

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Lands Strategies Plan

2018 - 2022



Executive Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to provide a historical and current perspective about the acquisition and disposition of properties owned and/or managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission). It provides information, strategies and guidance for the Commission to make decisions regarding the acquisition, management and/or disposition of lands for the next five years. To meet the changing goals and objectives of the Commission, this plan is designed to be dynamic and flexible over time.

The Nebraska Legislature has provided the Commission with several authorities (i.e., general Revised State Statutes and Nebraska Habitat Fund) to influence land use for the conservation of fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities. Since the creation of the Nebraska Habitat Fund, the primary emphasis related to land acquisitions has been directed toward the conservation of habitat for game species. The need to manage ecosystems in a more holistic approach has been recognized and acquisition of Commission lands has evolved to consider habitats for game and non-game wildlife species and other recreational opportunities for Nebraska residents and visitors.

Lands Portfolio

The Commission currently manages approximately 292,751 acres throughout Nebraska, of which 153,012 are directly owned by the Commission and the remaining 139,739 are generally managed and operated under lease and operation agreements with federal and local government agencies. These lands are designated by their authorized uses, including Fisheries/Fish Hatchery properties, State Parks, State Historical Parks, State Recreation Areas, State recreational Trails or Wildlife Management Areas. The Commission also sponsors conservation incentive programs providing more than 242,000 acres of additional habitat and access for the public on private lands.

When considering the future strategy for land acquisitions and management agreements, the Commission is currently, and will continue to be, faced with many challenges related to the expansion and diversification of its land portfolio. These challenges include

increasing costs associated with operation and maintenance of properties, increasing payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT), changing demographics, changing recreational demands of the public, climate fluctuations and revenue streams that may not keep pace with increased costs.

Guidelines and Priorities

To achieve its mission and to continue to be mindful of current and future challenges, the Commission is committed to the land acquisition and disposition guidelines, priorities and recommendations presented within this plan. There are challenges when acquiring land by fee title, but these lands are desirable and necessary to meet access needs and critical habitat protection for future generations. Fee title acquisitions will be done with a moderate and strategic approach. It is important to note that parklands will continue to be acquired when available parcels are adjacent to existing parks for access and additional recreational use. Park properties are not required to pay in-lieu-of-taxes and the primary issue when considering additions to existing parks will be the deferred maintenance associated with additional recreational uses.

Trails are important to Nebraska residents and visitors and are developed, maintained and operated by many entities within the state (e.g., communities, Natural Resource Districts, the Commission). Trends in all types of trail usages (i.e., hiking, biking, ATV riding, canoe/kayaking) are increasing annually and require the Commission to focus on providing opportunities for recreationalists. A major challenge for developing trails within the state stems from a lack of General Fund dollars and funding sources. Because of the financial challenge, long-range planning with partners has been difficult and additional planning and funding sources should occur for a more comprehensive land and water trail system that meets the needs of the public today and into the future.

The acquisition and disposition guidelines presented in this plan encompass the policies and procedures established by the Commission and state statutes. The guidelines ensure all land acquisition and disposition transactions (i.e., willing seller, donated or traded) are conducted appropriately and responsibly. The priorities established by the Commission for

acquiring new properties that are contiguous and/or adjacent to properties currently owned and/or leased by the Commission include:

- Parcels of land characterized as inholdings or are adjacent (“round-outs”) to currently owned parcels, which will improve connectivity to existing properties and/or allow for large-scale habitat restorations (e.g., wetlands, grass lands, riparian areas).
- Parcels of land for improving and/or providing public use and better access to existing properties, while also providing optimal habitat for Nebraska’s fish, wildlife and recreational opportunities.
- Parcels buffering currently owned Commission properties.
- Parcels that will improve and/or enhance the efficiency of operating, maintaining and managing currently owned Commission properties.

The priorities established by the Commission for acquiring new properties not contiguous to currently owned Commission properties include:

- Parcels characterized as highly ecological and biologically important for game and non-game species.
- Parcels containing unique characteristics and/or are optimal for recreation opportunities.
- Parcels close in proximity to communities, which will provide outdoor recreation and educational opportunities.
- Parcels close in proximity to existing administration facilities (e.g., regional offices, field offices, parks).
- Parcels presented to the Commission from willing donors (in part or whole).

Recommendations for Future Land Acquisitions

Commission staff has identified specific opportunities and established recommendations regarding future land acquisitions. These acquisition recommendations include:

- The Commission will consider acquiring approximately 1,500 acres per year consisting of one (1) large or unique tract of land and 1 – 2 additional smaller properties per year, as opportunities are presented to the Commission.

- The Wildcat Hills and Pine Ridge areas are critical for several species (e.g., mule deer, bighorn sheep, elk, mountain lions). These areas contain several large parcels of land owned by the Commission. It is recommended an evaluation within these regions be completed to identify gaps that meet the needs for the species to determine if additional acquisition of new parcels is desirable and beneficial.
- The Commission is committed to identifying and locating the amount of forested lands that currently exist, along with characterizing the importance these lands for the species that utilize them, in order to protect and conserve these habitats across the state.
- Wetlands in the Rainwater Basin are critical habitats for many resident and migratory species. The Commission is compelled to identify opportunities and partnerships to assist with providing protection to the wetlands within this region of Nebraska.
- Because of the potential for the additional development of water, opportunities for land acquisitions or leasing opportunities within the Sandhills, along with other at-risk regions, should be explored and evaluated to identify potential parcels containing water bodies for providing access to Nebraska residents and visitors for fishing and other recreational opportunities.
- Off-road recreational trails and parkland are increasing in demand by Nebraska's residents and visitors. The Commission will continue to explore future opportunities suitable for off-road recreational trails.
- The Commission will explore opportunities that will provide more access to Nebraska's navigable streams, rivers and other water bodies.
- The Commission's Park system properties and infrastructure have accrued a large amount of costs associated with the deferred maintenance of its parks facilities. The financial obligations to address the deferred maintenance of parks facilities will be considerable. The Commission will consider deferred maintenance as a priority over the acquisition of new parks properties.
- The Commission desires to be more proactive in protecting and conserving Nebraska's non-game species. Therefore, the Commission will explore the opportunity of establishing a new land management designation of Natural Areas.
- To achieve its mission and overcome its challenges, the Commission will establish a more robust acquisition and disposition process.

Disposition Priorities

The Commission has identified several characteristics and priorities for disposing of owned properties (i.e., sold or transferred). The priorities and characteristics for the disposition of Commission properties differ between fish and wildlife properties and park properties. The Commission will use separate priority criteria for the disposition of properties described below.

Fish and wildlife property priorities for disposition will include property parcels that are:

- No longer economically feasible to maintain and operate (e.g., noxious weed management, fencing, private encroachment).
- Limited in access because of size, location or the presence of inholdings, result in trespass issues on adjacent private properties, or have inhabited dwellings reducing the amount of acres available for public hunting.
- Small in size, which are not feasible to maintain and/or do not provide sufficient habitat for fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities.
- Underutilized by hunters, anglers and recreationists.

Parks properties priorities for disposition will include parcels that are:

- Remote or distant from regional park offices and are not economically feasible to maintain and operate (e.g., time, travel), where additional development is not feasible.
- Underutilized by the public.
- Not efficient relative to the resources required to operate and maintain and where the enforcement of regulations at parks is challenging (e.g., high vandalism due to remote location).
- Distant from local communities, which are beneficial in supporting park properties when parks are closer to communities.
- High opportunity for partner ownership transfer, when partner can also provide recreational opportunities.

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide a historical and current perspective about the acquisition and disposition of properties owned and/or managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Commission). To meet the changing goals and objectives of the Commission, this plan is designed to be dynamic and flexible over time. This document provides information, strategies and guidance for the Commission to make decisions regarding the acquisition, management and/or dispositions of lands for the next five years.

Background

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's mission is "stewardship of the state's fish, wildlife, park, and outdoor recreation resources in the best long-term interests of the people and those resources." The abundance and health of these resources depends on how public and private lands are used within the state. Healthy fish populations require healthy waters, which in turn are influenced by the land usage within their watersheds. Wildlife diversity and abundance depends on sufficient quality habitats for animals to find food, shelter, and breeding areas. Park visitors and outdoor recreationists depend on land that provides enough open spaces and natural amenities to allow for the variety of experiences they seek.

Given that land use largely dictates resource health, the Nebraska Legislature provided the Commission with the authority to influence land use throughout the state for the conservation of fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities. State statute (R.S.S. § 37-303) authorizes the Commission to purchase land outside of municipalities for "additional state parks, hatcheries, recreation grounds, state recreational trails, wildlife management areas, captive wildlife facilities, and public shooting grounds," and allows the Commission to "enter into appropriate contracts, leases, or lease-purchase agreements" for these purposes. Further, the Commission may "make a survey of all lands and areas within the state which are suitable for state parks, game refuges, or other similar purposes contemplated by this section and may

locate and designate any or all of such lands or areas or parts thereof and take such action as may tend to preserve or conserve them.” Along with other state legislative actions, the Nebraska Legislature adopted the Nebraska Habitat Fund in 1976 “for the acquisition of, on a willing-seller willing-buyer basis only, leasing of, development of, management of, enhancement of, access to, and taking of easements on wildlife lands and habitat areas,” where “up to twenty-five percent of the annual receipts of the fund may be spent by the Commission to provide access to private wildlife lands and habitat areas, and the remainder of the fund shall not be spent until the commission has presented a habitat plan to the Committee on Appropriations of the Legislature for its approval” (R.S.S. § 37-432). This legislative action has allowed the Commission to improve its capacity to conserve Nebraska’s resources for fish and wildlife, because it requires hunters to purchase a habitat stamp, where the revenue is remitted into the Habitat Fund for its designated uses.

