

1996

Annual Report 1996 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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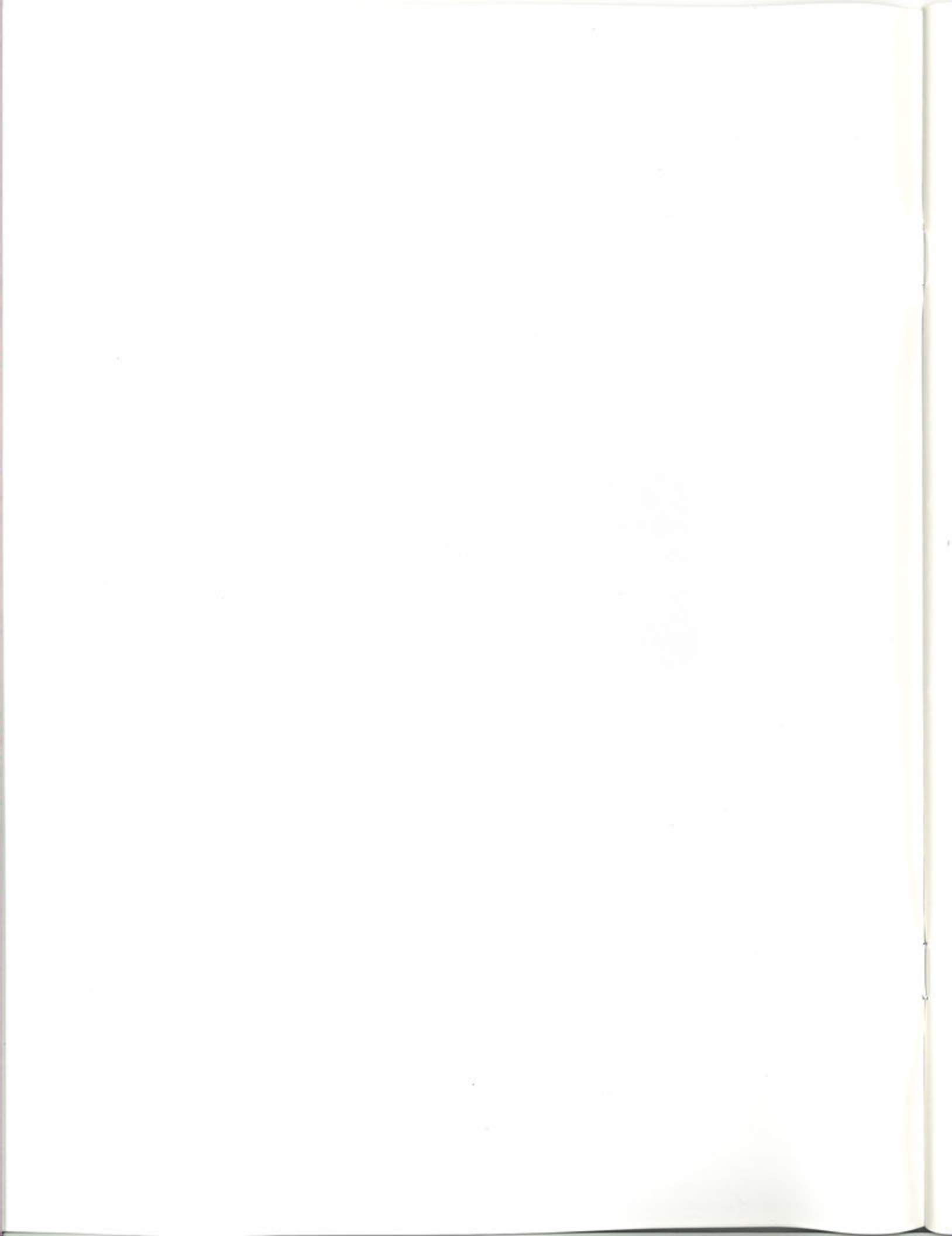
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ANNUAL REPORT

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NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS COMMISSION





Offices

Headquarters & District V

2200 N. 33rd St.
PO Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370
402-471-0641

Metro Office

1212 Deer Park Blvd.
Omaha, NE 68108-2020
402-595-2144

District I

East Hwy. 2
P.O. Box 725
Alliance, NE 69301-0725
308-762-5605

District II

524 Panzer St.
P.O. Box 508
Bassett, NE 68714-0934
402-684-2921

District III

2201 N. 13th St.
Norfolk, NE 68701-2267
402-370-3256

District IV

RR4 Box 36
North Platte, NE 69101-9412
308-535-8025

Commissioners

District 1

Thomas O'Neill Jr., Lincoln
1/15/1996-1/15/2001

District 2

Bill Grewcock, Omaha
1/15/1992-1/15/1997

District 3

Dr. Tim Biga, Norfolk
3/5/1993-1/15/1998

District 4

William Berryman, Kearney
2/28/1995-9/7/1999

District 5

Daniel Wallen, McCook
2/28/1995-1/15/2000

District 6

Dr. Charles Blaha, Omaha
10/5/1992-9/7/1997

District 7

Tom J. Plummer, Jr., Ogallala
11/3/1994-1/15/1999

Administration

Rex Amack, Director
Assistant Directors:
Wesley Sheets
Noelyn Isom
Roger Kuhn

Purpose

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is charged with managing and controlling the state's wildlife, parks and outdoor recreational resources in the best long-term interest of the people.

To accomplish that purpose, the Commission plans and implements its policies and programs efficiently and objectively; maintains a rich and diverse environment in Nebraska's lands and waters; provides outdoor recreation opportunities; manages wildlife resources for the maximum benefit of the people, and strives to help Nebraskans appreciate their roles in the natural world.

Contents

Administration	4
Budget and Fiscal	5
Engineering	8
Fisheries	10
Information and Education	13
Law Enforcement	15
Operations & Construction	17
Outdoor Education	18
Parks	20
Planning and Programming	29
Realty & Environmental Services	30
Wildlife	31

Complete copies of each division's annual report may be obtained by contacting the individual division at the Game and Parks Commission, 2200 N. 33rd St., P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370.

ADMINISTRATION

This division provides support services to all divisions through: Personnel, internal audit, in-service training, aircraft operations, word processing, headquarters maintenance, telephone switchboard, and district staff assistants and clerical personnel.

Liaison with the Nebraska Legislature is a major duty of the division, as is providing assistance to the Director's Office.

Personnel

Functions of the Personnel unit include payroll, Workers Compensation, retirement, insurance, accident reports, performance planning, personnel records, and budget.

The labor contract between the State of Nebraska and the Nebraska Association of Public Employees Local 61 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (NAPE/AFSCME) covers 230 agency employees. The State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council (SLEBC) represents 51 agency employees. Personnel serves as the liaison to the Department of Admin-

istrative Services Employee Relations Division.

There were 24 new permanent employees hired in 1996, and 17 employees were promoted/reclassified. Turnover for 1996 was 6.2% (27 employees).

Personnel confers the Office of Risk Management on Workers Compensation cases. Workers Compensation claims paid for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1996, amounted to \$413,007, up \$42,802.64 (+11.6%) over 1995.

Commission employees were involved in 30 motor vehicle accidents, up 67% from 1995, and the most accidents in several years.

PAYROLLS

Permanent Employees

Total wages: \$13,036,401.62

Average number per payroll: 442

Temporary Employees

Total gross wages: \$3,756,429.17

Average number per payroll: 451

Largest payroll: 851 employees

Smallest payroll: 133 employees

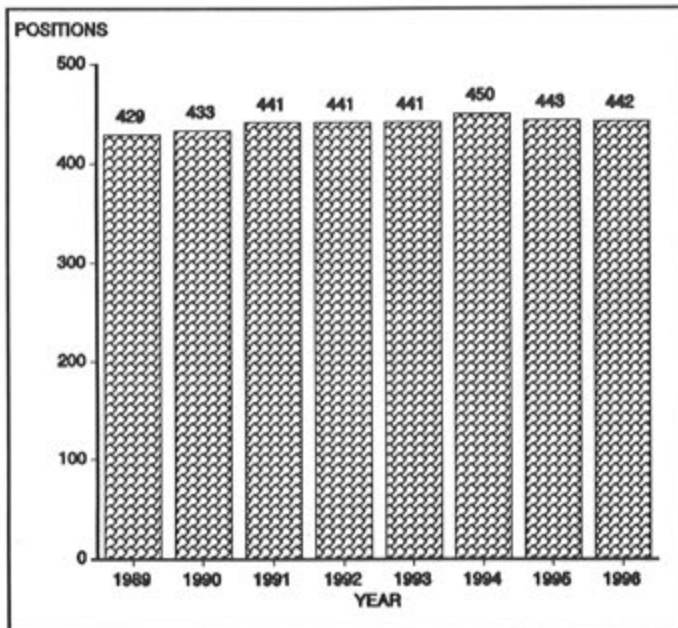
In-Service Training

To better performance and help prepare employees for higher responsibility, in-service training is directed toward meeting the specialized needs of individual staff members who enroll in various of short courses, seminars and workshops. Broad-based training needs are met through in-house workshops for employee groups.

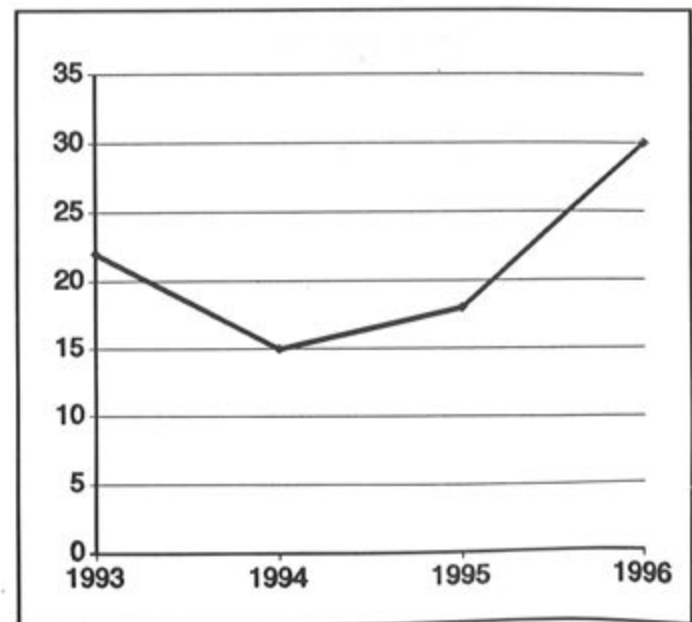
Aircraft Operations

The Piper Super Cub was flown a total of 132.2 hours (none at night) during 1996, down from the 212.2 hours logged in 1995, due in part to a three-month absence of the pilot.

Cost of operation was fairly high at \$60.50 per hour (\$47.94/hour in 1995), largely attributable to the low number of flight hours. Costs include hangar and insurance. There is no depreciation on the aircraft. The plane was used for various surveys, counts, antelope and deer depredation complaints, fish and wildlife, law enforcement and photography.



PERMANENT EMPLOYEES — 1989-96



MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS 1993-96

BUDGET & FISCAL

This division has four sections, whose duties include:

1. **Permits Section** issues big-game permits; consigns hunting, fishing, park permits and stamps to vendors; issues boating certificates to county treasurers; maintains necessary records; receives, receipts, deposits and accounts for all monies collected; operates the Customer Service counter at the Lincoln headquarters.
2. **Accounts Payable and Cost Accounting Section** processes payments of operating expenses, employee expense documents, conducts field audits, prepares monthly reports for Commission review; prepares all tax forms required by the Department of Revenue; distributes costs to appropriate areas for internal cost accounting, and maintains financial records for federal grants.
3. **Purchasing and Inventory Section** procures or coordinates procurement of materials, supplies, equipment and services and maintains an inventory system for agency-owned equipment.
4. **Budget Section** prepares the budget, monitors financial resources, assesses fiscal impact of proposed legislation, insures expenditures are in accord with the budget and applicable rules and regulations, and maintains financial records of capital projects.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

January 1, 1996, General Fund Appropriation and Cash on Hand:

Cowboy Trail (Fund 2328)		\$ 97,339.69
Environmental Trust Fund (Fund 2329)		7,733,044.00
Game Cash (Fund 2332)		
Includes Lifetime Hunt	812,600.00	
Includes Lifetime Fish	559,850.00	
Other	<u>5,214,257.16</u>	6,586,707.16
Park Cash (Fund 2333)		7,998,587.63
Nebraska Habitat Cash (Fund 2334)		3,943,296.96
Non-game and Endangered Species Cash (Fund 2335)		370,834.45
Nebraska Snowmobile Cash (Fund 2337)		71,678.52
NORDA Cash (Fund 2338)		2,304,382.55
Trail Development Assistance (Fund 2339)		55,710.63
Aquatic Habitat (Fund 2341)		0.00
Federal Fund 4332 — Land & Water Conservation Fund & Bureau of Reclamation (8972)		105,796.50
General Fund (Fund 1000)	4,749,268.65	
Less Amount Lapsed	<u>326.00</u>	
Total Cash & General Fund Appropriations On Hand January 1, 1996		34,016,320.74
General Fund Appropriations & Cash Received during 1996		
Cowboy Trail (Fund 2328)		6,941.23
Environmental Trust (Fund 2329)		5,549,012.65
Game Cash (Fund 2332)		
Includes Lifetime Hunt	164,867.25	
Includes Lifetime Fish	123,974.75	
Other	<u>12,931,845.29</u>	13,220,687.29
Park Cash (Fund 2333)		10,999,171.78
Nebraska Habitat Cash (Fund 2334)		2,782,974.22
Non-game & Endangered Species (Fund 2335)		112,583.08
Nebraska Snowmobile Cash (Fund 2337)		15,862.16
NORDA Cash (Fund 2338)		1,516,981.50
Trail Development Assistance (Fund 2339)		52,257.43
Aquatic Habitat (Fund 2341)		6,610.62
Federal Fund 4332 — Land & Water Conservation Fund and Bureau of Reclamation (8972)		1,561,485.26
General Funds		<u>8,641,544.00</u>
Total General Fund Appropriations & Cash Received during 1996		\$ 44,466,111.22
Expenditures by Fund Type during 1996		
Cowboy Trail (Fund 2328)		0.00
Environmental Trust (Fund 2329)		3,903,398.43
Game Cash (Fund 2332)		12,325,571.15
State Park Cash (Fund 2333)		11,377,676.62
Nebraska Habitat Cash (Fund 2334)		3,139,724.94
Non-game & Endangered Species (Fund 2335)		145,420.31
Nebraska Snowmobile Cash (Fund 2337)		3,575.00
NORDA Cash (Fund 2338)		1,096,426.65
Trail Development Assistance (Fund 2339)		50,000.00
Aquatic Habitat (Fund 2341)		0.00
Federal Fund 4332 — Land & Water Conservation Fund and Bureau of Reclamation (8972)		1,470,926.36
General Fund		<u>8,071,863.17</u>
Total Expenditure during 1996		41,584,582.63
End of the Year Fund Balances for 1996:		
Cowboy Trail Fund (Fund 2328)		104,280.92
Environmental Trust (Fund 2329)		9,378,658.22
Game Cash (Fund 2332)		
Includes Lifetime Hunt	977,467.25	
Includes Lifetime Fish	683,824.75	
Other	<u>5,820,531.30</u>	7,481,823.30
Park Cash (Fund 2333)		7,620,082.79
Nebraska Habitat Cash (Fund 2334)		3,586,546.24
Non-game & Endangered Species Cash (Fund 2335)		337,997.22
Nebraska Snowmobile Cash (Fund 2337)		83,965.68
NORDA Cash (Fund 2338)		2,724,937.40
Trail Development Assistance (Fund 2339)		57,968.06
Aquatic Habitat (Fund 2341)		6,610.62
Federal Fund 4332 — Land & Water Conservation Fund and Bureau of Reclamation (8972)		196,355.40
General Fund (Fund 1000)		<u>5,318,623.48</u>
Total General Fund Appropriation & Cash Balance Remaining on December 31, 1996		\$ 36,897,849.33

