1991 Annual Report of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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1991 Annual Report of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

1991 The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
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Commissioners
Chairman:
Richard L. Coyne, Omaha
Vice Chairman:
Elvin Adamson, Nenzel
2nd Vice Chairman:
J. Alan Cramer, Wayne
Randall K. Stinnette, Inland
Gloria Erickson, Holdrege
Charles E. Wright, Lincoln
Donald Forney, Lakeside

Administration
Director: Rex Amack
Assistant Directors:
William J. Bailey, Jr.
Dale R. Bree

Division Chiefs
Administration: Larry Morris
Budget & Fiscal: Larry Witt
Engineering: James Sheffield
Fisheries: Wes Sheets
Information & Education: Paul Horton
Law Enforcement: Don Schaepker
Outdoor Education: Butch Isom
Operations: Earl Johnson
Realty: Bruce Sackett
Recreation Areas: Jim Carney
Resource Services: Harold Edwards
State Parks: Charles Duncan
Wildlife: Ken Johnson

NOTE
As the Annual Report was first published in the pages of NEBRASKAland Magazine early in the year, but in a much abbreviated form, this expanded report was requested by staff members as a reference. We regret the lateness of its preparation.

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ADMINISTRATION

Administration of the Game and Parks Commission provides support services for all divisions through the following offices and functions: Personnel; Purchasing and Inventory; Internal Audit; In-service Training; Aircraft Operations; Word Processing; Headquarters Maintenance and Telephone Switchboard; and Staff Assistants, Secretarial and Clerical Personnel in the district offices. Liaison with the Legislature and assistance to the Director’s Office are also provided.

PERSONNEL

Functions of the Personnel Section include administration of payroll, worker’s compensation, retirement, insurance, accident reports, performance evaluations, personnel records and preparation of the personal-services portion of the agency’s operational budget.

The labor contract between the state and the Nebraska Association of Public Employees, Local 161, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees represents 212 agency employees. The labor contract with the State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council represents 51 agency employees. The Personnel office acts as liaison to the State Labor Relations Administrator.

The agency hired 28 new permanent employees in 1991 and 35 employees were promoted/reclassified to higher positions. Total turnover for 1991 was 4.5 percent (20 employees).

Numerous letters on employment possibilities and career information were received and answered. Replies were made to surveys regarding salary, benefits and personnel turnover.

Personnel conferred with the Office of Risk Management regarding worker’s compensation cases. Worker’s Compensation claims paid for fiscal year ending June 30, 1991 was $126,233.

Game and Parks Commission employees were involved in 30 motor vehicle accidents in 1991.

PAYROLLS

Permanent — Total wages paid: $11,271,184.76.
Average number of employees per month: 441.
Temporary — Total wages paid: $3,432,124.08
Average number of employees per payroll: 433
Largest payroll: 853
Smallest payroll: 78

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Devoted to bettering performance and preparing employees for positions of higher responsibility, in-service training directs its efforts primarily to meet the specialized needs of individual staff members who enroll in a variety of short courses, seminars and workshops. Broad-based training needs are met through in-house workshops for groups of employees.

AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS

The Piper Super Cub was flown a total of 169.8 hours in 1991 on 58 flights. Cost of operation was $27.29 per hour, not including insurance or hangar costs. Depreciation on the aircraft is unknown. The aircraft was used for various surveys, counts, antelope depredation complaints, fish and game, law enforcement and photography.
The Budget and Fiscal Division includes four sections:

1. Permits, which encompasses issuing boating certificates, operating the Customer Service Center in the Lincoln Headquarters, Accounts Receivable, and Permits Accounting departments.

2. Fiscal Accounting, which prepares all voucher payments for the agency and maintains various files and reports connected with all the agency's expenditures.

3. Audits and Cost Center Accounting, which audits all political subdivisions and maintains Area Cost Center Expenditure Accounting.

4. Budget Section, which includes preparation and daily maintenance of the agency's budget and financial resources.

Following are the various fund totals for 1991, with 1990 figures in parenthesis for comparison.

Cash and General Funds on hand January 1, 1991: $22,432,079.18 ($26,581,091.92).

Cash and General Fund Appropriations received during 1991: $35,106,362.81; which includes $11.9 million Game Cash; $7.8 million Park Cash; $2.6 million Habitat Cash; and $9.2 million Capital Construction Funds; ($35,580,162.89).

Expenditures during 1991: $34,226,979.60 ($36,257,908.94).

End of Year Fund Balance for 1991 was: $23,311,462.39 ($22,461,419.80).

Cash and Federal Income Received during 1991: $25,916,719.81 ($26,581,091.92). This includes, by fund: Habitat Cash $2,656,157.09 ($2,628,024.96); Norda Cash Income: $1,455,804 ($1,640,191); Federal Funds: $1,891,549 ($5,302,701).

Total Operation Costs in 1991: $28,929,118.42 ($25,967,126.06)

1991 Capital Development: $5,287,861.18 ($10,290,782.88)

This division provides architectural and engineering services to other divisions of the agency, with its work performed at the request of those divisions. Services include technical and planning assistance, which includes field data, research, design, contract preparation, bidding, construction administration, inspection and surveying.

The Division also works with outside consultants as state agencies are restricted to designing and bidding projects under $100,000 in most cases, and communicates with other divisions, administration, federal agencies and other state and local agencies to ensure compliance with codes, requirements, permits, reviews, etc. Drawings, specifications and surveying data have all been incorporated into a computer system in recent years. Five computers are used for drafting, specification and word processing, and records management.

