

America's Great Outdoors
Notes from Listening Session
Location: Grand Island, Nebraska
Date: July 12, 2010

President Obama launched a national conversation about conservation in America at the White House Conference on the Great Outdoors on April 16, 2010. The President understands that protecting and restoring the lands and waters that we love and reconnecting people to the outdoors must happen at the local level. Therefore, President Obama directed the principal leaders of the Initiative to travel across the country to listen and learn from people directly involved in finding grassroots solutions to conserve our lands, waterways, historical and cultural resources and to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. The President indicated that the sessions should engage the full range of interested groups, including tribal leaders, farmers and ranchers, sportsmen, community park groups, foresters, youth groups, businesspeople, educators, State and local government, recreation and conservation groups and others. The President placed a special priority on engaging with America's youth. Below are notes from the breakout groups at the Listening Session sorted by Discussion Question. Please feel free to use the ideation tool at <http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/> if you would like to share your thoughts.

Discussion Questions

1. What works: Please share your thoughts and ideas on effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors.
2. Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieve your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors?
3. Federal government role: How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors?
4. What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful?

Comments	Question (1-4)
It is important that we get the kids back to nature. There is research to support this fact that children with ADD are helped with spending time in the great outdoors. Being outdoors seems to quiet the soul (watching an ant hill, looking at the stars, etc.)and teaches children that these behaviors are not odd. We need to get the kids who are locked inside outdoors. Kids who never get the chance are missing out.	2
His dissertation was on outdoor learning theory. Kids learn if they walk in the ruts made by our ancestors more than being inside. No child left behind has put too much importance on tests. My plea is for private ranchers and farmers to reach out to the schools, especially the principals. Don't wait for them to come to you. If you can convince the principal you will find teachers who will bring their classes to your ranch or farm. We are having trouble funding outside activities. Find grants or private citizens who will fund these type of activities for the kids. We have to get the kids out there.	2,4
There is a club that has purchased canoes to take the kids out for an overnight fishing adventure. She has asked what the kids do when they find out there are no TVs, computer games, etc. The kids are awestruck when they can see the stars. This is a real success story.	1

Comments	Question (1-4)
He is involved in outdoor education. The kids need repeated exposure to outdoor activities. Education is important and relevant. We are one generation away from the farm. These kids need to be educated about the farm life.	1
Taking a kid on a field trip, getting the parents involved.	1
What does a hike and bike trail have to do with water quality. Is this an area the government can fund? There are various states where you cannot hunt and trap anymore. Beavers are overpopulated. We need to revisit some of these laws. Hike & bike trail are a real bonus.	3
College students are doing far more volunteer service then they used to because there is not enough money. How can we organize college students, high school students, and senior citizens to volunteer?	3
The Platte River Recovery is being forced on the state. The US Fish and Wildlife Service needs more water in the rivers for the piping plover, etc. Farmer should not be required to quit irrigating. Why don't we try to replicate some of the dry years when the rivers were dry, then the invasive species can die out. We are creating designer habitats on the river. Enhance habitats on the river by getting rid of trees ... not increasing the water level. A hundred years ago before developed irrigation in the state there was large blue stem grass, so basically years ago we were fully appropriated. Some of these changes make no sense.	3
Has been interested in the conservation taking place. He has had school children to his place and taught them to identify different plants, roots, shown them corn, earth worms, bugs, etc. We need to pay farmers not to irrigate. Farmers are using way to much water. Use the water appropriately; they need education on this issue. How do we get the kids to the farm? We need to make the parents be there. We fed the kids by roasting hotdogs on a stick. The kids had never done this before.	1,3
We need to get NRCS out in the field instead of shuffling paper. People have gotten away from getting into the field. They are filling the reports out to get money to farmers.	2,3
My family has been here 140 years. We are involved with center pivots. We have water running out of our ears. We cannot put down another well. The government needs to leave us alone. The farmer is the dog that keeps getting whipped.	2,3
American Heritage River. The federal government was here to take over the river. Fortunately there were enough farmers to take this back. What rights do you want to take away from us?	3
He grew up on a farm and hunting was something he wanted to do. He recommends using mentor programs from Pheasant Forever. There is a difference between conservation and earth science that is taught in schools. He learned a lot of useful information in FFA, but FFA is not available in urban areas. As kids get older they need to know about conservation issues, i.e., what is a buffer, etc. Project Wild (a conservation and environmental education program) is a program we need to get into our schools. Also need to continue this education at a higher level.	1
The Kearney & Platte River expo reaches audiences at a certain level. If you take the kids fishing they forget when they get home. We need additional personnel to put these expo's on in different parts of the state.	4
Children who play with mud pies are learning. How can we tie this in with a program like big brothers/sisters. We need trained mentors. These mentors could take them fishing or teach them about conservation.	4

