
For Birds, Birders, and Conservation

Nebraska Important Bird Areas Program

Audubon Nebraska has launched an Important Bird Areas (IBA) program to identify critical breeding, migratory stopover, and wintering areas for birds throughout the state. The program will develop conservation strategies to ensure the protection of these key bird habitats and increase public education about birds and the habitats they need in order to survive. The Important Bird Areas Program is already underway in 40 other states and 130 countries.



Nebraska bird experts have formed a technical review committee to create state-specific criteria for IBA site selection. Once the criteria are in place, nominations for potential IBA sites can be made. Individuals and groups throughout the state will be asked to help select the sites they feel meet the criteria of an IBA.

Guidelines to help groups or individuals select a site are given. The site might be one that supports endangered or threatened populations. It may host significant bird populations. Or it may be an exceptional example

of rare habitat.

At the **January 8** general meeting, Kevin Poague, Audubon Nebraska IBA Coordinator, will speak to us about IBAs in Nebraska. Kevin has worked for Audubon since 1998 and is currently the Administrative Assistant. Before joining Audubon, Kevin worked for the Pioneers Park Nature Center and the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. He has a Master's degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Please join us as Kevin Poague explains the Nebraska Important Bird Areas program, the guidelines for selection sites, and how each of us can help further the cause of bird conservation here in our state.

**The meeting will be held
January 8, 7:30 P.M. at Hansom
Park Methodist Church, 4444
Frances St (one block south of
45th & Center).**

A brief business meeting will follow the presentation. The evening will conclude with coffee,

Local Bird Feeder Watch January 17

Clem Klaphake will lead interested birders to several local backyard bird feeders on Saturday, January 17. The types of species we are likely to see is very unpredictable on these types of field trips. Winter migrants come and go quite regularly.

If you have unusual sightings at your feeders the week before the 17th, please let Clem know (292-2276), especially if you don't mind a few winter-starved bird sight

ing Auduboners stop by your house. This year I have included a rural backyard feeder station in Sarpy County I'm hoping might have some different birds from what most of us get in the urban neighborhoods. Unless there are a number of "hot," unusual birds, we should finish the field trip by 12:00 noon. We will meet at the Fontenelle Forest Nature Center parking lot in Bellevue at 8:00 A.M. and caravan from there.

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Nelli's Notes

By Nelli Falzgraf

The New Year

Here's to an active and productive year for ASO in 2004! Thanks to all those who participated this past year, whether on field trips, volunteering for some project, attending general meetings, or serving on our Board. If you haven't as yet joined us for some of these, we hope you will find some activities that enrich your free time.

Omaha Raptor Team

Congratulations are extended to the Omaha Raptor Team for earning Honorable Mention in the Omaha World-Herald Master Conservationist program.

the season's successes to Mr. Dinan. In 2000 Jenny Henricksen started to document the young birds from tiny balls of white fluff to fine-feathered young.

Jim and Cal retired from the project in 2001. Jenny used her flatbed to haul a 24-foot ladder and drove volunteers to monitor the route in 2002. The flatbed broke after the season's young were banded. The nest boxes are still up, and we hope established populations of Kestrels will return to start the next generation. But we see so many Starlings.

Would someone volunteer the use of a

The Team presents educational programs with non-releasable birds of prey, focusing on conservation and natural history of raptors. They are licensed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and have reached thousands of youths and adults each year with excellent programs that teach, entertain and connect to nature.

The Team was honored recently by the Papio-Missouri NRD for their Outdoor Education programs, and earlier at the Regency Court for Most Creative Display at the Spring Gardening Show. For years they helped with Earth Day Celebrations, Humane Society fundraisers, and Library Summer Reading programs.

Thank you, Team members Jenny Henricksen, Lisa Bough, Linda Dennis, Scott Marin, Linda Schulz, Bill Seibert, Sandy Seibert, Alison O'Connor, Peter Gros and Jim Fowler (when in town, the latter two give programs with the Team).

To arrange for a program by the Raptor Team, call Jenny Henricksen, 895-5487.

