiana Waterthrushes Might be Nebraska's Most Enigmatic Breeding Birds," by Shari Schwartz and John Carlini and "Strategic Planning Check-in Time and Your Opportunity to Ask the Board Questions," 7:00 p.m. (**NOTE required registration**)
- 13 Conservation Committee, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom (check with chairman)
- 15 Newsletter deadline, Wachiska office, 5:00 p.m.
- 21 Board Meeting via Zoom, 7:00 p.m. (contact Theresa Pella for meeting/password if you're not a Board member and want to attend)

## Strategic Planning *(continued from page 1)*

1. **Caring for Tallgrass Prairies.** Wachiska is at a place where professional resources are needed to coordinate and manage the 900+ acres of prairies under the chapter's care. So, the process to hire a prairie manager has begun, including seeking grant opportunities to help "jumpstart" filling the position. Related near-term actions are drafting a job description, securing personnel documents, and determining training needs and work location. The target is to hire a prairie manager by June 2021.

2. **Advocating for the Environment.** One way to be successful is to communicate more effectively with elected officials. This group will invite leaders from other organizations to do some training for Wachiska. This should help the organization and individuals to track and monitor proposed legislation that could negatively or positively affect birds, wildlife, tallgrass prairies, and climate change.

3. **Building Relationships.** The Wachiska Audubon Society more fully achieves its mission through relationships. We will focus on increasing membership, utilizing technology, improving communication, and engaging volunteers. There were many suggestions received in the survey, and four actions were identified to work on during the next year. Planning for one-on-one conversations with Wachiska members is underway and will be used as a resource when considering types of activities and volunteer needs and will provide contacts for social media communications. Improving Wachiska's social media presence will receive much focus. The third action is underway—updating Wachiska's website to allow use of both PayPal and credit cards to make donations and to join and renew Friends memberships. Lastly, we will conduct a review of capabilities in the current database with what is possible with online relational database software. In year two, many hearts and hands will be needed to prepare for Wachiska's golden anniversary celebration in 2023.

4. **Strengthening the Organization.** Following the hiring of a prairie manager in 2021, expectations are to begin the process of hiring an executive director, with a goal to have the position filled no later than January 2023. Part of the process will include reviewing and updating the current bylaws, policies, and procedures.

Board members for the January – December 2020 term are Stu Luttich, Theresa Pella, Marilyn McNabb, Mary Rogge, Linda R. Brown, Dave Titterington, Terry Stentz, Ross Scott, Tim Knott, Lana Novak, Bruce Kennedy, Patty Spitzer, and Kristal Stoner.

To attend this Zoom program on our regular meeting night, **Thursday, July 9, at 7:00 p.m., register at the link below by copying the link into your browser.** You can also find it on the website, WachiskaAudubon.org, on the first page of the July newsletter where you can click on it directly to register:

**<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlsd-ihqDkuEtJUyPmmKkBpqXOWLGqycOTD>**

## Board Recommendations for New Mission Statement

*by Theresa Pella, Vice President and Strategic Planning Lead*

Part of strategic planning is to review the organization's vision and mission statements to see if they are still relevant. As a result of discussions, the Board recommends revising the mission statement to read:

### Current version:

The mission of the Wachiska Audubon Society is to preserve and restore native grasslands and other natural ecosystems, promote birding, support native wildlife, provide nature educational opportunities, and advocate for sustainability in the natural environment.

### Recommended version:

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 opportunities, and advocate for sustainability of the natural community of which we are all a part.

With a clearer mission statement, the Board recommends retiring the vision statement to avoid confusion in the message that the Wachiska Audubon Society communicates about itself with the larger world. As always, feedback is welcome!

## Visits to Wachiska's Prairies

*by Linda R. Brown*

On June 18, I made a quick trip down to see Berg West Prairie near Talmage in Nemaha County. Krista Lang from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission drove in behind me and told me that a month ago she had checked the prairie and found it colored with lots of blooming golden alexander and spiderwort. She was thinking the burn had been in late January or early February. The grass was dense and waist-high, so it was a little hard to walk in, in order to find the blooming meadow anemones, my target species.



**Dickcissel**

Photo by Linda R. Brown

At Otoe County's Dieken Prairie southwest of Unadilla, the grasses were still below the knee from the burn. Bentzinger Prairie in Johnson County near Cook had the greatest number of blooming forbs and felt fairly open on the north side along the road.