Comments	Question (1-4)
Has a city not a rural mentality. Some of the audience at this meeting have a stronger tie to the land. Conservation is important and critical. To get an urban kid from a large metro area to the country would be asking too much. We need to get them or their parent's interested in outdoor recreation if for no other reason then to enjoy it. We need to think of recreation as a critical piece.	2
The UNL Extension Office uses a facility in Hastings at the old Regional Center. This center for outdoor and agricultural learning, Prairie Loft, is using grant monies and private donations to operate. Most of the work is done by volunteers and privately funded. I want all these agencies to work with schools more.	1, 3
His farm was established in 1862. A farmer does not have time for mentoring.	2
She had an organic farm for a while. Need to create pathways between the different points of view.	2
We have to go out and experience the outdoors. The streets of Omaha are not like streets of Dallas. What experiences do the kids today have of their parents telling them to go out and play and don't come back until dinner is ready? We probably had older siblings who watched out for our mischief.	2
We need to have the parents involved. He was involved with the Boy Scouts as a youth. It got him involved.	1
I disagree with this comment about getting parents involved. When I was a kid we built a tree house high up in a tree and wandered a creek nearby. In cities, how do you get kids in an unstructured area? A playground with plastic slides is not what I am taking about.	3
The federal government could fund more Game and Parks activities? More and more pivots are being used statewide utilizing less water. From Grand Island to Omaha you can get by without irrigating, but if you go west the farmers need to irrigate. The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program requires we go back to water usage of 1977.	3
We are using less water today then we have in the past.	1
Historic trails have been a great way to tie kids to the environment. Having the kids walk the ruts of the Oregon Trail gets more across to the kids then just talking about the Oregon Trail.	1
We need to prioritize. Five acres in the middle of Omaha does not cost as much as land in Los Angeles. We do not have the Congressional support that larger states may have. We would like the money allocated more fairly. Our cities may not be considered urban.	3
We need more tax incentives. Give people tax incentives if they volunteer. NRCS does need more money. They are understaffed.	3
That is a good way to get people back to nature. Bonus points for adult. Kids need to climb the tree by themselves. What about back to a heavy duty volunteer program. We have baby boomers who are retiring. Set up volunteer programs for the baby boomers. We could have community gardens in Grand Island. We could teach them to preserve their food, healthy eating, etc.	1
He sold vegetable at a farmers market. Everyone likes the corn, tomatoes, melons, but people did not know what to do with the more unusual vegetables.	2
She would add recipes to her vegetables when she sold produce at the farmers market. There are a lot of things we can share if we could reach individuals? Maybe through churches, help at a community garden, or teach canning?	1
Some of these ideas may not work due to the liability issues.	2

Comments	Question (1-4)
Liability is an issue. People have said to him for years you cannot do this or that or you will be sued. He did not listen but took people out on the trails, etc.	2
How do we reach the parents? Do they care? Can we get the parents to take their kids outdoors? Buses generally do not go to the nature spots. Sometimes the kids need to experience it themselves, and then get their parents involved.	1,2
A water park may be their connection to nature. Families need to do things together. We are competing against other activities. We need to get stuff in the urban areas to compete.	1,2
Free transportation to a park or lake.	1
Free food brings people out.	1
Why is it so important that we are talking about outdoor activities? Conservation/stewardship (especially in Nebraska) is so much better then 50 years ago when he was a kid. His home county of Saline used to flood every year, but not now because of the improved conservation practices.	1
We need nature areas for people to develop as human beings. Many of her students did not know what a seed pod was. They had no idea where food came from. We are losing farms like crazy and kids growing up on the farms.	2
How about taking kids who need a job and pairing them up with farmers? Someone else mentioned there are regulations on this, so be careful.	1,2
Agencies could get a list out to the schools of what services they have.	3
Throw the TV out the door and get rid of the fast food. Then maybe the kids would go out and do something.	2
Nebraska NRD's own and operate facilities that are free to the public. It would be nice if we could have access to more federal dollars to promote NE. The government cannot be everything to everyone. We can be a resource to volunteer organizations and public schools. I am a farmer, not at it actively. We started a program with Gothenburg High School and worked with FFA/biology/science for outdoor education. We obtained materials from NRCS and NRD. My family ran this program for 20 plus years. We passed the program on to our neighbor and it is still running today. It is a lot easier to run a program like this in a small town. We targeted 4th & 5th grade students and showed them how to husk corn in the fall, milk cows, etc., and exposed them to the environment. It is up to us to take the initiative to expose them locally. Another project one of the NRDs is working on is an educational trail. We are working with the local agricultural organization to promote the trail and place signs with points of interest, i.e., who it was settled by, heritage, history, culture, etc.	1,3
Schools should ask the parents for gas money to get the kids out on field trips.	4
Working with people with Ag backgrounds has its limitations. Ag-based board has to be more open-minded. Has consequences.	2
Kids have a basic fear of being outdoors. Biggest challenge is exposing them to the outdoors. Need to work with schools on getting environmental education in the schools.	2
Very important to get youth involved. Need education and adequate staff to provide education.	2

Comments	Question (1-4)
Funds needed at a number of levels. Socioeconomics – families with resources are more likely to spend time outside. Different levels of accessibility. Money is the number one thing. Private lands have non-profit groups to work with, NE lucky to have that. Socio economics is an important aspect. Challenge to reach everybody. Stroller and wheel chairs can get on a trail. Need to try to include aspects for everyone.	2
Agrees with everything said thus far. Ground water is a hidden resource. Hard to get people interested in something they can't see. Parents fear letting their children go out and play - abductions, bugs, critters. Nine times out of 10 we already get parents/children that are predisposed to learning. Need to figure out how to get others to the table. We are preaching to the choir.	2
Connect communities to outdoors. Recreation and conservation are attached to fixed bodies of water. Not interested in hunting but swimming and water sports, canoeing and boating. Corridors.	2
Make relevant. Broader environmental challenge. Inform of the benefits. If people were to get out, passion might be greater.	2
Stated that kids right in Lincoln have never “roasted a hotdog or toasted a marshmallow over an open fire, don’t like bugs, etc. Need to introduce concepts to Youth with assistance of federal organizations. Need to partner with Cooperative Extension, 4H and put more emphasis on environmental youth education.	2
Already have the positions in place now. Cooperative extension can do more with environmental education. Cannot add more programs to the schools. Needs to be done outside of class time.	2
The challenge is getting people interested and establishing a single network.	2
Relevancy – need to find out what we have in common; show why conservation has relevance. Show value. Find commonality. Listen to communities engaged in outdoors. Need to market the opportunity.	2
Private landowners becoming threatened. Reduce budget deficit. Balance between government and non-government up for grabs. Approaching tipping point – Feels his private land can go away. Need a group to link private and public – LEGACY Project. Build trust. One area is endangered species - how does that fit in to the greater scheme of things; canary in the land mine. Legacy Project is worthwhile. He is working with them. They learn from each other respect each other. Research done on his land but he didn’t know it till it was published 10 years later. Gets technical assistance from FSA & NRCS. Turned down some items because of the small print. How to build relationship with private landowners. Don’t need to get confrontational	2
Have to get kids outside....Everyone is very busy; must find time to get outside.	2
Send pictures to friends on what work they did on the project. Geo cache. Have to be really smart. We unplug. It is a challenge - we may need to schedule time to go outside. Connecting kids at school is hard. May want to teach about guns but not allowed in school because of Columbine. Try to listen to what people want and need.	2
Need to create access for kids. Not much success in getting into schools. After school programs good. Not much success in the school (during class time). Creative teaching not allowed - everything is about testing due to Federal Regulations.	2