During 1991, the Engineering Division was involved in 170 projects on 78 state areas across the state, including major work at:

- Eugene T. Mahoney State Park
- Calamus Fish Hatchery
- Ashfall Fossil Beds SHP
- Atkinson SRA dam
- Calamus Reservoir boat and fisherman access facilities
- Chadron SP Campground
- Fort Robinson SP flood repairs
- Fremont Lakes SRA shower building and electrical service
- Fish cleaning stations at many areas
- Niobara SP new swimming pool
- Improvements and additions to fisherman
- Access at many reservoirs and rivers
- Sherman Reservoir new shower building
- Stagecoach Lake wildlife nesting islands and shoreline stabilization completed
FISHERIES

The Fisheries Division assumes responsibility for maintenance, development and regulations on use of renewable fisheries resources. The broad goal is to manage these resources in the best interest of Nebraskans. The Division is organized into five sections: Administration, Management, Production, Research, and the Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium.

ADMINISTRATION SECTION
The Administration Section plans, organizes, directs and controls approved programs, polices and operation procedures of the division.

One of the functions of this section is the issuing of special permits, which in 1991 amounted to $21,789. Those permits were:
- 127 Missouri River Commercial Fishing permits (116 resident, 11 nonresident).
- 266 Bait Vendor permits (264 resident, 2 nonresident).
- 8 Non-resident Fish Dealer permits.
- 3 Commercial Put and Take permits.
- 57 Private Fish Culturist permits.

RESEARCH
Seven studies in progress in 1991 included:
- Lake McConaughy predator-prey dynamics;
- Feeding ecology of gizzard shad at Lake McConaughy;
- Missouri River Ecology;
- Studies on channel catfish in the lower Platte;
- Identification of fish fillets;
- Bibliography of Nebraska fishery publications and reports;
- Instream flows implementation in Nebraska.

One of the primary goals of the section is to produce information applicable to fishery management problems. Toward that end, as much information as possible is published in technical papers or presented in oral reports. The majority of technical reports are in the form of final project reports supported by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program.

RESOURCES
Activities during 1991 fell mostly into five categories: water project reviews for fisheries impacts; instream flow project; assisting Nongame Wildlife staff with threatened and endangered species; conferences, meetings and educational programs; and miscellaneous activities.

Instream flow efforts centered primarily on the Platte River in 1991, including assisting the non-game section with plover and tern projects.

Central Platte NRD filed six instream flow applications for various river and canal segments of the Platte River to protect riverine habitat;

Several segments of the lower Platte were studied to determine impact of several factors on the river, its habitats and wildlife;

FISH PRODUCTION
Fish stocking during 1991 totalled 31,575,500 fry and eggs.

Dedication of the new Calamus Fish Hatchery highlighted 1991 activities. Located just below the 5,200-acre Calamus Reservoir, the hatchery occupies 136 acres, and includes the main hatchery building, shop, 51 lined ponds and 24 concrete raceways. It depends on 15,000 gallons of water per minute of reservoir water, groundwater from eight wells, or a mixture of the two to attain proper temperatures. Water conservation is maximized using pond liners, and all water used will be treated and returned to the Calamus River.

This modern facility can oxygenate and degas well water, has an ultra-violet disinfecting system, a computerized water alarm system, a heat exchanger for warming water, a laboratory to identify diseases and parasites, and new culturing techniques. Much of the culture study is directed at rearing larger fish for release, and higher survival of the larger fish is expected to increase the quality of fishing.
AK-SAR-BEN AQUARIUM

The Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium is located along the Platte River at Schramm Park State Recreation Area, nine miles south of Gretna on Highway 31. Aquarium display tanks house about 52 species of fish, with 300 specimens on display. Tanks are also used to display turtles, crayfish, salamanders and clams.

The Aquarium is one of the showplaces of the Game and Parks Commission system. There are some 15,000 flowers planted and maintained throughout the growing season to add to its appeal.

During 1991 more than 93,000 people visited the Aquarium, a daily average of about 300. An admission fee of $.50 is charged for youngsters 6-15 years, and $1 for adults. Total admission fees for 1991 were $21,500. There is no charge for school groups, Boy Scout, Girl Scout or church groups, etc. if they make reservations. Large groups of 20 or more are allowed discount rates. In 1991, 390 groups with over 18,150 students toured.

Total revenue from the Aquarium, including permits, fees, souvenirs, etc. was over $87,500. The Aquarium is also used for workshops, tours and meetings, and personnel give programs to area groups.

TWO RIVERS TROUT LAKE

The Two Rivers Trout Lake was open 214 days during 1990, with a total of 26,700 trout tags sold, generating $66,750 in revenue. Anglers reported harvesting 70,535 trout, while an additional 3,437 were estimated to have been harvested by anglers not reporting.

In an attempt to maintain trout water throughout the fishing season, a hypolimnetic aeration system was operated throughout the season, but with some problems. One compressor burned out during the hottest weather, and a total fish kill probably resulted. After repair, the lake was restocked.
INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

NEWS PROGRAM
A vital news program is paramount to the mission of the agency. In 1991 there were new and continuing strides toward that end. Approximately 275 news stories were released to all Nebraska media from Commission headquarters during the year. News continues to be transmitted electronically to two wire services and five major daily newspapers in the state.