Because storms were predicted, I only spent about 20 minutes at each prairie. Even though each site seemed markedly different, I heard dickcissels and bobwhite quail at each prairie!

## Knott Prairie Open House Set for July 5

by Tim Knott, Education Committee Chair

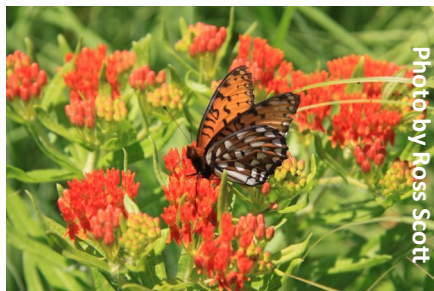
Wachiska's Knott Prairie near Yutan, Nebraska, is a species-rich, wet meadow prairie located in the Platte River flood plain less than one-half mile from the river. It's partly because of the high-water table that 146 or more plant species (including some rare ones) have been found on the property. This prairie is also a great spot to see bobolinks and other rare bird species such as Henslow's sparrows, and it's home to many kinds of prairie insects. Even though hot and muggy conditions can be expected, it is the best time of the year to see native prairies at their peak. If you haven't seen this prairie yet, now is your chance.

An Open House will be held on **Sunday afternoon, July 5, beginning at 3:00 p.m.** We will have a short introduction to tallgrass prairies, in general, and then introduce experts on prairie birds, insects, and photography. These folks will provide information on their subjects, answer questions, and may give some demonstrations. Guests will be free to walk around on their own or stay with one of the experts to learn more. We expect to conclude the event about 5:00 p.m. Remember to wear long pants, boots (it could be wet), a hat, and bring insect repellent. Bring your camera. Wachiska will provide cookies, iced tea, and ice water.

To be as safe as possible during this time, it might be best if people drive themselves and their family to Yutan rather than try to carpool. However, if you are interested and do not mind the risk, I will be at the Wachiska office at 1:30 that afternoon to provide rides for at least three people to the prairie. There may be others who will provide rides as well. On the prairie, try to keep a six-foot space between yourself and the next person.

Directions from Lincoln to Yutan: The easiest route to follow is north from Lincoln on Highway 77 to Wahoo, then turn east on Highway 92, and travel to Yutan. The trip should take a little over one hour and will be about 45 miles one way. When you reach Yutan (between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m.) we will rendezvous at the downtown area near the Rusty Rooster Bar. Because of the possibility of getting stuck or having traffic tie-ups on the poor road near the prairie, we will ferry people to the prairie using a local school bus provided by Tim and Ron Drews. If you are coming from other towns, meet at the Rusty Rooster, also. We will then proceed by school bus to the prairie by 3:00 p.m.

In case of heavy rains and muddy roads, it may be necessary to postpone the event until July 12. Call me at 402-217-8505 or 402-483-5656 or the Wachiska office if you have doubts about the event. You may also call our conservation committee chair, Ross Scott, at 402-202-1523 if you're in doubt due to the weather.



Regal Fritillary

Photo by Ross Scott

## Anhinga

by Richard Peterson

When observing some bird behavior, you just have to ask yourself, "what are they up to?" followed by "why would they do that"? The anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga* L. 1766) is one of those birds. They are found inhabiting warm, shallow, slow-moving water all over the world, including the swamps, rivers, and wooded ponds of the southeastern United States. They are also called the American darter, African darter, snake bird, or water turkey. Not a small bird, they are 35 inches from head to tail and have a wingspan up to four feet. The glossy black-green male and somewhat similar—but browner—female have long fan-shaped tails. They nest in isolated pairs sometimes in mixed groups of cormorants and herons. Females build a platform nest of sticks or may take over an already occupied nest of a heron or egret. Anhingas migrate toward the equator as winter approaches. Kettles of anhinga often migrate with other birds and have been described as "resembling a black paper glider." Fossil relatives have been described from the Late Oligocene to Early Miocene, ca 23 million years ago.