Kestrel Nest Boxes

American Kestrels, also called Sparrow Hawks, nest in abandoned tree cavities hollowed out by woodpeckers. When woodlands are cleared for freeway construction, the removal of trees eliminates nest sites. It is hoped that providing nest boxes along freeways makes up for the lost homes.

Jim Kovanda started the ASO Kestrel Nest Box project during the mid-90's, under the direction of John Dinan of Nebraska Game & Parks. Volunteers built nest boxes using plans provided by Clyde Anderson of the Sierra Club. I mapped the route and the Kestrel crew installed nest boxes on the Kennedy Freeway, I-680, and at two schools in 1995.

For six years we met on Sunday afternoons in spring and piled into Cal Wolf's van with a 24-foot ladder to monitor the nests and discourage

truck, van, or other vehicle that can carry a 24-foot ladder? Would you help to monitor? Please call Jenny Henricksen, 895-5487, or Nelli Falzgraf, 292-9687.

National Audubon

NAS requested Board members to complete a survey prioritizing conservation policy issues National could address, giving us a chance to voice our opinions on the direction of our organization.

Don't Forget Your Shirt Order

Orders are still being taken for T-shirts with the new logo. They will continue until 25-30 have been ordered.

Sizes are S, M,L,XL,XXL (add \$1.50), XXXL (add \$3.00). Colors are white, bright yellow, black, heather gray, navy, orange, lime green, gold.

Available in short and long sleeves. Prices: \$15 and \$20. Please contact Pauline Dickey with questions or if you want to check out colors in her catalog.

Allow 2 to 2 1/2 weeks for delivery. Payment to be made at time of delivery. Order via phone or email: 932-8205 or paulinedickey@cox.net.

Upcoming Events

Jan 5 (Mon) Conservation Meeting

Jan 7 (Wed) Board Meeting

Jan 8 (Thu) General Meeting

Jan 17 (Sat) Field Trip

Jan 31 - Mar 6 (Saturdays)

Birding Class at Metro Community College

Feb 13-16 Backyard Bird Count

invasive Starlings from nesting. Ruth Green banded the young in June, and Jim reported

Rivers & Wildlife Celebration March 19-21

Spring in Nebraska and Sandhill Cranes make a perfect pair, don't they? We can welcome both again at the Rivers & Wildlife Celebration under the sponsorship of Audubon Nebraska and Rowe Sanctuary.

The Holiday Inn, Kearney, will be the site of the 2004 event held Friday-Sunday, March 19-21. Daily field trips will be led by experienced guides to view the cranes plus Prairie Chickens, waterfowl, Snow Geese, and other avian attractions.

Distinguished speakers have been engaged. A nature journaling workshop will be offered for the first time.

In order to conserve, mass mailings including registration forms will not be made. Call or write soon to receive a registration brochure from Audubon Nebraska, 5000 Central Park Dr, Suite 101, Lincoln NE 68504, (402) 466-1220; nebraska@audubon.org; www.nebraska-audubon.org.

Meeting on Issue of Major Power Lines on Hike-Bike Trails January 5

Birding Class January 31- Mar 6

A six-week noncredit course, Birding for the Beginner, will be offered at the Audubon Office, Heron Haven, 11809 Old Maple Road, through Metro Community College starting January 31 and running through March 6.

Open to everyone interested in learning about birds, classes are scheduled from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon each Saturday and will be taught by Ione Werthman and other Audubon members. The class will cover bird identification through field marks, size, shape, behavior, song, habitat, and much, much more.

Call 457-5231 at Metro Community College to register.

provide homes for birds and other wildlife and clean our air. Their destruction isn't necessary. Put the power line on 72nd Street, a commercial and industrial area already clustered with industrial power lines and billboards.

.. The ugly, massive power lines (similar to those on Pacific Street) will rob us of our cherished inner city green space that our trails provide and we pay for through our taxes.

.. Our trails were built to provide solace and reprieve from the industrial world, to give citizens a green space to relax and enjoy our natural world. . .for all who want to take a break from industry,

By Melissa Gardner

The OPPD has proposed building a high-voltage power line along the Keystone Hike-Bike Trail near Ak-Sar-Ben. At a meeting on Monday, January 5, 7:00 P.M. at Belle Ryan School, 1807 So. 60th St. (5 blocks north of Center), the NRD Board will discuss and vote whether or not to approve the proposal.