Video news took off with releases issued twice a month during 1991. Surveys indicated that video news releases issued by the Commission are reaching an estimated half-million Nebraskans. Nearly every television station receiving the video packages broadcast the tapes.

MULTI-IMAGE
In a continuing effort to provide the public with information about the agency, and for various management efforts and public hearings, hundreds of slides were produced using an electronic slide-generation system. These slides are used by several divisions, as well as by the agency director at speaking engagements. Topics cover a wide range including fisheries and wildlife management setting seasons and many other topics.

NEBRASKAland MAGAZINE

OMAHA OFFICE
The public's ability to purchase big game permits accounted for significant business in the Omaha Information and Education Office. An all-time high in office sales, $198,015, was recorded, with 53 percent coming from sales of big game permits.

The office continued to direct much of its public relations effort at the broadcast media in order to reach large audiences. Weekly radio shows were prepared and broadcast on eight stations. In addition, a wide variety of public service announcements were produced. Appearances at civic groups, clubs, youth organizations and the like remained an important function, with 36 presentations made. News releases were also distributed to local media on an as-needed basis.

The office had an extremely busy year on the outdoor education front. Approximately 1,000 students were certified in 50 hunter education courses. Support is also provided for boating safety courses and aquatic education efforts.

NORTH PLATTE
As well as serving as the regional editor for NEBRASKAland Magazine, the District IV public information officer (PIO) is responsible for agency information and education objectives in southwest Nebraska.

The PIO directed the annual National Cornhusker Trapshoot at Doniphan, which attracted 385 students. The event is sponsored by the agency.

Ongoing programs demanding attention included a weekly television news feature, presentations, seasonal radio shows, and local area news releases. The PIO was also involved in the Outdoor Education portfolio and other divisional support as needed.

ALLIANCE OFFICE
The District I PIO also serves as regional editor for NEBRASKAland Magazine while promulgating information and education programs in the panhandle.

The PIO was involved in various magazine assignments and public information efforts. Another special activity was the coordination of the annual Nebraska High School .22 Silhouette Championships at Pressey WMA.

Ongoing programs requiring attention include news media releases and contacts on an as-needed basis, presentations to groups, schools and organizations, and involvement with Outdoor Education workshops and courses.
HABITAT STAMP ART CONTEST

Some 1,819 entries were submitted in the annual art contest for the 1992 Nebraska Habitat Stamp. A raccoon by Larry J. Bailey of Roca was selected from 50 adult entries. In the Youth Division, there were 539 entries in the elementary section, which was won by Heather Harold of Big Springs; 1,064 in the junior section, won by Kevin Meyer of Omaha, and 166 in the senior section won by Megan Merz of Falls City. The Omaha Fish and Wildlife Club donated $350 in awards to help sponsor the contest.

MAIL

The mail section processes all incoming and outgoing agency mail by the most efficient methods, and in 1991 recorded increases in all categories of mail.

Purchase of a direct address printer and bar-coder helped considerably in processing database mail. There were 135,947 pieces identified for presort; 285,391 pieces of regular mail; 223,055 pieces of bulk mail; 15,247 pieces shipped via UPS, and 15,731 information requests filled.

Postage costs of all categories totaled nearly $181,000 on a grand total of 659,640 pieces of mail.

PRINTING

The printing section handled a major increase in print jobs, 986 compared to 624 the previous year, and exactly doubled its paper use to 6.4 million sheets. Numerous negatives and plates were shot for printing various publications, plus all the related tasks of cutting, folding, collating, inventory and maintenance jobs in the print shop. A new (in 1990) 11 x 17-inch printing press has added much to the shop's capability, and partly accounted for the increase in jobs.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

In the 13th season of the ambitious KNOW NEBRASKA TOURS program, co-sponsored with the Omaha World-Herald, five tours were conducted with 173 participants.

State Fair

The Commission exhibit at the Nebraska State Fair again proved to be one of our best approaches to meeting the general public. The exhibit is one of the best of its type in the nation. Sales totalled over $22,481 of which approximately $12,000 was for NEBRASKALand subscriptions. A new feature was a souvenir shop with promotional items from parks across the state.

OUTDOOR NEBRASKA RADIO

The weekly Outdoor Nebraska radio program was produced and distributed to 38 stations throughout Nebraska and eastern Iowa. All aspects of agency functions were given air time via Outdoor Nebraska.

PUBLICATIONS

The division continued to manage the production and distribution of over 400 different brochures, publications and forms used by the agency. Designated I&E staff serve as liaisons to assigned divisions to facilitate publications and various projects.
PARKS

The Division of State Parks is responsible for administration and operation of Nebraska's system of state park areas. The division provides necessary resource protection and enhancement measures to assure quality outdoor recreation experiences for present and future generations of park users.

The State Park System is made up 87 areas with a total of 149,232 acres—67,346 acres of land and 81,885 acres of marsh or water. Within the system are seven state parks totalling 30,095 acres; 69 state recreation areas which encompass 116,717 acres; and 11 state historical parks totalling 2,420 acres.

To maintain and operate the park system's 87 areas, the Commission employs a permanent staff of 117 people, plus 14 staffers in support areas, and supplemented by 794 temporary employees. Only 37 of the park areas are staffed by on-site personnel and 94 of the permanent field employees are stationed there. The remaining 23 field positions are assigned to other recreation areas, and seven park maintenance crews maintain and operate 28 other recreation areas.