I first saw anhingas from a distance in eastern Peru in the Amazon basin, but it wasn't until a boat trip on the Rio Frio through the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge in Costa Rica that I saw them up close. I was with a group of ten birders on a boat, powered by a small outboard motor, slowly winding north along the river toward the Nicaraguan border. These birds were perched here and there on snags at the water's edge with their wings spread, half open, to dry. They do this because they don't have waterproof feathers (unlike ducks and a host of others). They resemble their close relatives the cormorant but have a sharp pointed bill instead of the cormorant's hooked bill.

The anhinga hunts for food with its barely buoyant body submerged underwater. Only its long, curved neck and head stick out as it moves slowly, ready to strike and impale a meal. The structure of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> neck vertebrae are adapted for the rapid thrust of its barbed bill. They will also dive underwater to pursue their prey. They do not have nares and breathe solely through their epiglottis. This species feeds on small catfish, mullet, shad, sucker, crayfish, and shrimp as well as very young snakes, alligators, and turtles. With their body under water, they would seem unable to see whatever prey is below. While submerged, anhingas may spread their wings like a tent to lure prey into a shaded canopy. Leaving the water to roost or hunt elsewhere presents a problem—getting up and airborne. Since their feathers don't shed water, they flap and "run" awkwardly on the surface to shake off the heavy water until they are able to get aloft. Then they will sit with wings spread to completely dry off. The anhinga is protected in the United States under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. For more on the anhinga's daily activities, search "anhinga hunting," then find "Anhinga Hunting – Video Results."

## With Nation in Turmoil, the White House Deepens Environmental Attacks

*(from National Audubon's website)*

Despite an intense national focus on racial justice and a pandemic that has now killed 115,000 Americans, the White House is accelerating its extremist attacks on the environment. Within the span of two days, the White House rolled back four major environmental protections important to birds.

The president signed an executive order rolling back the Endangered Species Act as well as the National Environmental Policy Act which allows the public a voice on the environmental impact of federal projects.

The Department of the Interior took the next procedural step to weaken the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

And the president signed a proclamation to open the Atlantic Coast's only marine monument, the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, to commercial fishing. The monument is critical wintering grounds for Atlantic puffins, and Audubon helped get it declared.

Contact our congressional delegation to take action to defend the MBTA from rulemaking that exempts all incidental take from enforcement. Contact information for Nebraska's senators and representatives is listed on page 7.

## Senate Passes Great American Outdoors Act

The Senate passed the most significant conservation legislation in decades on June 17, clearing a package to secure steady funding for public lands that came together only after the popular bipartisan measure got a lift from election year politics.

The core ideas in the bill, H.R. 1957—fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million annually and providing billions of dollars to address maintenance backlogs on the nation's public lands—have drawn significant support from both parties for years. But it was tough elections facing two of the package's lead backers, Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Steve Daines (R-MT), that raised its profile enough to get the backing of President Trump and for Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to give it valuable floor time.

"I hope, following our action, that the House will take it up and pass it quickly. The president has already said he is eager to sign it. We should not let this historic opportunity pass us by," McConnell said ahead of the vote.

The vote in the Senate was 73-25; however, both of Nebraska's senators Fischer and Sasse were in the minority who **voted against** this Great American Outdoors Act. Why?

## Birdwatching Booms as a Homebound World Looks Outdoors for Respite

*(from Cornell Lab eNews, June 2020)*

Partially in response to the April–May lockdown, people around the world turned to birdwatching in droves. eBird checklist submissions, media uploads to our Macaulay Library, and downloads of our birding app, Merlin Bird ID, all broke records. It was a time for appreciating birds around the home, while out-of-the-way birds saw a decrease in reporting.

At the same time in March and April, more than 90 percent of Americans were under stay-at-home orders, which meant millions of people were spending more time looking out their windows at a backyard, porch, or garden. Media headlines nationwide noted the rising popularity of birdwatching as a social-distancing pastime. ("Bird-watching is having a moment," proclaimed CNN.) Accordingly, more than 150,000 people downloaded the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's free Merlin smartphone app for bird identification in April, the largest monthly increase in the app's six-year history.

More birdwatching activity translated into a surge in eBird checklists in April, with birders around the world submitting around 50,000 checklists a day. More eBirders took the time to add multimedia to their checklists, with a 48 percent increase in photos and 80 percent increase in audio recordings uploaded into the Cornell Lab's Macaulay Library wildlife media archive. On the other hand, eBird checklists were down in places that usually receive heavy spring traffic from traveling and vacationing bird watchers. Hawaii experienced a 53 percent drop in eBird submissions, and eBirders in Louisiana reported fewer shorebirds such as black-bellied plover, willet, and sanderling—perhaps the result of beach and coastal wildlife refuge closures.