Since the creation of the Nebraska Habitat Fund, the main emphasis of land acquisitions was initially directed toward the conservation of game species. The need to manage ecosystems in a more holistic approach has been recognized and acquisition of Commission lands has evolved to consider both game and non-game wildlife species and their habitats. The Commission also has acquired lands that promote and benefit other outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., camping, cycling, wildlife viewing, boating, fishing). When acquiring these types of properties, which have generally been associated with existing or new areas for State Parks, State Recreation Areas, and State Recreational Trails, the Commission has employed other available funding resources (e.g., Park Cash Funds, Nebraska Outdoor Recreational Development Act [NORDA] Funds). The original habitat plan did not address land acquisition for parklands, nor did it present a disposition process of lands that are no longer of high value for the Commission. Therefore, the Commission has recognized that the scope of this plan should further include land acquisition and disposition as a whole to meet the Commission’s mission and goals for management of resources across the state.

Lands owned, leased or enrolled under conservation incentive programs by the Commission are utilized by many Nebraska residents and visitors who participate in a wide range of outdoor recreational activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, canoeing and

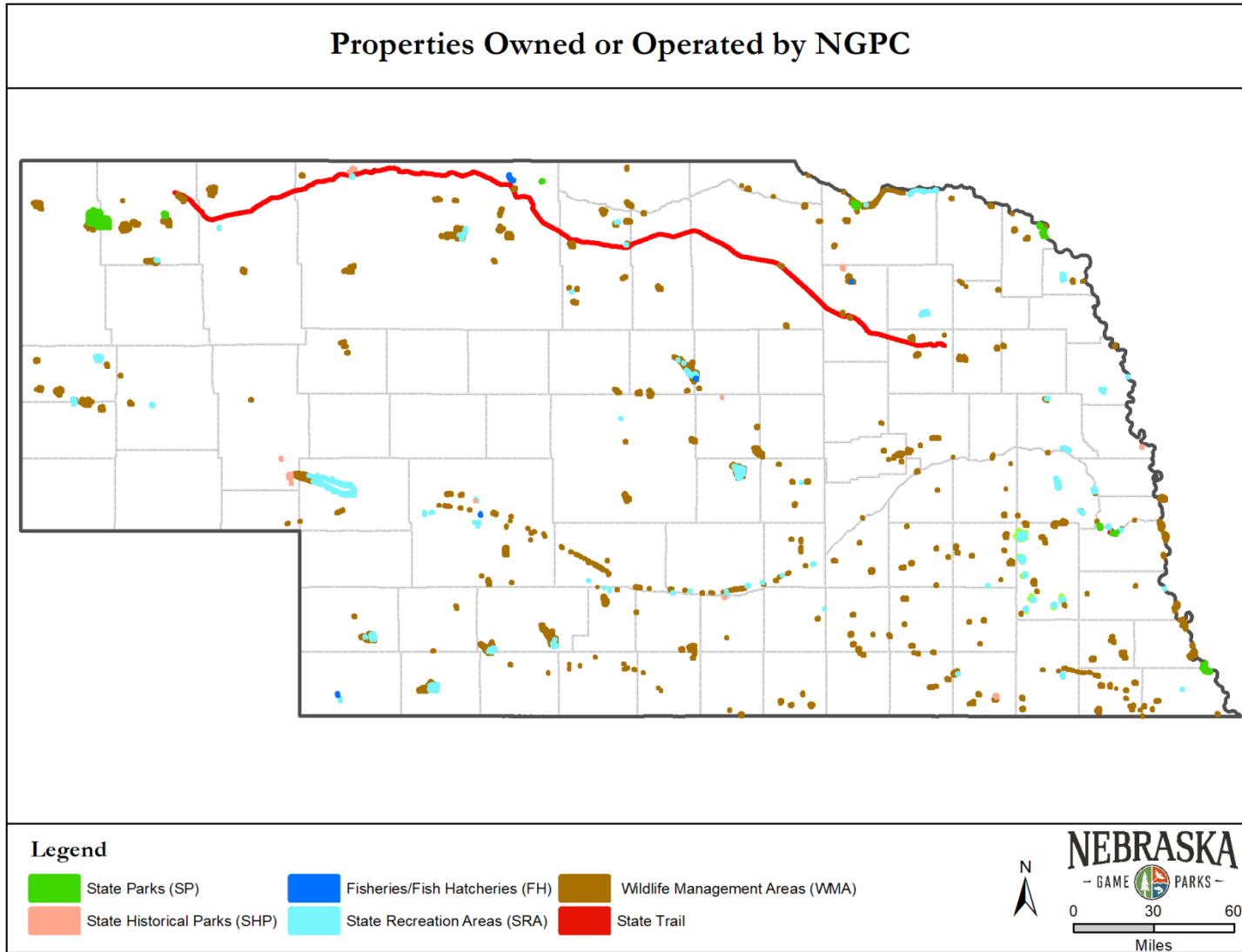
kayaking, boating, wildlife viewing). The lands operated and maintained by the Commission not only provide habitat for fish and wildlife and recreation opportunities for Nebraska residents and visitors, but are also vital to the State's biodiversity and economy. Since provided these tools in the mid-1970s, the Commission's rate of land acquisition accelerated, as did the development of programs designed to improve habitat conditions and recreational access to private lands, which make up more than 97 percent of the state. Together, public and private lands programs make up the Commission's land conservation portfolio. Acquisition and disposition of future lands operated and maintained by the Commission for the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants and promotion of outdoor recreation is vital to the State of Nebraska.

Existing Property Inventory

For the purposes of this plan, the agency's "Land Portfolio" is defined as all properties operated and/or managed as Fisheries/Fish Hatcheries (FH), State Parks (SP), State Historical Parks (SHP), State Recreation Areas (SRA), State Recreational Trails (SRT) or Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and private lands under contract that provide habitat and/or public access. As of September, 2017, the Commission currently manages approximately 292,751 acres throughout the state, where 153,012 acres are directly owned by the Commission and the remaining 139,739 acres are generally managed and operated under lease and operation agreements with federal and local government agencies (Table 1 and Figure 1 – Figure 7). Private lands under contract with the Commission, known as the Open Fields and Waters Program (OFW), provide approximately 242,000 acres of additional public access and fish and wildlife habitat within the state, which are supplemental to the Commission's land portfolio. All of these properties provide a diversity of habitats for fish and wildlife and public recreational opportunities for Nebraska's residents and visitors, where each property type is characterized by how it is managed within the Commission's property portfolio.

Table 1. Total number and total acres of properties owned and leased by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission by land designation (as of August 2017).

Property Type	Number of Properties	Owned Acres	Agreement/Lease Acres	Total Acres
Fisheries/Fish Hatcheries (FH)	6	947	274	1,221
State Historical Parks (SHP)	9	2,025	435	2,460
State Parks (SP)	8	31,218	226	31,444
State Recreation Areas (SRA)	60	7,734	21,340	29,074
State Recreation Areas/Wildlife Management Areas (SRA/WMA)	1	28	36,992	37,020
State Recreational Trails (SRT)	2	4,121	23	4,144
Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)	290	106,939	80,449	187,388
TOTAL	376	153,012	139,739	292,751



5 Figure 1. Location of all properties owned, operated and/or managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Fisheries and Fish Hatchery Properties (FH)

Fisheries and fish hatchery properties include lands owned or leased by the Commission for fish production and are managed and/or operated by the Commission's Fisheries Division. The Commission currently owns, operates and/or maintains six (6) FH properties (Figure 1 and Figure 2), equating to 1,221 acres. These facilities provide more than 90 million fish annually for supplemental stocking of a variety of sportfish species (e.g., walleye, largemouth bass, rainbow trout, channel catfish, bluegill) and native mussels to Nebraska's public and private waters.

State Historical Park Properties (SHP)

The Commission's Parks Division owns, operates and/or manages nine (9) SHP, covering 2,460 acres (Figure 1 and Figure 3). State Historical Parks include park properties of historical significance to Nebraska, which can include interpretive facilities pertaining to the historical significance of the property. Most of these Parks properties are equipped with limited day-use facilities and some are adjacent to or near State Recreation Areas, which provide overnight facilities (i.e., Rock Creek Station SRA, Fort Kearney SRA and Buffalo Bill Ranch SRA).

State Park Properties (SP)

The Commission's eight (8) SP properties are operated and managed by the Commission's Parks Division and include 31,443 acres (Figure 1 and Figure 4). Seven of the eight (8) SP properties are owned by the Commission, where Smith Fall SP is operated under a long-term lease agreement. These Commission SP properties are characterized as properties that provide significant statewide scenic, scientific, or historic interest and have complete development potential, where a representative portion of the tract is retained in a natural or relatively undisturbed state. State Park properties also provide day and overnight use and generally provide more modern infrastructure within their boundaries compared to SRA and SHP.

State Recreation Area Properties (SRA)

The Commission's Parks Division also operates and manages 60 SRA properties totaling approximately 29,075 acres (Figure 1 and Figure 5). These SRA properties are either owned by the Commission and/or operated under lease/operation agreements from federal, state or local partners. These properties include tracts of land and water bodies containing day-use facilities, with most including overnight-use facilities. Many of the State's public lakes are associated with these properties.