The 794 temporary, seasonal employees assisted the parks staff during the recreation season. Several areas used volunteer services of local groups, military units and campground hosts.

HORTICULTURE AND LANDSCAPING

During 1991, much of the activity centered around the final phases of development at Mahoney State Park. Major projects included landscaping of tennis court, miniature golf course, fishing lake, 14 new cabins and formal waterway.

The conservatory/greenhouse built during 1991 at Mahoney will aid the horticultural staff in production of plants for other parks. This facility was completed and landscaped, and later in the season it was furnished with benches and other equipment for plant production and tree and flower species were selected. The staff is working on wildflower plantings and acquiring equipment for plant production and planting for next season.

The nurseries at Branched Oak were again used to produce shade trees for parks. A relatively new method using root control bags was used for 1,000 trees, which reduces subsequent expense and labor. About 500 year-old trees were used in various projects with good success.

VISITATION

During 1991, visitation at state parks was estimated at just over 9.2 million people. There was a total of 19,591 registrations at the seven parks with cabins, involving 71,521 persons staying for 217,769 user/days. Fee camping areas had 79,141 registrations and 246,320 participants, totalling 626,370 camper/days.

Park visitors spent $254,094 to enjoy park trail rides; $916,967 on camping fees and $956,828 on Park Entry Permits. The total revenue collected from all services and facilities in Nebraska's parks was $5,239,942.

PROJECTS FOR 1991

New capital construction authority by program for the 1991/92 fiscal year, totalled $1,066,000 with the majority, $640,000, allocated for boating improvements at parks areas. Building Renewal Funds (309 projects), totalled $178,690 with work done at 6 parks areas. The largest was at Fort Robinson ($115,000) and the smallest at Fort Hartsuff ($721). Other areas were branched Oak, Medicine Creek, Ponca and Niobrara.

Among other projects during the year were: 30,000 trees planted by staff and volunteers in burn areas at Fort Robinson as part of the 10-year reforestation program.

70-pad campground at Chadron opened for use.

New lodging reservation policies adopted, for up to one year in advance.

Visitor center, entrance road and rhino barn opened to the public June 1 and staffed by University of Nebraska personnel.

Renovation of the Post Playhouse at Fort Robinson was started, during which a cache of artifacts was discovered under the floor.

The dam at Atkinson Lake was completed and the lake refilled. Contracts were let for hookups in the camping area.
### ESTIMATED PARK VISITOR COUNTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbor Lodge SHP</td>
<td>166,000</td>
<td>168,500</td>
<td>150,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashfall SHP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40,000</td>
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<td>Ash Hollow SHP</td>
<td>18,200</td>
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<td>Bluestem SRA</td>
<td>174,000</td>
<td>174,000</td>
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<td>Bowring Ranch SHP</td>
<td>4,163</td>
<td>5,445</td>
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<td>Box Butte SRA</td>
<td>75,900</td>
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<td>Branched Oak SRA</td>
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<td>Buffalo Bill SHP</td>
<td>36,622</td>
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<td>Calamus SRA</td>
<td>227,307</td>
<td>189,160</td>
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<td>Chadron SP</td>
<td>156,983</td>
<td>180,965</td>
<td>166,800</td>
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<td>Champion Mill SHP</td>
<td>16,015</td>
<td>14,997</td>
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<td>Conestoga SRA</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>115,800</td>
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<td>Dead Timber SRA</td>
<td>104,100</td>
<td>75,300</td>
<td>62,000</td>
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<td>E. T. Mahoney SP</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Fort Atkinson SHP</td>
<td>50,240</td>
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<td>Fort Robinson SRA</td>
<td>285,473</td>
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<td>Fremont SRA</td>
<td>813,300</td>
<td>807,800</td>
<td>790,225</td>
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<td>Indian Cave SP</td>
<td>174,644</td>
<td>150,535</td>
<td>137,339</td>
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<td>Johnson Lake SRA</td>
<td>458,660</td>
<td>433,500</td>
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<td>Lake Maloney SRA</td>
<td>152,440</td>
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<td>697,708</td>
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<td>Medicine Creek SRA</td>
<td>49,020</td>
<td>31,422</td>
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<td>Merritt Res. SRA</td>
<td>105,289</td>
<td>118,162</td>
<td>131,178</td>
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<td>Mormon Island SRA</td>
<td>337,000</td>
<td>331,500</td>
<td>301,500</td>
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<td>Niobrara SP</td>
<td>153,203</td>
<td>129,008</td>
<td>125,775</td>
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<td>32,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<td>Pawnee SRA</td>
<td>730,000</td>
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<td>Ponca SP</td>
<td>195,830</td>
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<td>Red Willow SRA</td>
<td>56,025</td>
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<td>Rock Creek SRA</td>
<td>42,870</td>
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<td>126,450</td>
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<td>Summit SRA</td>
<td>81,700</td>
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<td>Wagon Train SRA</td>
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<td>Windmill SRA</td>
<td>41,330</td>
<td>43,300</td>
<td>43,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Non-Reporting Areas</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>340,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9,004,023</td>
<td>8,817,208</td>
<td>9,214,548</td>
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</table>

### REALTY

The Realty Division was involved in land acquisitions, appraisals, lease renewals, payments and cancellations, lease renewals, appraisal reviews, negotiations, and public hearings during 1991.