But in the midst of a global health crisis, many birders discovered the citizen-science value of tallying birds from home. New registrations for eBird yard lists were up 900 percent, as more birders used the eBird tool for tracking birds at home.

Also, eBird checklists in March and April yielded more reports of close-to-home species in some areas. In Delaware, where residents were ordered to stay at home on March 22, reporting rates doubled or even tripled for suburban species. In Idaho, which instituted a statewide lockdown around the same time, eBird checklist submissions rose 66 percent, and reports more than doubled for common residential species.

Stay-at-home birding took off in other nations under lockdown, too. Canadian eBirders submitted 50,000 more checklists in April 2020 than they did last April. In the United Kingdom, birders used eBird yard lists for their annual garden listing competition. (British eBirders call their yards "gardens.")



## SCPAC Announces New Operating Policies

by Kevin Poague, Operations Manager  
Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center

We are pleased to announce that Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center will reopen its visitor center to the public on Wednesday, July 15. (This is as of the newsletter deadline; it is possible the date may be pushed back based on guidelines from city officials or the CDC. Updates will be posted on our website and social media.) Initially, public hours will be weekdays only from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Trails will continue to be open sunrise to sunset year-round. Signs will be posted as to the number of guests allowed inside at one time, direction of movement, etc. As the summer progresses, building hours may gradually be expanded as staff adjusts to keeping the building safe for all and to new operating procedures concerning COVID-19.

With the reopening, we are also announcing two new policies. First, admission will no longer be charged. We are thrilled to be able to provide this opportunity thanks to a corporate donation from Liz Lange Consulting. Liz is the current SCPAC stewardship board chair and is delighted to help make the visitor center free for everyone. Donations will still be accepted from visitors to support our education and conservation mission. Other services such as building rentals and group education tours will continue to have fees.

Second, when the visitor center eventually opens for regular hours, they will be weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. on weekends. Saturday and Sunday hours have been shifted to the morning, particularly to accommodate visitors during the hot summer months. These new hours are on a trial basis and could revert to the current hours of operation if the weekend change proves unsuccessful.

## Donations Received in Memory of Donald Taylor

When Donald Taylor passed away recently, Wachiska Friend, Mary Taylor, and her family designated memorials to Wachiska. We want to thank the following people for their gifts:

Mary Taylor  
Ann Voss  
Barbara Scribner  
Shelli Krupicka  
Paul and Mary Burrow  
Lee and Kay Rockwell  
Arleen Stubblefield  
Carol Damaso  
Ilya Fabrikant  
Laurette Seltzer  
Tivoli Press

## Wachiska's Birdathon 2020 Progress Report

by Tim Knott, Birdathon Chair

Wachiska's Birdathon is going well this year, thanks to the generosity of our members and friends this spring and during Give to Lincoln Day throughout May. We are close to reaching our goal to have the funds needed to keep us moving forward next year and to set a little aside for some of our bigger projects. Please consider a donation if you haven't already contributed. It would be great if we could reach our goal this early in the year.

To contribute, you can either use the Birdathon envelope which came with your letter in April or send your check directly to the office. Please either write "Birdathon" on the memo line or include a note. Our address is Wachiska Audubon Society, 4547 Calvert St, Ste 10, Lincoln NE 68506-5643. Thank you once again for supporting Wachiska Audubon during this annual fundraiser.

## Recycling Decline

by Arlys Reitan, Office Administrator

For over 15 years Wachiska Audubon has had an agreement with A-Can Recycling in Lincoln to recycle aluminum cans, and the proceeds were accumulated in our account with a check sent to the office at the end of each year. Some years we received several hundred dollars when aluminum brought 80+ cents/lb.; however, recently the price was just several cents/lb. A few weeks ago, we got a note that this recycling center had closed its doors, and a check for \$10 was included for cans on account since January.

