



LINCOLN PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
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402-441-7847 fax: 402-441-9249 lincoln.ne.gov

July 2, 2018

Lancaster County Commissioners
County-City Building
555 South 10th Street, Room 110
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

RECEIVED

JUL 16 2018

LANCASTER COUNTY
BOARD

**RE: *Funding Request for Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch
Lancaster County Visitors Improvement Fund***

Dear Commissioners:

This letter is to request that the County Board consider allocating \$120,000 of Visitor Improvement Fund revenues to be used over a 3-year period for the recreational trail associated with the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch project (see attached map). The request relates to a cooperative effort being led by the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department to apply for a grant in August from the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) for Phase III of the project. Visitor Improvement funds would be used for development of the recreational trail component of the Prairie Corridor, which could include trail and trail corridor development, signage, and planting of native grasses and wildflowers within the trail corridor.

The Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch is a tallgrass prairie passage and trail that will build on our nationally recognized trail and greenway system and will link two of Lincoln and Lancaster County's premier environmental resource centers. The Corridor will support economic development and environmental education, and will promote the enhancement and preservation of one of Nebraska's most valuable resources--tallgrass prairie.

Lancaster County has been a strong partner in this project, having provided \$60,000 to match a 3-year NET grant awarded in 2012 and \$90,000 to match the 3-year grant from NET awarded in 2015. This funding has assisted us in completing two segments of trail in Pioneers Park and preliminary engineering on additional segments in preparation for Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant applications to fund additional construction. The next segment targeted for construction is at the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center at the south end of the Corridor, and



there are two additional priority areas where land and easements acquired for the project will support the construction of additional sections in the near term.

We are excited about the progress made to date on the Prairie Corridor which, in addition to the completion of nearly 2 ½ miles of trail to the western edge of Pioneers Park, includes the conservation of over 800 acres through the purchase of land and easements and the re-establishment of high diversity tallgrass prairie on over 100 acres. Work also continues with the Prairie Corridor Cabinet formed in 2017 to help guide the project, and members of resource groups assisting in implementation of the Prairie Corridor vision. The project partners are continuing landowner outreach, habitat enhancement, development of the trail, and public engagement, and are working to enhance communication through social media.

Trail funding is a significant need for the project. We utilize primarily Visitor Improvement Funds and funds from GPTN to assemble a match for the RTP grants for the Prairie Corridor (RTP grants cover up to 80% of the project cost and require a minimum 20% match). RTP grants are becoming more competitive, requiring a much higher match to be successful, and the trail construction needs for the Prairie Corridor are growing as the project progresses. Thus, we have increased the grant request for Visitor Improvement funds for Phase III of the project.

Identifying Visitor's Improvement funds for the Prairie Corridor represents an opportunity to leverage significant additional funds and to enhance the public-private partnership to build on the early success of this project. Since the inception of the Prairie Corridor project, our partnership has grown to over 25 project and funding partners including cash and in-kind matching contributions totaling over \$5.4 million. One of those partners is the Village of Denton, which is interested in the economic opportunities and has supported the project with matching funds and with education and outreach activities.

We understand that in accordance with past practice, the Commission may forward this funding request to the Visitors Promotion Committee (VPC) for consideration, and we are prepared to present this request to the VPC when they meet in August. We have no doubt that the County's continued partnership and financial participation in the project will significantly strengthen our NET application, which is due on Tuesday, September 4, 2018. Thus, if the Commission is inclined to refer this request to the VPC and the VPC does recommend funding, we would respectfully request that the Commission consider that recommendation by August of 2018.

The Prairie Corridor is an opportunity to celebrate our natural heritage and to build on the unique sense of place we enjoy here in Lincoln and Lancaster County. We would welcome an

opportunity to more fully update you on the project at the Commission's convenience. I can be reached at 441-8265 or ljohnson@lincoln.ne.gov. You can also contact Nicole Fleck-Tooze at 441-8263 or ntooze@lincoln.ne.gov with any questions you may have.