Among activities carried on during the year were:

- Appraisals were made on 20 tracts with nine contracted and 11 done by staff. Four of the tracts were purchased during the year, with options to purchase eight more. The other tracts are in various stages of negotiation or are no longer being considered for acquisition.
- Twenty-one tracts taken before the Habitat Committee, Fish Access Committee and Administration have been turned down for acquisition.
- Funds from the Habitat Program were used to acquire seven tracts representing 1,977.35 acres.
- Nineteen appraisals were reviewed in 1991, of which 13 were contracted and six done by staff.
- 105 tracts have been purchased and designated wildlife management areas since 1977 when the Habitat Program began. The taxes and in-lieu of taxes paid in 1991 amounted $57,463.36 on 19,798.66 acres.

The Game and Parks Commission currently leases 76 areas through the Realty Division at a cost of $108,891.

A breakdown of those types of leases and their cost in 1991 was:

- Accessways: $420
- 14 Canoe Campsites: $2,702
- Habitat Areas, Fisheries, Recreation, Grazing: $31,360
- Office Space in Lincoln, Omaha and Kearney: $6,900
- 14 Storage Areas: $21,860
- 17 Tower Leases: $11,696
- Work Areas: $32,950
- Hanger Space: $660
- Post Office Boxes: $340
Nebraska Conservation Officers enforce laws and regulations pertaining to fishing, hunting, boating, and the State Parks system, an important part of wildlife and park management.

Law enforcement activities include general preventive patrol; selective enforcement details and special details.

For 1991, the Law Enforcement Division consisting of a division chief, one assistant chief, six district supervisors, one Boat Law administrator, one administrative secretary, one radio operator and 58 field officers.

Officers drove approximately 1.5 million miles and used their boats approximately 1,400 hours.

While on patrol, officers checked over 57,000 fishermen, 25,000 hunters, 300 fur harvesters, 19,000 boats and made over 60,000 miscellaneous contacts, most of which were park oriented. Officers also investigated over 3,000 complaints and made over 450 public appearances, including programs of various types.

ARRESTS & CITATIONS

Officers issued approximately 4,000 citations, with 300 small game cases, 150 migratory bird; 200 deer; 75 turkey; 30 fur harvester; 850 fishing; 600 boating; and 1,500 park cases. The conviction rate of total arrests was 96 percent.

Mandatory road checks and wildlife decoys have proven effective. In 1991, road checks were used in the three eastern districts, and decoys in all six districts. In the 20 times decoys were used, they resulted in 16 arrests for shooting from the road and hunting without permission.

BOATING LAW ADMINISTRATION

1991 saw officers becoming more active in enforcing the boating under the influence, and equipment was purchased to help in this effort. A total of 1,700 Nebraska Boating Basics (boating safety) course manuals were distributed in 1991, with the majority used in the Home Study course.

In 1991, there were 31 boating accidents reported, which resulted in 21 injuries and three fatalities.

A total of 58 permits for marine regattas were issued during the year, which was up from 34 the previous year.

OPERATION GAME THIEF

Nebraska’s Operation Game Thief Program is an opportunity for citizens to volunteer information pertaining to game law violations without actually becoming involved in the case.

Since its inception in 1982, nearly 500 investigations have been initiated, resulting in nearly 300 cases including: 159 deer, 13 waterfowl, 16 furbearer, 33 fish, 1 eagle and two swan cases. During 1991, over 50 investigations were initiated, and 25 of these resulted in fines, costs and liquidated damages of $5,500, bringing the totals since inception of the O.G.T. program in September of 1982 to nearly $32,000 in fines and costs and $45,000 liquidated damages. In addition, 101 rewards totalling $13,600 have been paid to informants.

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

The statewide agency radio communications system consists of a network of bases and repeaters which allow radio communications between district offices, from mobile to offices, and from mobile to mobile. Cost of the communications system during 1991 was $20,650.

PERMITS

Law Enforcement personnel also issue fur dealer and scientific collection permits. During 1991 there were 51 resident and one nonresident fur dealer permits issued; and one nonresident and 102 resident scientific permits issued.

![Total 1991 Offenses Chart]

- Hunters 715
- Fishermen 850
- Trappers 30
- Boaters 800
- Misc-Parks 1500
- Total 1991 Offenses 4,000 Arrests

10
OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The Outdoor Education Division is responsible for four major programs: Hunter Education, Project WILD, Aquatic Education and Adult Workshops.

PROJECT WILD

Project WILD continues to be the agency’s premiere program for environmental education. As part of an international program, Project WILD in Nebraska passed the 5,000 mark for classroom teachers trained in its sixth year. Increased demand for resource materials to supplement Project WILD activities is being met by a new wildlife species series, and greater use of Trail Tails. New video materials on wetlands and water were added to the loan library.

A number of advanced workshops were held to provide knowledge and incentives for programs in the K-12 grade levels. Workshops held in conjunction with Creighton University focused on the Missouri River.

The division continued with regular outdoor education workshops during 1991, and they continue to be popular.

HUNTER EDUCATION

Nebraska’s corps of 525 volunteer Hunter Education instructors added 5,306 students to the ranks of those certified since 1972, when Hunter Education became available, bringing the total to 134,507 students.

Pre-service instructor-training sessions were conducted throughout the state, and 154 new instructors were certified as a result of 17 workshops.

Hunting accidents were again very low in 1991, with no fatalities and 14 non-fatal accident reports.

