

## PROGRAM DETAILS

- Annual payment rates for OFW range from 50 cents to \$15 per land acre, depending on property location, enrollment option, and habitat type/quality enrolled.
- For fishing access, landowners can enroll ponds or lakes (\$250 for 1<sup>st</sup> surface acre plus \$40/ac for each additional acre), as well as cold-water (\$375-750/mile) or warm-water streams (\$250-500/mile). Payment rates for streams depend on whether one or both sides are enrolled.
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields and other undisturbed grasslands are ideal for OFW, but other habitat types that provide high-quality hunting/angling opportunities also are considered: wetlands, woodlands, unfarmed draws or pockets, tall wheat and milo stubble, ponds, cool and warm-water streams, etc.
- Contracts are 1-5 years in length and cooperators can withdraw from the program at any time. Withdrawal prior to the end of hunting seasons will result in a pro-rated annual payment.
- Currently, OFW enrollments are being targeted within six priority areas identified in the NGPC's Berggren Plan 2.0 – a five-year initiative aimed at improving the pheasant hunting experience in Nebraska, and on WRE/WRP lands across the state. Properties outside of these priority areas will also be considered for enrollment dependent upon funding.
- Access is allowed only for hunting, trapping, and/or fishing; all other activities are prohibited.

## How to Enroll

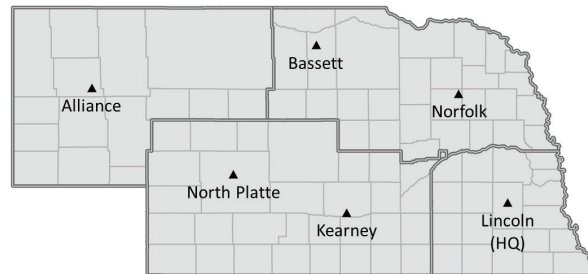
- 1 Contact your nearest NGPC office any time of the year.
- 2 Your property will be evaluated in the spring and approved tracts are contracted by early June.
- 3 Once your contract is approved, NGPC staff will post OFW boundary signs around your property.
- 4 Your annual payment will be issued in spring (March/April) following closure of the primary hunting seasons.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370 or call one of the following offices:

Northeast District, <i>Norfolk</i>	402-370-3374
Northwest District, <i>Alliance</i>	308-763-2940
Southeast District, <i>Lincoln (HQ)</i>	402-471-0641
Southwest District, <i>North Platte</i>	308-535-8025
Service Center, <i>Bassett</i>	402-684-2921
Service Center, <i>Kearney</i>	308-865-5310



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More places to hunt, trap, and fish

# OPEN FIELDS AND WATERS

Open Fields and Waters Program  
**Hunting & Trapping Permitted**  
 All Species & Seasons  
**By Walking Only**

**DO NOT HUNT, TRAP OR FISH BEYOND FIELD BOUNDARY**

This site has been enrolled to provide hunting, trapping and/or fishing opportunities with your Habitat Stamp funds. Federal Aid to Fish and Wildlife Restoration and Environmental Trust funds also may have been used.



**Respect the Landowner and the Land!**



## OPEN FIELDS AND WATERS PROGRAM

Nebraska is more than 97 percent privately owned, and obtaining access to private lands is one of the major challenges facing today's hunters, trappers, and anglers. In 2009, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) initiated the Open Fields and Waters (OFW) program to increase public access opportunities on private lands. OFW is a voluntary program that offers financial incentives to landowners willing to allow public walk-in access for hunting, trapping, and/or fishing. Contact us today to join the 850-plus landowners in Nebraska who provide public access opportunities on 381,643 land acres, 560 acres of ponds/lakes, and 42.9 stream miles during the 2021-22 season.



## LANDOWNER BENEFITS

- Earn annual, per acre payments for allowing public access for hunting, trapping, and/or fishing.
- Technical assistance and additional financial incentives are available to establish or enhance wildlife habitat on your property.
- In general, most OFW sites are open to public access year-round but other enrollment options are available: excluding rifle deer season, spring turkey hunting only, ice or open water fishing only.
- Enrolled properties are accessed by WALK-IN only; no vehicles are allowed, except on specified trails.
- Landowners who enroll in OFW are afforded protection from liability through the Nebraska Recreation Liability Act.
- Boundary signs are posted by NGPC staff and enrolled properties are displayed in the Public Access Atlas.
- Properties enrolled in OFW are patrolled regularly by NGPC conservation officers.

## LIABILITY

Landowners who enroll in OFW are afforded protection from liability through the Nebraska Recreation Liability Act (Nebraska Statutes 37-729 to 37-736), which states that landowners or tenants do not assume responsibility or incur liability for injury to any persons who enter land opened to public hunting and fishing under agreement with the state.

For more information, visit <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/laws.php>.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**If I enroll, do hunters, trappers and anglers have to contact me before accessing my land?**

No, they may access OFW lands without landowner permission. This is the basis for the program. Many hunters, trappers and anglers, especially those who live far away, do not have time to scout or track down landowners for permission. Likewise, many landowners, especially those who live out of state, do not have the time or ability to manage those accessing their property.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

**How do I get an estimate on my property?**

Contact your nearest NGPC office (see backside of brochure) and a biologist will evaluate your property, determine your annual payment, and answer any other questions you may have about the program.

**Will people be allowed to drive their vehicles onto my property?**

No, users may access the property by WALK-IN only. Driving vehicles on lands enrolled in OFW is prohibited except on trails specified by the landowner.

**If I enroll, can people target shoot on my land?**

No. Hunting, trapping and fishing are the only activities authorized on lands enrolled in OFW. Target shooting, camping, swimming, dog training, horseback riding and other unauthorized activities are prohibited. Campfires and the use of alcohol also are prohibited on OFW sites.

**What happens if I decide to hay or graze CRP fields that are enrolled in OFW?**

If the cover on an enrolled site is removed or degraded, the annual payment is typically reduced or withheld on those impacted acres.

**If I enroll my property in OFW, when would I receive my annual payments?**

Annual payments are issued in the spring (March/April) following the closure of the primary hunting seasons.

**Do I have to enroll ALL of my property in OFW?**

No, landowners can choose to enroll all or portions of their property.

**What happens if I decide to sell the land I have enrolled in OFW?**

Landowners can withdraw from OFW at any time and will receive a pro-rated annual payment. Once notified of the contract cancellation, NGPC staff will take down OFW signage and remove the property from the online version of the Public Access Atlas.



Funding for OFW comes from multiple sources, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program, habitat stamp sales, the Pittman-Robertson Act, and contributions from conservation organizations such as Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, and the Lower Loup Natural Resources District.