

Agenda Item: 6.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Programs, Projects and Operations Subcommittee

FROM: Amanda Grint, Water Resources Engineer

SUBJECT: Review and Recommendation on Grant Requests and District Cost Share for
Glacier Creek Prairie Preserve

DATE: November 2, 2017

The University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) and the District have been working together for a number of years to acquire additional property adjacent to the Allwine Prairie/Glacier Creek Prairie Preserve at 144th and State Streets. To date the District has helped to fund the purchase of 86 acres east of Allwine Prairie (2009), which is planned to be a District wetland and stream mitigation bank, 76 acres north of Allwine Prairie, Hayes Overlook (2013), and 100 acres west of the preserve, Bouteloua Tract (2015). These purchases preserve a unique ecosystem in the urban area, provide numerous education and research opportunities and protect the only high quality stream in Douglas County. See attached map for parcel locations.

A number of efforts were made to obtain funding for the Bouteloua Tract and North Tract from 2013 to 2015 through private foundations and federal programs. However, by December 2015, the funding obtained was only enough to purchase the west Bouteloua Tract, 104 acres. Along with the purchase of the west parcel the landowner, N.S. The Heritage, LLC, sold an option to UNO at the price of \$35,000 per acre for the remaining 101 acres until December 2018. The purchase price of the North Tract is \$3,538,185. Contributions from committed sources total \$1,775,000. The funds needed to complete the project are \$1,763,185.

In order to meet the option deadline of closing by December 2018, staff recommends District Board approval of an application to the NRCS ACEP-ALE program for the North Tract. If successful, an agricultural easement will be placed on the property in perpetuity and the program pays for 50% of fair market value of the easement. Staff also recommends approval to submit an application to the Peter Kiewit Foundation for 25% of the cost of the land, approximately \$880,000. UNO submitted an NET grant for \$880,000 and continues to reach out to private foundations and donors. Dependent upon the amount of grant funds received, it is recommended that the District contribute up to \$300,000 toward the purchase of the North Tract over a two year period, FY19 and FY20. All funding sources must be identified for the North Tract purchase prior to District funds being expended.

Staff recommends that the Subcommittee recommend to the Board that the General Manager be authorized to submit applications to the NRCS ACEP-ALE program and the Peter Kiewit Foundation to fund the purchase of 101 acres north of Allwine Prairie as part of the Allwine Prairie/Glacier Creek Expansion Project, and, upon the condition that grant awarded funds and other contributions are insufficient to purchase the full 101 acres, the General Manager is authorized to execute an interlocal agreement with UNO for a District contribution of up to \$300,000 paid at a maximum of \$150,000 per year in FY19 and FY20 for the purchase of the 101 acres (North Tract) of Glacier Creek Preserve subject to changes deemed necessary by the General Manager and approval as to form by District Legal Counsel.

Glacier Creek Project

An ongoing cooperative project of private donors and:



Objective of the Glacier Creek Project: To provide present and future generations a unique, landscape-level, tallgrass prairie preserve focused on conserving our natural heritage, the tallgrass prairie. Managed to approximate historic conditions, activities at the preserve center on multi-disciplinary education and research while also supporting outreach for inquiry-based science at all educational levels. The 130 ha (320 acre) preserve also provides a setting for visitors to enjoy an outdoor experience that gives the *feel* of our historic prairie landscape.

Glacier Creek Project Fund Raising: \$6.25 million are needed to purchase the 205 acre North Conservation Area, which consists of the combined West Watershed and North Tracts (see map). Of this, we have \$2.8 million in hand leaving \$3.4 million to complete the purchase. Investment in the overall project to date totals \$4.5 million. The price and availability of the land are only guaranteed until August 2015 thus there is an urgency to this one-time purchase. Donations to the tax exempt (501c3) organization would be available for tax benefits. See contact information below.