I am hosting this public meeting to hear opinions on this proposal. Everyone is invited to attend. Join your neighbors for dessert, beverages, and open discussion on this important NRD vote, which will set the precedent for future use of our trails in Omaha.

As this is in my NRD Sub-District, it is important that I hear your concerns on this proposal. If you cannot attend, please e-mail your opinion to me at ma.gardner@cox.net, or call me at 402-556-5198. I will pass along your views to my fellow NRD Board Directors and the Douglas County Board members, who also need to vote on OPPD's proposal.

Listed are some comments I've already received:

“ According to OPPD, many trees would be removed from Grover Street just south of I 80. Trees

for taking nature walks and viewing wildlife. Using them as "utility corridors" would be the exact opposite of the original intent of taxpayers in funding these trails.

“ Placing major electric poles on our trail will subject taxpayers to unnecessary liability and related future costs and set a dangerous precedent that our trails were built as "utility corridors."



I hope to see you at the Jan. 5 meeting or to hear from you regarding this important NRD vote that will set the precedent for the future use of our hike-bike trails in Omaha.

Conservation/Legislative Action

By Ione Werthman

Is it Pork Barrel Time?

A Fishy Problem in Nebraska

Robert J. Samuelson in a Dec. 1
Newsweek article

calls the new Medicare bill "Pork Barrel" and a "blatant pitch for votes of the elderly that worsens the long-term budget outlook and will be paid for by the young." As baby boomers retire, costs between \$1.3 trillion and \$2 trillion are projected for Medicare. Samuelson said everyone in the White House and Congress knows this, but the young aren't paying attention. Democrats and Republicans competed to show how much they'll help retirees.

In a recent interview, Senator McCain (R-AZ) said that Congress is spending like a drunken sailor. "The Medicare bill will cause the 38-year-old insurance program for those 65 and older to go broke." The Congressional Budget Office has forecast that the U.S. will spend as much as \$200 billion over the next 10 years for military operations in Iraq. The House, which has passed the \$31 billion energy Bill, will make it even worse. The Senate has postponed voting on the Energy Bill until January. We still need to put an end to this bill, which will make energy production the dominant use of our Western public lands and weaken the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act to free energy companies from continuing to take steps to protect the public.

If you haven't already done so, a letter, card or phone call to Senators Ben Nelson and Chuck Hagel asking them to vote "no" on the Energy Bill is a must. See addresses and phone numbers on page 7.

And then comes Senator Grassley (R IA), proposing the creation of a \$225 million fake rain forest near Iowa City, using \$50 million in federal funds for initial financing. Pork Barrel?

I've heard that no environmental groups in Iowa have endorsed the concept, pointing out that the Botanical Gardens in Des Moines, 1/3 the size of the proposed rain forest, loses about

It's one thing to read about salmon farmers in Canada fighting regulation and environmental concerns that detract from their industry making profits on salmon. It's another thing to read articles on Food and Drug Administration reports that say, while nutritious, tuna can also contain mercury, a metal that accumulates in the bodies of fish eaters and can damage the growing brains of fetuses and young children.

Now comes a report from the December 11 *Los Angeles Times* about Nebraska's Elkhorn River and its fish reads that reads, "Hormones that leak into streams from cattle feedlots are altering the sexual characteristics of wild fish, demasculinizing the males and defeminizing the females." Scientists said the samples were taken from a site on the Elkhorn flowing directly adjacent to a large Nebraska feedlot. Lab tests confirmed that feedlot effluent contains a complex and potent mix of the male sex hormones, androgens, and the female hormones, estrogens. Thus fish in the Elkhorn are being affected by the artificial growth hormones used on cattle in Nebraska feedlots.

This report comes from a group of scientists funded by the European Union and headed by the University of Florida who are studying the safety of U.S. meat. Cattle industry representatives called the study an unsubstantiated attack. Do you suppose this could be another reason why the 8,000 square mile Gulf off the coast of Louisiana has become the "dead zone"? Will we never learn?