Sport shooting activities were held at Pressey and Doniphan. Attendance at the Pressey Silhouette Shoot was up, from 54 shooters in 1990 to 83 in 1991. Attendance at the Cornhusker National Trap Shoot included 22 junior squads and 53 senior, totaling 440 youngsters, also up from the previous year.

Bowhunter Education continues to be a priority program. Five volunteer instructor workshops were conducted and 41 new instructors were certified. Student workshops certified 157. In addition, an instructional video for bowhunter education was filmed at Red Bird, and subsequently won much acclaim and a national award.

AQUATIC EDUCATION

Nebraska’s Aquatic Education Program is designed to increase awareness and understanding of aquatic environments. Educational materials are targeted at the upper elementary and higher age groups, but are adaptable to other grade levels.

In 1991, teachers registered in the program totaled 1,379, up 210 from 1990. Educational materials available for loan showed a marked increase in usage by teachers.

The fishing program completed its third year with 487 certified volunteer instructors. Ten training workshops in 1991 resulted in 142 new instructors. These instructors, along with 185 assistant volunteers, held 95 clinics and worked with 6,390 young anglers.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Management of 20 canoe campsites and information on the Nebraska Canoe Trails Program;
- TRAIL TALES, a wildlife education newspaper for fourth grade, is published three times each school year and sent free to all elementary schools in the state;
- Hosting the OUTDOOR NEBRASKA radio program January through July, in cooperation with the I&E Division which handles the program August through December.
PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

Major responsibilities of this division include administration of several federal grant programs; comprehensive planning; special studies; local planning review; water resource project monitoring; and environmental review of all federally assisted developments in the state.

LAND/WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 provides 50 percent federal grants-in-aid to the various states and their political subdivisions for state comprehensive planning, acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas. It is supported by the sale of surplus federal property and revenues from off-shore petroleum leases. About 85 percent of the fund is derived from off-shore leases.

In fiscal 1991, $326,859 was apportioned to Nebraska. Of this, 60 percent or $196,115 was allocated for 16 local, community projects. Forty percent, or $130,743 was used for agency projects. In addition, $9,508 in special reapportionment account funds came to Nebraska.

Over the past 25 years, the federal government, state and local communities, have invested more than $75 million in new and improved outdoor recreation facilities under this program in Nebraska.

FED AID IN SPORT FISH AND WILDLIFE

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950 are companion programs, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which provide financial assistance to the states and territories for restoration activities. The Wildlife Restoration Program is funded by an 11 percent excise tax on arms and ammunition, and a 10 percent excise tax on handguns and archery equipment. The Sport Fish Restoration Program is funded by a 10 percent excise tax on fishing rods, creels, reels, baits and lures.

During 1991 these programs made about $5 million available to Nebraska for fish and wildlife surveys and inventories, research, land acquisition, development and maintenance, technical assistance, hunter safety training and aquatic resource education.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Publication of the 1991-1995 SCORP Assessment and Policy Plan and the companion Nebraska Wetlands Priority Plan follows a long public and agency review period. Governor Nelson certified the required public participation in the planning process, which extends eligibility for Nebraska to participate in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund matching grant program.

The 1991 "Quality of Life" survey attempts to quantify Nebraskans' participation in a variety of recreation and trail-related activities.

RESOURCE MONITORING

Game and Parks Commission staff members evaluated potential benefits of project proposals by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Soil Conservation Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, and Nebraska Department of Roads.

The major review effort involved the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of hydro power facilities on the Platte River.

Nebraska continues to participate in the Missouri River Mitigation Project Steering Committee with three other states to address environmental concerns pertaining to the channelized Missouri from Sioux City to St. Louis. Additional activity in 1990 included field reviews and meetings on the Missouri River Corridor project initiated by the Papio/Missouri River NRD.

Several Soil Conservation Service small watershed projects, Natural Resources District proposals in a number of communities across the state, power-line corridor studies, airport facility development and numerous state/county highway and bridge projects were among activities requiring Game and Parks Commission participation.

Reduced inflows and shrinking water levels prompted the Corps of Engineers to initiate a two-year interagency study of Harlan County Reservoir in 1991.
The Operations and Construction Division has the responsibility of providing personnel and equipment to assist other agency divisions with engineering, construction, maintenance, and transportation services.

The Engineering Section regularly inspects agency facilities and areas needing improvements or repairs, and provides corrective solutions. It also inspects construction for compliance with planned design, and develops specifications for materials and equipment purchased by the division.

The Construction Section provides personnel trained in engineering and construction skills to supervise and operate heavy equipment and install and maintain utility services.

The Maintenance Section provides personnel and equipment for the supervision, operation and maintenance of unmanned areas. Among responsibilities are establishment of tree nurseries; maintaining the tree transplanting program; assisting with regulation enforcement; maintaining public contact on unmanned areas; and providing and manning equipment and a material supply shop for the Parks Division.

During 1991 the Operations and Construction Division maintained a staff of 32 full-time employees and 91 seasonal, temporary employees, many hired at the job site to reduce travel and lodging costs.

Division staff operates from offices and shops located at headquarters, at 3019 Apple Street and 3001 Y Street in Lincoln, and outstate at North Platte, McCook, Fort Robinson, and Grand Island.

The Construction Section
1991 was a year of continuing projects started the previous year, and it was a year worth waiting for. After seven years of work, development and construction were completed at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park near Ashland. The miniature golf course was completed, as was the conservatory/greenhouse using donated money from the James Family.