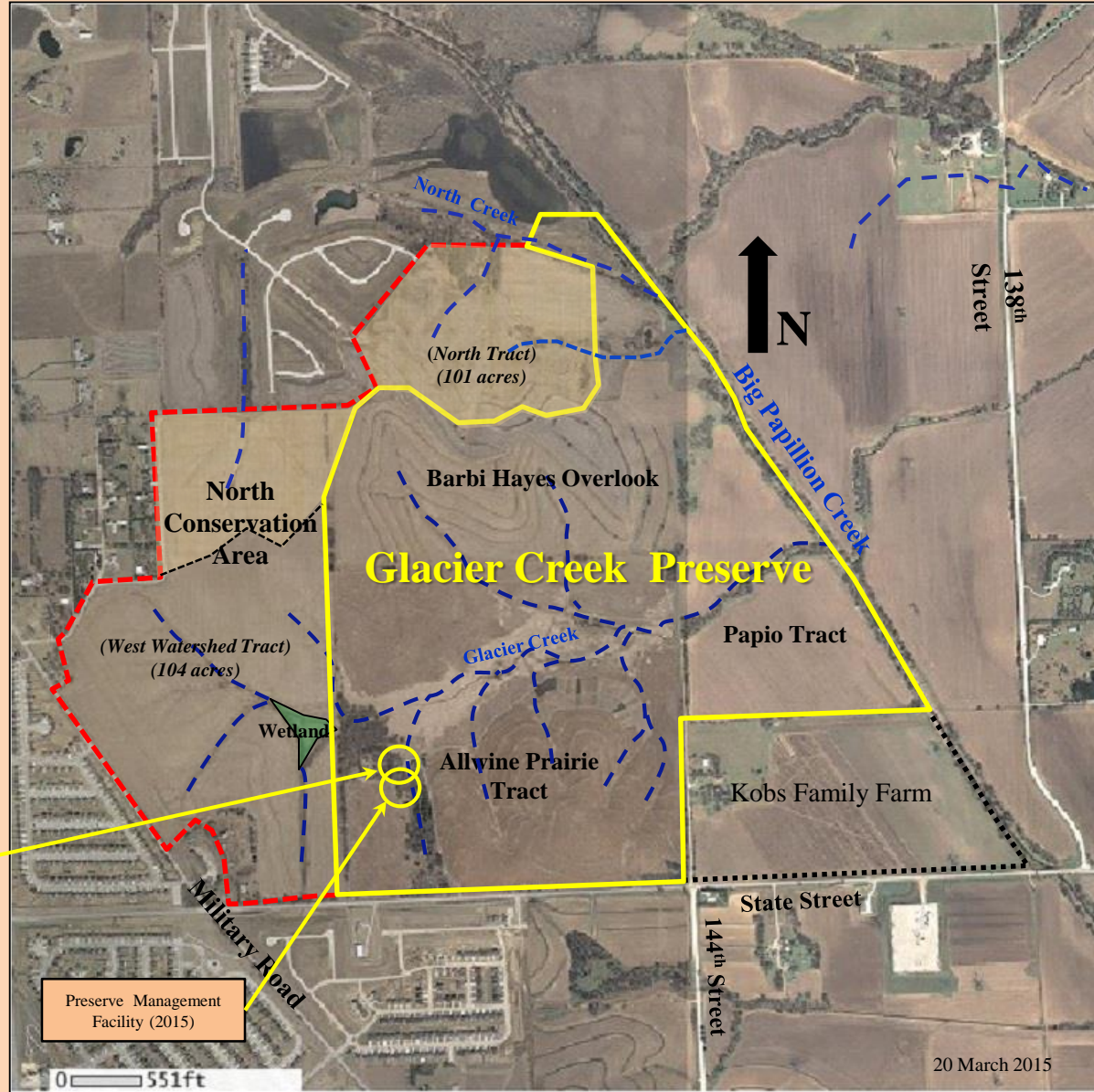
Viewing north across the lowland at Glacier Creek Preserve.



The Barn @ Glacier Creek education and research facility

LEGEND

- Red Dashed Line** = Approximate outline of 92 ha (205 acre) North Conservation Area consisting of the North Tract and the West Watershed Tract, the present focus of fund raising for land acquisition.
- Black Dashed Line** = Boundary between West Watershed Tract and North Tract of the North Conservation Area
- Yellow Solid Line** = Boundary of the Glacier Creek Preserve.
- Blue Dashed Line** = Glacier Creek and North Creek drainages.



Contact Information: Tom Bragg, Biology Department, University of Nebraska at Omaha (tbragg@unomaha.edu)
 Preserve Website: <http://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/biology/nature-preserves/index.php?>

**Project Funding Summary for North Track Conservation Area Expansion
Summary as of 9 July 2017**

Glacier Creek Preserve (GCP) Project* Costs to Date		Remaining Land Acquisition North Tract Conservation Area)(101.091 acres)	
1. Land Acquisition Through 2017		Contributions to Date	
Source	Contribution	Source	Contribution
NET	\$ 2,172,000.00	NET Committed	\$ 425,000.00
NRD	\$ 1,588,500.00	Donor (3-yr Option)	\$ 350,000.00
Private Donor	\$ 1,455,000.00	Donor (2017)	\$ 500,000.00
UNO	\$ 591,731.28	Donor Committed (2018)	\$ 500,000.00
Audubon Society of Omaha	\$ 35,000.00		
Total Land Expenses Paid	\$ 5,842,231.28	Subtotal of Contributions to Date	\$ 1,775,000.00
2. Preserve Education and Research Facility		North Tract Purchase Price	
Private Donor	\$ 1,297,859.00	at \$35,000/acre	\$ 3,538,185.00
Private Donor 2	\$ 50,000.00		
McArdle Grading Co. (donated barn grading)		Total Funds Needed to Complete Project	\$ 1,763,185.00
Total Barn Expenses Paid	\$ 1,347,859.00		
Total GCP Project Costs Paid Through 2016	\$ 7,190,090.28		

* The *Glacier Creek Project* is the overarching project designed to develop the preserve into a premier education and research site.