Good News Department

According to an article by Nancy Gaarder in the Dec. 14 *World-Herald*, NPPD (Nebr. Pub. Power Dist), has taken a serious step toward using our state's plentiful wind resource by voting to building a 75-megawatt wind farm on land south of Ainsworth by the spring of 2005. It would generate enough electricity to power 24,000 homes. NPPD will lease the land from five

\$800,000 a year in operating budget. A popular tee shirt produced by environmentalists says, "Prairies are our rainforests." Iowa members are urged to contact Senator Charles Grassley, urging him to rethink this project:

The Honorable Charles Grassley, 731 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510

(202-224-3254, fax (202) 224-9369.

property owners.

We who are native Nebraskans need no one to remind us that Nebraska ranks as the sixth windiest state in the nation. (Sometimes I think we must be first!)

The potential is there, and we hope OPPD will join in the venture. Nebraska, with all the potential, still lags

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Omaha Raptor Team Goes Traditional

On November 29, Omaha **By Bechara Embaid**

Raptor Team members Jenny Henricksen and Linda Dennis gave another extraordinary presentation. Their audience was the Arab-American Heritage Society, an organization in which I am a board member in charge of Public Relations. I asked Jenny to wear a traditional Middle Eastern dress from Damascus, Syria.

When I presented her to the audience in her new traditional look, she drew a rarely witnessed roaring and warm applause that would make many politicians jealous. Jenny's presentation pleased and amazed the audience of all ages. Again the ORT won the interest and hearts of all present.

In appreciation, I gave Jenny a flying carpet (no batteries included) from my ancestral city, Aleppo, Syria. I gave Linda a tablecloth made by artisans from the same region.



Omaha Raptor Team Recognized by NRD

By Jenny Henricksen

Happy New Year to everyone from the Omaha Raptor Team. We hope you've not forgotten us, but during the past few months we've been very busy with our educational programs. It has been a fantastic year for us. We've seen so many familiar faces in the many schools and libraries we visit. Equally rewarding has been traveling to exciting places and making new acquaintances throughout Nebraska and Iowa.

Sherry Seibert accepts award from Fred Conley, Chair of the Board of the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District.

The highlight of our year was being recognized by the Papio-Missouri NRD for our Honorable Mention Award in the *Omaha World-Herald* Master Conservationist program. Thanks to the NRD for their continued support, not only with our partnership in education but also with the new plumbing and improved parking lot at Heron Haven. They help us look good!

Please keep us in mind next year if you need a good program for your special organization, school, or library. We travel throughout Nebraska and Iowa visiting a range of places from preschools to retirement homes. Please call me at 895-5487 for additional information.

Conservation/Legislative Action Continued from page 4

behind and is dwarfed by what is happening in Iowa, Minnesota and Colorado in wind power.

Happy New Year! Join us for more conservation/legislative updates during 2004. Meetings are generally held the first Monday of each month. If you would like a reminder notice, call 445-4138. **Next meeting - Jan. 5.**

7th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count

N.Y., N.Y. & Ithaca, N.Y. From February 13-16, bird enthusiasts are invited to take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). During the event, everyone will be able to submit their observations through www.birdsource.org. Participants will help determine the status of bird populations continent-wide. At the same time, the project will teach participants how to turn their backyards into habitat for birds.

In the United States, an average of 2.1 million acres of land is converted to residential use every year. Eighty percent of U.S. households have private lawns. This enormous habitat must not be overlooked in efforts to conserve North American birds and other natural resources, especially because it can be easily managed by the millions of bird and nature lovers as healthy havens for wildlife—and not-so-wildlife.

"Backyards are important greenways for birds between parks and wild areas," said Frank Gill, Audubon's Director of Science. "They allow for cultivation of native plants and provide essential sanctuary to migratory and resident birds. Projects such as GBBC give people a firsthand view of how important bird-friendly backyards are to many species."

The GBBC tracks the abundance and distribution of our

winter birds as a means of ensuring that common birds remain common, especially during a time when they face many environmental hurdles. The GBBC is a terrific way for individuals and groups to contribute to a better understanding of birds," says Gill. "Another way is to create healthy backyard habitat. . .during this time of environmental challenges that include habitat loss and degradation."

Birders are invited to visit the web site to learn the best ways to improve the health of their back yard with native plants and water, and by reducing pesticide use, conserving water, and removing exotic pests.