1996 EXPENDITURES

OPERATIONAL COSTS

Program 162 — Environmental Trust	\$ 3,903,398.43	
Program 330 — Habitat Development		
Game Cash	5,835.31	
Habitat Cash	<u>1,629,205.29</u>	1,635,040.60
Program 336 — Wildlife Conservation, Enforcement, Promotion & Development		
Sub-Program 01 — Enforcement		
General Fund	418,058.71	
Game Cash	2,136,617.41	
Park Cash	552,262.46	
Federal	<u>0.00</u>	3,106,938.58
Sub-Program 02 — Information & Education		
Game Cash	1,683,607.81	
Park Cash	<u>371,169.74</u>	2,054,777.55
Sub-Program 04 — Game		
Game Cash	2,837,310.90	
Federal	<u>6,669.45</u>	2,843,980.35
Sub-Program 05 — Fish		
Game Cash	3,069,712.45	
Federal	<u>367,726.29</u>	3,437,438.74
Sub-Program 10 — Outdoor Recreation		
General Fund	126,714.96	
Game Cash	540,171.40	
Park Cash	<u>9,168.69</u>	676,055.05
Sub-Program 16 — Non-Game & Endangered Species		
General Fund	307,330.31	
Non-Game Cash	95,420.31	
Federal	<u>182,677.68</u>	585,428.30
PROGRAM 336 — SUMMARY		
General Fund	852,103.98	
Game Cash	10,267,419.97	
Park Cash	932,600.89	
Non-Game Cash	95,420.31	
Federal	<u>557,073.42</u>	12,704,618.57
Program 337 — Agency Administration		
General Fund	683,860.99	
Game Cash	1,221,043.88	
Park Cash	431,414.03	
Habitat Cash	<u>103,590.87</u>	2,439,909.77
Program 549 — Park Administration & Operation		
General Fund	4,107,560.72	
Cowboy Trail	0.00	
Park Cash	<u>8,158,308.93</u>	12,265,869.65
Program 550 — Federal Aid & Planning		
General Fund	205,012.29	
Game Cash	156,012.17	
Trail Development Cash	<u>0.00</u>	361,024.46
Program 617		
— Engineering, Area Maintenance & Snowmobile		
General Fund	2,223,325.19	
Cowboy Trail	0.00	
Game Cash	47,634.91	
Park Cash	1,706,315.54	
Snowmobile Cash	3,575.00	
Federal	<u>56,543.11</u>	4,037,393.75
Program 628 — Credit Card Discount		
Game Cash	2,014.47	
Park Cash	36,303.54	
Habitat	<u>0.00</u>	38,318.01
TOTAL OPERATION COSTS — 1996		\$ 37,385,573.24

1996 REVENUE

Cowboy Trail Cash Fund		
Other	1.00	
Interest Earned — Investments	5,295.23	
Land Lease/Easements	<u>1,645.00</u>	
Total Cowboy Trail Cash Fund		<u>\$ 6,941.23</u>
Environmental Trust Cash Fund		
Transfer-In	5,078,946.00	
Interest	464,396.00	
Other	<u>5,670.85</u>	
Total Environmental Trust Cash Fund		<u>5,549,012.85</u>
State Game Cash Fund Income		
Hunting Activities (Lifetime Hunt—164,867.24)		5,281,344.35
Fishing Activities (Lifetime Fish—123,974.75)		3,186,089.96
State & Local Reimbursements		2,629,110.87
Federal Reimbursements		142,224.72
NEBRASKAland Magazine		
Subscriptions	561,575.11	
Advertising	<u>8,363.98</u>	569,939.09
Calendars, books, slides, etc.		150,361.38
Sale of surplus property		62,687.30
Land lease and crop income		88,853.67
Boating permits		539,185.85
Incidentals		250,687.02
Liquidated and property damage		96,231.64
Interest earned on investment		215,079.10
Cash Gifts		<u>8,892.54</u>
Total Game Cash Fund		<u>13,220,687.29</u>
State Park Cash Fund Income		
Park Entry Permits		2,990,095.00
Ice Fishing Shelter Permits		20.00
Property damage		1,818.91
Interest earned on investment		466,177.77
Camping fees, cabin lots, etc.		1,534,932.76
Rental of cabins & lodge rooms		2,679,311.43
Concession leases and sales by lessee		102,123.90
Swimming pool admissions		184,025.23
Entry admissions		216,848.11
Use fees (trail rides, etc.)		487,645.73
Concession sales, leases and agency facilities		452,299.52
Food Service — Fort Robinson		205,356.80
Food Service — Chadron		31,450.21
Food Service — Platte River		83,128.78
Food Service — Mahoney		846,068.96
Cash gifts		5,863.82
Sale of surplus property		10,510.18
Incidentals		79,750.54
Catering		362,249.86
Grocery store & snack items		118,422.50
Rental items (linen, dishes, tables)		1,071.77
Reimbursement other state agencies		<u>142,000.00</u>
Total Park Cash Fund		<u>10,999,171.78</u>
Nebraska Habitat Fund Income		
Habitat Stamps		1,543,283.75
Waterfowl Stamp		7,826.00
Interest earned on investment		216,307.58
Federal reimbursements		906,498.13
Incidentals		14,320.27
Cash gifts		42,045.73
Crop/Pasture		37,780.15
Sale of surplus property		<u>14,912.61</u>
Total Habitat Cash Fund		<u>2,782,974.22</u>
Non-Game & Endangered Species Cash Fund Income		
Cash gifts		5,201.00
Federal reimbursements		2,778.49
Interest earned on investments		21,719.04
Non-game donations		87,752.40
Incidentals (adjustments to prior fiscal year)		<u>(4,867.85)</u>
Total Non-Game & Endangered Species Cash Fund		<u>112,583.08</u>
Nebraska Snowmobile Cash Fund Income		
75% of fee, less issuing fee		11,399.83
Interest earned on investments		<u>4,462.33</u>
Total Nebraska Snowmobile Cash Fund		<u>15,862.16</u>
NORDA Cash Fund Income		
1-cent tax on cigars		1,368,499.13
Interest earned on investments		140,864.39
Incidentals		<u>7,617.98</u>
Total NORDA Cash Funds		<u>1,516,981.50</u>
Trail Development Assistance Cash Fund Income		
Interest earned on investments		2,257.43
Transferred income		<u>50,000.00</u>
Total Trail Development Assistance Cash Fund		<u>52,257.43</u>
Aquatic Habitat Cash Fund		
Interest earned on investments		28.37
Aquatic Stamp		6,500.00
Cash Gift		<u>82.25</u>
Total Aquatic Habitat Cash Fund		<u>6,610.62</u>
Federal Funds		
Land & Water Conservation Fund,		
Bureau of Reclamation		<u>1,561,485.26</u>
TOTAL Cash & Federal Income Received during 1996		\$ 35,824,567.22

1996 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Area of Expenditure	2332 Game Cash	2333 Park Cash	2334 Habitat Cash	2335 Non-Game Cash	2338 NORDA Cash	2339 Trail Devel.	4332 Federal Funds	Total
Acq. of Habitat Lands	321,528.44		1,395,894.38	50,000.00				1,767,422.82
IMPROVEMENTS & RENOVATIONS								
Chadron		10,000.00						10,000.00
Fort Robinson					40,077.10			40,077.10
Indian Cave	3,726.57	15,258.08			7,588.16		21,997.98	48,570.79
Platte River					36,841.44			36,841.44
Mahoney					302,408.86			302,408.86
Ponca		3,831.21						3,831.21
Smith Falls		27,274.26			103,932.72			131,206.98
Arbor Lodge					4,875.00			4,875.00
Rec Areas - General					94,301.50			94,301.50
Branched Oak		689.07			311.63			1,000.70
Box Butte	2,496.65				13,746.67		48,399.72	64,643.04
Fort Kearny SRA		464.62			1,336.50			1,801.12
Fremont					138,253.78			138,253.78
Johnson Lake	4,069.88				4,414.17		24,075.00	32,559.05
Lewis & Clark	22,424.28	40,000.00			251,907.31		237,030.93	551,362.52
Louisville		838.69			3,940.00			4,778.69
Lake McConaughy		464.63			33,393.48			33,858.11
Lake Ogallala					43,941.48			43,941.48
Medician Creek		464.62						464.62
Morman Island		1,586.82						1,586.82
Pawnee		1,182.83						1,182.83
Pelican Point	1,356.48				1,356.47		8,138.85	10,851.80
Riverview	1,742.16				10,186.15		11,525.42	23,453.73
Swanson		464.62						464.62
Summit	3,614.22				3,614.23		21,685.36	28,913.81
Wildcat Hills		3,764.59						3,764.59
Windmill		6,449.65						6,449.65
Central Office	43,347.38							43,347.38
District IV Office	2,680.00							2,680.00
Alexandria WMA	150,511.95							150,511.95
Cedar Valley	15,212.10							15,212.10
Clear Creek	2,256.28							2,256.28
Meridian	5,599.05							5,599.05
Oak Glen	994.76							994.76
Osage	325.00							325.00
Peru Boat Ramp	8,905.54							8,905.54
Pintail			11,034.40					11,034.40
Prairie Marsh	3,058.45							3,058.45
Prairie Wolf	1,206.24							1,206.24

ENGINEERING

Engineering Division duties are similar to engineering, architectural and surveying firms in the private sector, providing professional, technical and planning assistance to the agency.

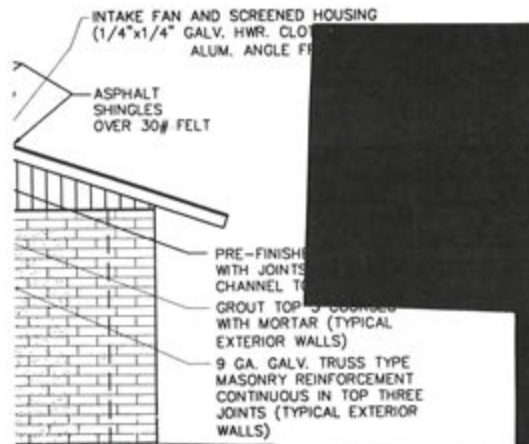
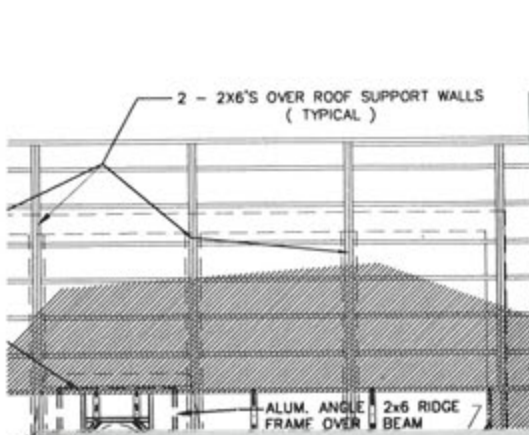
Goals and Objectives

- Develop appropriate design solutions for engineering and architectural projects.
- Draw complete plans and specifications for bidding agency construction projects.
- Administer construction contracts, conduct inspections, and write reports.
- Select and work with private consulting firms hired to assist the Commission.
- Furnish Cadastral surveys, prepare legal descriptions and provide construction survey layouts for agency projects.
- Produce construction specifications and handle record management.
- Provide technical support for the agency technology applications.

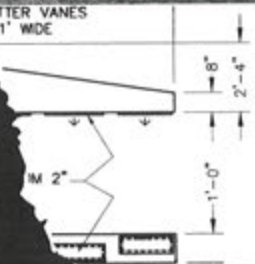
Engineering and architectural designs are prepared for both new and repair capital construction projects, for competitive bidding and to facilitate construction. Surveying is done to establish a legal boundary for a newly purchased areas or gather elevations for a new construction. Our division also provides computer hardware and software setup support for other divisions.

This division is also involved in the agency Internet, World Wide Web, HomePage, E-Mail, AutoCAD and basic operator training needed to access and utilize these features.

During the past year the Engineering Division has continued to expand its role in providing technical support for agency information technology applications. The division manages the Lincoln office local area network (LAN) and Internet for more than 120 users. Internet applications include the HomePage/web site and electronic mail services. Engineering also provides ongoing computer hardware/software technical support, training and custom application development for other divisions and personal computer users.



The Engineering Division began 1996 with 134 open projects, division personnel completed preliminary evaluations, cost estimates, design phases, construction documents, inspections and surveys of various degrees of complexity for 92 projects throughout the year. 270 new projects were assigned numbers in 1996, of which 135 were assigned to the Engineering Division for feasibility studies, cost estimates, construction document development, etc. to be completed. The division ended 1996 with 177 open projects.



LOCATION: JOHNSON LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA

DRAWING CONTAINS: SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"
FLOOR and ROOF FRAMING PLANS
ELEVATIONS and DETAILS

DESIGN/DRAWN BY N.W.J.
DATE NOV. 1996

FISHERIES

The year 1996 was good to both Nebraska anglers and to the Fisheries Division. The quality of fishing continued to improve from the early 1990s drought, according to several measures and the division had many accomplishments.

Most Master Angler Awards Recorded In 10 Years

Master Angler certificates were awarded for 3,670 trophy fish caught during 1996, the highest number since 1985 and the second highest since the program began in 1966. Awards for several species were up from recent years, including walleye, northern pike, largemouth bass, bluegill and wiper. All-time records were set for the number awards issued for largemouth bass and wipers.

The last 10 years have seen more Master Angler wipers caught than the previous year. The wiper program should continue to improve as more fish stocked approach trophy size.

State Records Broken and Rebroken

The record for wiper fell three times in 1996. Steve Lytle caught wipers weighing 15 lbs. 11 oz. and 17 lbs. 5 oz. from Red Willow Reservoir, only to have Reggie Booshammer catch a 17-lb. 14-oz. wiper from Har-

lan County Reservoir. Look for a 19-pounder to be landed in 1997!

The hook-and-line record for shovelnose sturgeon was broken twice. Dennis Bacon, Jr., caught a 4-lb. 2-oz. specimen from the Missouri River, only to have Sean Gellatly land a 4-lb. 4-oz. sturgeon from the Platte River. Bryan Juhas also set a new state hook-and-line record, catching a 2-lb. white perch from a Sarpy County sand pit. The state archery record for channel catfish fell when Johnny Clancy arrowed a 22-lb. 2-oz. fish at Harlan County Reservoir.