State Recreational Trails (SRT)

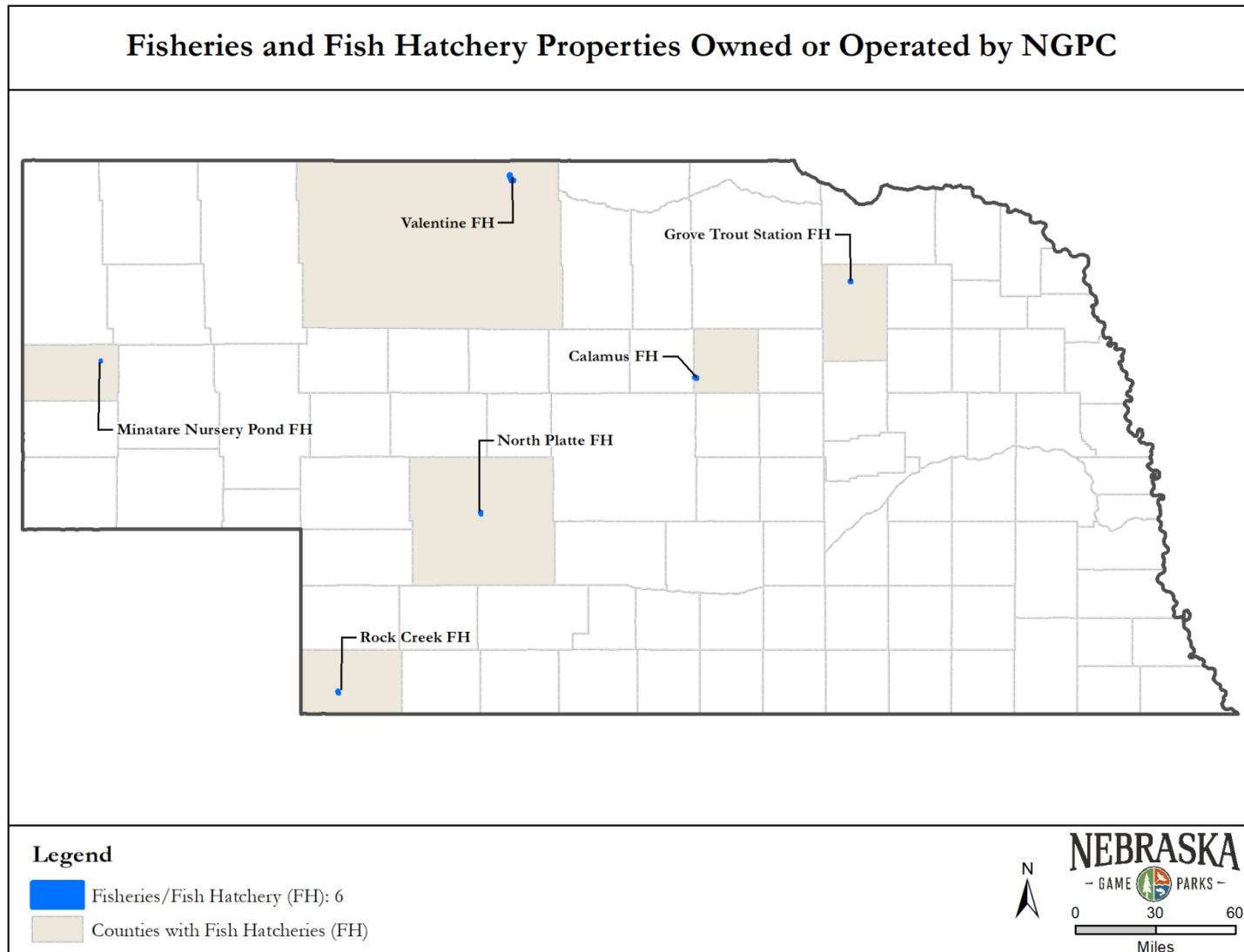
The Commission operates and maintains two (2) SRT in the state (i.e., Cowboy Trail and Lied Bridge Trail), totaling 4,144 acres (Figure 1). The Cowboy Trail is owned by the Commission, but the Lied Bridge Trail is managed under an agreement with two Nebraska Natural Resource Districts. The lands designated as SRT are characterized as linear corridors of statewide or regional significance, providing opportunities for non-motorized recreational use. State Recreational Trails are limited to day use only, where hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, use of firearms, and use from livestock is prohibited. However, horseback riding is generally allowed in the right-of-way boundary of these properties.

Wildlife Management Area Properties (WMA)

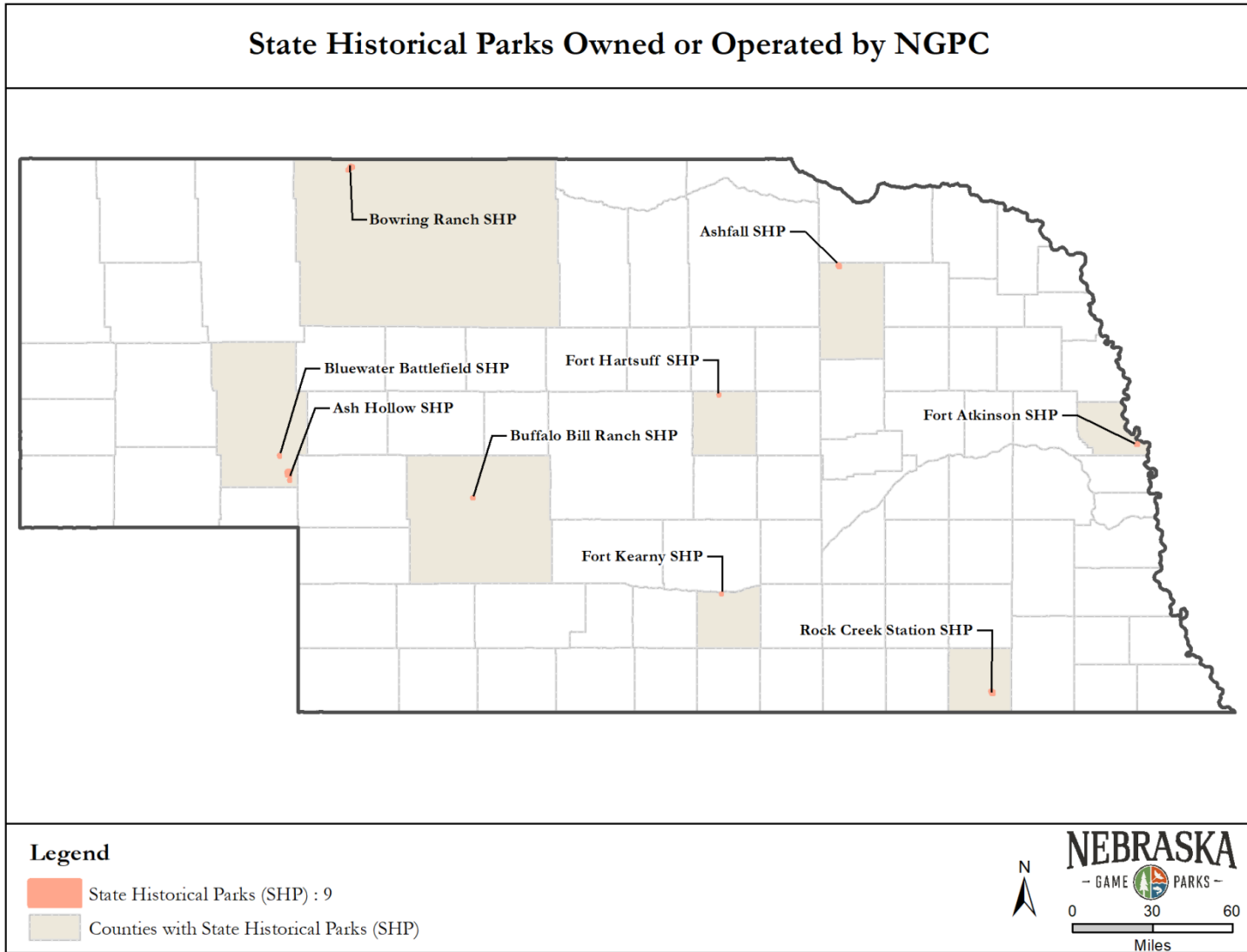
The Commission's largest land holdings are those designated as WMA properties. The Wildlife Division operates and maintains 290 WMA properties (Figure 1 and Figure 6). These properties include 187,388 acres and are either owned or leased for the management and enhancement of wildlife habitat, public hunting, trapping and fishing. These properties may also provide other recreational activities, such as hiking, bird watching, nature study and primitive camping.

Private Land Incentive Properties

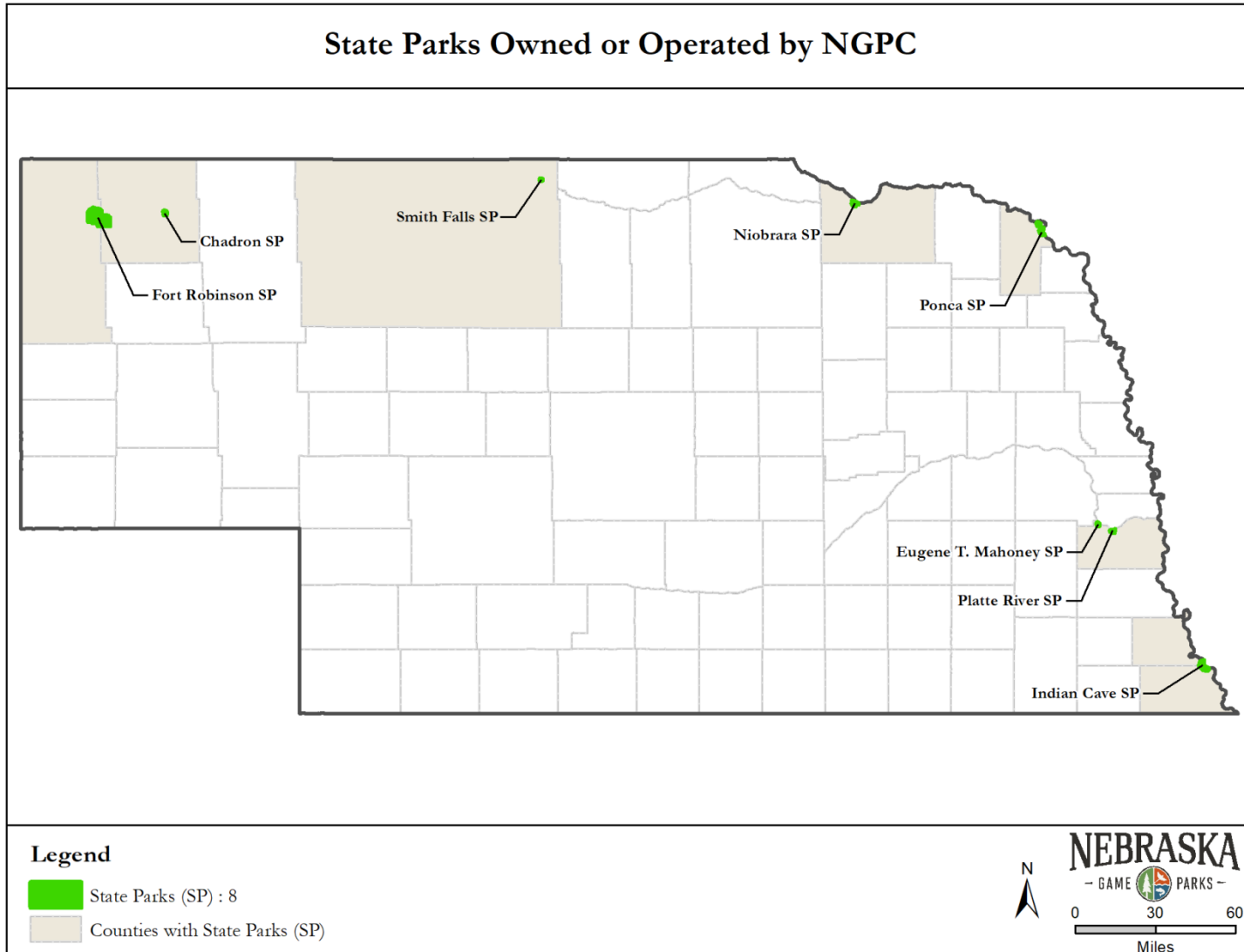
In conjunction with owning and leasing properties, the Commission also provides public access and habitat for fish and wildlife through its conservation incentive program with private landowners. This program is known as the Open Fields and Waters Program (OFW) (Figure 7). The OFW provides monetary incentives to eligible private landowners for allowing public access for hunting, fishing and/or trapping. This program has provided more than 242,000 additional acres for public access and habitat (September 2017).