Comments	Question (1-4)
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission: Funds needed for operations/management. Push activities that bring in money. Excise tax needed to fund operation and maintenance of recreation areas. Not self-sufficient. Can't make money on trails. Feds great help to get things started. Need help to keep things going. Texas has a good system for taxing recreation. Park permit, camping, cabins/lodging are the three top money makers. Public information - educate.	2
QUESTION: HOW DOES GAME & PARKS COMMISSION MAKE THEIR MONEY?	2
Stated by: park admissions, cabin rentals, camping, fishing & hunting licenses.	2
Educate people on how to get on Platte River and other areas without trespassing . Need to let people know we have a great Platte River. Let people know.	2
Need to work with landowners to have more revenue streams. The fears of the landowner need to be addressed. Need to do more work with landowner to allow them to make money. Opportunities to work together. Show them there are opportunities as well as risks.	2
Younger generation has non-traditional ways to get information - internet, face book, twitter. Need to tap those resources.	2
Generation Y is missing opportunities. Need to change the way we reach people. If she didn't work for NRD she wouldn't know what is going on, what programs are available.	2
Stated he is involved with the Kiwanis which sponsors 100 low-income youngsters to attend Camp OK which is a 4H camp. Eighty percent really want to be there. Some have fear of the outdoors – trees, bugs, animals. Had two extra kids wanting to go to camp - private individual paid the \$700 needed for the two to go. John Hay, UNL extension, runs it. Most Kids really want to be there. Some just put up with it, but yet they leave with having experienced it.	1
Boys Scouts try to make sure that children are connected to the outdoors. Single contact great – Girl Scouts, 4H, Boy Scouts beneficial. Effective even if a single contact it is a great opportunity. Civic organizations are great at making sure people are still connected to the outdoors. A continuing opportunity is even better.	1
Stated that she has been a camp counselor. Raised money for scholarship fund by auctioning off quilts that were donated. \$26,000 was the highest bid. Opportunities.	1
Need more free or low-cost opportunities that are family-oriented. Need accessibility. Must market tourism to outsiders. Collaboration works – schools, scouts, museums. Exposure promotes interest. Does not have to be your own resources. Farmers getting interested...	1
Grandson likes to learn the different kinds of fields of crops. Would like to ride on a tractor. Great opportunity to work with farmers.	1
Need to work with urban people. Need to build relations. Fire (prescribed burning) works with Loess Canyon, need to work with urban because of smoke issues. CRP management. PF can be a natural. Look at the bigger picture. Cooperation/coordination.	1
Need to reconnect people via education, access, opportunities. People take part in recreational activities close to home - put parks there. Why reinvent the wheel.	1
Organization's values need to match people's values. Reach/target individuals and they can reach their friends, etc, etc.	1

Comments	Question (1-4)
Youth programs, social media works - connects people across the country. Ag Chat tells rest of the country about Ag. Envirothon all work very well. Stick up for geeks who are into technology but it is a way for them to connect. AG chat is a whole opportunity to let people know what is going on on the farm.	1
Need Ag in the classroom through regular curriculum. Farm Bureau supports program. Use Ag examples for English paper and math problems. Bigger challenge as people move farther from the farm now - two generations, Grandma and Grandpa, not on the farm.	1
Have to go where the students are and provide information. Move programs to venues that are already set up. Public believes that others taking care of issues for them. Water festival over time has become more difficult to get students to come. Have to take it to the kids. After-school programs. Pioneer days . Take programs to new venues. Communities at large are hard to get involved. Think someone else is taking care of the problem. At Wayne at the Chicken Show to present water programs. Festivals -Summer Enrichment Program-Protecting water-media campaigns-Foundation has succeeded (I think).	1
Hire teachers for the summer. Invite teachers to work with your organization and use resources from your agency and they can then take back to the schools. Teachers can be hired non-competitively to be part ranger. They work on teaching plans but have to involve the program. Let them do their own lesson plan and use your resources.	1
Kudos to the federal government. CRP great program – conservation benefits. Challenge to continue due to locked-in rates. Value/tax - @ full Ag value.	1
Social support after event, free, family accessibility, community-based projects. Reconnect kids with nature. Will be involved after. PONCA program worked- the community wanted it. Lincoln safari has been very successful to bring people to the city parks. It was representative of the general population. If 10% of population is Hispanic, they had 10% of their participant were Hispanic. Better ways to reconnect. Teach art - bring in environment. Great Park Response has been very successful.	1
Need to involve high school students and have them contact younger students rather than having adults contact students. Students will be more perceptive. Benefits high school students too because they realize that younger students are interested in what they say. Especially HS students who are very Ag oriented. Ag days- HS student can realize the impact they can have on other.	1
Questions cap and trade issue – implications. How to keep balance - carbon sequestration.	3
Needs to be some type of movement - society needs to see issue as important and value it. But...do not need more regulations. Needs to be seen, movement within organizations before there will be real change. If Federal Government could back without regulations.	3
Landowners reluctant to get involved because of bureaucratic nightmare. Private landowners are reluctant to get involved. Stewardship program was so simple - the land owner appreciated that. In comparison, EQIP is very complicated and confusing. Bureaucracy is a negative for people. KISS methods.	3
Recognize that government has a role but cannot solve all the problems – use where most effective. Concept of supporting conservation - getting back to nature. School curriculum is avoid litigation. States created statutes. Feds can't solve all the problems. Focus on effective role. Positive on things Feds can do.	3