Sandhills Lakes Produce World-Class Bluegill

Each of the past six years, Nebraska's Sandhills lakes have produced the heaviest bluegill caught in the country, based on contest results from *In-Fisherman* magazine. The most consistent producer of magnum bluegill is Pelican Lake on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, but other public and private lakes in the Sandhills have yielded bluegill in excess of 2 pounds, as well. Interestingly, these huge bluegill are not all that old, usually 7-8 years. The clear, shallow Sandhills lakes, with highly vegetated basins, crawling with invertebrate food organisms provide a unique

situation tailor-made for growing big bluegill. The largest bluegill known to have been caught in Nebraska during 1996 was taken by John Graves and weighed 2 lb. 10 oz. This fish was just 3 ounces short of the state record caught by Gary Ralston in 1977 from Grove Lake.



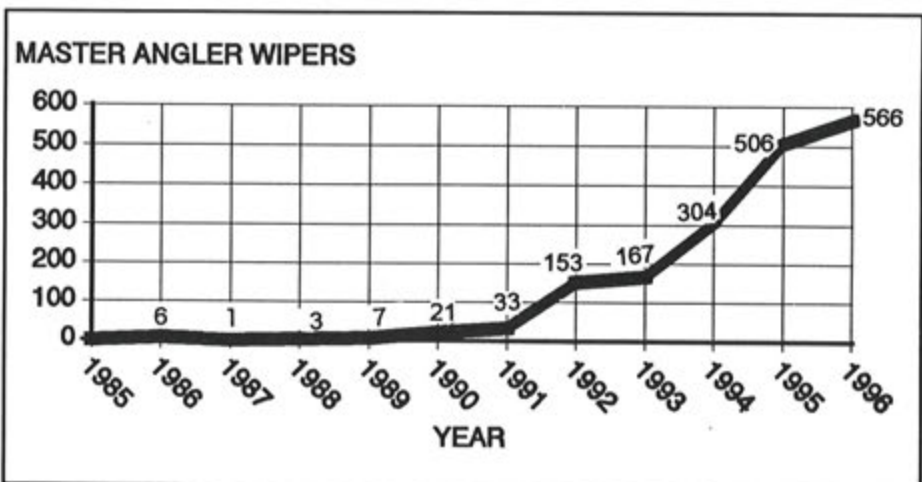
New Aquatic Habitat Stamp

Aquatic Habitat Stamp Created By Nebraska Legislature

Passage of LB584 by the 1996 Legislature created the nation's first Aquatic Habitat Stamp and Fund. The stamp, required of most anglers beginning January 1, 1997, will be the cornerstone funding mechanism for a program aimed at rehabilitating and enhancing aquatic habitat and fishing in Nebraska's lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams. The Aquatic Habitat Plan identifies 16 water bodies to be rehabilitated or enhanced over the next 6 years. If the plan is approved by the Natural Resources and Appropriations committees of the Legislature, revenues generated by the stamp could be used beginning in 1997.

Commission Increases Fishing Opportunity

The Commission increased the state's inventory of public fishing waters in 1996 by purchasing Cottonwood/Steverson Lakes in Cherry County. These joined Sandhill lakes cover 679 acres. They will be renovated in 1997 to remove the existing fish, dominated by common carp, and will



be restocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, walleye and yellow perch. The cost of renovation will be paid from Aquatic Habitat Stamp revenue.

Papio #21 Emphasizes Fishing

When complete, this new lake will cover 97 acres ½-mile southwest of Papillion. Facilities include a boat launch site, handicap-accessible breakwater/fishing pier, two islands, three off-shore wave attenuation structures and two sediment control ponds. The pier, islands and wave structures were specifically designed and located to reduce shoreline erosion and provide attractive areas for fish and fishing.

Artificial structures, including cedar trees, tires and wood pallets were added to the lake bottom to attract fish by Fisheries personnel, NRD staff and volunteers to bolster the natural habitat in the lake. The boat launch and the in-lake enhancements were cost-shared with local NRD funds and federal Sport Fish Restoration funds.

Branched Oak Lake Piers Built

Two rock riprap piers were constructed on opposite banks of Bobber Bay at Branched Oak Lake, northwest of Lincoln, to reduce wind and wave action in the cove and to provide angler access to deep water.

The two piers, one about 550 feet long and the other about 450 feet long, overlap one another with a passageway between them for boat traffic. Beside protecting shorelines within the bay, the piers augment angler access to deep water.

Hamburg Bend Becomes First Missouri River Mitigation Site

Channelization of the Missouri River, primarily for navigation, resulted in loss of 500,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat in the floodplain and a river shortened by 127 miles between Sioux City and St. Louis. In 1986, the Water Resources Act authorized a mitigation package of 29,900

acres for compensation, to be split among Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska.

Hamburg Bend, a 1,628-acre site, about a mile south of Nebraska City, is Nebraska's first mitigation site. The Commission has worked with the Corps of Engineers to restore the chute and lower some pile dikes so the river can spread out. Objectives are to create shallow water habitat for fish and wildlife and to create a low-maintenance wildlife management area where the public can hunt and fish. Other river bend revitalization projects are also being planned.

Missouri Paddlefish Snagging — Enough is Enough!

For the third consecutive year, the paddlefish snagging season on the Missouri River lasted just three days. Even so, the 1996 harvest quota of 1,600 paddlefish was exceeded by more than 400 fish. The throng of paddlefish anglers in the Gavins Point tailwaters surpassed the limits of the area and facilities and even became a safety concern.

New regulations will manage the harvest of paddlefish by both snagging and archery through a free permit system, beginning in 1997. Anglers will be required to apply for and have in their possession an unopened tag while attempting to take paddle-

fish. Because of this change, the snagging season length will be expanded to a full 30 days. This should distribute angling pressure, making the angling experience not only safer but hopefully more enjoyable. Applications for paddlefish tags are included in the 1997 *Nebraska Guide to Fishing Regulations and Public Waters*.

Platte Instream Flow Highlights

Negotiations between the Commission and a coalition of objecting parties concerning the agency's Platte River instream flow applications was concluded in March, when the Board of Commissioners rejected a proposed settlement agreement.

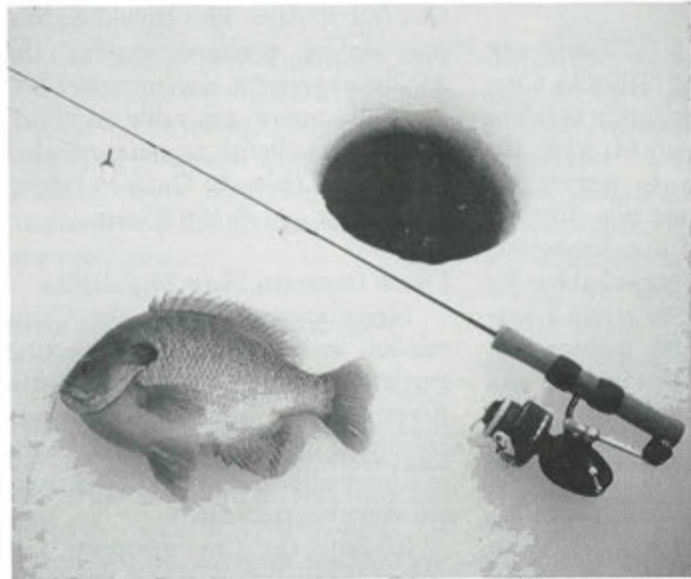
In July, the Commissioners endorsed staff recommendations to reduce some application flows and agreed with some future water development for selected public interest considerations. Staff was directed to submit those recommendations to the director of the Nebraska Department of Water Resources for action on the Commission's instream flow requests.

The Department of Water Resources instream-flow hearing on the Commission's applications started on September 25 and lasted for 37 days with 5 additional days scheduled for completion of the hearing by March 28, 1997. Game and Parks staff provided nearly 6½ days of testimony. This



Anglers are virtually elbow to elbow during the tremendously popular paddlefish snagging season on the Missouri River.

Sandhills lakes offer some of the nation's best bluegill fishing with hefty specimens common.



Free fishing and park entry day enticed many to enjoy the offerings at Nebraska's lake and streams.



hearing culminates a 14-year process by the Game and Parks Commission, costing approximately \$1 million to determine the needs of fish and wildlife, hydrology and economic and social values of Platte River instream flows.

Fish Stocked to Augment Natural Reproduction

During 1996, approximately 20 million fish were stocked in Nebraska waters, where natural reproduction is thought to be insufficient or even lacking. Among these were 4½ million walleye fingerlings, the most ever stocked in one year. As part of an 8-year stocking evaluation project, walleye stocked into 18 reservoirs are being marked as fry with a bath of oxytetracycline. This material is absorbed into the bones of fish, creating a glowing ring when magnified under black light. Young-of-the-year walleye captured in the fall during standard survey sampling efforts are examined to see what percentage have marks (hatchery-raised fish) and what percent don't (natural reproduction). Ultimately, this project will reveal where hatchery products are most needed and where fish may have been stocked unnecessarily.

Free Fishing Day a Success

Despite little time for publicity, Nebraska held its first Free Fishing and Free Park Entry Day on June 1. Results indicate the event may be one of the best and least costly tools to increase and retain fishing permit buyers. Survey results, based on interviews of 992 anglers at 27 water bodies, indicate that 53% were aware that it was Free Fishing Day. Among adult anglers, 18% did not have Nebraska fishing permits. Of the 138 anglers without permits, 75% indicated they would likely buy a permit; 23% said they would not likely buy a permit, and 2% were uncertain.

Half of the individuals who did not have fishing permits had one in 1995, so hopefully Free Fishing Day helped them realize that fishing (legally) should continue to be a part of their lives. We also hope that the rest of the 75% who said their fishing experiences on June 1 would likely motivate them to buy a permit do, in fact, follow through.

A survey of licensed anglers, conducted by the division found that 8% of anglers who had Nebraska fishing permits in 1993 did not buy one in 1994, and 19% did not have one in 1995. If Free Fishing Day can increase

retention by reintroducing one-time anglers to the sport, fishing permit sales should increase.

Personnel Active Professionally

Each year, Fisheries personnel attend meetings to increase their knowledge of fisheries management. At these meetings, fisheries biologists from across the country and Canada share ideas and innovations. The formal exchange of information takes two forms – oral and poster presentations. At the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, a Nebraska poster was selected Best Poster from among 40 posters displayed at the conference. It was entitled, "A Comparison of Barbless and Barbed Hook Influences on Bluegill Catch, Loss, Injury and Mortality Rates." Staff also presented papers and posters at various conferences and meetings.

INFORMATION & EDUCATION

The information arm of the Commission, I&E provides service to other divisions as well as to the public. I&E publishes *NEBRASKAland Magazine*, *Trail Tales*, *Outdoor Nebraska*, numerous brochures, pamphlets and other printed materials; produces TV and radio shows and news spots, and designs exhibits for Commission areas and State Fair.

Art Projects

Art designed and laid out the popular *Trail Tales* for fourth graders, as well as the Commission's main publication, *NEBRASKAland Magazine*, the ever-popular NEBRASKAland Calendar, and the Outdoor Planner for Project WILD.

The annual Hunting Guide was redesigned to incorporate various hunting publications, including big game information and public hunting lands. Artists also prepared five large displays for sport shows and State Fair, plus several small displays. All three guides — Fishing, Hunting and Boating — now accept advertising.

The Voluntary Waterfowl Stamp, coordinated by the division, was discontinued by Wild Wings in 1996. It raised approximately \$550,000 for the agency during its five years.

NEBRASKAland Magazine

NEBRASKAland Magazine was sent to approximately 40,000 subscribers, with nine 52-page regular issues and a combined January-February special on the *Weather and Climate of Nebraska*. The Weather issue won the Platinum Award for web-offset consumer magazines in the National Gold Ink Competition. The magazine carried liftout sections for overprinting on the rainwater basins, the State Park System's 75th anniversary, wild turkeys and the aquatic habitat plan. *NEBRASKAland* articles were reprinted by several publications and used in several university classes.

The *Outdoor Nebraska* tabloid was included with the March and October issues, carrying timely information and news features about hunting, fishing, parks and outdoor recreation. *NEBRASKAland* was distributed on newsstands serviced by dealers in Omaha, Lincoln and Scottsbluff. Newsstand sales totaled about 9,000 copies. Of subscriptions that expired during the year, 68.7% were renewed.

Some 100,000 copies of a *Spring Migration Guide*, coordinated with the Wildlife Division, were published for a coalition that included the Commission, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Rowe Sanctuary-Audubon Society, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Crane Meadows and the visitor bureaus in Kearney, Grand Island and Hastings.

News Program

About 300 news stories were issued during the year as specials or in a weekly packet to newspapers, radio and TV stations, magazines and other outdoor media. News is also transmitted electronically to the Associated Press, several daily newspapers and the Nebraska Press Association's bulletin board, which acts as a wire service to weekly papers in the state.

GPC NEWS, the employee newsletter, continued to inform and educate staff on various aspects of agency work. Coordinated by I&E, most of the articles in GPC NEWS are written by employees from all divisions. Other news department duties include: Coordinating the Outdoor Alley exhibit at the State Fair and producing the Vendor Bulletin, the newsletter sent to all permit vendors after Commission meetings.

Web Site

Division information on the Commission's Web site averaged about 350 requests per day. Material included news releases, outdoor reports, previews of upcoming *NEBRASKAland*

issues and database of magazine articles, *Trail Tales*, gift catalog, and an online version of *Outdoor Nebraska*.

TV & Radio

Considerable time and effort was spent in preparing for the return of the *Outdoor Nebraska* TV show to the air on Nebraska ETV in January 1997. The Commission's weekly radio program continued strong, airing on more than 50 stations in Nebraska and surrounding states. Several radio stations, including some out-of-state, have regular interview segments with division personnel. Video news continued with stories released nearly every other week. In addition, I&E personnel in Lincoln, Omaha and North Platte host weekly outdoor segments on local news programs.

Publications

Printing/publishing manages the production of more than 450 different brochures and pamphlets, as well as various other agency publications and over 400 forms. Publications range from full-color brochures to one and two-color pamphlets, stationery and short-run technical publications. I&E staff provides assistance to other divisions to determine the best way to produce a given project.

The in-house print shop produced 741 jobs in 1996, which included pamphlets, booklets, news releases, surveys, cards, envelopes and other materials. The 2,887,577 printed pieces included 84,050 cards, 405,500 envelopes and 2,398,027 pamphlets and other publications.

Habitat Stamp Art Contest

Deb Gengler-Copple of Hubbard won the Adult Division of the Habitat Stamp Art Contest, and her rendering of white-tailed deer will be featured on the 1997 stamp.

There were over 1,200 entries in the three categories in the Youth

Division of the contest. Selections of the youth art are featured in a Traveling Exhibit that is displayed at locations across the state. The Omaha Fish and Wildlife Club again donated contest awards: \$200 to the adult winner and \$50 to youth winners.

Mail & Shipping

I&E handled 772,282 pieces of outgoing mail and packages during the year at a total cost of \$279,888.08. Changes in U.S. Postal Service bar coding and pre-sorting requirements necessitated a switch to a presort service in July in order to take advantage of postage discounts.

First class presort (in-house and presort house) resulted in a savings of \$5,213.38 for the year for 158,169 pieces of mail. Outgoing mail processed included: Bulk mail, 249,637 pieces, \$58,740.85; regular mail (including presort), 512,833 pieces, \$187,409.80; UPS, 9,812 packages, \$33,737.43).