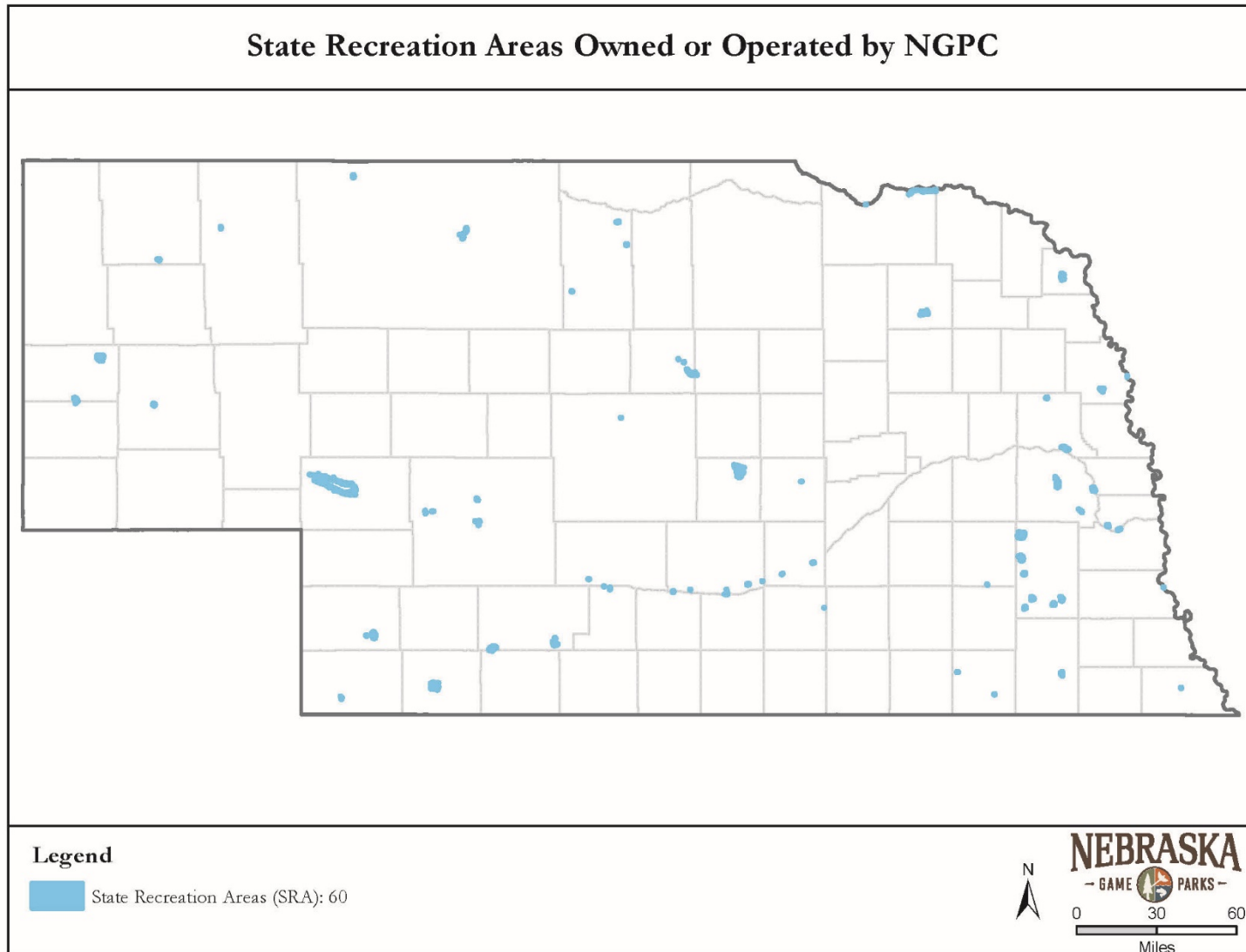
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11 Figure 4. Location of State Parks (SP) owned or operated by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.



12 Figure 5. Location of State Recreation Areas (SRA) owned or operated by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

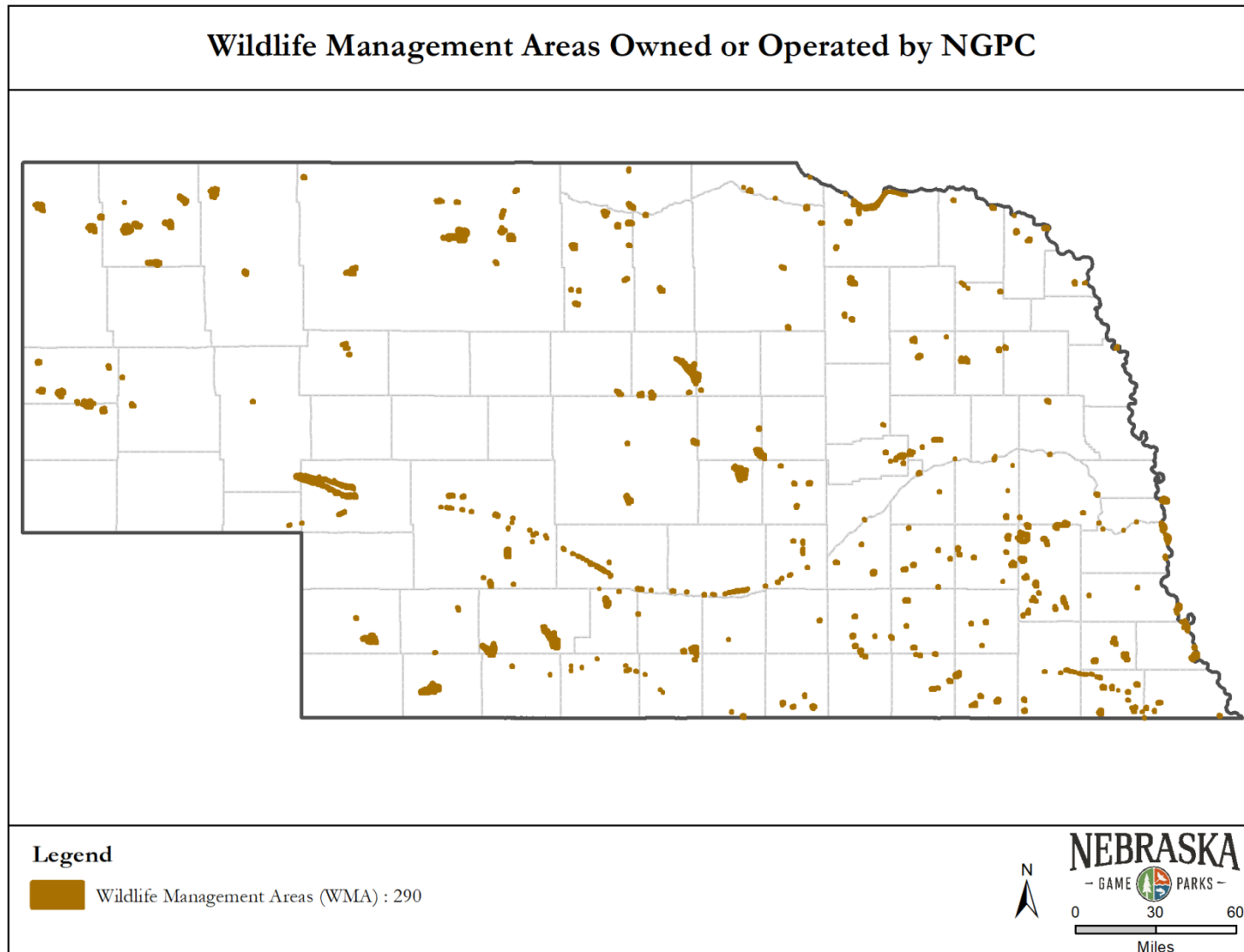


Figure 6. Location of Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) owned or operated by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

