

Wachiska  
Audubon  
Society  
2022 Annual  
Report

- *Vision: To share the experience and love of nature – that life may sustainably flourish in all its natural diversity.*

- **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 (WAS) service area

Counties	
Butler	Pawnee
Cass	Polk
Fillmore	Richardson
Gage	Saline
Jefferson	Saunders
Johnson	Seward
Lancaster	Thayer
Nemaha	York
Otoe	

# 2022 Board of Directors

Theresa Pella  
Marilyn McNabb  
Linda Plock  
Dylan Aufdenkamp  
Stu Luttich  
Bruce Kennedy

Ethan Freese  
Kris Powers  
Ross Scott  
Tim Knott  
Lana Novak  
Linda Brown





# Wachiska Operations

- Staff:
  - Mark Brohman, Executive Director
  - Arlys Reitan, Office Administrator
- Administrative/Management Partners in 2022:
  - Nancy Hamer, Bookkeeper
  - Rediger & Company, LLC - CPA Support
  - HBE - Tax filing Support and Audit
  - Stingray Technologies - IT Support
  - Prairie Legacy Inc. – support for prairie owners where WAS owns easements
  - Northern Prairies Land Trust – management of WAS owned prairies
  - Zulkoski Weber - legislative relations



# 2022 Finances



- Operating Budget - \$200,289
  - Membership, Birdathon and Give to Lincoln Day continue to help with revenue growth
  - To date, generous donors contributed over \$63,800
  - Approved for a three-year grant (\$46,000 for year 1) from Nebraska Environmental Trust to help with work needed on easement properties.
    - NRD partners gave additional \$4,500
    - Started May 4, 2022




# 2020 Strategic Plan (updated December 2021) Four Focus Areas

## • **1) Building Relationships**

- Accomplished:
  - Birding field trips resumed in February.
  - In person monthly meetings resumed in October (hybrid with live stream).
  - Board members and executive director met with Audubon Nebraska, Audubon Society of Omaha and Kansas Audubon regarding partnership possibilities.
  - Initiated partnership with Reconciliation Rising and the Otoe-Missouria Tribe and hosted them at Dieken and Knott Prairies.
- Ongoing:
  - Completing research for online membership database.
  - Matching volunteer interests with organization needs?
  - Developing one or more college chapters.
  - Planning for Wachiska's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.





## 2020 Strategic Plan Focus Areas, cont.

- **2) Advocating for the Environment**
    - Accomplished:
      - Offered “Vote with Climate in Mind” yard signs for sale.
      - Continued to show support for Recovering America’s Wildlife Act by submitting letters to Congress.
      - LB 1135 – concern with potential legal issues with proposed conservation easement language changes
      - LB 1251 – oppose changes to Nebraska Environmental Trust funding
      - LB 1255 – support funding for UNL update to Assessing Climate Change Report.
      - LB 925 – support the Resilient Soils and Water Quality Act
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# 2020 Strategic Plan Focus Areas, cont.

- **2) Advocating for the Environment, cont.**

- Accomplished:

- Participated in seven nature nights at elementary schools in Ashland and Lincoln. Held two after school programs at Arnold Elementary School. Received Nebraska Game and Parks Commission grant to obtain backpacks for students use.
- Held three Prairie Discovery days at Dieken and Knott Prairies for 180 4<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Six sites were on the Tour the Wild Side with approximately 240 visits.
- Participated in nature events at Walt Branch Library, Friends of Whitehall Mansion, Indian Center, and Future Farmers of America Convention.

- Ongoing:

- Build volunteer base for projects
- Meld the Population & Environment and Education Committees into one – the Education/Outreach Committee.



# 2020 Strategic Plan Focus Areas, cont.

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- **3) Caring for Tallgrass Prairies**

- **Accomplishments:**

- Approved for a three-year NET grant. Entered into a MOU with Prairie Legacy, LLC to coordinate improvement work with landowners on prairies that WAS has easements.
    - Saturday walks and seed collections at Berg and Dieken Prairies. Nature tour held at Dieken.
    - Completed first year of partnership with Northern Prairies Land Trust, manager of Wachiska-owned prairies.
    - Received \$25,000 endowment from Rosalyn Morris estate for the conservation of prairies and woodlands in southeast Nebraska.
    - Held OLLI class about tallgrass prairies that included a field trip to Dieken Prairie.
    - Updated the website to include maps and GPS locations for the prairies.

- **Ongoing:**

- Partnership with Boy Scout Camp in Richardson County in support of a student's survey work.
    - Continue efforts to ensure prairies will be protected and maintained forever.
    - Dr. Tom Weissling with UNL doing insect surveys on WAS owned prairies.





2020 Strategic Plan Focus Areas,  
cont.

### 3) Caring for Tallgrass Prairies

*Dedication of Rousek and Mendenhall  
Prairies*



# 2020 Strategic Plan Focus Areas, cont.

- **4) Strengthening Internal Operations**

- **Accomplishments:**

- Members approved revised Constitution and Bylaws.
- Joined Give Nebraska, an organization that coordinates employee workplace giving for companies of all sizes.
- Reviewed investment strategies for Lincoln Community Foundation accounts.
- Board approved a revised Vision Statement.

- **Ongoing:**

- Dialogue regarding origin and meaning of “Wachiska”; awaiting National Audubon Society’s decision regarding future use of “Audubon”.
- Implementation of revamped financial reports.
- Board working on solidifying fundraising strategies.





# Thank You (among many others)



## Outgoing Board Members:

- Bruce Kennedy
- Lana Novak
- Linda Brown
- Linda Plock
- Marilyn McNabb

## Volunteers:

- Cheryl Moncure (Hospitality)
- John Carlini and Shari Schwartz (Birding)
- Mary Rogge (Past Treasurer)

## Special Recognition:

- Don Pepperl
- Elizabeth Nelson



*One reason Wachiska does  
what it does:*

“.... it's just amazing that we  
can be here on the same  
grounds that our people  
walked.” Otoe-Missouria tribe  
member Addie Jo Tohee

(NPR story, Sept. 29, 2022)