Comments	Question (1-4)
Be more effective with existing funding. Look at streamlining - how to get current funding. Level playing field with the rural area. Village of 300 shouldn't have the same rules/paperwork (to receive a few thousand) as Omaha (does for a quarter million project). Recreation lawsuits. One size fits all for federal projects is not the best approach.	3
Need to teach children about outdoors – just have to go outside. Frustrating to say Federal Government has no role in schools. Teachers say federal regulation don't allow them to do that. Suppose to be educated in school, but they aren't learning anything and then we try to do it with afterschool programs. Kindergarteners get 15 minutes of recess because it is a Federal regulation. Federal government can help us.	3
Need to coordinate messages that come out of the government. Food pyramid - exercise by going outside. See how it all fits together.	3
Need to have more groups discussing these problems and issues and conduct programs like we are doing today. "There is no wheel that has not been invented". Need to collaborate rather than butt heads. Need action to go with talk. Look at a lot of programs, initiatives and studies - reduces ADD, Obesity and seeing better. What works with you and your barriers. Don't need to reinvent the wheel. The bureaucracy gets in the way.	3
Eliminate the office of OMB. Federal employees, i.e., NRCS, etc need to get out in the field and see where their money is being used. We do more on administration and paperwork than we do on the program. (OMB) needs to get out in field and see what the money is going for.	3
Spend too much time planning and not getting any more done. Value of woodlands/ environmental services. Future will be in conservation. Biased likes CRP need for Ag cropland, woodlands and the service they provide. Need to have Forest Reserve Program.	3
Incorporate more community volunteerism and outreach. Relationship-building. Must give relationship time and energy. Relationship has to grow. Allow for employees to do more volunteering/outreach on company time.	3
There are more and more layers of bureaucracy; Need to reduce this. How can we do what works. More flexibility.	3
Continue partnerships - Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever..., etc. More freedom with Pittman-Robertson money (federal excise money given to state through Dept of Interior, that comes from individuals buying guns, ammo). There should be some avenue for passing money to partners. No child left inside - connect to literacy program. Kudos to put biologists out in the field. PF QF help with the Federal programs. Access to office and resources and help you get through the red tape. Need to get rid of OMB. Hunters and anglers would be supportive of excise tax to be used for other things. Pass it through to other programs if they (Feds) would be allowed.	3
QUESTION: What can be done to help farmers/landowners?	4
More programs in the other sectors. Needs to have community buying 50/50 - additional programs like this in other sectors. Land & water conservation is a good tool.	1
CRP great. CRP is huge and glad there is a signup this year.	4
Farmers tend to fortify their positions. How to turn around? (attacks -i.e. atrazine) protect Ag-better educate.	2
Education, understanding, appreciation. Bring more people to the table and educate them.	4

Comments	Question (1-4)
Wind energy, solar energy – would get revenue. Promote idea of windmill on each farm - could access low-rate loan and use profit off of selling the electricity. Electric companies can't invest in that. Would do something for environmental growth.	4
Promoting agriculture to consumer. Getting the right information to where it needs to be. Opportunities for landowners. Bad rap GMO etc need show how it connects to consumer. Agri-tourism and education.	4
Farmer ranchers need easier way to be involved. Open door for them to educate and make money at the same time. Beneficial if producers would work together.	4
Property taxes went up 30% in two years – we are hooked on local control. Challenge – how big is big. 20 qtr pivots isn't big. Trying to make it work on 2 sections of grass. Property taxes go up 40% in 3 years he is not trying to live on it, just get it to work with others. Markets are a big issue.	4
QUESTION: IS IT FAIR TO SAY THAT WE NEED TO FIND WAYS TO INCREASE FARM INCOME AND DECREASE THREAT TO PRODUCER?	2
“Kennedy said we can land a person on the moon – why can't we land a person in the country”. Society does not understand how we all fit together. If we do not know how to balance things can we fall (like the Roman empire)? Reconnect - Peace Corps was a great thing. It will be great all around.	1,2
There needs to be a balance, perception, and education. Everything in moderation. Progress hippie gardener or everything - a parking lot or grass. From one extreme to another.	2
Bigger and bigger in order to survive. Where do we stop. Mentality. 40 acres and a mule.	2
Movement to natural grazing processing. Product all the way to the consumer. People with different ideas are doing some amazing things.	1
Working with landowners is key to a lot of what has worked in Nebraska is that in the Natural Resource District System has allowed us to deal with natural resources issues in an integrated and comprehensive way .that a lot of other states have not been able to do. We are now dealing on things on a watershed basis in an integrated sort of way, taxing authority, resources to deal with and the local ownership connection between landowner and... Successful wildlife conservation and habitat relationship between people and land. Ownership that local folks have is a larger part of why things are successful. NRD's are tied closing to folks who own the land and natural resources. That is why Nebraska structurally has a huge advantage and why Nebraska is the only state in the nation that has the kinds and amounts of local funds spent on the land. Looking at it thru the eyes of landowners, incentives work. You can educate all day but if you don't have the carrot/incentives to go with it, if they don't have the money and the where withal then they don't do it. If you do a good job of education and you have the incentives, landowners will do the right thing. Going all the way back to Section 208 (Public Law 92-500, Section 208). If you want to be successful, you have to have the support from the bottom up. That's why we are as successful as we have been. A lot of NRD programs are things that came from the local folks. Folks said we have this resource problem and we solved with ideas that came from the ground up	1