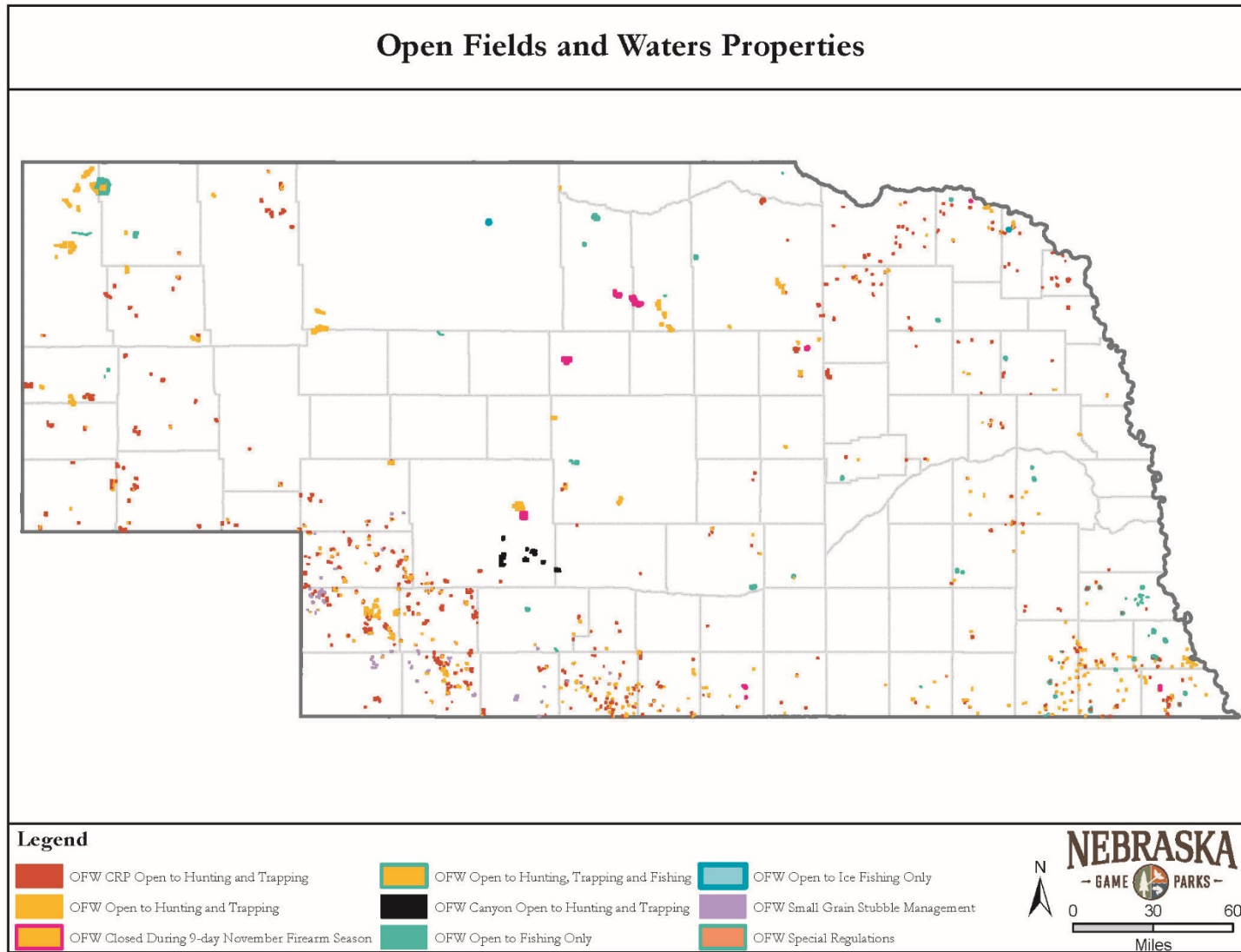


Figure 7. Location of Open Fields and Waters Program (OFW) areas sponsored by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Land Acquisition Types

The Commission uses a variety of methods for acquiring new lands, in order to be efficient with agency funds and provide habitat for fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities for Nebraska residents and visitors. The instruments employed by the Commission include fee-title acquisition (i.e., purchased and donated parcels) and lease agreements, which can include other government agencies (long-term agreements), as well as private landowner partners (short-term agreements). Each of these acquisition vehicles provides opportunities and challenges for the Commission. The Commission is mindful of the resources required for each option for acquiring new properties to meet the mission of the agency and seeks to have a balanced approach with its lands portfolio.

Fee-Title Acquisitions

Fee-title acquisitions include properties purchased with Commission funds, where the agency holds title to the acquired parcel. Most of the acres designated as SP, SHP, FH, WMA, and some of the acres associated with SRA (e.g., Alexandria SRA, Blue River SRA, Louisville SRA) have been acquired as fee-title acquisitions. There are two types of fee-title acquisitions, which include full purchases from willing sellers, and donated parcels from willing donors (whole or in part).

Fee-title acquisition is beneficial to the Commission, because it allows the agency to have complete management over land usage on the property and investments in infrastructure can be made without concern of future loss of use of the property. The Commission can make substantial investments in habitat restoration and infrastructure projects that will be beneficial to Nebraska's fish, wildlife and recreationists for as long as the agency is authorized to own the land, essentially into perpetuity. This ensures the public of Nebraska and its visitors that these properties will be available for recreation for future generations. The benefits of having portions of the Commission's land portfolio under fee-title provide security and protection for the properties. Properties acquired under fee-title also provide current and future

opportunities to study and/or create best management practices for a diversity of habitats, while providing Nebraska residents and visitors places to hunt, fish and recreate.

Fee-title acquisitions have challenges. Fee-title acquisitions require the Commission to be responsible for all operations and maintenance costs, which can be considerable for the agency. For instance, payments in-lieu of taxes (PILT) are required for all lands designated as WMA and purchased after 1976 (R.S.S. § 37-335). The PILT is defined as “the property tax amount equal to what the annual property tax assessment would have been for that property, in each corresponding county where the property resides, had it been privately owned, and the tax shall be based upon the use of the land at the time of its acquisition.” For example, if a property was designated as irrigated cropland at the time of purchase, the taxes will continue to be assessed as this designated land use. This requires the Commission to be strategic when purchasing future properties. It also should be noted, between 2002 and 2017, the PILT has increased by 287 percent, which totaled approximately \$986,800 in Commission expenditures for the 2016 property tax year (Figure 8). This can lead to concerns for the future because assessed property values vary annually, which will influence the financial resources of the Commission into the future.

Many of the Commission’s fee-title acquisition transactions are assisted with the use of federal funds. Acquisition of properties using federal funds can limit the future use and/or disposition options of the properties purchased with these funds.

The benefits and challenges associated with fee-title acquisitions require the Commission to be mindful of when to purchase land. There will be many times that it will be the best, long-term interest of the public for the Commission to acquire land. The Commission will continue to be committed to being proactive and strategic when acquiring fee-title properties.

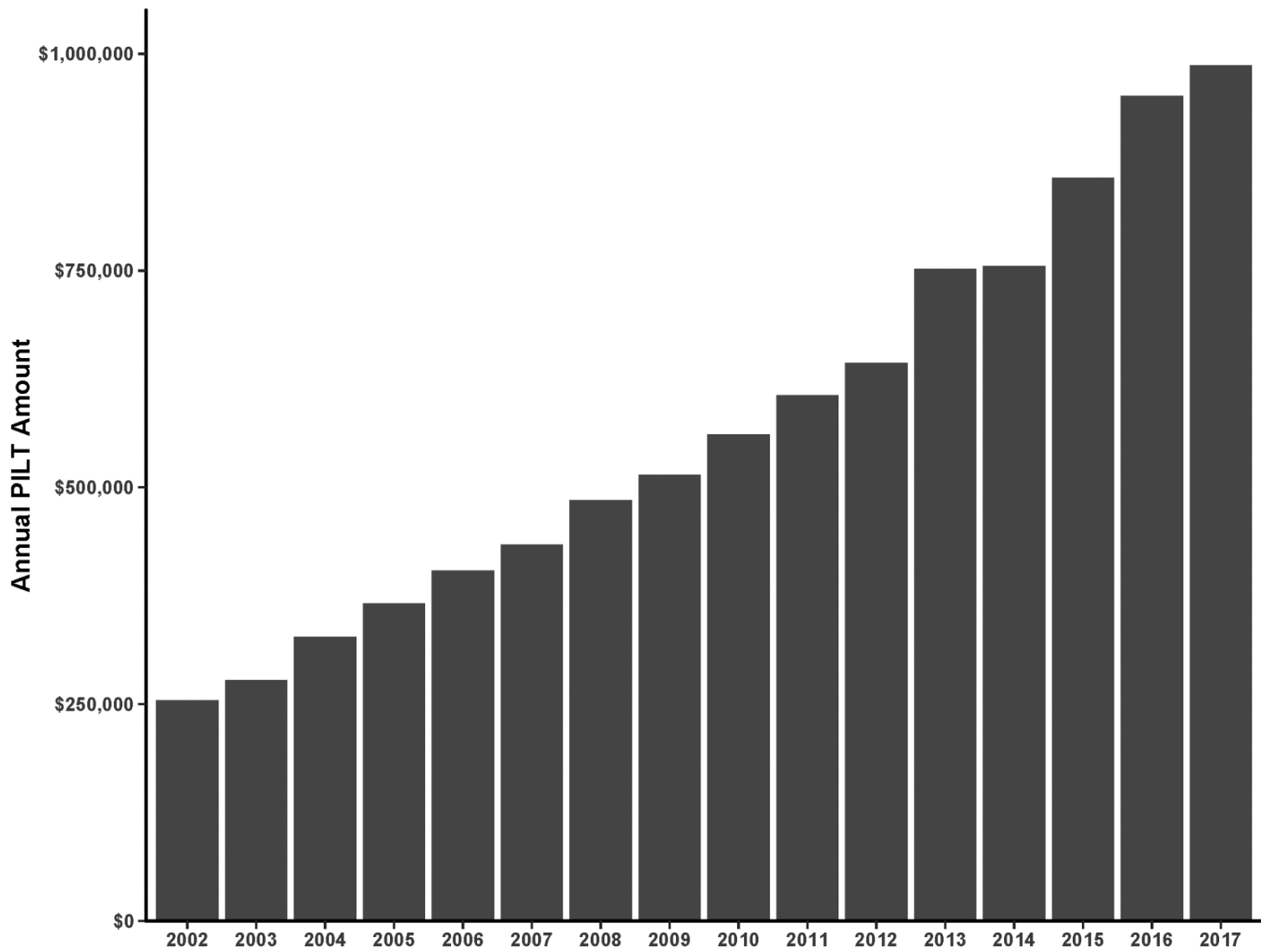


Figure 8. Amount of Commission funds expended on "payment in-lieu-of-taxes" (PILT) from 2002-2017.