There were 2,310 information requests handled compared to 6,251 filled in 1995, much of this drop is attributable to "hits" on the agency's Homepage. Hunting information was sent to 6,727 nonresident hunters.

Regional Representatives

Division information officers are located at Alliance, North Platte, and Omaha to provide information to regional media, as well as handling local programs and area articles and photos for *NEBRASKAland Magazine*.

District I — Alliance

Duties of the Panhandle information officer include local and statewide news releases, media contacts, and a news program for the area's 17 newspapers, 14 radio and 2 television stations.

Other responsibilities include programs, information requests and firearm instruction. Counter sales totaled \$153,579 with \$106,580 from big-game permits.

District IV — North Platte

The information officer serves as district office manager and also directs the National Cornhusker High School Trap Shoot. The 27th annual shoot in May drew more than 500 competitors.

Other ongoing activities include a TV news feature, *Nebraska Outdoors* that airs each Wednesday on KNOP-TV since 1986; seasonal radio shows

and local news releases; Hunter Education and Project WILD activities, assisting with permit sales, over-the-counter information and other public relations. Permit and other sales totaled \$274,854.

Omaha Metro Office

Open seven days a week from March-October and Monday-Friday the rest of the year, the office is located in the Visitor Information Center, 1212 Deer Park Blvd. Space is shared with the Division of Tourism of the Department of Economic Development and Spirit of the Prairie gift shop (DAS).

Counter sales totaled \$294,212.77, up 17% from 1995. Big-game permits accounted for \$170,310.50 of that amount, an increase of 23% from last year.

The staff continued to direct their public relations efforts statewide as well as locally. Over 20 appearances are made each week on radio and TV programs. Staff also coordinated agency efforts for such special events as the Omaha Bass Show, Omaha Boat, Sports & Travel Show and youth fishing clinics.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Enforcing the laws and regulations pertaining to fishing, hunting, boating and the state parks system, is a vital part of management.

Effective natural resources law enforcement can be divided into three categories: (1) education demonstrates the purpose and need for existing laws and regulations, (2) selective law enforcement allows officers to concentrate their efforts where specific problems are occurring, and (3) general enforcement concentrates on prevention and control of violations in an officer's patrol area.

Well-trained, mobile and well-equipped, officers strive for high visibility, which serves to educate and to deter unlawful conduct to benefit Nebraskans and the resource.

For 1996, the division had 58 positions, including a division administrator, assistant administrator, 6 supervisors, 47 field officers, a staff conservation officer, administrative secretary and staff assistant.

On Patrol

Officers drove 1,433,937 miles on patrol, at an average cost of 11¢ per mile, including all operating expenses

such as gas, oil, tires and repairs. The average was 14.54 miles per gallon of gas. Patrol boats were used 1,469.5 hours to promote water safety at an average cost of \$8.32 per hour. Snowmobiles used for enforcement were driven 18 miles at an average of 44 cents per hour.

Contacts

In 1996 officers checked 24,771 hunters; 50,758 fishermen, 701 trappers; inspected 18,994 boats, and made 45,862 miscellaneous contacts, mostly park oriented. Some 3,082 complaints were investigated, and officers attended 1,280 meetings.

Arrests & Convictions

In 1996, officers made 3,522 arrests, compared to 4,030 in 1995. Of this total 3,316 individuals were found guilty — for a conviction rate of 94.15% for all arrests and citations issued. Over the past 25 years, the number of arrests ranged from a low of 2,491 in 1973 to a high of 5,405 in 1980. Conviction percentages went from a low of 94.8 in 1985 to a high of 98.8 in 1972.

Some 106 individuals were sentenced to jail time, while fines totaled \$129,967. Court costs assessed were \$82,788.09, with liquidated damages of \$80,100. Average assessment per violator was \$83.15.

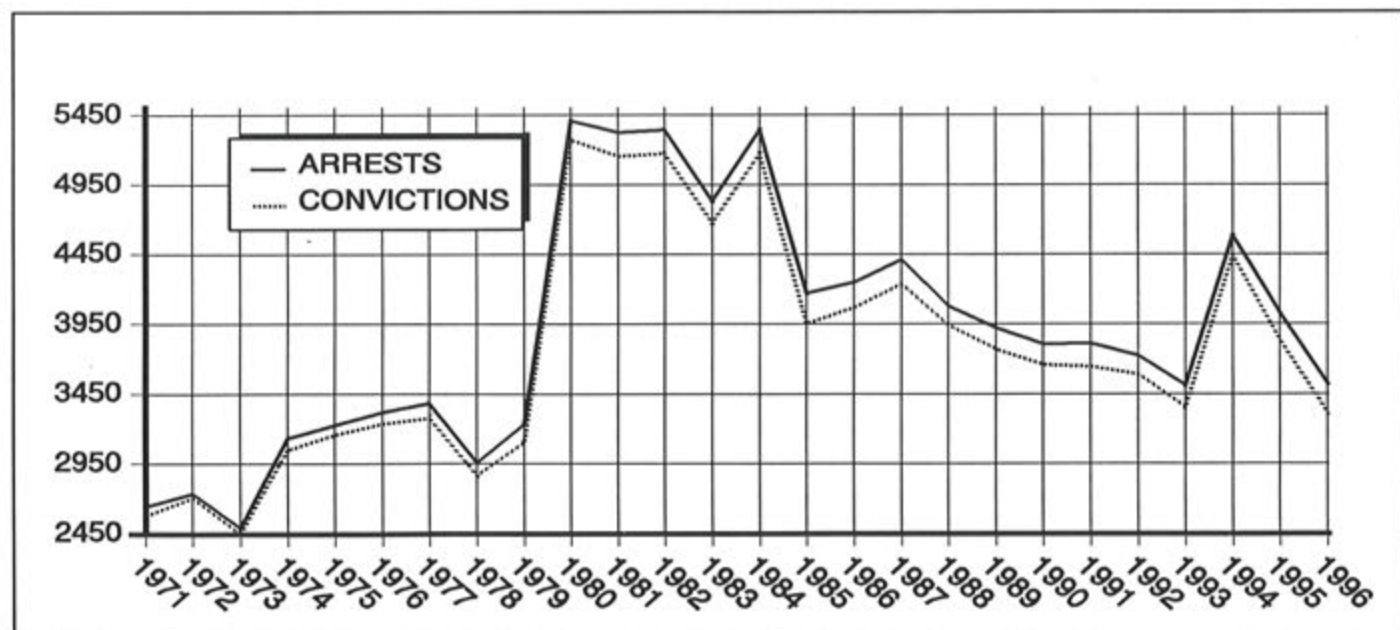
Most common violations in 1996 were: no park entry permit, fishing without a permit, improperly equipped vessel, possession of illegal size game fish, no boat registration, loaded shotgun in a vehicle, trespassing, hunting with artificial light, illegal possession of game, illegally drinking alcoholic beverages and open alcohol container.

Expenses

Total expenses for 1996 were \$75,591.70, including \$44,035.40 for meals; \$14,082.30 for lodging; \$12,657 for telephone, and miscellaneous of \$4,816.30.

Mandatory Road Checks

Conservation officers manned three mandatory road checks during 1996 that resulted in 528 vehicles checked with 45 arrests made.



Communications System

The statewide radio communications system is a network of bases and repeaters, which allow contact between district offices, mobile to office, and mobile to mobile. Operating expenses totaled \$45,027.87, 16.8% higher than the \$38,555.26 for 1995. Costs included tower and equipment repair and maintenance, electricity to towers, with \$22,862.40 going to tower equipment space rental and site leases.

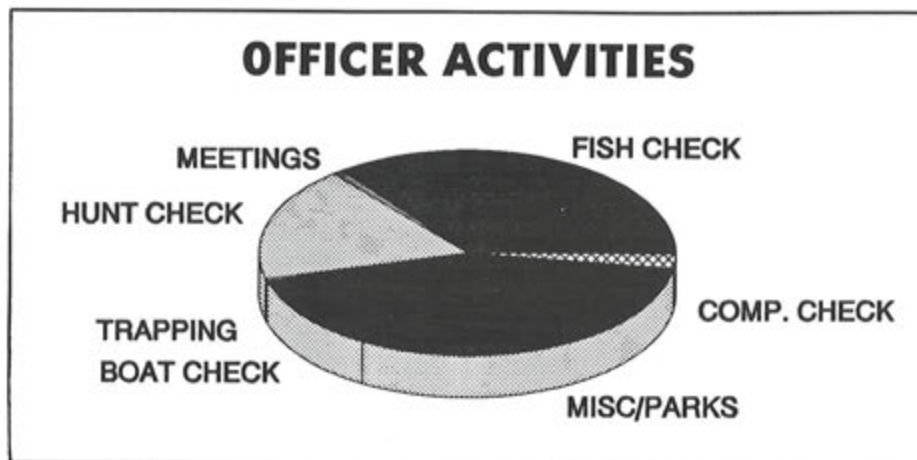
Operation Game Thief

During its 15th year, calls to the toll-free Operation Game Thief hotline resulted in 83 investigations with 27 arrests made in 22 cases. Fines and costs of \$2,042 were assessed, plus liquidated damages of \$9,740.

Wildlife involved included: 2 elk, 15 deer, 4 antelope, 8 turkeys, 12 geese, 3 pheasants, 8 quail and 10 fish. The Nebraska Wildlife Protectors Association paid rewards in 17 cases, totaling \$1,475.

The Operation Game Thief hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. On Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., calls are answered by Law Enforcement Division, after hours and on weekends, dispatchers from the Nebraska State Patrol take calls and relay information to the appropriate conservation officer.

The Nebraska Wildlife Protectors Assn. conducted a banquet/auction to raise funds for the program. It resulted in \$6,171,83 to bolster the OGT reward fund.



OPERATIONS & CONSTRUCTION

A service division, Operations provides personnel and equipment to build, repair and manage Commission facilities across the state.

Duties fall into six main categories:

1. Recreation area maintenance — mowing, painting, building repair, garbage pickup, landscaping and tree planting.
2. Recreation area management — collecting fees, enforcing regulations and crowd control.
3. Utilities — construct and repair electric, water and sewer service.
4. Heavy equipment — road maintenance, lake dredging, dam building, material and equipment hauling, welding and fabricating.
5. Building/trades — building construction and repair, cabinet making, concrete work and roofing.
6. Purchasing/Contract — write specifications for materials and equipment, let small contracts to supplement force account work.

In June, Branched Oak SRA personnel and equipment were transferred from Operations to the Parks Division. The Y St. facility provided 32,827 gallons of gasohol and 13,522 gallons of diesel fuel were for agency vehicles. Also dispensed were 71 quarts of oil and 64 gallons of anti-freeze. Average cost per gallon was 1.063 for gasohol and .791 for diesel.

Projects were completed during the year at: Bowman Lake, Bowring Ranch, Branched Oak, Brownville, Buffalo Bill Ranch, Calamus, State Fair, Fisheries office, Fort Atkinson, Fort Robinson, Fremont SRA, Indian Cave, Lake McConaughy, Lewis and Clark Lake, Louisville, Eugene T. Mahoney Park, North Platte Hatchery, Omaha office, Pawnee Lake, Platte River State Park, Pressey WMA, Riverview Marina, Schramm Park, Smith Falls, Straight Water, Summit Lake, Valentine Fish Hatchery, Verdel Boat Ramp, Verdon Lake, Wildlife Division and Windmill.



Division carpenters are remodeling and improving the seven Wild Turkey Cabins at Platte River State Park. After 15 years of use new roofs, siding and insulation were needed, along with painting inside and out. Heating and air conditioning were also installed.



Preserving and maintaining wetlands are vital to the Commission. The division undertook restoration work on wetlands at Alexandria Wildlife Management Area.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Current program areas include Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium; boating, aquatic education, and hunter education; Project WILD, and coordination of volunteer services. The goal of the division is to provide wildlife-based conservation and environmental education for all Nebraskans.

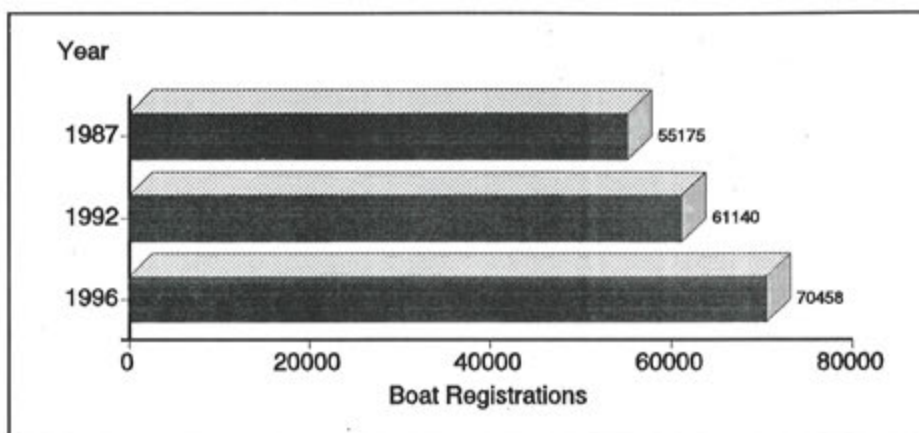
Division projects, programs, and educational offerings are possible only through the tireless efforts and dedication of some 5,500 volunteer instructors and Project WILD teachers. Across the agency, volunteers contributed over 62,000 hours of service equal to the work of 30 full-time employees or a salary equivalent of \$465,000.

Youth Hunts

Six youth pheasant hunts, held in conjunction with Pheasants Forever, involved 118 young people ages 12-15 at Arapahoe, Grand Island, Holdrege, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Syracuse. Two youth archery deer hunting projects in the Omaha area, matched 17 bow hunter instructors as mentors to 30 youth, and harvested 21 deer.

Pilot Day Camp For Kids

Outdoor Discovery, a day camp for kids, was piloted at Platte River State Park, offering a chance to learn skills in canoeing, fishing, archery, shooting and survival, with emphasis on safety, outdoor appreciation, ethics and personal responsibility.



Outdoors-Woman Workshop

Some 112 women from five states attended the 5th annual *Becoming an Outdoors-Woman* workshop at the State 4-H Camp near Halsey. Represented were Nebraska, California, Colorado, New York, and Oregon. The workshop is an opportunity for adult women to learn the skills necessary to participate in various outdoor activities, such as hunting, fishing, camping and canoeing.

Project WILD

There were 971 classroom teachers and student teachers certified at 42 Project WILD workshops, and the total number of teachers certified since the inception of the program is expected to reach 10,000 in 1997. The program is now available in all Nebraska colleges and universities that offer a curriculum leading to a teaching certificate.

Hunter Education

During 1996, Hunter Education continued the tradition of teaching cultural and hunting heritage values to students that ranged in age from 15 and under to 70 and older. The classes stress ethics, safety, respect and responsibility. Volunteer instructors taught more than 7,892 students, which is a 10% increase from 1995. They donated more than 14,800 hours of time for an average of 1.88 hours per student.

Boat Registrations UP Again!

Boating registrations reached an all-time high of 70,458, up nearly 5,000 from 1995's 65,527 registrations. The fastest growing area of boating is personal watercraft (PWC), which accounted for 5,737 registrations, a jump of 32.3% from the 4,335 PWCs registered in 1995.