Construction of the barracks walls continued at Fort Atkinson using logs and lumber donated by the Burlington Northern Foundation, and concrete and roof materials purchased with state funds. This project was started in 1985 and is estimated to be finished in 1995.

LINCOLN MAINTENANCE
Provides daily maintenance and supervision of seven Salt Valley areas: Branched Oak, Pawnee, Conestoga, Bluestem, Olive Creek, Stagecoach and Wagon Train; and five district V areas: Alexandria, Rockford, Memphis, Blue River and Pioneer. In addition, refuse pickup, latrine cleaning and mowing was provided at Salt Valley and other sites. Personnel also assist with enforcement of park regulations, install and repair boat docks and ramps, repair wells and water systems, and maintain trees and shrubs, supervise and regulate pay campgrounds at Branched Oak, Pawnee and Alexandria areas, and set up and operate exhibits at the Omaha and Lincoln sport shows and state fair.

TRANSPORTATION AND EQUIPMENT
The division provided a wide range of equipment such as air compressors, tractors, trucks and loaders to area superintendents for temporary use. Bulk purchases of maintenance supplies were delivered to the Lincoln maintenance shop, inventoried, and transported to the major areas of the park system. Gasoline and diesel fuel were provided for agency vehicles from pumps at 3001 Y Street. During 1991, 45,604 gallons of gasoline and 17,428 gallons of diesel fuel, 220 quarts of oil and 251 gallons of antifreeze were dispensed to Game and Parks vehicles.

Equipment purchased during 1991 included: three 3/4-ton pickups; two pickup bodies; one 1-ton utility van; two dump truck bodies; two flatbed trucks; one 4-wheel-drive tractor/loader; one 1½-yard loader; one landscape scraper; and one 1/3-yard loader.

ROAD MAINTENANCE
Personnel and equipment headquartered at Lincoln, McCook, North Platte, Fort Robinson, Wildcat Hills, Valentine and Grand Island provided maintenance on 225 miles of agency non-hard surfaced roads and parking areas.

During 1991 the Division provided a wide variety of equipment and services for other divisions: Roadwork and/or gravel projects at Aksarben Aquarium, Dead Timber, Keller Park, and Rock Creek Hatchery.

Building and office projects at Fort Robinson, the Lincoln headquarters and Sherman Reservoir.

Interior or exterior water projects, (plumbing or lake facilities, were completed at Arbor Lodge, Brownville SRA, Hershey, Lake McConaughy, Platte River State Park, Ravenna and Rock Creek Station.

Electrical work was done at Ponca State Park, and general cleanup and maintenance work was done at about a dozen state areas.
WILDLIFE DIVISION

The Wildlife Division is responsible for developing research and management programs associated with game and nongame mammals and birds of the state, which are categorized as: big game, upland game, waterfowl, furbearers, and non-game, or threatened and endangered.

Wildlife research studies provide information that assists in development of management programs, and to aid Law Enforcement, Resource Services and other divisions.

Management programs attempt to provide the maximum hunting, trapping and recreational opportunity for sportsmen and women, and to develop regulations that ensure adequate safeguards for the resource.

Division personnel collect data to determine populations, productivity, harvest information, conduct banding studies, document habitat changes and impact, develop practices to protect threatened or endangered species, and study non-native species for suitability for introduction. The division is responsible for monitoring private game farm operations, controlled shooting areas, falconry operations and pheasant rearing programs through the game farm operation at Wilcox and the day-old chick cooperator program.

RESEARCH PROGRAMS

A study involving duck breastbones continued, noting differences in species. Several law enforcement cases have been made on these distinctions. A field manual for law enforcement agencies is to be printed in 1992.

An ongoing study involves the identification of fish fillets once the skin is removed and to determine the original length of the fish. A video tape, booklet and key are being prepared.

Other activities in law enforcement forensics include identification from meat, blood, bone, feathers, hair and scales; time and cause of death, grouse and pheasant identification, sexing of turkey, pheasant and deer.

The Natural Heritage Database continues to collect, update and disperse information on the rare species and natural communities in Nebraska. Currently the database has processed 3,750 species and natural community records; and about 600 species and 50 community types are being collected. Several agencies are making use of the data.

A grant was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct inventory work on Sandhills fens in Cherry County. Work began in the summer of 1991 and 125 potential fens were identified.

The official beginning of the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture came in 1991 and a task force and work team are developing plans and programs. Saline wetlands of eastern Nebraska were the subject of a wetland protection grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. An color feature in NEBRASKAland Magazine, a slide program and color poster are being finalized to increase public awareness.

Other wetlands projects were under way, including data to be included in the 1991-1995 comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

NONGAME

OTTERS — A river otter introduction project was completed in 1991 with the release of 48 otters on the Niobrara, Elkhorn and Platte rivers. This made a total of 159 otters released at seven locations in the state since 1986.

BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS — Release sites are being sought for the release of black-footed ferrets following the success of a captive breeding program at several facilities in the country. Release sites will be centered around prairie dog colonies since they are the primary food of the ferrets.

BALD EAGLE — The first bald eagle egg in Nebraska this century was laid in 1991, along the Platte River in Douglas County. Although the egg hatched, the young bird never fledged. The January 1991 census showed there were 632 bald eagles wintering in Nebraska.