When we invite birds into our yards, we are responsible for keeping them safe. Window strikes kill perhaps a billion birds each year; roving house cats are a menace and need to be kept indoors.

The web site will help with bird identification problems and offer bird-feeding tips. Instructions for the Count can be found at www.birdsource.org/gbbc. No fee or registration. Those who aren't online can ask for help at a library or from a friend. Watch for a reminder about the GBBC in the February issue.

DeSoto Christmas Count

By Jerry Toll

Greetings all. The DeSoto/Boyer Chute CBC was held Saturday, Dec. 20. The lack of open water kept the numbers and species down. Conspicuously absent were waterfowl and sparrow diversity. A

1990, 2002). A surprising number of Hermit Thrush were found (4), setting a new record. Previously only 9 had been found in both 2003-04. Purple Finches were prodigious with most counts at the

Snipe seen at the Ft. Calhoun water treatment outlet for many years was absent. The count day weather was good with clear skies, moderate temperate and wind. Out Chickadee numbers were down only 36% from last year (406). Looking back to 1987, only 5 years had higher Chickadee counts (2987-

Hitchcock Hawkwatch during count week being over 100. The 34 seen on count day was still enough to blow away any previous high tally (9). The totals presented are tentative. The compiler Bob Barry, biologist at DeSoto NWR, has the final say, but these numbers are based on the same data.

Snow Goose 450	American Kestrel 16	Downy Woodpecker 75	Hermit Thrush 4
Canada Goose 577	Merlin 1	Hairy Woodpecker 23	European Starling 5806
Mallard 660	Ring-necked Pheasant 46	Northern Flicker 174	Cedar Waxwing 154
Blue-winged Teal 3	Wild Turkey 212	Blue Jay 100	Yellow-rumped Warbler 2
Northern Shoveler 15	Northern Bobwhite 2	American Crow 301	SpottedxEastern Towhee 2
Common Goldeneye 41	Killdeer 3	Horned Lark 146	American Tree Sparrow 579
Common Merganser 67	Ring-billed Gull 4	Black-capped Chickadee 261	Fox Sparrow 1
Duck Species 42	Rock Dove 189	Tufted Titmouse 11	Song Sparrow 10
Bald Eagle 30	Mourning Dove 28	White-breasted Nuthatch 92	Swamp Sparrow 2
Northern Harrier 7	Screech Owl 4	Brown Creeper 2	White-throated Sparrow 13
Sharp-shinned Hawk 5	Great-horned Owl 7	Carolina Wren 5	Harris Sparrow 7
Cooper's Hawk 5	Barred Owl 8	Golden-crowned Kinglet 3	Dark-eyed Junco 564
Red-tailed Hawk 93	Red-headed Woodpecker 8	Eastern Bluebird 86	Lapland Longspur 6
Rough-legged Hawk 6	Red-bellied Woodpecker 90	American Robin 90	

**Continued on
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**Addresses
Remember**

to

Audubon Society
Membership Application

President George W. Bush
The White House, 1600
Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington D.C. 20500-0001
Comments: 202-456-1111;
fax: 202-456-2993

Senator Ben Nelson

U.S. Senate, Washington DC
20510; 202-224-6551; fax
202-228-0012; Lincoln: 402-
437-5246; Omaha 391-3411;
Omaha address: 7602 Pacific
St, #205, 68114

Senator Chuck Hagel

U.S. Senate, Washington,
D.C. 20510-2705

Phone: (202) 224-4224; Fax:
(202) 224-5213

Omaha phone: (402) 758-
8981

Representative Lee Terry

U.S. House of
Representatives, Washington,
DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-4155 ; Fax:
(202) 226-5452

Omaha phone: (402) 397-
9944

Representative Douglas
Bereuter

U.S. House of
Representatives, Washington,
DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-4806; fax
(202) 225-5686

Lincoln phone: (402) 438-
1598

Governor Michael Johanns

The *Audubon Magazine**(see below,
chapter-only membership) and your
membership card will be sent to this address:

Name_____

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City_____State_____

Zip Code_____Phone:_____

Email:_____

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Mail to Audubon Society of Omaha

11809 Old Maple Road

Omaha NE 68164

PO 3

7XCH

Capitol Bldg, Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509

Phone: (402) 471-2244; Fax:
471-6031

Mayor Mike Fahey

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center

1819 Farnam St, Omaha NE
68183

Phone: 444-5000 Hot Line:
444-5555

Memorials

The Audubon Society of
Omaha greatly
appreciates the
memorials it receives.