Long-term Lease or Management Agreements

Lands operated and maintained by the Commission under long-term lease and management/operation agreements include lands owned by another entity, generally for a minimum of 20 years. Properties associated with these agreements, typically WMAs and SRAs, generally are operated and managed on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (e.g., Branched Oak SRA, Hamburg Bend WMA), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (e.g., Medicine Creek WMA/SRA, Calamus Reservoir WMA/SRA), public power and irrigation districts (e.g., Lake McConaughy SRA, Clear Creek WMA) and Nebraska Natural Resource Districts (e.g., Wildwood WMA, Willow Creek SRA, Danish Alps SRA). However, there are some properties the Fisheries Division manages under lease from private and public landowners to provide fishing access. These agreements generally are exclusive to seasonal fishing (i.e., ice fishing) and small in size, but satisfy the needs of the public. Examples of these long-term agreements can be found in Appendix 3.

Although the Commission does not own the lands associated with these long-term agreements, these properties provide many benefits and efficiencies for the agency. Lands operated and managed under these types of agreements allow the Commission to have moderate to high level of control over land management, with limited liabilities associated with full ownership. These long-term agreements allow the property owner to assist with management costs associated with the property, where the Commission may have the option to dissolve the agreement if costs outweigh benefits or the property no longer meets the Commission's goals. Properties associated with these agreements provide opportunities to build lasting partnerships with other government entities sharing similar mission's related to promoting conservation and recreation opportunities into the future.

Properties associated with long-term leases and agreements can present fiscal and operational challenges for the Commission. The expenses associated with operating and maintaining managed areas is similar to the expenses associated with fee-title properties. Properties under long-term leases and agreements do not allow the ability of the Commission to move forward with the development of these areas without the approval from the property

owner. Obtaining approval from the property owner can take time and requires the Commission to identify developments and operations on the properties associated with these agreements in approved planning documents, which describe how the area will be developed and operated. Trends may dictate a need for certain types of development and the plans associated with the areas, due to the long-term nature of the agreements, can become outdated. Using long-term lease or management agreements are an effective tool for the Commission to employ in obtaining its mission and goals when another entity desires the agency to manage the property for public outdoor recreation.

Short-term Management and Access Agreements

Short-term management and access agreements are another option the Commission employs to provide public access and recreation opportunities on private lands for Nebraska residents and visitors, while also providing enhanced habitat for the state's fish and wildlife. These agreements are executed with a private landowner, where money, materials or labor is exchanged for a specified conservation practice or public access for the duration of the contract, usually five years or less. Programs sponsored by the Commission related to short-term management and access agreements include Open Fields and Waters Program (OFW), Passing Along the Heritage (PATH), and Small Grain Stubble Management and Access programs.

Short-term management and access agreements provide many opportunities and efficiencies for the Commission and its constituents. These short-term contracts are attractive to an array of landowners, because landowners are compensated for the lands enrolled under the agreement. These agreements also capitalize on the flexibility for the conservation of fish and wildlife and provide public access and recreational opportunities for many Nebraska residents and visitors to fish, hunt, and trap. These agreements can easily be modified and directed as the landscape and financial conditions change, without incurring the cost of owning the land.

However, these short-term agreements have challenges and limitations. For instance, the habitats created and public recreation opportunities gained from these agreements only

exist as long as the term of the contract. This acquisition tool affords short-term benefits for the Commission and can be an effective way to move the agency mission forward.

Future Land Strategy

The acquisition of properties is important to the Commission and is one of several options the agency uses to conserve habitat for fish and wildlife and provide recreational opportunities for Nebraska residents and visitors. The Commission is frequently approached by willing sellers to purchase their property(s), and occasionally by landowners wishing to donate their property. However, Commission resources are limited for acquiring, maintaining and operating all offered properties at any given time. Establishing land portfolio management strategies are paramount in having a land portfolio that meets numerous needs into the future. These strategies would determine how much land is enough to: 1) satisfy the public's needs for fish, wildlife and parkland resources, 2) sustain these resources in the long-term and 3) ensure the Commission has the right types of land to meet habitat and/or species management goals.

When considering the future strategy for land acquisitions and management agreements, the Commission must be mindful of the benefits and challenges associated with expanding its land portfolio. This section specifically outlines the challenges associated with the expansion of existing lands already owned and/or managed by the Commission. Some challenges are due to changes beyond the Commission's control, and can greatly affect decisions, such as demographics and climate issues. Other challenges are due to the limitations of staff, funding and availability of lands that meet the changing desires and needs of constituents and the habitats managed by the Commission. The challenges outlined below require the Commission to continuously adapt and remain flexible when making future decisions regarding land acquisitions.

Challenges

The increasing costs associated with the operation, maintenance of current and newly acquired properties, and the increasing upfront costs associated with acquiring new properties (e.g., land value, appraisal reviews) with limited resources, can be a challenge for the Commission. Land values have increased over time, which requires the Commission to expend more funds per acre towards the acquisition of new parcels. The required payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) of the Commission also has increased by approximately 287 percent over the past 15 years (Figure 8), where \$986,800 of the agency's budget was used toward the 2016 PILT. This continued increase in PILT is influenced by two factors, (1) the cumulative additions of Commission-owned land requiring payment of PILT and (2) increases in county property value assessments that have occurred during this 15-year timeframe, which will not likely significantly decrease in the future.

Commission expenditures associated with managing and maintaining property also is something to be aware of and the affects it has on the agency. The annual costs associated with operating and maintaining WMAs during the 2016 tax year has been estimated to be approximately \$27 per acre. This estimate equates to approximately \$4.9 million of the Commission's total annual budget being spent toward WMA property management expenses (e.g., personnel, equipment, supplies). The Commission's Parks Division does not have a current per-acre figure related to the costs associated with operating and maintaining its properties, due to the complexity and diversity of its many areas. The Commission will need to consider calculating a number in the future to assist in making future Park Division acquisition decisions. This challenge requires the Commission to examine carefully land purchases to ensure that the staffing levels and resources are available to manage its land portfolio.

The majority of revenue generated by the Commission comes from the sales of permits and licenses. However, national annual license and permit sales have declined over the last several decades, and the Commission's annual permit sales can be variable. The variability of Commission's annual permit and license sales affects the amount of federal funds the agency receives, which affects the amount of funds available to it annually for acquiring, maintaining and operating current and future properties associated with WMA and FH properties. Aside

from rare opportunities of a specific habitat type or location, leasing and private land incentives can be an option to consider, as opposed to acquiring any new parcel(s) presented to the Commission. The Commission should consider utilizing its partnerships with other government and non-government agencies to leverage land acquisitions and manage and/or operate more habitat and recreational opportunity acres where lease agreements or private land incentives are beneficial for the agency.

Another challenge faced by the Commission includes the state's demographics. The shifting population has concentrated areas of urbanization over the past 15 years, where most of the population growth has been within six counties in eastern Nebraska. These demographic changes can impact available wildlife habitats as development of urban land uses encroach upon wildlife habitats. The Commission must remain attentive to these demographic shifts in order to be prepared to address the needs of the changing population and will employ the latest data and information to predict where and what kind of public access areas and recreational opportunities its constituents will be more likely to use.

Recreational needs and demands of the state's residents and visitors are evolving. Recent data suggest paddling sports, wildlife viewing and RV camping have seen significant increases in participation within the state and the nation. Access for some recreational activities, such as hunting and fishing, may be better suited through private land access agreements, rather than fee-title acquisitions, because of the potential flexibility in location and length of agreements provide for the agency. Trend data must be studied for the Commission to make informed decisions on how to move forward in providing recreational opportunities for its constituents.

Climate change is also altering the quantity and quality of fish and wildlife habitat across Nebraska. Increasing temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, flooding, droughts and wildfires have and will continue to affect many of Nebraska's fish and wildlife species and its natural resources. These changes can expand and/or shift many fish and wildlife species historical distributions, which may provide the Commission management challenges for the future. In turn, the Commission may need to protect additional properties or access to properties due to the changing landscape. Protecting native landscapes, fish and wildlife, and

recreational lands that provide a rich diversity of offerings for the state's fish, wildlife and recreationists, will become even more important to obtain to safeguard for future generations. Therefore, for long-term protection and conservation of habitats and the species that rely on them, it may be beneficial for the Commission to use fee-title acquisitions, which would aid in the mission and long-term goals of the agency.

To minimize and overcome these challenges, the Commission must execute long-term strategic and responsible decisions regarding when and where to acquire and dispose of land, along with when to utilize other land conservation approaches to protect natural resources to provide recreational opportunities. Regardless, the answer to these challenges will continue to be dynamic, because many factors influence how the Commission manages the landscape and its properties.

Acquisition Guidelines

To achieve its mission and being mindful of providing habitat for protecting and conserving Nebraska's fish wildlife and recreational opportunities into the future, the Commission's procedural and fiscal guidelines for acquiring new lands are presented below.

All acquisitions

To ensure all new land acquisitions are acquired appropriately, successfully, and benefit the mission and goals of the agency, the Commission will employ the following guidelines when acquiring new property:

- All property parcels, including donated parcels, to be acquired will be inspected and/or assessed by the Commission's administrative and field staff, and Realty Coordinator (Commission's Lands Committee). The assessment and recommendations made by the Commission's Lands Committee will be forwarded to administration for final decision to proceed or not to proceed with proposed property acquisitions. This will ensure the proposed property acquisition is most beneficial to the mission and goals of the

Commission, poses no unnecessary burdens or liabilities and the transaction of the property is of fair market value. A more detailed decision matrix will be created to assist with determining which properties meet the recommendations outlined in the “Acquisition Recommendations” section presented later in this document.