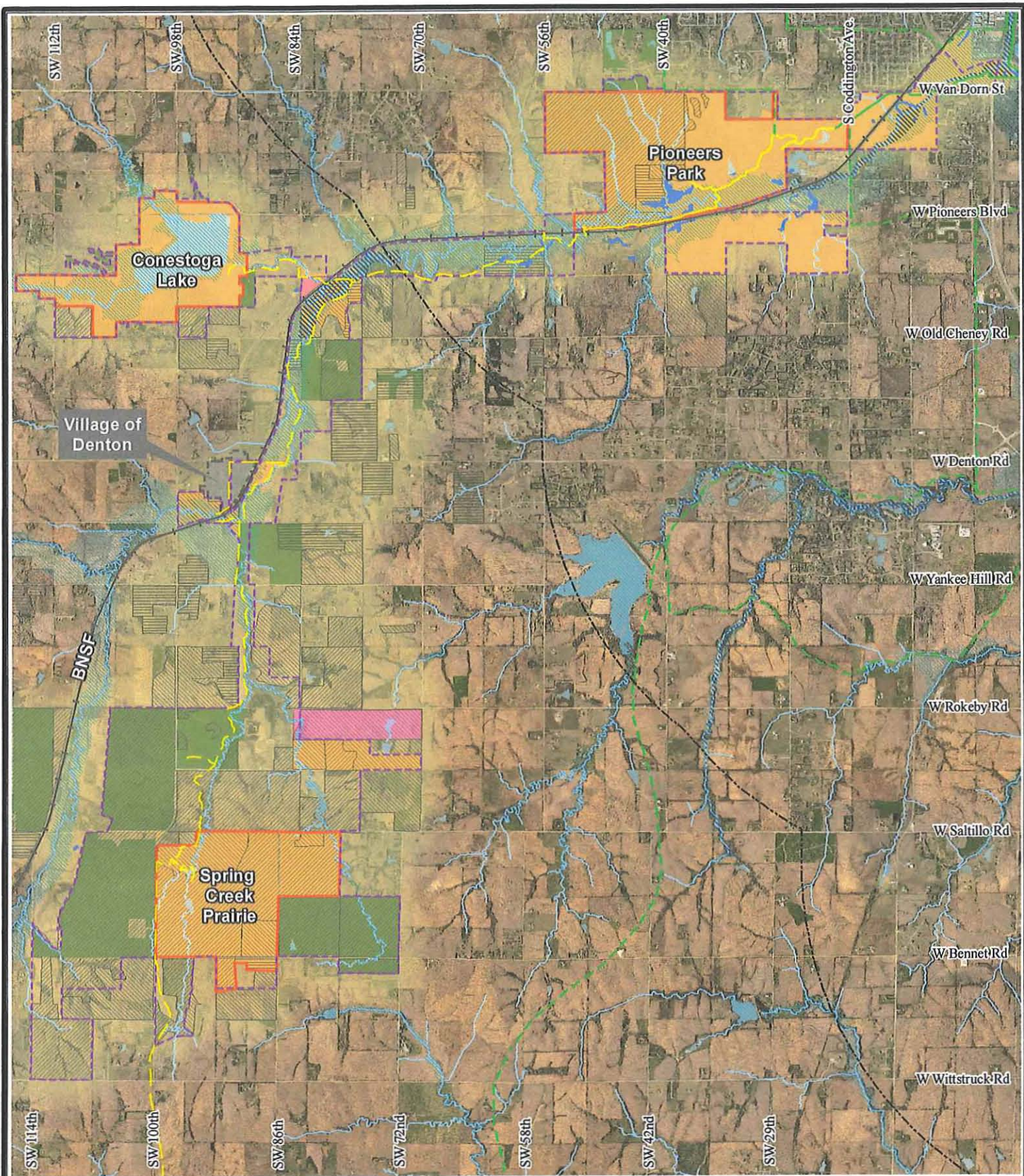
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