Unfortunately, there were six boating-related fatalities, compared to 1 in 1995. There were 42 accidents, involving 65 boats with 23 injuries.

Some 509 students passed the boater education course. Legislation was drafted to make boater education mandatory for all watercraft operators born after January 1, 1997, but it did not pass in the Legislature.

The first comprehensive survey of boaters showed that the average boater used 161.7 gallons of gas or a total of 11,390,000 gallons for all boaters

1996 NEBRASKA HUNTER EDUCATION

Item	Firearm Hunter Education	Bow Hunter Education
Number of students certified	6,850	1,042
Number of active instructors	644	223
Instructors certified during year	111	70
Average number of students per class	18.17	10.56
Average class length (hours)	11.98*	10.85*
Average instructors per class	2.72	3.06
Total number of classes	377	95

*Statutes require a minimum of 10 hours of instruction.

per season. Based on these figures, boaters paid over \$2.8 million dollars in fuel taxes in 1996.

New Trapping Video

A video entitled "Balancing Nature — Trapping in Today's World" was produced in cooperation with the Wildlife Division.

The video presents the biological, economic, and emotional rationales in the management of fur-bearing resources. Over 8,000 copies have been sold for distribution throughout North America and Europe.

Aquatic Education

Headlining the 52 species of fish on display at Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium is the pallid sturgeon. This fish has been on display since May 1984. The spe-

cies was placed on the endangered list in 1990. The 300-plus specimens on display also include turtles, crayfish, salamanders and mussels.

During the year 367 groups (16,123 people) toured the aquarium and Schramm Park SRA on field trips. In all, about 60,000 people visited the facility, an average of 190 people per day for 307 days open.

1996 AQUARIUM INCOME BY SOURCE	
Admissions	\$ 15,090.00
Permits	96,976.50
I&E Items (books, etc.)	2,519.83
Souvenirs	4,663.75
Fish Food	2,359.40
TOTAL	\$ 121,609.48

Other activities included assistance with private fish culture, management, and providing fish for display at State Fair and sport shows. The check station was in operation for four months and sealed 615 deer.

In its 11th year of promoting fisheries education and safe responsible angling, the Aquatic Education program has 442 certified volunteer instructors. They taught 180 courses to 11,474 youth and adults, donating 7,105 hours of their time.

There are 853 teachers in the AE program, and 225 requests for materials were handled.

Workshops

A variety of workshops are held at the aquarium throughout the year. Volunteer Ruth Green presents bird banding and identification workshops from September-April.

PARKS

During 1996, the Nebraska State Park System celebrated its 75th anniversary with a variety of promotional activities designed to encourage Nebraskans to explore their state park lands. The highly successful promotion included giveaways based on numbers of park areas visited and through drawings. Several activities centered at Chadron State Park, the state's first state park.

This division handles the administration and operation of Nebraska's state park system. Responsibilities cover visitor contact functions, day-to-day park housekeeping chores, planning and programming improvements, and providing the necessary resource protection and enhancement measures to assure quality outdoor recreation experiences for current and future generations of park users.

Park personnel also assist with maintenance on 21 wildlife management areas, walleye egg-harvesting, deer check stations, tours, sports shows and law enforcement.

Located throughout Nebraska, state park areas offer a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Facilities range from modern campgrounds, cabins, swimming pools, and trail rides to cultural/historic interpretation to boating and fishing at Nebraska's many lakes, primitive camping, backpacking and much more. The 87 areas comprising the State Park System fall into the four classifications:

STATE PARKS — public use areas of significant scenic, scientific and/or historical value and sufficient size to allow adequate development without infringing upon the primary values.

STATE RECREATION AREAS — areas with resource values primarily associated with the active outdoor recreation pursuits, day-use activities and camping. The state's major water-oriented areas fall into this classification.

STATE HISTORICAL PARKS — sites of notable historical significance.

STATE RECREATION TRAILS — linear corridors of state or regional significance for nonmotorized recreational use. They may be equipped with appropriate amenities and support facilities.

PARK PLANNING

Planning strives to solve particular design problems through preparation of graphic designs, descriptive narratives and preliminary cost estimates for various park developments.

Planning work was performed for Eugene T. Mahoney and Niobrara state parks, Branched Oak and Lake McConaughy state recreation areas (SRA) and the Cowboy Trail State Recreation Trail.

Computer graphics were initiated into the planning process. Maps usable as handouts and/or planning documents were completed on 14 smaller SRAs for which little up-to-date graphic material was available. Digital aerial photos were obtained for all park areas in Lancaster and Saunders counties and near county borders. Photos were pulled from Digital Ortho Photo Quarter Quads, provided "online" by the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, which plans to complete state coverage over the next three years.

STATE RECREATION TRAILS

The nation's longest rail-to-trail conversion and Nebraska's first state recreational trail was accepted as a

donation from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy by conveyance of deed on Dec. 5, 1994, as authorized by the Nebraska State Legislature and the Federal Railbanking Statutes. Administration of the abandoned Chicago & Northwestern Railroad right-of-way was assigned to the Commission's Division of State Parks.

Under Federal Railbanking Statutes, the right-of-way is preserved as a future transportation or utility corridor providing for interim use as a recreational trail. Designated as the Cowboy Trail State Recreation Trail, the right-of-way stretches 321 miles across Nebraska from Norfolk to Chadron and covers 3,893 acres. The 250 miles of right-of-way between Norfolk and Merriman are presently under various salvage and development contracts.

The remaining 71 miles, Merriman to Chadron, are being maintained by NEBKOTA as a shortline railroad under an agreement providing for development of a recreational trail on the same right-of-way. Salvage work should conclude this summer with the removal of ballast between Bassett and Johnstown, main trail grading and right-of-way clean up. Operational activities such as weed spraying, mowing, fencing and trail repair will continue as budget permits. Two flood-control projects were undertaken, placing riprap and repairing bridge approaches in the Clearwater and Norfolk areas. Noxious weed control was contracted with county weed control superintendents, and

PARK LAND ACREAGES BY CLASSIFICATION

Type of Areas	No. of Areas	Water or Marsh	Land Acres	Total Acres
State Parks	8	88	29,844	29,932
Recreation Areas	67	66,883	34,170	101,053
Historical Parks	11	0	2,387	2,387
Recreation Trails	1	0	3,893	3,893
TOTALS	87	66,971	70,294	137,265

fencing problems are being handled under Nebraska's 50-50 fencing law.

Other operational activities included a wildlife habitat survey, administering haying leases, crossing and utility easements and right-of-way usage licenses. A number of small trail surfacing projects were completed in the Valentine and O'Neill areas.

The Cowboy Trail has over 600 water crossings with 221 bridges equaling 3 miles of surface that require decking and railing. A private contractor has decked and railed all bridges between O'Neill and Neligh. With a few exceptions, all bridges are now completed between Merriman and Wood Lake.

To date all development dollars have come through grants with \$1.8 million committed in Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds, Symms grants of \$107,000, and contributions from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy of over \$400,000.00. Requirements for matching contributions have been met with trail land valuation.

Volunteer groups, such as *KEEP IT CLEAN* section crews, have been at work in Valentine and O'Neill, and several communities have entered community trail maintenance partnerships with the Commission. Norfolk and Valentine have formed chapters of a "Friends of the Cowboy Trail Association," established to promote development of the trail and related facilities. Neligh and O'Neill are in the process of establishing chapters.

1996 HAPPENINGS

- Rain and cool weather statewide on all three days of Memorial weekend impacted park visitation.
- The first annual free park and fish day was held on June 1.
- Chadron SP was rededicated on June 23.
- A new trail ride policy was implemented, and helmets were acquired for riders.
- A foot bridge was installed across Niobrara River at Smith Falls SP, which also added modern rest-

rooms and a shower facility.

- Arbor Lodge SHP was featured on Arts & Entertainment's "America's Castles."
- Arnold, Bowman Lake, Box Butte, Bridgeport, Brownville, Buffalo Bill, Champion Lake, Cheyenne, Cottonwood Lake, Gallagher Canyon, Hord Lake, Lake Maloney, Medicine Creek, Merritt, Oliver Reservoir, Pibel Lake, Red Willow, Riverview Marina, Rockford Lake, Sherman, Sutherland, Swanson, Union Pacific, Verdon Lake, Walgren Lake, War Axe, and Wildcat Hills were added as minimum fee camping areas.
- Rock Creek Station, Fort Kearny, Buffalo Bill and Ash Hollow SHPs were involved in the Olympic Torch Run. Personnel from several other areas participated as riders and/or support staff.
- Portions of Lake Minatare were removed from "refuge" status and are again administered under a management agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Lewis and Clark redevelopment included asphalt paving of interior roads and camping spurs, a road crossing from Weigand to Burbach, storage building, residence, convenience store and shower buildings. Jetties and bank stabilization materials were installed.
- Louisville received an overlay of interior roads.
- Niobrara added river raft tours to their list of visitor services.
- Mahoney and Platte River parks hosted the Natural Resource Commission's National Envirothon.
- Lakes 1 & 2 at Alexandria SRA underwent major renovation with dike and road work. The lakes were joined, and work on dredging is continuing.
- Summit Lake was connected with rural water supply, 2 jetties were added, and 2,500 feet of shoreline was stabilized.
- A 26½-foot tall imitation ponderosa pine was installed at Wildcat Hills Nature Center.

- Handicapped parking and access to the ramp added at Pelican Point.
- A handicapped picnic shelter was installed at Fremont Lakes SRA.
- Air conditioning and handicapped accessible facilities were installed in Mallet Lodge at Platte River.
- A new wastewater treatment lagoon was installed at Mahoney SP.
- Under LB1070, Ravenna SRA was deeded to Buffalo County as a public park.

SIGN SHOP

Various displays on the 75th Anniversary were developed, including a plaque for Chadron State Park and those for several sport shows. General signs were silk-screened for the bulk sign orders and shipped to park areas. New signs were constructed for the O'Neill Depot, which is being renovated into an information center and hub for the Cowboy Trail.

A display was created for the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture and North American Waterfowl Management Plan. A sign was constructed for the Father Hupp WMA dedication. North Lake Basin received a sign indicating the joint venture between the NG&PC and Ducks Unlimited. Numerous other specialty signs were made throughout the year for areas across the state. Signs and banners were made for the State Fair. Buildings were painted and touched up. A sign program was developed for the Weigand/Burbach area at Lewis & Clark SRA, featuring routed entrance and directional signs. Various signs were made for Outdoor Education and Hunter Education projects.

SNOWMOBILE CASH FUND

In 1981, a snowmobile land-leasing program was established, financed by the Nebraska Snowmobile Trail Cash Fund. It provides additional lands for public snowmobiling to supplement trails established on state recreation areas. The program is administered in cooperation with the Nebraska State Snowmobile Association (NSSA). Affiliated clubs contact landowners for

proposed lease sites. Applications for the sites are reviewed by the Snowmobile Advisory Board, which recommends to the Commission whether they should be funded or rejected.

Private lands are leased from December 1 through April 30. The current lease rate is a maximum of \$2 per acre or \$100 per corridor mile for a trail 100 feet wide. For the 1996-97 season, 2,615 acres of private land were leased for a total of \$2,285.00.

PARK HORTICULTURE AND LANDSCAPE PROGRAM

The mission of the horticulture and landscape program is "to promote the planting and proper care of trees, shrubs and wildflowers in landscapes of Nebraska State Park System."

During 1996, the Landscape Services Section worked with staff and prison trustee crews to landscape all of the new facilities and improvements at Weigand-Burbach. Hundreds of trees and shrubs were planted around the various facilities, many of the which were grown in the nursery at Branched Oak SRA.

Many new shade trees were also planted along the new park roads and campground pads at Weigand-Burbach. All of these shade tree seedlings were produced at the Nursery. Another 600 trees from commercial sources were planted into a new nursery on site at Weigand-Burbach to provide more trees for other later developments.

The horticulture staff also designed and helped install landscaping projects at Smith Falls, Mahoney, and Fort Robinson state parks and Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium. Numerous other small landscape projects were designed and installed at the various parks areas.

Trees and shrubs, produced and distributed to various park areas during 1996, include: 1,500 shade trees grown in root-control bags, 1,200 landscape grade shrubs, and 1,500 shade tree seedlings grown in containers. Additional progress was made with the wildflower and native grass landscaping program, and a total of 22 acres were planted at Willow

PARKS EMPLOYEES BY REGION					
Region	No. of Areas	Manned Areas	Unmanned Areas	Perm. Staff	Temp. Positions
Northwest Region	20	10	10	21	183
Central Region	47	23	24	42	190
Eastern Region	20	16	4	62	376
Total	87	49	38	125	749

Creek, Conestoga, Gallagher Canyon, Summit, Pelican Point, Fort Kearny, Lake Minatare, Oliver, Pawnee, Dead Timber, Lewis & Clark and Wildcat Hills SRAs, Scouts Rest Ranch and Fort Hartsuff SHPs, Smith Falls and Mahoney state parks, Cornhusker WMA and the Norfolk District Office. A total of 209 acres have now been planted to native grasses and wildflowers at Commission areas since the program began in 1990.

PERSONNEL

Parks administration is staffed by 15 permanent and 8 seasonal employees. The 87 park areas are maintained by a permanent staff of 125 people.

There are 49 park and recreation areas staffed with resident personnel (99 permanent field positions). Staffed areas also maintain 8 satellite areas. The remaining 21 field positions are assigned to other recreation areas and park maintenance crews to perform maintenance on the remaining 29 unmanned areas and 1 recreation trail. Some 749 temporary seasonal employees assisted the permanent parks' staff during the main recreation season. Several areas used the volunteer services of local groups, military units and Campground Hosts in addition to seasonal employees. Green Thumb and AARP help were utilized at several areas. Lewis & Clark Lake had the benefits of inmate labor from a federal minimum security installation.

VISITATIONS

Accurate counts of park visitors are difficult to achieve. Most areas have multiple accesses, and nearly half of the park and recreation areas are

not manned. There are 53 reporting areas that contribute most of the total visitor count. Some 32 areas are credited with conservative lump sum visitor estimates. One area was closed for development during this reporting period. The tables show the annual lodging and camping report and visitation by area.