Yesterday I read an article that COVID-19 is laying waste to many U.S. recycling programs. (Read about it at this site: <https://theconversation.com/covid-19-is-laying-waste-to-many-us-recycling-programs-139733>.) Local stores are not allowing customers to bring their own cloth bags to sack their purchases. I contacted Mark Brohman, executive director of the Nebraska Environmental Trust, for his comments which follow: "I have read article after article in the recycling trade magazines and newsletters where stores have stopped taking materials and recycling centers have closed or slowed down their programs. Even in Omaha, the recycling program is in danger of being severely reduced or eliminated. The only good news I have read lately was a company in Canada trying to get patents on a material that acts like plastic, made of cannabis waste products that is biodegradable. Let's hope for the best."

Thank you to the many, many members, friends, and small businesses who recycled their aluminum cans and donated the proceeds to our chapter's account. Also, we wish to thank Connie and Ben Dahlberg for their many years of cooperation at A-Can (later referred to as Nebraska Malt/A-Can). Mark Brohman suggested contacting another firm in town to check if they might be interested in working with Wachiska. Let me know if you have some suggestions. Stay tuned.

# Climate Change Update

by Marilyn McNabb

The door to all serious climate policy discussion in Congress is slammed shut, polarized by political party; on top of that, they're all preoccupied with COVID-19. Right? Well, no.

In June, a Republican farmer, Senator Mike Braun from Indiana, introduced the Growing Climate Solutions Act (no bill number yet), an important bill that has extraordinarily broad support ranging from National Audubon to the American Farm Bureau; the Farmers Union; the big national organizations representing soybeans, corn, milk, and cattle; and corporations including Cargill, Bayer, Danone, McDonalds, Ocean Spray, Syngenta, and Microsoft. Supporting environmental groups include the Environmental Defense Fund, The Nature Conservancy, The American Farmland Trust, and The National Wildlife Federation. Co-sponsors with Braun are senators Lindsay Graham, Debbie Stabenow, and Sheldon Whitehouse—two Rs, two Ds. The intended effect of the bill is to reduce greenhouse gases.

The bill would encourage sustainable farming practices like the use of cover crops, conservation tillage, prescribed grazing, and reforestation by enabling farmers, ranchers, and foresters to receive payments through carbon credit markets. Until now, the cost and complexity of certifying credits for sale in the markets has kept many from participating, especially those with smaller operations. This bill would create standards for things like sampling methodologies, accounting principles, and systems for verification, monitoring, and reporting. The U.S. Department of Agriculture would certify independent consultants to verify compliance and would also periodically audit to ensure ongoing compliance with the standards.

California and nine northeastern states have set up carbon markets for reductions in greenhouse gases. *Agri-Pulse* (6/4/20) reports "Multinational corporations are expected to increase their demand for the credits as they try to meet commitments for reducing their carbon footprint." Similarly, the 20 states that have set ambitious goals to reduce GHG emissions will use the purchase of carbon credits as one tool in the toolbox.

President and CEO of National Audubon, David Yarnold, said the bill is a first step in giving farmers, ranchers, and foresters "the resources they need to maintain their lands in a way that supports common sense conservation. This bill will help to create a cleaner future for both people and birds, while also helping rural economies recover from the COVID-19 crisis."

**What you can do:** Ask senators Fischer and Sasse what they think about this bill. Tell them about its broad support. Senator Braun does not expect passage this year; but it has a good chance of passing next year, possibly as part of a larger bill. If they were to support the Growing Climate Solutions Act, it would mark the first time for either Senator Fischer or Senator Sasse to address climate change in a significant way. It's not impossible.

On another topic dealing with climate change: What's race and color got to do with it? "People of color disproportionately bear climate impacts, from storms to heat waves to pollution." Also, "black people are significantly more concerned about climate change than white people (57 vs 49 percent), and Latinx people are even more concerned (70 percent)." For documentation, see Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, "I'm a black climate expert," *Washington Post*, June 3, 2020.



## Sandhills R-Line Update

by Marge Kennedy, Legislation Committee

Many conservation organizations, including Wachiska Audubon, have gone on record opposing the siting of the R-Line Project power transmission line by the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) in Nebraska's Sandhills. A permit had been granted to NPPD a year ago by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to allow incidental killing or significant disturbance of the endangered American burying beetle along construction paths.

