

Agenda Item: 7.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Programs, Projects and Operations Subcommittee
FROM: Amanda Grint, Water Resources Engineer
SUBJECT: Glacier Creek/Allwine Prairie West Parcel Acquisition
DATE: December 29, 2014

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 at 144th and State Streets. To date the District has helped to fund the purchase of 86 acres east of Allwine Prairie, which is planned to be a District wetland and stream mitigation bank, and the 76 acres north of Allwine Prairie (Hayes Overlook). These purchases provide a unique ecosystem in an urban area and also protect a viewshed which allows an undisturbed view of the prairie. See attached map for parcel locations.

One of the remaining parcels that UNO hopes to acquire, for the expansion of the prairie and for control of the entire Glacier Creek watershed, is the 227.84 acres to the north and west of the existing prairie. This property is currently owned by NS-The Heritage, LLC and has been preliminary platted as single and multi-family residential. UNO has received Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) Fund dollars to put toward the land purchase. To help fund this acquisition, UNO requests that the District continue to pursue the NRCS grant funding and also contribute toward the acquisition. Through the NRCS ACEP-ALE grant the District could receive federal funds in an amount up to one half the appraised value to administer an easement over the property, preserving the 227 acres as farm and ranchland. The ACEP-ALE application was approved but not funded in 2014 and therefore, we request approval to carry over the application to 2015.

In addition to extending the ACEP-ALE grant application with NRCS, a District contribution is sought to put toward the purchase of the property. UNO is requesting that \$200,000 per year for three (3) years be budgeted from the District general fund toward the land purchase and preservation of the west parcel. Should UNO secure enough funding through the District's contribution, NET funding, ACEP-ALE and/or other private donations to close in the upcoming years, the District would be able to reimburse UNO. No District funds will be expended until all funding sources are identified for the parcel.

Staff recommends that the Subcommittee recommend to the Board that the General Manager be authorized to extend the application for NRCS ACEP-ALE funding for the 227 acres north and west of Allwine Prairie as part of the Allwine Prairie/Glacier Creek Expansion Project and to execute an interlocal agreement with UNO for a District contribution of \$600,000 paid at a maximum of \$200,000 per year for three years for the purchase of the 227 acres north and west of Allwine Prairie.

Glacier Creek Project

An ongoing cooperative project of private donors and:
 The Nebraska Environmental Trust
 UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
 Omaha
 PROFESSIONAL PRAIRIE RESOURCES DISTRICT

Glacier Creek Project Objective: To provide present and future generations of the region a unique resource consisting of class and lab space in *The Barn @ Glacier Creek*, an education/research facility that is embedded within a 130 ha (329 acre), landscape-level preserve that supports a diversity of tallgrass prairie and associated habitats. Managed for wildlife to approximate historic environmental conditions, activities at the preserve are centered on university-level, multi-disciplinary education and research while also supporting outreach for inquiry-based environmental education and research at all other educational levels. The Glacier Creek Preserve also provides a setting where visitors can enjoy an outdoor experience and where students and visitors alike can get the *feel* of our historic prairie landscape.



Viewing north across Glacier Creek Preserve towards the Barboi Hayes Overlook in the distance.