INCOME

Camping, lodging, swimming and trail rides are typical activities for which fees are charged. Other park income is derived from restaurant and concession sales, leases for cabin sites, conservation practices, shelter rentals and private concession leases. Monies generated from these sources are returned to the Park Cash Fund to help support park programs. Park areas also vend hunting and fishing permits, habitat stamps, trout stamps, publications and other items purchased for resale. Income from these activities are deposited to their respective funds. Certain goods, services and facilities are subject to applicable sales tax, state lodging tax and county lodging tax. Park cash income is also received through Lincoln, Omaha and district offices, Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium and private permit vendors. Park Cash income from all sources totaled \$11,003,261.00 less liability accounts and adjustments of \$4,083 totaled \$10,999,178.00. Income producing categories include:

- Resale — souvenirs, fish food, buffalo, advertising, park publications, grocery store, snack items, gas and oil
- Food — Restaurants, cookouts
- Catering

VISITATION	JAN 1996	FEB 1996	MAR 1996	APR 1996	MAY 1996	JUNE 1996	JULY 1996	AUGUST 1996	SEPT 1996	OCT 1996	NOV 1996	DEC 1996	TOTAL 1996
ARBOR LODGE SHP	500	500	1,000	15,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	21,000	28,000	55,000	500	1,000	182,500
ASHFALL SHP	462	552	764	1,364	2,906	5,881	5,902	5,559	3,094	2,029	797	528	29,838
ASH HOLLOW SHP	300	500	1,200	1,300	3,500	7,000	6,500	7,300	5,000	1,500	1,500	1,000	36,600
BLUESTEM SRA	729	870	1,203	2,148	4,578	9,264	9,297	8,756	4,874	3,196	1,255	832	47,000
BOWRING RANCH SHP	0	0	0	0	1,334	3,360	3,311	3,479	640	0	0	0	12,124
BOX BUTTE SRA	1,163	1,388	1,920	3,428	7,305	14,783	14,835	13,973	7,778	5,100	2,003	1,328	75,000
BRANCHED OAK SRA	15,128	18,056	24,986	44,603	95,062	192,370	193,053	181,829	101,211	66,368	26,059	17,275	976,000
BRIDGEPORT SRA	575	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,800	8,762	10,957	10,957	3,949	1,100	1,200	1,150	44,050
BUFFALO BILL SHP	0	0	0	628	3,182	6,940	8,265	6,626	2,086	719	0	0	28,446
CALAMUS SRA	3,500	3,500	3,500	5,250	17,500	50,750	54,250	53,200	22,750	8,750	5,250	2,800	231,000
CHADRON SP	3,000	3,100	3,400	11,250	34,069	71,268	83,512	62,862	34,183	10,500	11,000	3,000	331,144
CHAMPION MILL SHP	450	900	500	450	1,800	2,400	3,100	2,500	1,100	550	500	400	14,650
CONESTOGA SRA	2,062	2,461	3,405	6,078	12,954	26,214	26,307	24,778	13,792	9,044	3,551	2,354	133,000
DEAD TIMBER SRA	500	700	1,000	1,000	3,000	1,500	4,500	2,000	2,000	2,500	500	500	19,700
ENDERS SRA	976	1,522	1,736	1,575	5,320	10,325	4,725	5,460	6,639	980	1,680	1,627	42,565
EUGENE T. MAHONEY SP	50,400	45,500	43,750	60,550	70,350	110,250	116,375	121,625	81,375	72,975	52,325	44,800	870,275
FORT ATKINSON SHP	415	510	650	3,200	4,800	6,250	7,500	7,450	7,750	9,125	1,215	300	49,165
FORT HARTSUFF SHP	20	100	550	575	2,300	5,250	6,500	4,750	5,000	1,750	75	50	26,920
FORT KEARNY SHP	155	310	4,700	5,000	8,110	12,425	13,490	12,600	2,915	930	830	100	61,565
FORT KEARNY SRA	115	300	1,950	5,825	11,890	26,060	15,600	38,050	13,875	1,100	170	125	115,060
FORT ROBINSON SP	1,500	1,500	1,500	15,616	17,459	86,201	104,128	84,698	15,130	11,168	13,789	1,500	354,189
FREMONT SRA	8,000	12,400	35,300	38,300	80,200	126,300	135,800	130,300	103,100	91,200	15,100	12,000	788,000
INDIAN CAVE SP	619	921	4,025	11,614	18,172	17,441	22,015	26,726	24,550	28,753	5,163	2,465	162,464
JOHNSON LAKE SRA	50	65	300	2,226	10,002	62,660	36,523	30,593	13,217	1,617	1,200	600	159,053
LAKE MALONEY SRA	300	875	1,750	10,500	33,250	73,500	15,750	9,450	5,600	3,850	1,400	1,050	157,275
LAKE MCCONAUGHY SRA	3,131	12,019	12,885	16,810	43,764	80,215	121,593	140,516	60,061	6,975	6,711	5,292	509,972
LAKE MINATARE SRA	525	700	900	2,115	4,650	12,300	35,000	17,453	10,534	0	25	0	84,202
LEWIS & CLARK SRA	1,534	3,426	4,502	5,878	15,631	17,130	14,586	17,172	8,596	5,080	3,462	1,082	98,079
LOUISVILLE SRA	750	960	1,290	990	18,300	59,100	81,900	96,600	29,940	33,300	900	750	324,780
MEDICINE CREEK SRA	770	1,330	1,382	1,032	4,550	12,075	8,750	9,275	5,250	1,767	2,502	1,715	50,398
MERRITT SRA	1,995	1,796	1,471	1,025	12,153	31,612	33,193	34,681	21,398	2,786	2,925	1,639	146,674
MORMAN ISLAND SRA	7,500	5,000	5,500	6,000	26,750	64,000	60,000	40,000	50,000	20,000	10,000	4,000	298,750
NIORARA SP	1,170	1,050	1,800	1,700	13,000	28,350	25,000	27,550	17,350	10,125	4,500	1,000	132,595
OLIVE CREEK SRA	431	514	712	1,270	2,708	5,479	5,499	5,179	2,883	1,890	742	492	27,800
OLIVER RES SRA	500	640	975	2,250	1,875	18,251	18,251	10,646	3,546	1,458	1,200	975	51,861
PAWNEE SRA	9,145	10,915	15,104	26,963	57,466	116,289	116,702	109,917	61,183	40,120	15,753	10,443	590,000
PLATTE RIVER SP	2,885	3,516	6,790	6,911	6,184	30,070	29,100	28,615	11,718	10,457	6,547	5,795	148,588
PONCA SP	1,110	1,250	3,055	8,565	18,500	55,900	56,600	43,400	17,240	13,850	2,225	1,700	223,395
RED WILLOW SRA	88	150	210	3,720	4,200	7,910	7,840	6,300	6,440	1,458	300	0	38,616
ROCK CREEK STATION SHP	189	350	875	5,845	6,839	7,210	7,700	8,225	7,028	7,000	1,575	350	53,186
SCHRAMM SRA	1,333	1,591	2,202	3,930	8,376	16,951	17,011	16,022	8,918	5,848	2,296	1,522	86,000
SHERMAN SRA	1,050	700	875	1,435	9,100	10,675	10,689	8,400	3,850	3,388	2,800	2,100	55,062
SMITH FALLS SP	0	0	0	120	1,959	10,205	18,082	14,484	2,629	871	212	0	48,562
STAGECOACH SRA	319	381	527	941	2,006	4,060	4,075	3,838	2,136	1,401	550	365	20,600
SUMMIT SRA	1,000	1,000	2,000	1,800	15,000	19,000	18,000	18,000	8,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	87,300
SUTHERLAND SRA	1,000	1,050	1,400	4,200	26,250	43,750	6,650	2,450	2,100	2,800	2,800	2,450	96,900
SWANSON SRA	600	1,600	1,500	1,600	6,700	6,600	9,200	9,800	8,750	1,200	1,050	595	49,195
TWO RIVERS SRA	3,000	7,200	10,040	33,696	45,356	72,368	58,260	50,528	31,496	22,040	10,008	9,040	353,032
VICTORIA SPRINGS SRA	50	100	200	300	1,000	9,000	11,000	7,500	1,000	200	300	50	30,700
WAGON TRAIN SRA	566	675	934	1,668	3,555	7,194	7,220	6,800	3,785	2,482	975	646	36,500
WILDCAT HILLS SRA	525	1,316	1,145	2,584	5,500	3,034	3,326	2,526	2,269	1,580	503	750	25,058
WILLOW CREEK SRA	4,200	5,250	6,300	9,800	22,750	35,000	31,500	24,750	15,750	10,500	6,300	3,500	175,600
WINDMILL SRA	700	700	1,100	1,600	5,600	8,400	8,500	8,300	2,500	1,200	600	650	39,850
32 UNMANNED AREAS	4,960	5,920	8,192	14,624	31,168	63,072	63,296	59,616	33,184	21,760	8,544	5,664	320,000
MONTHLY TOTAL	141,944	168,828	234,154	418,052	891,734	1,803,869	1,810,717	1,705,063	949,142	622,619	244,366	160,349	9,150,838
CUMULATIVE TOTAL		310,772	544,927	962,979	1,854,713	3,658,582	5,469,299	7,174,361	8,123,504	8,746,123	8,990,489	9,150,838	

CABINS 96	REGISTRATIONS	PARTICIPANTS	CABIN DAYS	AVE PART/REG	AVE DAYS/PART
CHADRON SP	902	3,580	12,346	3.97	3.45
E T MAHONEY CABINS	3,890	22,451	69,599	5.77	3.10
E T MAHONEY LODGE	4,504	23,277	62,719	5.17	2.69
FORT ROBINSON CABINS	1,404	9,235	33,481	6.58	3.63
FORT ROBINSON LODGE	1,622	4,346	12,736	2.68	2.93
NIOBRARA SP	1,304	5,087	15,904	3.90	3.13
PLATTE RIVER SP	3,350	18,013	54,350	5.38	3.02
PONCA SP	559	2,457	8,405	4.40	3.42
TWO RIVERS SRA	226	1,047	3,611	4.63	3.45
VICTORIA SPRINGS SRA	86	306	912	3.56	2.98
TOTALS	17,847	89,799	274,063	5.03	3.05

FEE CAMPGROUNDS 96	REGISTRATIONS	PARTICIPANTS	CAMPING DAYS	AVE PART/REG	AVE DAYS/PART
ALEXANDRIA SRA	894	1,367	3,617	1.53	2.65
ARNOLD SRA	44	96	210	2.18	2.19
ATKINSON SRA	198	489	1,084	2.47	2.22
BOX BUTTE SRA	232	712	1,844	3.07	2.59
BRANCHED OAK SRA	10,202	35,769	90,117	3.51	2.52
BRIDGEPORT SRA	914	1,999	4,802	2.19	2.40
CALAMUS SRA	3,272	11,204	26,893	3.42	2.40
CHADRON SP	3,038	8,472	20,792	2.79	2.45
CHAMPION LAKE SRA	46	131	351	2.85	2.68
CHEYENNE SRA	200	532	1,080	2.66	2.03
CONESTOGA SRA	1,045	2,972	7,983	2.84	2.69
CRYSTAL LAKE SRA	348	1,020	2,366	2.93	2.32
DEAD TIMBER SRA	344	1,092	2,420	3.17	2.22
ENDERS SRA	1,956	5,661	18,258	2.89	3.23
E T MAHONEY SP	6,749	23,302	65,759	3.45	2.82
FORT KEARNY SRA	4,374	12,902	30,090	2.95	2.33
FORT ROBINSON SP	3,794	11,992	31,648	3.16	2.64
FREMONT SRA	6,522	22,769	57,790	3.49	2.54
HORD LAKE SRA	419	1,341	3,102	3.20	2.31
INDIAN CAVE SP	14,154	17,225	43,045	1.22	2.50
JOHNSON LAKE SRA	7,154	17,344	60,419	2.42	3.48
KELLER PARK SRA	573	1,571	3,805	2.74	2.42
LAKE MALONEY SRA	3,134	6,194	14,972	1.98	2.42
LAKE MCCONAUGHY SRA	15,113	47,559	137,278	3.15	2.89
LAKE MINATARE SRA	2,993	8,939	22,027	2.99	2.46
LAKE OGALLALA SRA	3,737	8,056	18,377	2.16	2.28
LEWIS & CLARK SRA	2,678	8,993	24,037	3.36	2.67
LONG PINE SRA	432	1,530	3,668	3.54	2.40
LOUISVILLE SRA	8,470	23,879	48,214	2.82	2.02
MEDICINE CREEK SRA	1,913	6,803	16,908	3.56	2.49
MORMAN ISLAND SRA	3,740	10,604	23,083	2.84	2.18
NIOBRARA SP	1,597	5,041	12,829	3.16	2.54
OLIVER RES SRA	1,142	1,751	4,604	1.53	2.63
PAWNEE SRA	5,516	17,181	45,045	3.11	2.62
PELICAN POINT SRA	54	150	314	2.78	2.09
PONCA SP	2,438	8,124	20,353	3.33	2.51
RED WILLOW SRA	1,883	6,936	15,814	3.68	2.28
ROCK CREEK STATION SRA	1,207	2,058	5,120	1.71	2.49
SHERMAN SRA	2,241	5,771	13,944	2.58	2.42
SMITH FALLS SP	866	5,777	15,903	6.67	2.75
SUMMIT SRA	1,221	4,366	10,143	3.58	2.32
SUTHERLAND SRA	849	1,585	4,019	1.87	2.54
SWANSON SRA	1,534	4,753	11,884	3.10	2.50
TWO RIVERS SRA	4,584	15,213	36,868	3.32	2.42
VICTORIA SPRINGS SRA	784	2,249	5,508	2.87	2.45
WAR AXE SRA	78	201	405	2.58	2.01
WILDCAT HILLS SRA	45	106	227	2.36	2.14
WILLOW CREEK SRA	2,128	7,234	18,192	3.40	2.51
WINDMILL SRA	2,803	7,559	17,061	2.70	2.26
TOTALS	139,652	398,574	1,024,272	2.85	2.57

- Camping — Camping, camping coupons, electrical hookups
- Lodging — Lodge, cabins, group facilities, employee rent, advanced deposits, refunds, stall rental, tepees and picnic shelters
- Marina Leases — Wet slips, docks, buoys
- Concessions — Private concessionaires pay 2% of gross sales
- Activities — Trail rides, paddleboats, golf, archery, hayrack, buggy, conestoga, stagecoach, bicycles
- Pools - Swimming pool admissions, annual passes
- Land Lease — Private cabins, club sites, crop and pasture, right-of-way, ice fishing shelters, lease to other agencies and other land leases
- Vending — Vending machines, pay phones, showers, laundromat
- Admissions — Arbor Lodge, Kountze Theater, museums, entertainment
- Fees/Adjustments — Cash gifts, liquidated damages, refunds, surplus, federal/state reimbursements
- Miscellaneous — Collection fees, tips, personal phone, linens, towels, bedding, tablecloths
- Park Permits — All annual, duplicate and daily permits
- Game Fund — All game permits, stamps, trout tags, game resale, NEBRASKAland Magazine
- Habitat Fund - Habitat stamps, habitat resale, habitat patch

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

FY 96/97 new capital construction authority by program for 549 and 617 include:

Program	Area	Park Cash	Federal
900	Park Areas - General	\$ 140,000	\$240,000
967	E T Mahoney SP	55,000	
967	Fort Robinson SP	100,000	
967	Platte River SP	50,000	
967	Indian Cave SP	346,000	
969	Buffalo Bill SRA	200,000	
969	Branched Oak SRA	200,000	
969	Fremont SRA	207,500	
969	Lake McConaughy SRA	217,800	
969	Lewis & Clark SRA	212,500	
969	Mormon Island SRA	34,000	
969	Pawnee SRA	14,600	
969	Two Rivers SRA	27,000	
969	Union Pacific SRA	3,700	
975	Emerg. Facility Repair	60,000	
TOTAL		\$1,686,100	\$240,000

309 PROJECTS

Many park structure renovations are accomplished through the Building Renewal Program. Areas authorized for Renewal Funds (309 Projects) include:

AREA	AMOUNT
Ash Hollow SHP	12,000
Buffalo Bill SHP	38,000
Fort Robinson SP	34,740
Lake Maloney SRA	12,000
Platte River SP	50,950
TOTAL	\$147,690

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

State parks and recreation areas are administered under two separate programs. Program 549 provides funding for administration, operation and maintenance of parks, historical parks, recreation areas and recreational trails, offering improved facilities and resident management and maintenance personnel. Program 617-09 funds crews to maintain the system's lesser developed, unmanned areas and the Operations Division, which supports all park crews when maintenance and construction projects exceed capabilities of park crews.