PEREGRINE FALCON — Male falcons established territories at both both capitol in Lincoln and Woodman Tower in Omaha. Females were attracted but no nesting occurred in 1991.
KESTREL — The Raptor Recovery Center in Lincoln joined the Commission’s 1-80 nest box project, and built and installed 15 boxes on the back of interstate signs between Lincoln and Seward. While only one of these was used in 1991, the 30 boxes between Omaha and Lincoln get 50 percent use annually.

BLUEBIRD — Over 200 Nebraskans monitored 2,274 nest boxes of bluebirds in 54 counties and they recorded the fledging of at least 2,215 bluebirds.

LEAST TERN, PIPING PLOVER — A survey of least tern and piping plover nesting colonies was conducted on the Niobrara, Platte and Middle Loup rivers, with 486 pairs of terns and 187 pairs of plovers found.

WHOOPING CRANE — Cranes are monitored each spring and fall migration period and stopover sites evaluated. In the spring of 1991, there were six confirmed, seven probable and 11 unconfirmed reports of whoopers. In the fall, there were six confirmed, two probable and three unconfirmed sightings.

GAME
FURBEARERS — Various projects are under way to gather harvest data, monitor populations, provide trapper education and others.

WATERFOWL — Surveys, counts and studies of many types are continuing, including several types of banding. All data collected is used for various management programs, including season recommendations.

UPLAND GAME — Plans have been prepared for all species, and arrangements have been made for North Dakota to trap Hungarian partridge for release over the winter in the Panhandle of Nebraska and possibly other sites.

Much other information for public dissemination has been updated, such as new range maps for pheasant and quail; fact sheets on cottontails and fox squirrels for public schools; prairie grouse studies; a quail brochure which appeared in NEBRASKAland Magazine, and others.

Most upland species took advantage of a mild winter and moist spring in 1991 and increased populations statewide.

DEER — Hunter success was off slightly in 1991, partially as a result of fewer permits and fewer either-sex permits. Overall success, however, was 54 percent.

ANTELOPE — Aerial surveys indicate increased numbers for the third consecutive year since 1988, with about 5,000 antelope estimated in the Panhandle. Most typical range, however, is only at about 65 percent of capacity. Coyote control was conducted for the second year on a 1150-square-mile study area in Sioux County, and significantly higher fawn:doe ratios were seen in the study area.

TURKEY — Although preceded by three years of poor reproduction, spring hunting success was comparable to 1990. Summer production in 1991 was improved. Hunter success for fall was slightly better at 58 percent with 3,000 turkeys taken. Archery success was 24 percent.
The primary responsibilities of the Resources Services Division are development, improvement and maintenance of wildlife habitat. This involves lands and facilities on state wildlife management areas and administration of the Nebraska Wildlife Habitat Plan, which involves Game and Parks Commission-controlled lands, private lands, and lands under the control of other governmental agencies.

The division is responsible for:
- Management of captive waterfowl and pheasant production flocks
- Management of elk, buffalo, and bighorn sheep herds
- Management of controlled hunting areas such as the Sacramento-Wilcox Area, the Clear Creek Area; and the Randall W. Schilling Area
- Nest box management
- Technical land reconnaissance
- Providing facilities for sporting dog training and field trials
- Coordination with and assistance to other governmental agencies and groups
- Technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, sportsmen groups and individuals

During 1991, the Resource Services Division was involved in a number of efforts to enhance wildlife habitat through the Nebraska Habitat Program. Among those efforts were:
- The allocation of 45,000 trees to farmers and ranchers for wildlife habitat plantings
- The distribution of 1,500, 5-pound bags of seed mixtures to be planted as wildlife food plots
- The distribution of 7,500 pounds of grain sorghum (milo) to be used for planting of food plots for wildlife.

Among the projects involving public land habitat improvements during 1991 were:
- Providing seed for the County Roadside Seeding Program. The Division received requests from 32 counties, and some $27,000 was expended on this practice.
- Continued coordination efforts with the U.S. Forest Service for various habitat developments and protective projects, such as habitat improvement and protection on McKelvie, Bessey, and the Pine Ridge Forest Service lands. To date, over $214,426 has been expended on these areas. Habitat development included tree and shrub plantings, grass and legume seedings, oats and sweet clover seedings, and food plot plantings. About $12,000 was expended for those purposes during 1991.
- Again coordinated efforts with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Harlan County Reservoir for various habitat projects including numerous tree and shrub plantings, grass and legume seedings and food plot plantings. Fences were also erected at several locations. While only $7,170 was expended in 1991, the Commission thus far has expended approximately $896,940 for wildlife habitat improvement on the Harlan area.
- Completed projects on numerous state wildlife management areas across the state (30,000 acres) including 75 acres of trees and shrubs planted, along with numerous grass-legume plantings and food plot plantings of corn, milo, soybeans and sunflowers.

Wildlife land acquisition is an important part of the Nebraska Wildlife Habitat Plan and each year division personnel conduct numerous land reconnaissances. The information they develop on land is presented to a habitat screening committee, and each area is assigned a priority rating for acquisition.

During 1991, 2,811 acres of land were acquired for the growing list of state Wildlife Management areas. Since 1977, the program has purchased 25,708 acres of land at a cost of over $10 million.

The division administers all sporting dog training and field trial activities in the state. During 1991 there were 29 organized clubs listed on the state roster, and they conducted a total of 86 trials during the year. Of those, 21 were held at Branched Oak. There were 1,730 dogs entered in the trials, and 5,500 people attended.