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>Talked about her experiences of mayor of small community and what we face in order to accomplish this great outdoors. My town has parks, ball fields, swimming pool and frisbee golf. We revitalized an old zoo into a park. It is hard to keep all of these going. One thing that has worked well is the RC&D program. They received help from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Hall County RC&D program did a presentation and told them they needed one central area to go to get help. From this group we got two scenic byways – Sandhills and Loup City, the Junk Jaunt, and chalk mines—needs to be developed further on. Helped with Spalding Dam and Lake Ericson project. Partnerships that we have with NRD’s, Game and Parks, land-grant colleges, and university extension. Family activities. We are a family place to come and visit. Over 100,000 kids go thru program. This works.</p>	1
<p>Every year around budget time local offices spend time and energy trying to defend their existence/budget. What isn’t working: STOP trying to remove funding from RC&D’s.</p>	2,3
<p>Local people find solutions. For every one dollar of federal received, they provide twenty dollars locally.</p>	1
<p>Challenge—land and water conservation. Offshore drilling royalties. We have developed golf courses, pools, and parks, using land/water conservation funds. Most are matched 75-25. There used to be tremendous monies allocated across the country. Now I feel guilty for even applying for some of those funds as a larger community because smaller communities struggle to get the funds. This has been a huge process that matched dollars that is no longer available that allowed us to do a lot of these projects. The recent history with different highway bills, the trails programs have become 80/20 matching and are very popular. This year the state is not accepting any applications for trails because there has been a free-for-all between federal highway and Department of Roads when it comes to administering these programs. Struggling and making Nebraska jump thru hoops with charges to apply for these grants. Someone’s feet got stepped on at national level that have caused a responsible charge. Need to have an engineering background. Must pass many tests, many hours of study. As Parks and Recreation Director, I can no longer manage this program because, for example, of a program that struck a chord with local people. Senator Nelson has been contacted to try and get past the roadblock. More of state/federal issue in Nebraska.</p>	2,3
<p>I got certified then was decertified. We had \$250,000 sitting but they put a hold on it. We finally got a local guy to get it done. We only wanted to get safe routes to school program completed. Process has become very cumbersome. Senators Nelson’s been contacted to try and get past roadblock. But to be successful we need to not be fighting each other.</p>	2
<p>Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act is in shambles. Mostly administrative problems with State Department of Roads and also on federal side. Program has been halted. This program needs to be streamlined. The state says the engineering firm that designs the trails can’t be the same inspectors as the firm that inspects the trails. Now we have to hire two firms.</p>	2
<p>Perfect example of stepping on each other’s toes</p>	2

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>Reconnecting people to the outdoors. Most of the time we think about urban citizens needing to be connected. Sometimes we need to connect farmer to outdoors in terms of habitat. American Great Outdoors habitat programs have actually disconnected the two; farmers to wildlife habitat. In the past wild life habitat programs are either ag land or habitat. We need to have them in both. Grazing and wetland is good for wetland and provides ag use for farmers. The set aside concept needs to go away. Example: Water bank program is no longer a program but the mentality still exists. Under the program the farmer was forbidden by program rules from doing anything to a wetland. As a result wetlands became choked with trees because the farmer couldn't remove the trees. Needs mosaic of wetland habitat. Over grazed pasture may not reflect proper pasture use, but great for shore birds. Government should not be so risk adverse because of under use not overuse. Poor wetlands because of little activity, not too much.</p>	2
<p>Land owners and owner operators, you know how fiercely independent those people are. You won't get anything done until you get those people on board – conservative conservation minded people. We burn 4-5000 acres of cedar invested acres every year. Until you get the farmer/rancher on board with same agenda you have, you won't get what anything done. You're not talking to the right people.</p>	2,3
<p>Tri-Basin NRD and Phelps County Weed Control Association, works. CCPI Nebraska being one of the few states where the cooperative landowner owns the land up to the rivers edge. Nebraska was been hit with influx of invasive vegetation. CCPI put into last farm bill and funds were set aside to encourage landowners to utilize those funds to cost share management of this vegetation..Concerns about CCPI program because it is not continually funded because we know even though Nebraska was granted \$4.5 million, it may not continue to come. We need to see that because there is a learning curve, that landowners don't jump into things until they see what their neighbor does. We need to see this continue because we know that those that don't sign up now will sign-up in a couple of years. They put in money of their own. There is over \$86,000 committed to CCPI. Landowners do understand it and it helps control these invasive plants. This is somewhat limited in Nebraska because it is only for fully appropriated land areas. Over half of state doesn't fall into this area. We need latitude to get it used in other areas in the state in the next farm bill.</p>	2,3
<p>Saw the tour this morning, there's an incredible partnership between landowners. 3600 miles, 700 landowners. Missouri River has Wetland Reserve Innovation Program. First state in the nation to have this. Common resources can be targeted to land scale initiatives. Common landscape scale objectives is hugely important. We are lucky in Nebraska to have Steve Chick. He is a good listener. He's open minded enough to listen to ideas from the field. Then he sets that tone with his staff to also be good listeners and try new things. We need that kind of leadership. With 97% of land privately owned you have got to have cooperation. Forcing realization, working partnerships and targeted collaborations that have been very successful.</p>	1,3
<p>Mentioned partnerships being key. Takes local initiatives that understand local issues; folks who understand local issues and can deliver. State wildlife grants program works great. Have biologists in local communities who know the folks and find win/win solutions. Go out to all states and have impacted over 200,000 acres. Can find landowners objectives meet wildlife objects. This is working.</p>	1

