

Agenda Item 8.

## Memorandum

To: Programs, Projects and Operations Subcommittee

Subject: Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership – Request for Funding

Date: December 6, 2006

From: Gerry Bowen

The District received a funding request (see attached letter) from Renae Held, with the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership (TPCP), a cooperative venture (see attached description) with twelve entities (see attached list), including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC).

The TCPC's mission is to protect the endangered least tern and the threatened Piping Plover and to prevent and resolve conflicts with the sand and gravel industry. The species use the sand and gravel mining areas for nesting.

The request is for a contribution of \$5,000 in 2007 to help fund seasonal personnel to monitor tern and plover nesting sites along the Platte and Elkhorn Rivers, and to help resolve conflicts as they arise throughout the year. They are also requesting a similar amount of funding from the Lower Platte South and Lower Platte North NRDs. As noted in the request letter, the TCPC has also secured partial funding from the sand and gravel industry. The program has been totally grant-funded in the past, with an annual budget of approximately \$50,000.

**Management recommends that the Subcommittee recommend to the Board that the District provide financial assistance in the amount of \$5,000 to support the 2007 program activities of the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership.**

Renaë Held  
153C Hardin Hall  
University of Nebraska - Lincoln  
3310 Holdrege  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0931

December 5, 2006

Dear Mr. Petermann and Mr. Bowen:

I am writing regarding our request to the Papio-Missouri NRD for \$5,000 in funding for the Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership (Partnership). In Nebraska the *Endangered* interior Least Tern and the *Threatened* Piping Plover nest on dry, sparsely vegetated sandbars in the middle of braided river systems such as the lower Platte River. An alternative nesting habitat, which mimics this habitat in many regards is sand spoil piles at sand and gravel mines adjacent to the river.

The mission of the Partnership is to prevent and resolve conflicts between the sand and gravel industry and least terns and piping plovers that use these areas for nesting. The Partnership is a diverse partnership of 11 organizations including the several sand and gravel industry representatives, the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), and other granting agencies.

In the past the Partnership has been completely grant funded, but with grant funds decreasing in availability and the decrease in budgets of both UNL and NGPC, the Partnership is striving to become more self sustaining and is looking to additional sources for funding. We are currently working with the sand and gravel industry to acquire partial funding for the project and have been successful at procuring \$7,500 in funding at this time with the anticipation of more funding to come. We are confident that adding additional partners and funding sources will help us leverage additional funds from industry, thereby ensuring the continuation of the program.

This is an opportunity for the Papio-Missouri NRD to fulfill its mission to wisely conserve, manage and enhance wildlife resources within the districts boundaries, as many of our largest nesting sites are included within the district. We request \$5,000 to help fund one of two seasonal technicians to help with monitoring and conflict resolution along the Lower Platte and Elkhorn Rivers. In the month of December we will also be contacting the Lower Platte South and North NRD's for financial assistance in this manner. Thank you for your time and consideration, we look forward to meeting with you on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

Renaë Held  
Tern and Plover Conservation Partnership – Program Coordinator, UNL

Joel Jorgensen  
Non-Game Bird Program Manager - NGPC