- All new land acquisitions will continue to be completed only with a willing seller or donor.
- All acquisitions will conform to Commission acquisition policies and procedures and state statutes.
- Each property proposed for acquisition will be appraised and assessed by a state-certified appraiser. When required, specifically with federal grants and funds, these appraisals will be completed to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and/or United Appraisal Standards for Federal Acquisitions (UASFLA).
- All fee-title and donated acquisitions will be open and transparent, which will include public hearings. Conducting public hearings related to land acquisitions will provide an opportunity for the public to present comments and concerns about the acquisition of the parcel in question.

Along with the previously mentioned guidelines, the Commission commits to being fiscally and operationally responsible for acquiring new properties by:

- Purchasing parcels that will have a positive, high impact on species conservation (game, non-game and/or at-risk species) and/or provide public access for Nebraska’s fish, wildlife, and recreational opportunities.
- Evaluating the upfront and future costs associated with managing and developing the property in order to maintain quality habitat and/or recreational opportunities, before a property is acquired.

- Pursuing alternative strategies that will continue to provide public access for recreational opportunities and habitat for game and non-game species, limit PILT and other fiscal obligations required with owning and leasing property.
- Continuing to utilize current and future conservation and recreational partnerships with government and non-government organizations related to the Commission. Collaborating with these partners will assist with minimizing costs associated with purchasing, developing, operating and/or maintaining new properties that achieve shared goals between the Commission and willing partner organizations.
- Continuing to utilize and/or explore other funding resources and grant opportunities (i.e., Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Nebraska Environmental Trust) when possible, allowing the Commission to be more fiscally efficient.
- Establishing percentage spending limits for the Nebraska Habitat Fund among PILT, acquisitions and private lands partnerships, where up to 25 percent of these funds may be used for private wildlife lands and access, as established by state statute.

Donated properties

The Commission is also provided with many opportunities related to acquiring donated properties. Guidelines for evaluating, recommending and accepting donated parcels are similar to fee-title acquisitions, but there are a few unique processes or guidelines characteristic of donated parcels. The Commission will employ the guidelines previously mentioned, along with the following guidelines, when considering lands offered as a donation:

- Donation Timing

The donation can take place immediately or upon death or another future date.

- If the donation is immediate, the same criteria that are used for purchased land will be utilized.

- If the donation is upon death or another future date (e.g., owner is no longer able to utilize the land) the Commission will inform the owner that the donation will be contingent on the availability of funding and interest to the agency at the time of the donation.

- Donation Value

The donation of land can be for the total value of the land or a portion of the value of the land.

 - If the donation is for the total value of the land, no special consideration is needed.

 - If the donation includes a partial value donation, which requires the Commission to purchase the balance of the land value, the Commission will inform the owner that the donation will be contingent on the availability of funding and interest of the agency at the time of the donation.

- Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation's Role in Donations
 - The acceptance of a gift or donation of real property, regardless of value requires State Legislature's and Governor's approvals. There can be a significant time lag between the offer and obtaining approvals from the legislature and the governor. Therefore, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Foundation can accept the donation until the Commission has approval from the State Legislature and Governor's office to accept the donation.

Acquisition Priorities

To meet the challenges and limitations associated with land acquisitions and to conserve Nebraska's fish, wildlife and recreational opportunities, the Commission has established priorities for all land acquisitions, donations and land trades. It is not the intent of

this plan to solely focus on properties that are new within its land portfolio, but to also include properties considered to be additions to existing properties. These priorities differ between currently owned properties and properties that are new/independent properties and are presented below.

Additions to Lands Currently Owned/Leased by the Commission

The Commission will consider the following priorities when acquiring new land parcels contiguous to properties it currently owns and/or leases.

- Parcels of land characterized as inholdings or are adjacent (“round-outs”) to currently owned parcels, which will improve connectivity to existing properties and/or allow for large scale habitat restorations (e.g., wetlands, grass lands, riparian areas).
- Parcels of land for improving and/or providing public use and better access to existing properties, while also providing optimal habitat for Nebraska’s fish, wildlife and recreational opportunities.
- Parcels buffering currently owned Commission properties, which will minimize future urbanization and/or conserve what is currently available for public access and recreation.
- Parcels that will improve and/or enhance the efficiency of operating, maintaining and managing currently owned Commission properties.

Newly Acquired/Donated Properties

The Commission will consider the following criteria when acquiring new parcels not contiguous to properties it currently owns; fish and wildlife priorities can differ from Parks-related properties and are noted in parentheses:

- Parcels characterized as highly ecological and biologically important for game and non-game species. These types of parcels include, but are not exclusive to biologically unique landscapes (e.g., Sandhills, Wildcat Hills), wetlands, riparian habitat, upland/prairie habitats, which will benefit goals of specific species plans established by the Commission (e.g., Berggren plan, Cool-water Streams Plan, big game management, endangered or threatened species). (Fisheries and Wildlife)
- Parcels containing unique characteristics and/or are optimal for recreation opportunities. (Parks)
- Parcels close in proximity to communities, which will provide outdoor recreation and educational opportunities. (Parks)
- Parcels close in proximity to existing administration facilities (e.g., regional offices, field offices, parks), which will benefit the development, management and operation and maintenance of the newly acquired properties (e.g., Parks related properties) by reducing the time and travel by Commission staff.
- Parcels presented to the Commission from willing donors (in part or whole), which will assist in achieving the Commission's goals and vision.

Acquisition and Partnerships Priorities

There are many private, government and non-government agencies sharing similar desires to protect and develop diverse habitats, landscapes and recreational opportunities throughout Nebraska. Establishing and perpetuating a vast, diverse network of partnerships working towards the same goals should be at the forefront of the Commission, especially when determining future acquisitions. Many non-government organizations (e.g., Nebraska Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program) are able to own and manage an array of properties within the state. These non-government organizations also may have the funds to assist in the management of the properties. Therefore, great efforts should

be made to continue to cultivate and nurture these relationships, where discussions with these partners occur frequently. It is important for the Commission to inventory these existing partnerships and understand what these partners are doing for the species and landscape as a whole. This will allow the Commissions and its non-government partners to identify potential gaps, alleviate redundancy of services and/or protection, which will meet shared goals for all involved.

When providing a palette for species habitat, there may be private programs, incentives and partnerships that can achieve the goal better than the Commission can alone. It is important to understand the goals and desires of the Commission's partners and see how all contributors can collaborate to meet these goals. Land acquisition is "one tool in the tool box," but there are other tools the Commission can employ for conserving and protecting the natural environment in ways that can be just as successful. These tools can include incentive programs the Commission currently utilizes, but there is potential for developing new/other programs the agency should explore.

Acquisition Recommendations

It is important to provide recommendations for this plan regarding the priorities of land acquisitions. There are several questions that must be answered to establish the goals associated with land acquisitions. Commission staff has identified opportunities and recommendations they desire to explore and are presented below:

- The fiscal responsibilities beyond the purchase of new fee-title properties have increased over the years (e.g., PILT, operation and maintenance costs). With the limited amount of funds to accomplish its mission and maintain the current land purchasing rate, it is recommended that the Commission reduce the rate of purchasing new lands associated with its fee-title inventory in the next five years. Therefore, the Commission will consider acquiring approximately 1,500 acres per year consisting of 1 (one) large or unique tract of land and 1 – 2 additional smaller properties per year as opportunities arise. These fee-title acquisitions will include properties purchased, donated or traded.

- The Wildcat Hills and Pine Ridge areas are critical for several species (e.g., mule deer, bighorn sheep, elk, mountain lions). These areas contain many large parcels of land currently owned by the Commission. It is recommended an evaluation within these regions be completed to identify gaps to meet the needs for the species within these areas to determine if additional acquisition of new parcels is desirable and beneficial.
- Forested lands are dwindling across the state. In order to protect and conserve these habitats, the Commission is committed to identifying and locating the amount of these lands that currently exist, along with characterizing the importance these lands are to the species that utilize them.
- Wetlands in the Rainwater Basin are critical habitats for many resident and migratory species. The Commission is compelled to identify opportunities and partnerships to assist with providing protection and conservation for the wetlands within this region of Nebraska.
- Because of the potential for the additional development of water, opportunities for land acquisitions or leasing opportunities within the Sandhills, along with other at-risk regions, should be explored and evaluated to identify potential parcels containing waterbodies for providing access to Nebraska residents and visitors for fishing and other recreational opportunities.
- Off-road recreational trails and parklands are in higher demand by Nebraska's residents and visitors. A funding source by the State's Legislature (i.e., Capital Maintenance Fund), derived by sales tax from boat and ATV sales, has been created and provided to the Commission for a set period of time. The Commission will continue to explore future opportunities suitable for off-road recreational trails.
- The popularity of paddle sports and land trails (i.e., hiking, biking) has been increasing. The Commission will explore opportunities that will provide more access to Nebraska's navigable streams, rivers and other water bodies and other land trails that meet the

needs of recreationists across the state. Additional long-range planning with partners who develop trails will be beneficial to create a comprehensive trail system across the state.

- The Commission's SP properties and infrastructure have accrued a large amount of deferred maintenance costs. The financial obligations to address the deferred maintenance of parks facilities will be considerable. The Commission will consider deferred maintenance as a priority over the acquisition of new parks properties.
- The Commission desires to be more proactive in protecting and conserving Nebraska's non-game species. Therefore, the Commission will explore the opportunity of establishing a new land management designation of Natural Areas. The primary goal of these areas will emphasize increasing biodiversity of Nebraska's plant and non-game wildlife species and promoting Nebraska residents and visitors to connect with nature, while minimizing operations and maintenance costs associated with this land designation. The secondary goals associated with this land management designation will also include providing habitat for game species and allow for hunting, fishing and/or other recreational opportunities, when resources allow.
- To achieve its mission and overcome its challenges, the Commission will establish a more robust acquisition and disposition process, which will include criteria that provide guidance to the Commission's Lands Committee regarding future acquisitions and dispositions.