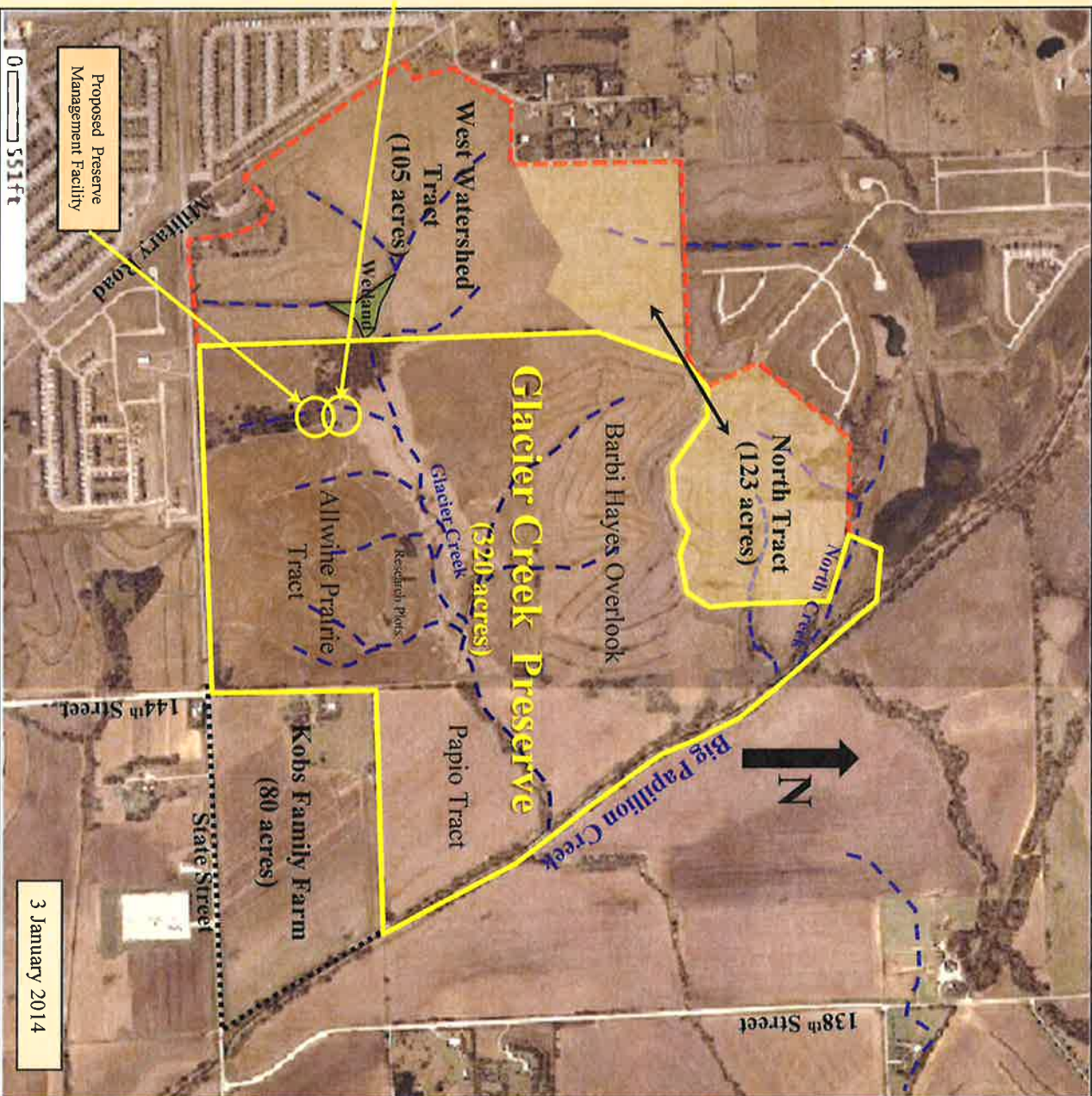
The Barn @ Glacier Creek education and research facility

LEGEND
 Red Dashed Line = Approximate outline of 228 acres (combined North Tract and West Watershed Tract) that is the focus of present fund raising efforts for land acquisition.

Yellow Solid Line = Boundary of the Glacier Creek Preserve

Blue Dashed Line = Glacier Creek and North Creek drainages.

Black Dotted Line = Kobs Family Farm



Contact Information: Tom Bragg, Biology Department, University of Nebraska at Omaha (tbragg@unomaha.edu); Glacier Creek Preserve e-mail: unoglaciercreek@unomaha.edu
 Nature Preserves Website: <http://www.unomaha.edu/prairie/>