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>Funding for RC&D needs to be funded. It works. You don't get something for nothing. I've been in this a long time. We are in red zone for level of funding for NRCS technicians. As talk about incentives and education, you're right. Have to have both. Who does education with landowners? The local technicians that work with NRCS. Dollars and workload and amount of time and then still be accountable to taxpayers. Absolute foolishness. Cannot keep increasing the work load and expect the techs to continue the work load. Something has to give somewhere. We are clearly in the red zone. Yet will put more cost share dollars and land into programs but cuts the technicians. We are at the point. We are doing disservice to all other tax payer dollars that has been spent and invested. Because they're not getting done. The point has to be underlined that we can't continue to rob from the local technicians there and still get the job done. Made enormous progress in conservation. Need both – adequate staff and adequate incentives. This is an investment and it's part of protecting water and soil resources for future generations. I'm sure Steve Chick will take me to task for that.</p>	<p>2,3</p>
<p>Been around about 20 years. We've worked on several projects of as part of effort to develop literacy plan. It is on the NACEE.org web site. Would welcome any last comments. Will present to Board of Education this August. Funding as part of education act to get kids and families outside. Funding goes thru Department of Education to provide more training to teachers to incorporate this in their course work. Many ways that the environment can be incorporated in all subject areas - math, social studies, reading, and the arts. Also health issue too. Increased youth obesity. Challenges: Comes down to money. No child left behind act has forced teachers to teach to test. Forced to cut physical education, recess time. No money for field trips. Unless kids can raise money to subsidize. Kids don't know what nature entails. Used to mowed lawns and game boys. No one likes taxes but maybe increase taxes on game boys type games and put money into education. What works is starting young. Teach teachers how to teach these things in their curriculum. Hands on aspect is what hooks kids. Can't teach nature by showing videos. Develop outdoor classrooms. Field trips. Funding for school to nature type areas. Liability aspect mentioned earlier. Private and public, We grew up with 10' tall slides and monkey bars but now all the regulations governs the types of playgrounds. First place that is cut is parks and recreational funding. Funding for educators, person pursuing teaching degrees. All states have funding for literacy place they have to have one of these in place to qualify for funding. All states are working on this so Dept .of Ed at national needs to do more to emphasize outdoor education and opportunities. Archery, fishing programs. A lot of programs out there but need dollars to support these programs/activities. Off-shore drilling leases. Congress needs to get guts to increase, my understanding we're still charging companies what we charge back in 1800's to mine on public lands. Those fees need to be increased.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>50 years ago could drive across road and see pheasants cross road. Was fun to hunt. Can go to Kansa and get 50 or more and enjoy hunting. Not fun to hunt in Nebraska. Go out, get permission, see 6 birds. In Kansas you can go down there get a booklet see areas, then go to area, find signed areas and go hunting. Don't have to ask landowner. This would be good addition for Nebraska to do this program. I would rather spend my money here.</p>	<p>2</p>

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>There is a set aside program in Nebraska. There is a guide to allow walk-ons but still need permission. If you see a pheasant in Nebraska you want to name it because there aren't many left. Through the parks and recreation department, if we don't have everything organized to a tee then parents are reluctant to let kids participate. Nature/outdoors is unknown. A lot of parents are afraid to let their kids go out because they read somewhere about West Nile, bird flu, marsh critters etc. We need to get parents to allow participation in non-scripted activities. Our biggest challenge is to get people to not be afraid.</p>	2
<p>JAKES State Women's Coordinator. We have programs for women, parents, and kids to get them out doing this. They need to start when they're 4 years old.</p>	1
<p>Is there a place where you can get a centralized clearing house for finding out about all these great programs?</p>	
<p>NACEE is working with Nebraska organizations to create a web site that would provide a web site for someone to go to find out opportunities in the state. Game and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, etc. Include all web sites to a single location. Each organization could have their own password to keep their own dates, etc. updated. Others can sign up to find out what is happening in other parts of the state. Hopefully online by next summer.</p>	1
<p>Not working. Impossible to get. NRCS involved in many. Building road structure, 30-40,000 to develop site and in 5 years may not qualify. What we're looking at doing is purchasing mitigated ground in middle of Lincoln to get something done in rural Ne. How does that work? Trying to do fast track but. Landowners dealing with recreational development but getting comments from EPA. Why is EPA trying to regulate my cattle's gas? As a result set on hands and don't do anything. You can't develop on your own land for your family, grandkids. The tremendous cost to mitigate is too high.</p>	2
<p>Piece of property that got 3 acres covered with water. Wanted to dig a pit last spring. All my ground is wetland. Wanted to make pit to catch water, concentrate to keep it off my land. I had to go thru 5 organizations to get permission. Road structure. Taking out Road</p>	2
<p>Flood control project part of master plan for watershed development. Held up for 2 years. Requirements for Section 404 (Clean Water Act) are so intense. As soon as you get that accomplished they throw something else at you. They've lost the value of the human resource that we're trying to accomplish and over-weigh the environmental project. We have a letter in the file from EPA that said all dams are bad and no dams should be constructed. The lake was about 65 acre lake. Ridiculous regulations trying to get structured created. In two years costs have gone up but not able to move forward. Heard Washington is going to change definition so the ditch I have would be wetland and I won't be able to do anything with it.</p>	2
<p>I went to coffee shop and mentioned what I was doing. Someone said "You know you're creating a wetland and after two years you won't be able to do anything with it in 2 years."</p>	2
<p>Neighbor put pivot on ground. Neighbor owns all drainage ditch. Fella wanted to put in pivot irrigation but couldn't cover ditch because it's a wetland.</p>	2
<p>Has to get permission like he's doing a dam in Lincoln Nebraska when the project is in Nemaha.</p>	2