Disposition Guidelines and Priorities

There are a few properties owned and operated by the Commission that may no longer meet the needs of its recreational users, have public access issues, and/or require operational expenses that exceed the benefits received. Properties within the Commission's current land portfolio that no longer meet its mission and goals should be recommended for disposition.

Therefore, the Commission has created guidelines and priorities for the disposition of these properties and are presented below.

Property Disposition Guidelines

There are many policies and procedures established by the state and Commission that must be adhered to when disposing of properties. Many property parcels have been acquired using outside funds, specifically grants associated with federal funds that require additional procedures and policies to be followed to dispose of lands. The Commission will follow the guidelines presented below when disposing of properties it owns.

- All land dispositions will conform to Commission policies and procedures, state statutes and federal laws and regulations.
- Each property proposed for disposition will be appraised and assessed by a state-certified appraiser. When required, specifically properties acquired with federal grants and funds, these appraisals will be completed to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and/or United Appraisal Standards for Federal Acquisitions (UASFLA).
- All properties proposed for disposition will be recommended by the Commission's Lands Committee to ensure the property no longer meets the agency's mission, goals and objectives and that the transaction of the property is of fair market value. These recommendations proposed by the Commission's Lands Committee will be forwarded to Administration for approval before moving to the Board of Commissioners for a final decision.
- Criteria matrices will be created to guide the Commission's Lands Committee and Administration through the disposition of any property.

Property Disposition Priorities

The Commission has defined several characteristics and priorities for disposing owned properties (i.e., sold or transferred). The priorities and characteristics for the disposition of Commission properties differ between fish and wildlife properties and park properties. The Commission will use separate priority criteria for the disposition of properties described below. Properties proposed for potential disposition are represented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. These proposed properties need to be further evaluated for disposition under the priorities presented below before they are moved through the decision-making process.

Fish and Wildlife Property Disposition Priorities (WMA, FH)

Fish and wildlife property priorities for disposition will include property parcels that are:

- No longer economically feasible to maintain and operate (e.g., noxious weed management, fencing, private encroachment).
- Limited in access because of size, location or the presence of inholdings, result in trespass issues for adjacent private properties, or have inhabited dwellings that reduce the amount of acres available for public hunting.
- Small in size, which are not feasible to maintain and/or do not provide sufficient habitat for fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities.
- Underutilized by hunters, anglers and recreationists.

Parks Property Disposition Priorities (SP, SHP, SRA, SRT)

Parks properties priorities for disposition will include parcels that are:

- Remote or distant from regional park offices which are not economically feasible to maintain and operate (e.g., time, travel) and where additional development is not feasible.

- Underutilized by the public.
- Not efficient with the required resources to operate and maintain and where enforcing regulations at parks is challenging (e.g., high vandalism due to remote location).
- Distant from local communities, which are beneficial in supporting park properties when parks are closer to communities.
- High opportunity for partner ownership transfer, when partner can also provide recreational opportunities.

Summary

The challenges of tomorrow influence how the Commission continues to manage its properties. It will be important to be mindful of the trends related to recreational usage, climate fluctuations, changing demographics, urbanization, property values and the fiscal and personnel resources required to manage the diversity of lands the Commission is responsible for protecting.

It is important to note the purposeful broadness of this plan, because the future is unpredictable. Opportunities will present themselves at any given time and the Commission must have the flexibility to react. Commission staff will continue to be aware of the limitations and challenges faced by the agency and will commit to pursuing its mission by moving forward with these specific recommendations when examining all acquisition and disposition opportunities. The Commission is dedicated to improving and optimizing the many vehicles and invaluable partnerships presented in this strategy to ensure the protection of Nebraska's landscape for the conservation of fish and wildlife and recreational opportunities for the people of the state now and into the future.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Proposed Wildlife Management Area (WMA) properties owned, operated and maintained by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to be evaluated for disposition. Presented in order of priority.

Property Name	Proposed Disposition (Acres)
Iron Horse Trail #17	15
Iron Horse Trail #25	6
Iron Horse Trail #29	15
Iron Horse Trail #31	1
Iron Horse Trail #51, #77, #89	9
Iron Horse Trail #43, #87, #88	32
Iron Horse Trail #100	12
Iron Horse Trail #106, #112	23
Iron Horse Trail #11, #12, #13	9
Iron Horse Trail #32, #33, #35, #37	26
Iron Horse Trail #39, #40	13
Iron Horse Trail #45, #46	15
Skull Creek WMA #1, #2	8
Denman Island	4
East Darr WMA	14
East Cozad WMA	4.5
Overton WMA	14
Lone Tree WMA	21
Cattail WMA	85
West Elm Creek	24
Sioux Strip WMA	25
South Twin Lakes WMA	160
Beaver Bend WMA	27
Hull Lake WMA	5
Flatwater Landing	6
Big Springs WMA	7
Middle Decatur Bend WMA	133
O. John Emerson WMA	40
West Hershey WMA	31
Wood River WMA	28
Omadi Bend WMA	33
Blue Heron WMA	60

Appendix 1 (Continued). Proposed Wildlife Management Area (WMA) properties owned, operated and maintained by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to be evaluated for disposition. Presented in order of priority.

Property Name	Proposed Disposition (Acres)
Box Elder WMA	26
Wannamaker	160
Bittersweet WMA	86
Goldeneye WMA	23
Goldenrod WMA	97
Total	1,302

Appendix 2. Proposed State Recreation Areas (SRA) and Fisheries/Fish Hatcheries (FH) properties operated and maintained by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to be evaluated for disposition.

Property Name	Size (Acres)
Blue River SRA	14
Cottonwood Lake SRA	240
Dead Timber SRA	200
DLD SRA	7
Grove Trout Station (parcel) FH	5
Lewis and Clark Lake SRA (West of Miller Creek/Stewart Road)	---
Long Lake SRA	80
North Loup SRA	20
Pelican Point SRA	36
Verdon SRA	75
Walgren Lake SRA	130
Blue River SRA	14
Total	821

--- indicates acreages were not determined at the time of this document

Appendix 3. Parks and Fisheries properties managed or operated under lease or license agreements by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Property Name	Lessor	Lease Term (years)	Lease End Date
Ponderosa	NE Board of Education Lands Fund	10	12/31/2017
Arcadia Diversion Dam	Loup Basin Reclamation District	---	Perpetual
Ash Grove	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Bazile Creek	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	9/30/2016
Beaver lake	Private Land Owner	20	1/31/2038
Blue Lake	Private Land Owner	25	7/1/2022
Bluestem	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Box Butte	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	5/1/2020
Box Elder Canyon	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	25	7/31/2024
Branched Oak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Brownville Bend	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Buckskin Hills	Lewis and Clark Natural Resource District	25	12/6/2029
Burton's Bend	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Calamus	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Cambridge Diversion Dam	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Catfish Run	City of Lincoln	---	No End Date
Chalkrock	Lewis and Clark Natural Resource District	25	12/6/2029
Clear Creek	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	25	7/31/2024
Clear Lake	New Clear Lake	20	1/31/2035
Conestoga	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Crescent Lake	NE Board of Education Lands Fund	11	12/31/2021
Danish Alps	Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District	5	5/1/2020
Davis Creek	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
East Philips Canyon	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	99	9/26/2044
Elwood	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	25	7/31/2024

Appendix 4 (Continued). Parks and Fisheries properties managed or operated under lease or license agreements by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Property Name	Lessor	Lease Term (years)	Lease End Date
Enders Reservoir	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Enders	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	5/1/2020
Gallagher Canyon	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	99	9/26/2044
Guide Rock Diversion Dam	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Hamburg Bend	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	9/30/2017
Helmuth Public Access Atlas	Pheasants Forever	20	11/12/1930
Hull Lake - Easement	Private Land Owner	---	Perpetual
Jeffrey Lake	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	25	7/31/2024
Johnson Lake	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	99	9/26/2044
Kansas Bend	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	9/30/2017
Kent Diversion Dam	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Lake Maloney	Nebraska Public Power District	20	3/31/2022
Lake McConaughy/Lake Ogallala	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	36	2/28/2037
Lake Minatare	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	5/1/2020
Lake Wanahoo	Lower Platte North Natural Resources District	6	12/21/2020
Langdon Bend	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	9/30/2017
Lewis and Clark Lake	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	9/30/2016
Loup Bottoms	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Loup River PPD	Loup River Public Power District	---	No End Date
Marsh Wren	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Medicine Creek	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Medicine Creek	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	5/1/2020
Merritt Reservoir	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Milburn Dam	Loup Basin Reclamation District	---	perpetual
Mirdan Canal	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020

Appendix 5 (Continued). Parks and Fisheries properties managed or operated under lease or license agreements by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Property Name	Lessor	Lease Term (years)	Lease End Date
Olive Creek	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Pawnee Slough	NE Department of Transportation	1	Year to Year
Plum Creek	Central NE Public Power Irrigation District	99	9/26/2044
Red Willow Diversion	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Red Willow Reservoir	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Red Willow	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	5/1/2020
Saline Co. FMHA	Farmers Home Administration	---	No End Date
Sherman Reservoir	Loup Basin Reclamation District	---	Perpetual
Sherman	Loup Valley Irrigation District	Perpetual	Perpetual
Smith Falls	Private Land Owner	30	4/30/2022
Stagecoach	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Summit	Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District	25	5/16/2034
Sutherland	Nebraska Public Power District	20	12/31/2024
Swan Lake	Private Land Owner	14	12/1/2026
Swanson Reservoir	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	4/30/2020
Swanson	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	25	5/1/2020
Twin Lake	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Wagon Train	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040
Whitney Lake Boat Ramp	NE Board of Education Lands Fund	10	12/31/2020
Wildwood	Lower Platte South Natural Resources District	10	5/10/2022
Willow Creek	Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District	25	12/12/2038
Wm Gilmour Tobacco Island	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	9/30/2017
Yankee Hill	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	25	3/31/2040

--- indicates corresponding information was not accurately available at the time of this document