1996-97 Budget Authority	Program 549	Program 617
General Fund	\$ 4,547,440	\$ 1,801,016
Cash Fund	7,905,109	1,872,287
TOTAL	\$12,452,549	\$ 3,673,303

1995-96 Budget Authority	Program 549	Program 617
General Fund	4,441,791	1,748,155
Cash Fund	7,861,694	1,876,374
TOTAL	\$12,303,485	\$ 3,624,529

1995-96 EXPENDITURES	PROGRAM 549	PROGRAM 617
Personal Services - Permanent	3,121,998	1,360,695
Personal Services - Temporary	2,491,307	610,746
Overtime/Other Wages	62,330	2,630
Personal Services - Benefits	1,070,431	426,648
Operating Expenses and Supplies	4,423,931	1,203,007
Travel	25,843	68,209
Equipment	722,150	525,190
Credit Cards	4,630	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$11,922,621	\$ 4,197,125

The following table summarizes the fiscal year 95/96 (July 1, 1995 - June 30, 1996) park income and expenses. This summary includes all income deposited by areas. Park cash income was also generated through the Lincoln office, district offices, Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, Omaha office, maintenance districts and all permit vendors.

Column 1: Only main area name is listed, but includes satellites managed by area, ie. Indian Cave - Brownville & Verdon

Column 2: Expenses include salaries, benefits, supplies, equipment, mileage, and capital expenses

Column 3: Income produced on that area from all sources, ie. lodging, camping, park entry permits, boat docks, and hunting & fishing licenses, etc.

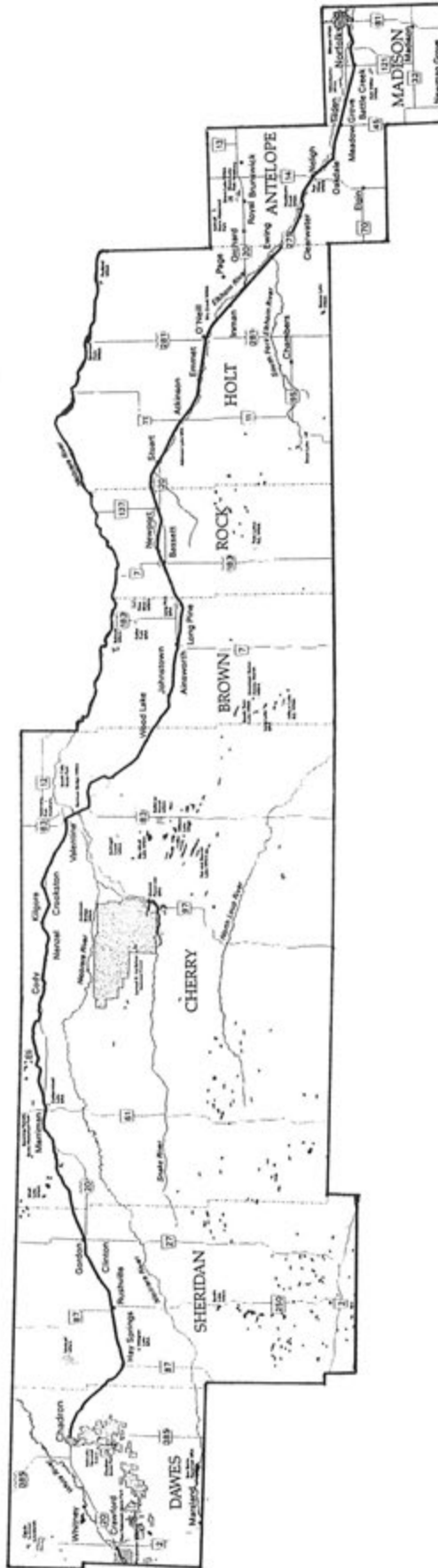
Column 4: Income less expenditures

AREAS	All Expenses -- 6/30/96	Income from Area -- 6/30/96	Profit/Loss -- 6/30/96
STATE PARKS			
Chadron	304,295	\$ 223,594	(80,701)
Fort Robinson	1,163,208	1,128,841	(34,367)
Indian Cave	297,211	150,536	(146,675)
E T Mahoney	3,433,184	4,026,968	593,784
Niobrara	371,504	197,512	(173,992)
Platte River	774,786	600,120	(174,666)
Ponca	219,190	165,053	(54,137)
Smith Falls	260,633	44,402	(216,231)
STATE HISTORICAL PARKS			
Arbor Lodge	217,332	\$ 95,337	(121,995)
Ash Fall*	2,773	540	(2,233)
Ash Hollow	139,334	14,351	(124,983)
Bowring	119,197	6,806	(112,391)
Buffalo Bill Ranch	202,394	40,572	(161,822)
Champion Mill	60,170	3,073	(57,097)
Fort Atkinson	160,990	11,216	(149,774)
Fort Hartsuff	135,390	12,417	(122,973)
Fort Kearny	188,100	109,680	(78,420)
Rock Creek Station	173,973	34,400	(139,573)

STATE RECREATION AREAS			
Calamus	\$ 183,930	50,142	(133,788)
Dead Timber	120,227	5,333	(114,894)
Enders	108,050	27,402	(80,648)
Fremont	387,300	177,355	(209,945)
Johnson Lake	193,343	83,879	(109,464)
Lake McConaughy	583,010	209,128	(373,882)
Lake Minatare	120,613	62,337	(58,276)
Lewis & Clark	504,585	87,211	(417,374)
Louisville	192,856	167,215	(25,641)
Medicine Creek	13,818	44,386	(69,432)
Mormon Island	107,567	73,656	(33,911)
Red Willow	90,833	20,909	(69,924)
Schramm Park	34,266	1,765	(32,502)
Sherman	186,324	66,074	(120,250)
Southwest Res-General	12,263	5,465	(6,798)
Summit Lake	117,118	7,077	(110,041)
Swanson	130,900	25,636	(105,264)
Two Rivers	290,751	256,641	(34,110)
Victoria Springs	74,012	31,021	(42,991)
Wildcat Hills Nature Center	194,340	5,833	(188,507)
Willow Creek	108,308	24,662	(83,646)
Windmill	110,436	48,373	(62,063)
Cowboy Trail	239,323	258,020	18,697
TOTAL FOR AREAS	\$ 12,427,837	\$ 8,604,937	(\$ 3,822,900)

COWBOY TRAIL — Nebraska's First State Recreational Trail

Trail stretches along railbanked Chicago & Northwestern right-of-way from Norfolk on the east to Chadron on the west.



PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

Major responsibilities include administration of several federal grant programs, comprehensive planning, state trail planning and development, special studies, local planning review and agency-wide strategic planning.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON) Fund Act of 1965, as amended, provided 50% grants-in-aid for 25 years to both federal and state recreation agencies for comprehensive recreation planning, land acquisition and development of outdoor recreation facilities in permanently protected parks across the nation.

The program has been supported by royalties from off-shore mineral extraction, which are patented into the fund for Congressional appropriation each year to replace nonrenewable national resources with renewable local recreation resources.

Program authority was extended for another 25 years in 1991, but Congress rejected appropriation of funds to state programs for fiscal years 96/97. A major grassroots initiative is attempting to remedy this problem for the states, but strong action is imperative to maintain this investment in youth at the local level.

The 1965 LAWCON legislation mandates that staff inspect completed projects on a regular schedule and prevent conversions of funded property. Proposed conversions, which would change the use of LAWCON assisted property, must be corrected by the purchase of property of reasonably equivalent usefulness and value to that converted. Inspections ensure that conversions are noted and duly corrected.

Nebraska law governs allocations specifying 60% allocation to the various local political subdivisions and

40% to capital projects budgeted by the Game and Parks Commission and approved by the Unicameral Legislature. Over the 31 years of the program's existence, combined federal, state, local and private investment totaled over \$75 million in public outdoor recreation facilities in Nebraska.

Comprehensive Planning

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was due in December. Since LAWCON funds, including SCORP, were cutback, there is now an option for certification for two years of continuing eligibility by submitting a shortened version. Included are the required Wetlands Plan, the Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS) results, and the Nebraska State Trail Plan. These comprise the SCORP update, while Congress reconsiders funding of the program. The Wetlands Plan is being printed. NASIS results have been tallied and underscore the steady upswing in recreational activity over the last three years.

The State Trail Plan was published in 1994 as part of SCORP and will be updated as new trails open. Inclusion in the plan results in rating points for all projects considered for funding under the Nebraska Trail Development Assistance Act (TDAA) and the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA); National Recreational Trail Funding Act (NRTFA), administered by Planning & Programming, or the major ISTEA Enhancements Fund, administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads.

Nemaha Natural Resources District received \$50,000.00 to begin construction on its Steamboat Trace trail on the railbanked Burlington Northern ROW between Nebraska City and Peru. Four communities were

approved to share \$50,000.00 allotted by the Unicameral for FY96. Seven trail projects have been approved for matching grant funding under the \$283,266 allowed to Nebraska under the federal NRTFA allocation. Several major ISTEA Enhancement projects have been completed or are near completion on NGPC's Cowboy Trail, the state's first recreational trail, along the railbanked Chicago & NorthWestern right-of-way. See map of trail on next page.

Other staff duties involved participation in a variety of LAWCON and trail-related programs including:

- Attended various meetings and conferences
- Consulted with local governments and other political subdivisions on recreation and park facilities, park plans, trails and trail plans and offered general technical assistance
- Maintained a research library of technical materials, which are shared with the public
- Assisted the legislative effort to develop the state trails coordinator position
- Organized and chaired the Nebraska Recreational Trails Advisory Committee to assist with trail funding recommendations
- Participated in planning and sponsoring the first annual Nebraska State Trails Conference
- Served on the ISTEA Enhancements Interagency Select Committee for project approval
- Worked with the "Back to the River" inter-agency planning group for the metro Missouri River corridor
- Served on Nebraska's Long-Range Transportation Plan inter-agency study groups on bicycling and pedestrian recreation, traffic and safety needs and concerns.

REALTY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Environmental Services

Staff evaluated potential impacts of projects proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service), Bureau of Reclamation, Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, the Nebraska Department of Roads, consultants and private individuals. The "404" Permit Program, administered by the Corps of Engineers, offers the Game and Parks Commission and other agencies and individuals the opportunity to evaluate proposed developments affecting streams and wetlands. Recommendations to reduce or eliminate adverse effects on fish and wildlife habitat are sent to the Corps for consideration in the permit process.

A major review was carried over from 1995 and involved the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's relicensing of hydropower and irrigation facilities on the Platte River. These include Kingsley Hydro, Lake McConaughy and the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (Tri-County). In conjunction with the relicensing, considerable time was spent on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska to address the needs of endangered species on the Platte River.

Many hours were spent on the Commission's instream flow applications on the Platte River and negotiations with opponents of those applications. Meetings and negotiations on the MOA will continue in 1997, as will work related to the Platte River Instream Flow applications.

Nebraska continues to participate with three other states on the Missouri River Mitigation Project Steering Committee. This group addresses environmental concerns on the channeled Missouri River from Sioux City, IA, to St. Louis, MO. The Corps of Engineer, U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service and the four state conservation agencies have evaluated land-water units with potential for improving habitat for fish, migratory waterfowl, furbearers and other wildlife. Possible sites for restoration are evaluated and ranked within the Commission, and consensus recommendations are forwarded to the Corps. Among featured considered are chute restoration (flow-through), dike modifications and water-level controls. The Corps has begun to acquire land from some of these projects, and plans are being designed. Hamburg Bend was completed and is providing much-needed chute habitat.

Staff represents the agency in the "Back to the River" project, which will develop a comprehensive plan for the Missouri River Corridor from the mouth of the Platte River to just north of Blair. The project will help facilitate many activities, such as recreation access, trails, habitat restoration, education, historic preservation and interpretation.

Ongoing activities requiring participation include several small watershed projects, NRD proposals in a number of communities, power-line corridor studies, and airport facility development. Technical assistance was provided to consulting firms during preliminary design stages of wastewater treatment facilities.

Geographic Information Systems

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services have been provided to the Wildlife, Fisheries, Information and Education, Parks, and Administration divisions.

The use of GIS technology has allowed a number of spatial databases, maintained by Game and Parks, to be automated, mapped and analyzed. For example, fish species records, ecological element occurrence data, and whooping crane sighting data have been used for various projects. GIS technology was also used to provide maps for the Cowboy Trail and a variety of other needs. GIS has proven to be an effective tool for surface analysis at the Hamburg Bend Mitigation site. Realty uses GIS to maintain property records.

Land Purchases/Appraisals

The division handles land acquisition, appraisals, appraisal reviews, lease renewals, lease payment and cancellations, negotiations, and public hearings for the agency.

During 1996, 13 appraisal reviews involved: two Land and Water Conservation Fund projects, ten fish and wildlife reviews and one re-review of a rewritten appraisal. Six appraisals were completed. The Commission acquired title to nine tracts in 1996.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS ACQUIRED IN 1996		
AREA	COUNTY	ACRES ACQUIRED
Kirkpatrick Basin South Addition	York	11.17
Fliesbach	Morrill	422.06
Dry Sandy	Thayer	201.40
Aspinwall Bend	Nemaha	182.35
Rhoden	Cass	47.82
Prairie Wolf Addition	Nance	606.85
Kissinger Basin Addition	Clay	80.00
Alexandria Addition	Jefferson	394.00
Cedar Valley	Lincoln	880.00
	TOTAL	2,825.65

WILDLIFE

A Year of Partnering and Responsiveness

While 1995 was the year of planning, 1996 began the process of putting the initial planning efforts to work. The division worked on several initiatives that partnered monies from other entities to satisfy mutual resource goals. Additionally considerable time was spent seeking and listening to the concerns of our constituents.

The division continues to play a leading role in translating strategies into projects. Staff members were involved in the initial efforts of building a better cost tracking system to improve agency accountability and planning/programming efforts.

Continually striving to improve the stewardship of the state's wildlife and outdoor recreational resources in the best long-term interest of the people and those resources is quite a challenge. To balance the desires of the public with the limitations of the resource, several steps were taken to improve public responsiveness. The division is involved in four broad areas of responsibility - Research and Inventory, Education, Habitat Management, and Resource Management.

Research and Inventory

Research involves the ongoing inventory and analysis of the wildlife and habitat resources of the state. These efforts utilize several ongoing survey techniques as well as special projects to help monitor wildlife populations and habitat conditions.

Research and monitoring activities are critical in determining the basic foundations of resource management efforts. In Nebraska there are more than 97 mammals, 400 birds, 84 fishes, 50 amphibians and reptiles, 32 mollusks and tens of thousands of other invertebrate species, 1,600 native plants, 60 natural communities, (Figure 1). Fewer than 10 percent of animals are monitored and managed as game species.