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>How to connect people to outdoors. No offense but no one in this group is young enough to appreciate the social networking available. Conservation community needs to recognize that they need to advertise this kind of information in Twitter, Facebook, etc. Show the kids a good time and it will be all over the network.</p>	<p>2,4</p>
<p>The funding availability to do education whether it is to build a web page or to put techs on the ground is just not out there. I know money is tight everywhere but I have personally been surprised to find out how few dollars are out there. This has to start with the next generation.</p>	<p>2,3,4</p>
<p>Access issue that was raised .Game and parks does have a long standing program of paying farmers for access but that funding has plummeted and that has suffered. We're more immigrants and more urban dwellers now so fewer and fewer people in state have ties to land. #2 in the country for lowest public lands.. Huge lack of public lands for people to get onto the land. Needs to reinvigorate programs to get public lands for access for people. Need to address fundamental issue.</p>	<p>2,3,4</p>
<p>We have the largest reservoir in Nebraska. Lake McConaughy in Keith County, series of 29 lakes and reservoir. Stated purpose is irrigation and hydro-electric generation. The problem I have in working with the farmers and it needs to be stated here on a base level. Ag is Nebraska's base economy. If farmer's get more efficient there is more water for the river, and wetlands. They need to be more efficient at moving from pipe irrigation to center pivots and subsurface irrigation . In a large way they are priced out of the market. Pivots have gone from \$25,000 to \$50,000 in over 10 years. Need NRCS cost share. About 60 percent gated pipe in our system. Would like to be 100% for pivots or subsurface. Ag Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) proposal where we can group our producers together and affect the entire system. Fully funded in 2009 and partially funded in 2010. We would like to see that put in Farm Bill and be fully funded and increased so that we have some water to work with in Nebraska. I appreciated Scott's comments earlier about large water bodies. If we have large water body, people will come. We have visitor days where people will come. What I hear that you don't know we would love to have school kids and instructors come to our lakes. Anything we can do to provide free public access, probably need a park permit. Anything is possible at the big lakes. Would love to partner with anyone that has a bunch of kids come with an instructor. Maybe that's something that might work for all of us.</p>	<p>2,3</p>
<p>One of challenge we've faced is balance between ground water and water resources. One of State's AWEPS in central state has worked very well with money from EQIP, Conservation and urban development program? In case of Platte Basin Habitat this is a challenge .</p>	<p>1,2</p>

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>Environment and sportsman organization. Nebraska says we take pride in fact that we are 97% private land ownership. Average across US is 70%. Is that the fact that we are the leader? Should others aspire to what we have or should be finding more public lands? As soon as this happens their property taxes goes up. Same thing happens in Sandhills. Ted Turner bought ground and rancher's properties went completely out of reason. Landowners are furious. Is 97% private ownership to crow about or does it need to be fixed Spent a lot of years in education. A year after I retired I was called back for a half year because an auto mechanics instructor retired. Even without knowing how to teach auto mechanics, I could go in office and sleep as long as you let kids get "hands on". I'm an avid fisherman. I raised 3 boys and nothing compares to raising children. I have 9 grandsons and only 4 have any attitude positive toward hunting fishing, etc. It bothers me. Anything we can do to facilities getting those kids out getting hands on.</p>	1
<p>I wanted to briefly. Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. Have seen huge success with partnership with them. People's Gardens. They provide research based field tested for providing nature based outdoor spaces. Can be used anywhere a traditional playground. My kids go to public school in Lincoln they go to where a nature playground is being put in. If we can provide a place for kids to go out and play right at the school instead of going somewhere else. Then that starts with curriculum and getting hands on. Fund on average about 6 million trees on public lands. Work with state foresters. I am trying to find a fit with private landowners. How do we make a fit on private lands to fund reforestation on private lands. It's the program I run. I came here today to talk to people about partnership's These forums are great. Continue building partnerships.</p>	1
<p>School systems because of budget crunches are deprived of shop classes and FFA type activities. As a result life time activities are being cut. We have a problem in our education system too.</p>	2
<p>We've talked about a generation in getting them back into the outdoors. None of the people that were outdoors got it from school. They got it from hands-on mentoring.</p>	2
<p>We're partnering with several folks. Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center which has been reopened with Game and Parks and Hasting College. They are doing a day camp today. Use funding from state and federal to fund this, to get kids involved in the nature center more year round instead of just when the cranes are here. In terms of access issues, the program has been charged with acquiring 10,000 acres over past 13 years. Have gotten about 6,000. Have received many requests from the public on how do we open lands to hunters while still preserving habitat for the birds. We are working on that. We have examples where people have gone out and used TVs for target practice. How do we get responsible hunters.</p>	2