In response to this, a lawsuit was brought against the USFWS by two Sandhills landowners and two nonprofit organizations, one of which is the Western Nebraska Resources Council headed by Buffalo Bruce McIntosh of Chadron. The other nonprofit plaintiff is the Oregon-California Trail Association, which argued that the USFWS did not adequately consider the effects of the R-Line Project on a portion of the Oregon-California Trail that runs through the area with wagon ruts that are historic landmarks. That argument, along with the fact that the USFWS had "unlawfully excluded" potential wind turbine development in Antelope County from its analysis, turned out to be enough for a District Court judge to revoke the federal permit previously granted.

Construction work on the R-Line is halted as a result of this ruling until the "issues get resolved" per NPPD.

## The Prairie: A Place to Safely Distance and Explore the Outdoors

The following entry was discovered recently in the visitor book at Wachiska's Dieken Prairie, located south of Unadilla: "Exploring these uncharted seedless prairies has brought a warm light during the darkness of the pandemic Covid-19. Take good care of each other and love your neighbor!"  
Doc, Roscoe, and Allison

Theresa Pella recently took this photo of prairie wildflowers on Dieken Prairie.



## Public Officials

### **President Donald Trump**

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 Ben Sasse**

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://sasse.senate.gov>

### **Senator Deb Fischer**

440 N 8<sup>th</sup> St Ste 120, 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 Jeff Fortenberry (1<sup>st</sup> District)**

301 S 13<sup>th</sup> St Ste 100, Lincoln NE 68508-2537  
Lincoln phone: 402-438-1598  
Wash. DC phone: 202-225-4806 Fax: 202-225-5686  
E-mail at website: <http://fortenberry.house.gov>

### **Congressman Don Bacon (2<sup>nd</sup> 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Pete Ricketts**

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 10<sup>th</sup> St Rm 110, Lincoln NE 68508  
Phone: 402-441-7447 Fax: 402-441-6301  
E-mail: [commish@lancaster.ne.gov](mailto:commish@lancaster.ne.gov)

### **Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird**

County-City Bldg, 555 S 10<sup>th</sup> St Rm 301, Lincoln NE 68508-2828  
Phone: 402-441-7511 Fax: 402-441-7120  
E-mail: [mayor@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:mayor@lincoln.ne.gov)

### **Lincoln City Council**

402-441-7515  
E-mail: [council@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:council@lincoln.ne.gov)

### **Lincoln Journal Star**

Letters to the editor, 926 P St, Lincoln NE 68508  
E-mail: [oped@journalstar.com](mailto: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)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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- \_\_\_ \$25 Individual/Friend
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- \_\_\_ \$100 Northern Cardinal Friend
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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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Lincoln NE 68506-5643



*The Babbling Brook* is printed on recycled and recyclable paper.

**NOTE THIS POLICY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

During COVID-19, Wachiska Audubon will continue to provide our monthly general meeting programs at **7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday each month;** however, these presentations will be by Zoom teleconferencing until such time as we can resume meeting in person. Zoom programs in May and June were well-attended. The programs were excellent, and comments were extremely favorable.

Please give this format consideration. There's no night driving and you don't have to even put your shoes on. The only thing is you will need to provide your own cookie!

Check out the link in the front-page article for registering. It really is very easy!!



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

**WACHISKA AUDUBON LEADERS - 2020**

**OFFICERS**

President.....	*Stu Luttich (Geneva).....	402-759-3597
Vice President.....	*Theresa Pella.....	512-585-1511
Recording Secretary .....	*Marilyn McNabb.....	402-476-7463
Treasurer .....	*Mary Rogge.....	402-488-1342

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\*Denotes Board member

**OTHER ASSOCIATES**

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Facebook Coordinator .....	Benjamin Vogt .....	402-499-5851
Raptor Recovery.....	Betsy Finch (Elmwood).....	402-994-2009
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Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Director.....	Meghan Sittler .....	402-797-2301
Webmaster.....	Roxanne Smith .....	402-477-1319
Wachiska Computer Issues/Questions .....	Linda Sullivan .....	402-580-8515
Bookkeeper .....	Nancy Hamer .....	402-499-1306

**Remember Wachiska Audubon When Shopping Online**

Every time you order from Amazon, please consider logging into [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). Make Wachiska Audubon Society your permanent designee for a 0.5 percent discount on whatever you purchase at no extra cost to you.

**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**.