While many routine game surveys dominate the division's research and

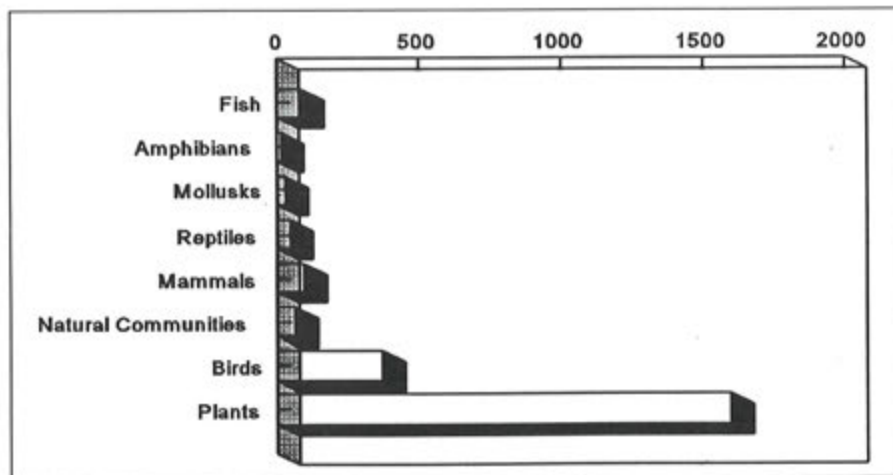
monitoring activities, we actively sought and received outside funding for investigations of both hunted and non-hunted wildlife. These investigations epitomize the concept of partnering with other natural resource entities. Partners included Bureau of Reclamation; The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, University of Nebraska; Environmental Trust Fund, Safari Club, International; U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; The Nature Conservancy; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Ducks Unlimited and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Examples include:

- ☞ Bighorn Sheep Habitat Evaluation Study
- ☞ Elk Telemetry Study
- ☞ Pesticide protection monitoring program
- ☞ Swift Fox genetics study
- ☞ Brainworm Monitoring in White-tailed Deer
- ☞ Wildcat Hills region inventory of plant communities
- ☞ Republican River Basin inventory of plant and animal species
- ☞ Loup and Middle Loup River

Basin inventory of plant and animal species

- ☞ Whooping Crane habitat study along the Platte River
- ☞ Regal Fritillary Survey
- ☞ Rare invertebrate survey on Forest Service Lands
- ☞ Ogallala National Grasslands and McKelvie National Forest inventory of rare plant species
- ☞ Sandhill streams threatened and endangered fish inventory and habitat restoration project
- ☞ Ecology of ornate box turtle in Nebraska study
- ☞ American Burying Beetle study
- ☞ Blowout Penstemon study

To accurately reflect the continually changing status of all the states resources and effect of conservation actions, the research/monitoring process is dynamic and ongoing. Ongoing studies related to threatened and/or endangered species such as Bald Eagles, Least Terns and Piping Plovers required attention in 1996. Financial resources tend to be a limiting factor for much of this work, consequently, the division has and will continue to seek alternative funding. Support and promotion of the Wildlife



Number of native nongame animals, plants and natural communities in Nebraska.

Diversity Funding Initiative (Teaming with Wildlife), which could provide additional funding, continued to occupy staff time in 1996.

Many routine game surveys were conducted in 1996. Of particular note were expanding trends in the deer population, especially in the southeast, and increases in Canada geese, which in December 1996 numbered a record 322,000 during the state count. Snow goose surveys in the breeding grounds and elsewhere indicated a dangerously high population level that was negatively impacting nesting habitat. All of this trend information was used in setting season lengths and bag limits for all affected species and will be discussed in more detail under the Resource Management section.

Wildlife Division's forensic/genetics lab played a key role in providing information to biologists and law enforcement officers, as well as assisting in investigations nationally.

Over 50 forensic cases were examined in 1996.

Resource Management

Resource Management is an all encompassing area, which includes wildlife utilization through season-setting, harvest regulation, accessibility issues, statutory and regulatory action.

This area includes some of the most publicly visible activities of the division. However, most of the 'work' in this arena is less recognized with numerous meetings, data analysis and survey activities covering a broad variety of wildlife impacting issues. Perhaps the most widely identifiable aspect of this activity is the annual season setting and harvest regulation efforts, which result in the annual hunting regulations. In addition to efforts that directly impact resource utilization, much time is spent working on other issues and activities outside the direct control of the agency, which can and do impact wildlife resources as a whole through external agency actions, legislation and public debate.

The latter items listed are often the least visible and/or understood. On the local level, well over a dozen proposed state legislative bills were addressed by staff. The bills all had potential direct or indirect impact on wildlife resource

Canada Goose Harvest in Nebraska As a Percent of the Central Flyway Total - 1962-1995



Source: USFWS - NGPC, Jan 1997 (p/j)

utilization, classification, and habitat impacts. Staff spent hundreds of hours gathering information, drafting possible legislative language and preparing facts for testimony. A few of the highlighted issues dealt with:

- hunting fee refunds
- lifetime permits and stamps
- license revocation
- outfitter licensing
- captive animals and controlled shooting areas
- wildlife classifications
- importation of wildlife

On the national level, it has long been recognized that federal farm bill legislation plays an integral part in habitat impacts and their subsequent effect on wildlife populations. Thousands of hours were devoted to working on national legislative issues with recognizable results. Although many played a key role, the division's Agricultural Program Manager was recognized nationally for his role in helping ensure federal legislation had a positive impact on the wildlife resources of Nebraska and the Midwest.

A few of the national legislative arenas that were addressed included the overall Farm Bill Provisions of:

- Conservation Reserve Program
- Wetland Reserve Program
- Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

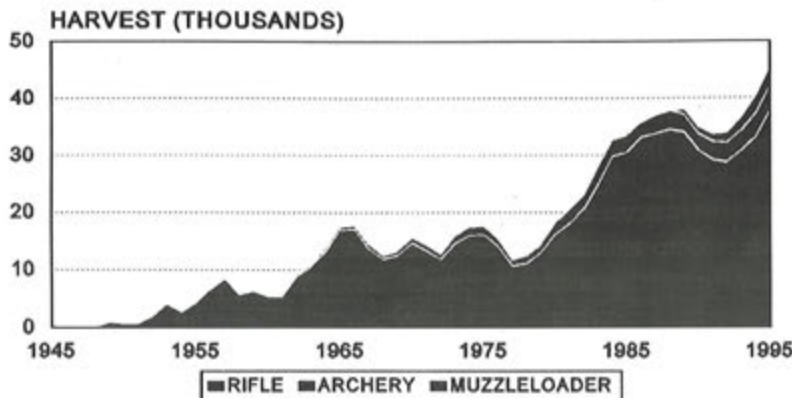
In addition to being actively involved in the development of underlying

legislative language on the federal level, many staff members devoted hundreds of hours in shaping and implementing the programs at the local level. Nebraska's citizens and wildlife resources should no doubt reap the rewards of these efforts in these many arenas which often go unnoticed.

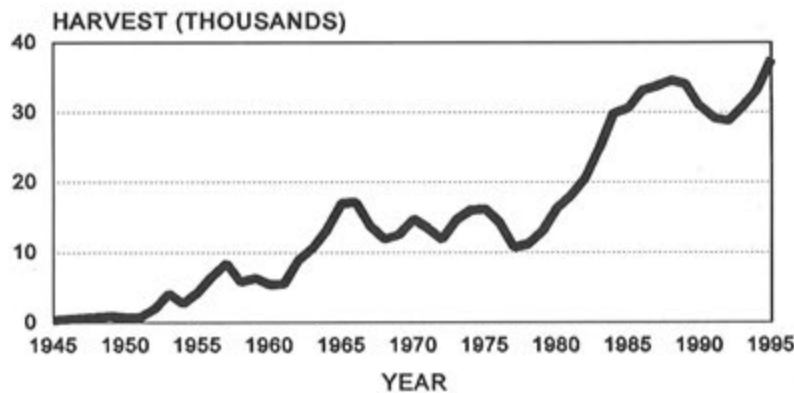
In the more recognizable portion of Resource Management is use and harvest regulation. 1996 could be categorized as "A Year Of Responsiveness." It is a difficult task to balance the desires of the public with the limits of the resource, and numerous hours went into gathering public input through surveys, meetings and informal calls and correspondence. Special initiatives, including professional surveys, were conducted to gather information from deer hunters, landowners, elk hunters, and waterfowl hunters. Crop depredation response was another key part of Resource Management efforts and key to management recommendations. Input from these sources, tied to biological information gained through research and analysis, lead to several new harvest initiatives in 1996:

- Cooperative Elk Season with South Dakota
- Increased elk hunting opportunities for landowners
- Waterfowl zone and season changes
- Retention of Point System for

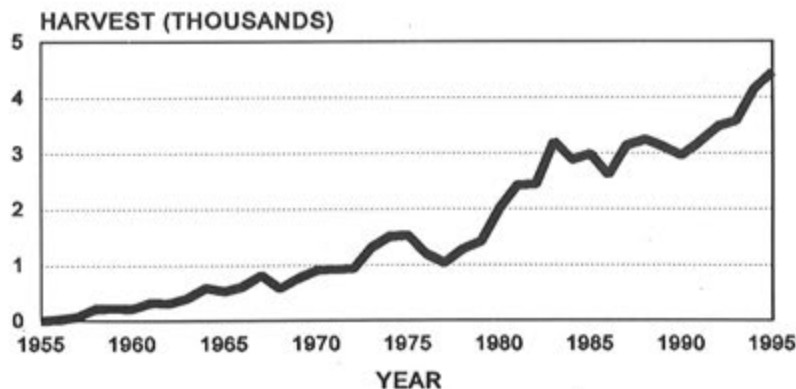
NEBRASKA DEER HARVEST



NEBRASKA FIREARM DEER HARVEST



NEBRASKA ARCHERY DEER HARVEST



determining daily bag limit on ducks

- Approval of late season Snow Goose hunt
- Increase in deer permits
- Additional late deer season opportunities
- Over-the-counter limited landowner permits at District Offices

Harvest results for 1996 indicate that, despite some regional wildlife population trends and/or affects of weather, the year can be considered a success. The tables provide 1996 (or 1995 data for upland species where 1996 data has not been compiled as of this report) harvest information for a number of key species.

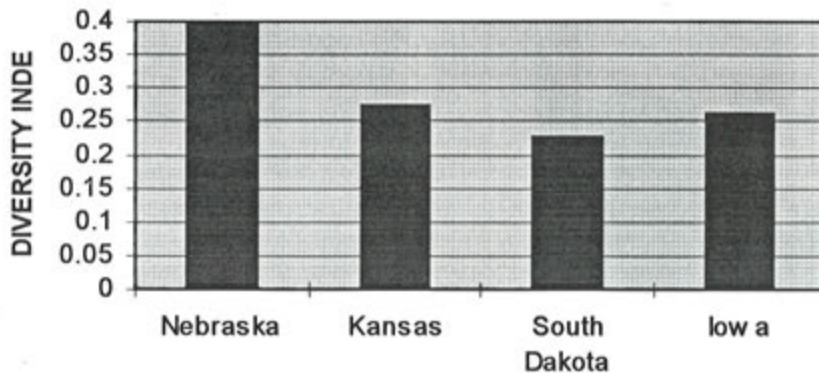
Habitat Management

Habitat Management takes place on both public and private lands and is geared toward providing wildlife and natural communities with all the necessary components for survival.

The saying "habitat is where it's at!" rings true for another large share of divisional activities. The division continues to strive to improve habitat on both private and publicly owned lands and to optimize recreational access to those lands. Next to weather, habitat plays one of the most significant environmental components in the wildlife population equation. Division efforts are geared toward meeting wildlife habitat needs whenever and where ever we can. Additionally, providing recreational access to those habitat areas, whether for traditional hunting and trapping activities or for wildlife viewing, is an integral part of the picture.

Nebraska has approximately 49.4 million acres of land and water within its boundaries. Approximately 97% of these acres are under private ownership. The Commission manages approximately 147,000 acres of land and water as wildlife management areas (roughly 0.3 % of the state). With this in mind, it is understandable why considerable effort continues to be devoted to private and other public (non-agency owned or controlled) lands.

DIVERSITY OF UPLAND GAME BIRD HARVEST (SHANNON INDEX)



Wildlife Division administers several ongoing programs designed to improve habitat conditions on private lands. In an effort to take advantage of new opportunities, two new habitat incentive concept programs were initiated during 1996:

- ☆ S.H.I.P. - The Seasonal Habitat Improvement Program is intended to provide shallow water habitat for migratory birds during the non-cropping season in the 17 counties that make up the Rainwater Basin. This project is part of a coordinated effort between the Game and Parks Commission and the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture to protect and enhance wetlands.
- ☆ CRP-MAP - The Conservation Reserve Program-Management Access Program was developed as a pilot program to improve pheasant habitat and provide public access on CRP fields.

Additionally, as described in the Resource Management narrative portion, staff devoted thousands of hours in technical assistance to federal agencies and private landowners for the field implementation of Federal Farm Bill program initiatives and habitat development projects on federal lands.

The division administrator chairs the aquatic and terrestrial habitat committee, which is responsible for reviewing potential habitat tracts for acquisition. This committee reviewed 29 tracts for acquisition, 13 of which were approved for acquisition, based on criteria developed by the committee. These new lands become Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and are managed for wildlife production and public access opportunities. As noted earlier, the division manages over 215 WMAs totaling more than 145,000 acres of land and water across the state under various

habitat management strategies and public use facilities maintenance. Nine areas totaling 2,825.72 acres were added in 1996. Four tracts were additions to existing WMAs, and the other five are new areas. See Realty report.

Education

Education is actually intertwined with most Wildlife activities and is designed to better inform the public of the issues facing our state's wildlife and habitat resources and what steps are being taken to ensure their longevity.

Having a well-informed public is fundamental to obtaining support for the sustained and appreciative use of Nebraska's wildlife and recreational resources. In cooperation with other divisions and/or other outside agency partnering efforts, Wildlife staff were involved with several educational initiatives in 1996:

- ⇒ Archery Youth Hunt
- ⇒ Waterfowl Youth Hunt
- ⇒ Dove Youth Hunt
- ⇒ Pheasant Youth Hunt
- ⇒ Wildlife Viewing Guide
- ⇒ Spring Migration Guide
- ⇒ Trapping Video
- ⇒ Hosted International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Meeting
- ⇒ Hosted 58th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference
- ⇒ Presented findings and gathered information at national meetings
- ⇒ Conducted school and public service presentations
- ⇒ Computer homepage development and enhancement

This was a busy year for the Division. This report touches only some of the highlights of our "responsive" year. Several ongoing activities occupied time during 1996 as well to include work on Canada goose restoration, DNA work, wetland restoration efforts, including Rainwater Basin Joint Venture implementation efforts, Missouri River Mitigation planning and coordination, area management planning and implementation as well as coordination with other government entities on properties they own or control. The activities of 1996 were as rich and diverse as the state's wildlife and habitat resources.

Table 1. Approximate average harvest (1990-1995) of the five primary upland game bird species for Nebraska and its neighboring midwestern states.

SPECIES	NEBRASKA	KANSAS	SOUTH DAKOTA	IOWA
Ring-necked pheasant	730,000	700,000	1,150,000	1,200,000
Northern bobwhite	433,000	2,000,000	2,500	220,000
Sharp-tailed grouse	36,000	0	100,000	0
Greater prairie chicken	24,000	30,000	7,500	0
Gray partridge	10,000	0	60,000	70,000