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>I was on team of people to resurrect this nature center. It went under and lost all of its money. There were lot of federal agencies that talked about getting kids feet into the water. But when I went to them they did not commit to following thru to get the kids into the wilderness. A lot of lip service. Each raised the flag about the issue but they didn't walk the talk. If you have these portals that have a mission to get this done then fund them. If you cut a tree down in Nebraska in the name of conservation you about get lynched. You have to cut trees down in wetlands or you don't have a wetland. Planting trees is conservation but only in the right place. The Arbor Day Foundation might have a public education campaign about "get your feet in the wilderness". The Arbor Day Foundation campaign is very effective.</p>	<p>2,3</p>
<p>Carbon in roles of tree planting can be an effective tool to do limited tree planting to augment wildlife. Good public purposes. The role of carbon in terms of conservation then put trees where they ought to go to accomplish. Help augment conservation and resource management efforts. Nebraska 4.6% total available. Land signed up in Chicago Climate Exchange. The idea of what that is worth is \$18 million dollars. We have resources in our state. Is if you have 20% of all electricity used and you gave farmers a top of line land lease payment of that would generate \$9 million. If you look at potential for carbon to find market based value for conservation a lot of the incentives come down to money. Looking at the role of carbon in that way is a huge opportunity. My experience with landowners is that the access issue is about control and bad experiences. The amount of money we pay landowners is it worth putting your family, equipment at risk. Those bad experiences color a lifetime of cooperation. Those people that abuse, landowners never forget that, plus the coffee shop feeds that. More incentives and education for hunting access.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Reconnecting all Americans with the outdoors. When I grew up my parents were together and we went out and did everything together . Today is a completely different family lifestyle. We are asking our schools, organizations, government. Somehow we need to have things that involve the parents/foster parent. If we are going to reach all Americans, what programs are out there and can we do this very basic that these kids can to go out and do? Used to walk to school. Kids don't walk to school. How to get every kid everywhere to experience this. Pick 1 2 or 3 programs that we can support and put our whole heart into it. Remember the "Got Milk" campaign? What happened to the "Keep America Beautiful" campaign? Everyone identified with that. What is one slogan that we can all identify with?</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Back to some education things. There's some great education Project Learning Tree, Project Wet, Project Wild, H2O, etc. They stand alone. They haven't been correlated to national teaching standards. The Department of Education should create a curriculum that addresses environmental education themes across the entire curriculum. Math lessons could have environmental conservation themes.</p>	<p>3</p>

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>National Park Organization. We have quite a few partnerships. Everything we do is partnership based with funding. Weed awareness group of partners, landowners to get rid of invasive species. Niobrara. Valley Outdoor Education based -- all volunteers get together to talk about Naturefest for 5th graders. Niobrara Council has day camps for local kids kindergarten thru high school We always have a waiting list. Talking about a senior citizen outing day. They would take individuals for sack lunch photo tour New existing program is a camp program for young parents and kids out camping. Families that don't have camping background. If you've never camped you'll be first to get in. Biggest challenge is funding. We spend \$2,500 to \$3,000 for all of those kids because it is volunteer base.</p>	2
<p>Something we talk about as outdoor education . Once they're educated they need access. They need opportunity. When alone they won't have access. They need local opportunities. One thing to help with this stems federal government land and water conservation fund. There is movement to get this to full funding \$9.5 million. One key element left out now is that most money will wind up going to federal programs and parks. We need at least half to go to smaller towns so they can provide to local families. Lots of families won't have opportunity to get to national parks. Needs to go to smaller or any town in Nebraska so once the kids are educated they can get access to do. What kids learn in school, if there is not an opportunity to do it, it is gone.</p>	2,3
<p>Is funding restriction, that you need seed money or full funding.</p>	2
<p>Answer. Right now for whole state is about \$300,000. That doesn't go very far. In order to raise level, opportunity is here and administration can see what success stories have happened thru this program. Now those things are aged and there's no money to repair it or create new. Now Land and water conservation fund is opportunity.</p>	2
<p>When created was allowed off-shore money but wasn't demanded. That money has now gone elsewhere. A lot of parks setup with that money but now that it's dried up we're not keeping up. Lincoln Pools shutting down at end of year. Now potential bond issue. Federal money always dries up and then local has to pick it up or it goes away. Lincoln not picking up the funding so they'll close a pool.</p>	2
<p>Talk a lot about private land use and partnerships. Anyone from Gehring area? There was a wonderful land partnership of opening up thousands of acres of land for just bird watching, no motorized no hunting. Promote for tourism. Wildcat Hills - Wildland Initiative (Game and Parks, NGO, Ducks Unlimited, varieties of partners, NRCS) 24,000 acres of private and public land open to public. Grown to be very important natural amenity for local people. Federal government has helped put a lot of easements on lands. What are economic benefits of this? We have uncertainty of what economic impacts are when investment in public access when competing with agriculture. Look at what happens to community when an investment is made on land? Are there compensatory gains by supporting recreation activity? Wildcat Hills great example Excellent opportunity to promote tourism.</p>	4

Comments	Question (1-4)
<p>Handout on North Star Neighbors Farm Tour near Fullerton, Nebraska. Will have demonstration on things they do on a farm - now certified organic, grown natural beef, raise chickens and eggs. Have a field day to help people understand where their food comes from. Work thru food system and educate them on how food is produced. Bought metal canister and split in two. Going to make cabins. People can go out on pasture and rent a cabin. Identify and support these people. A free will basket will be available to cover costs. We undervalue our resources in Nebraska.</p>	1
<p>In teaching for a long time. It's easy to get a youngster excited about something, but when that kid runs home and sits down at the dinner table and tells mom or dad and they squash the idea. If there's a program that will get kids enthused at age 20-40 that will help too.</p>	2
<p>Nebraska Environmental Literacy Program will contact a lot of groups in this room. We will send out e-mail and an executive summary and plan. Would welcome letters of support for the proposal in August to State Board of Education.</p>	4
<p>As a parent, I know a lot of parents of young children. We keep our kids so busy so they'll stay out of trouble mainly. Between home work, athletics, playing with friends. Only time to get into nature are those close to home. Let's take care of green spaces in neighborhood. Come up with an 8 week long nature type thing or something for kids to do something beside soccer, tee ball.</p>	2,3