Sandhills Task Force

"Where the people and land are one"

P.O. Box 787
Wood Lake, NE 69221

Next Task Force Meeting:

The next Task Force meeting is on Wednesday, August 24th, in Thedford. Stub's is now called Brahmer's and is located on east HWY 2 just west of the HWY 83 junction.
 http://brahmersteakhouseandsaloon.com

Agenda Items:
9:30 Meeting called to order
      Introductions
      Approval of minutes
      Financial Report (Barb Cooksley)
      Audit update
      Fill USFWS board vacancy
      NRCS staff assignment change-Britt replacement
      Fill rancher board member vacancy
      Project Coordinator update (Van Winkle)

- 2010 NET Award update (Grant County project)
- FRPP contract and project update (Loup County project)
- Nebraska Land Trust (Funding for Loup County FRPP project)
- US Fish and Wildlife Cooperative agreement update
- Nebraska Bird Partnership grant application (VFD Award)
- Update on environmental review process
- Update on various projects past and present

      Committee report, discuss and act on RC&D board
      vacancy (Hansen-Mack-Luchsinger)
 12:00 Lunch
      Website expansion/update (Graham)
      Leopold award update
      Review Loup County Project appraisal and funding

      Discuss NET grants for 2011 Application period/
      Authorize committee plan (Van Winkle-Mack-
      LaGrange)

2:00 Walter Wehtje (Crane Trust research report)

3:00 Adjourn

August 2011

Whooping Crane Project-Walter Wehtje Requests STF Board discussion

Since December 2009, biologists from the Crane Trust, Canadian Wildlife Service and Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center have placed GPS transmitters on 24 Whooping Cranes, with the goal of identifying the habitats the cranes prefer during migration. In Nebraska, close to 20,000 acres along the Platte River are managed for whooping cranes. However, because there are so few of them, The Crane Trust has very little data on which to base management decisions. In Nebraska, the transmitters have documented whooping crane use along the Platte River and in the Sandhills. By learning what habitats are used in the Sandhills, improved management practices along the Platte River could be developed. The Crane Trust has applied for a $10,000 grant, renewable for three years, from the Nebraska Bird Partnership to do this. However, The Crane Trust would like to work with the Sandhills Task Force to maximize the success of the grant. Initially, The Crane Trust would coordinate with STF when contacting landowners in the Sandhills. The Crane Trust will also provide STF with outreach information that you can use to inform landowners of how important this region is for whooping cranes, and how ranching practices benefit this endangered species.

Nebraska Land Trust

The Nebraska Land Trust has pledged their support for the STF Loup County FRPP project. Having completed several successful FRPP agreements, their staff experience is invaluable. Their board is expected to approve the transfer of funds in the amount of $175,000 and will provide a letter of support for the project.

Sheridan County Projects

Since our last board meeting we completed the first phase of a willow planting project along Box Butte Creek. The work was completed by the Pine Ridge Youth Job Corp the first week in June. The project should result in improved bank stabilization for years to come. In addition, the STF recently completed an agreement with a landowner along the Niobrara River south of Gordon. The project entails a planned grazing system and removal of cedar trees along Johndreau Creek. This project is expected to be complete by the next board meeting.

Grant County Project Receives NET Funding

The STF was notified recently that $150,000 of a $192,000 2010 grant application was approved at the last NETF board meeting. The purpose of the grant application was to provide funding for a wetland restoration project that would result in permanent protection.

STF Website Update

Kyle has been working with a website designer out of North Platte. They have developed a updated version of the current website that Kyle will present to the STF at the next board meeting.