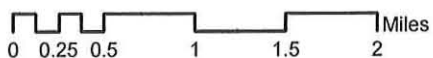


Lynn Johnson
Lincoln Parks and Recreation Director

Cc: Jeff Maul – Executive Director, Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau
Denise Pearce – City of Lincoln Mayor's Office
Nicole Fleck-Tooze – Lincoln Parks and Recreation



Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch



- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Priority Area | Native Seeding | Lakes/Streams |
| Destination Areas | Pasture | BNSF RR |
| Under Contract | Virgin Prairie | Existing Trail |
| 3-mile Jurisdiction | Floodway | Existing PC Trail |
| Conservation Easements | 100 Year Floodplain | Potential PC Trail |
| Public/Conservation Ownership | Wetlands | Future Trail |

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LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD

The undersigned represent members, friends, and supporters of the Wachiska Audubon Society of Southeast Nebraska. This chapter of several hundred members was instrumental in creating Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center in 1998 for the purpose of providing a tranquil, natural area free from the hubbub of city life where nature education experiences would abound. We believe that odorous fumes from a factory of 200,000 chickens will destroy this prairie experience which hundreds of volunteers have created and maintained over the past two decades.

Name (print only)	House Address
Arllys Reitan	2310 S. Canterbury Ln - Lincoln
Patricia Spitzer	4501 E. Eden Dr. Lincoln, NE
Sam Welsch	4501 E. Eden Dr. Lincoln, NE 68506
Tim Johnson	4333 E St Lincoln 68510
MASCHA MIEDANER	3800 J St. Lincoln 68510
Theresa Pella	6139 S 81 st St, Lincoln, 68516
Melinda Varley	8839 Leighton Ave
Eloise KloefKorn	3900 Pine Lake Rd.
Brad Woodruff	7511 Poplar Rd Lincoln
Jerry Wiggle	1949 N Gate Rd, Lincoln, NE 68521
Mitzi Wiggle	" " " " " "
Bruce Wenderer	2244 American Ave Lincoln Ne 68502
LINDA R BROWN	3745 Garfield St Lincoln 68506
Paul A Wohlgast	7347 Holdrege, Lincoln, NE 68505
Jatilyn W Polzien	2808 Ponce St Lincoln, NE 68506
Ken Reitan	2310 S. Canterbury Ln, Lincoln, NE 68512
Timothy R. Knott	4310 Waterbury Ln Lincoln NE 68516
LARRY NIPPERT	6711 GRANITE RIDGE CT LINCOLN Ne 68522
ERNEST ROUSEK	801 Danville Cir. Lincoln NE 68518
Mary A. Barton	3334 Jamestown Ln. Lincoln 68516
June Knudsen	304 W 1st Wilber NE 68465
Theodore Browne	304 W. 1st (PO Box 333) Wilber NE 68465
Barbara Beall	3838 S. 39 th St., Lincoln NE 68506
LANA NOVAK	2255 E St WK 68510
George Maly	1921 Greenbriar Ln Lincoln NE 68506
Cindy Maly	1921 Greenbriar Ln., Lincoln Ne. 68506
Cheryl Moncure	4520 Gertie Ave, Lincoln, NE 68516
Rachel Simpson	3000 Forestview Circle, Lincoln NE 68522
JUNE VILAVIER	2416 SEWELL ST, LINCOLN

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Anne Pamperl	2333 Liberty Bell Lane	Lincoln	68521
Jack Eager	387 County Road A	Ashland	NE 68003
Anne DeVries	684 E. Aspen Rd.	Cortland	NE 68331
Barb Francis	4435 Pioneers Blvd	Lincoln	NE 68506
Sue Guild	1848 154 Road	Garland	68360
Joyce Vannier	7421 Osage Ct	Lincoln	68506
Lyle Vannier	7421 Osage Ct	Lincoln	NE 68506
Ingrid Kirst	11666 Burr St	Lincoln	NE 68502
ESA JARVI	6050 S. 81st St	LINCOLN	68516
EDITH MATHESON	6050 So 81 st Street	Lincoln	NE 68516
WUTTECH, Steve	824 K Street	Geneva	NE
Mark Brohman	2637 Washington St	Lincoln	NE 68502