When sending your gift,
please identify the person
you wish to memorialize.
Please also give the name
and address of the person
to be notified.

Continued from page 6

DeSoto
Count,
Snow Bunting 5

Northern Cardinal 154

Red-winged Blackbird 88

Meadowlark Species 128

Rusty Blackbird 1

Brown-headed Cowbird 1

Purple Finch 34

House Finch 30

American Goldfinch
126

House Sparrow 490

Bequests

A bequest to Audubon is a gift to those who will
succeed us; a gift to secure our natural heritage.



If you find an injured bird of prey,
please contact a Raptor Recovery
Center volunteer at 402-731-9869.

Shrike Species 1

Total Individuals
12,195

Total Species 64

**Audubon Society of Omaha, 11809 Old Maple Road,
Omaha 68164**

Phone: 445-4138 - <http://audubon-omaha.org>

Elected Officers:

President Nelli Falzgraf, 414 Ridgewood Dr, Bellevue 68005 292-9687

1st Vice President Elliott Bedows, 309 Greenbrier Ct, Bellevue 68005 292-5017

2nd Vice President Laurine Blankenau, 3808 Grebe, Omaha 68112 451-3647

Treasurer Vacant

Past President Eric Scholar, 5012 Nicholas St, Omaha 68132 551-5045

Recording Secretary Linda Dennis, 1011 Homer St, Omaha 68107 733-6548

Elected Directors Jackie Scholar, 5012 Nicholas St, Omaha 68132 551-5045

Mace Hack, 1735 So. 87th St, Omaha 68124 934-5040

Mark Armstrong, 12741 Forestdale Dr, Omaha 68123 292-9770

Bob Fuchs, 1113 Dillon Dr, Omaha 68132 553-8242

Sharon Draper, 6220 Kansas Ave, Omaha 68104 572-4026

Clem Klaphake, 707 Garden Ave, Bellevue 68005 292-2276

Standing Committee Chairpersons:

Conservation Ione Werthman, 11649 Burt St, #011, Omaha 68154 493-0373

Education Brian Jensen, 12430 Bel Drive, Omaha NE 68144 333-6375

Field Trip Clem Klaphake, 707 Garden Ave, Bellevue 68005 292-2276

Finance Nelli Falzgraf, 414 Ridgewood Dr, Bellevue 68005 292-9687

Fund Raising Pauline Dickey, 2534 Benson Gardens Blvd, Omaha 68134 932-8205

Hospitality DwanDean Leach, 3006 Poppleton, Omaha 68105 346-5769

Membership Bechara Embaid, 3218 No. 120th Court Apt. 221, Omaha 68164 965-9598

Natural Areas Mgt Eric Scholar, 5012 Nicholas St, Omaha 68132 551-5045

Omaha Raptor Team Jenny Henricksen, 4845 So 167 Ave 68135 895-5487

Program Ed Higgins, 3717 No 93rd St, Omaha 68134 572-1957

Publication Laurine Blankenau, 3808 Grebe, Omaha 68112 451-3647

Publicity Kathy Schwery, 3616 So 96th St, Omaha 68124 397-7343

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Naturestudy Vacant

Bird Seed Sale Co-Chairs Kathleen Rose, 123 Bellevue Blvd So, Bellevue 68005 292- 8912

Carol Rasmussen, 4503 So. 16th St, Omaha 68107 731-3939

Historian Kathleen Rose, 123 Bellevue Blvd So, Bellevue 68005 292-8912

Audubon Nebr Director Don Helmuth, P. O. Box 117, Denton NE 68339..... (402) 797-2301

ASO State Board Rep. Mace Hack, 1735 So. 87th St, Omaha 68124 934-5040

NAS Board Member Dave Tylka, tylka@stlcc.cc.mo.us

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