

August 15, 2023 | Wildcat Hills Nature Center | 210617 Highway 71 Gering, NE 69341

Overview: Nebraska's conservation community is known for its close collaboration, excellent working relationships, and open communication. To further provide a forum to build these relationships and learn different partner programs a series of Conservation Practitioner Symposiums are being hosted. These one day Conservation Practitioner Symposiums will focus on human dimensions related private lands conservation. The speakers will provide an overview of landowner perceptions of conservation programs, the drivers that influence program participation, tools to engage landowners, opportunities to improve follow-up with participants, and development of interpersonal relationships. Conservation roundtable forums will provide opportunities to address gaps to leverage partner resources to more effectively address resource concerns as a collective community. This discussion will help highlight what different partners can provide in either Financial Assistance (FA) and Technical Assistance (TA) and what FA and TA resources they need from partners.

Objectives:

- Local networks will feed more effectively into a statewide natural resource network for Nebraska.
- Natural Resource organizations will work to build stronger collaborations to solve Nebraska's natural resource challenges.
- In regions, conservation professionals will become more acquainted with their colleagues and partners, individuals whom they serve, and what they provide to the network.
- Collection of data through conversations and evaluation to help determine the next steps.

Vision: Symposium participants will come away from these meetings with an elevated awareness of landowners perceptions related to adoption of conservation programs, the partner priorities related to natural resource concerns, and programmatic offerings that different partners have. These symposiums will also provide a venue for conservation practitioners to establish new relationships and rejuvenate old ones.

Symposium Agenda

Moderator: Megan Burda - UNL Extension

8:00 – Registration/coffee social

8:30 – Welcome - Mary Reece, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

8:45 – Ice Breaker and Introductions

9:45 – Plenary Session 1 (40 minutes presentation 10 minutes questions)

- Andy Little, Assistant Professor of Landscape Ecology and Habitat Management, and Extension Specialist – Understanding the constraints Nebraska farmers and landowners face when choosing to adopt precision technologies

10:40 - Plenary Session 2 (40 minutes presentation 10 minutes questions)

- John Westra, Director Panhandle Research & Extension Center - Economic tradeoffs to generating environmental benefits in agricultural landscapes

11:30 – Lunch

12:30 – Conservation Roundtable (20 minutes for conversations 15 minute debrief)

- Facilitated discussion, you will be able to participate in 5 conversations.

12:45 – 1:05 – Conversation 1

1:05 – 1:20 – Debrief questions, capture main ideas, move to next table/question.

1:20 – 1:40 – Conversation 2

1:40 – 1:55 – Debrief questions, capture main ideas, move to next table/question.

1:55 – 2:15 – Conversation 3

2:15 – 2:30 – Debrief questions, capture main ideas, move to next table/question.

2:30 – 2:40 – Break

2:40 – 3:00 – Conversation 4

3:00 – 3:15 – Debrief questions, capture main ideas, move to next table/question.

3:15 – 3:35 – Conversation 5

3:35 – 3:50 – Debrief questions, capture main ideas, move to next table/question.

Half sheets of paper available to write down main ideas for each topic.

Half sheets will be collected/displayed on a sticky wall under each question

3:50 - Closing: Where do we go from here? What will you take with you today?

4:00 – Adjourn

Participating Organizations

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Ducks Unlimited

Nebraska Extension

Nebraska Forest Service

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Pheasants Forever

Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Upper Niobrara White NRD

USDA-NRCS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Conservation Roundtable Questions

Read the questions below and think about the 5 you want to participate in before coming to the symposium.

1. Deep Dive: What is the nature of your work?
 - What is your area of focus, primary geography, or focus area for work?
 - Tell us about your organization, employer, or non-profit.
 - What priority resource concerns does your agency/entity focus on?
2. Landowner Interactions:
 - How do you prepare to meet a landowner or conduct a site visit?
 - What communication venues have engaged landowners most successfully (i.e., direct mailings, stakeholder meetings, etc.)?
 - What are some nonconventional ways you have connected with landowners when trying to address a resource concern?
3. Who are some individuals/industry leaders that you would like to improve relationships with to ensure they are aware of and understand conservation programs and opportunities?
4. What are some of the ways you have tried to engage producers and non-traditional partners to communicate/educate about conservation programs and benefits?
5. What challenges exist relative to the adoption and maintenance of conservation practices?
6. What is needed to make conservation delivery easier (i.e., types of resources needed, barriers to reduce or eliminate, support, etc.)?
7. As a conservation community what opportunities exist for collaboration and efficiency? How do we capture and make best use of those opportunities?
8. Precision Agriculture Practices:
 - What is your comfort level with elements of precision agriculture?
 - What would you like to learn more about?
 - How might precision agriculture be helpful in your role?
9. What are some best venues (i.e. egov delivery, twitter feed, direct email, etc.) for presenting information to producers through webpages/social media, etc.?
 - What are some examples of how you are doing this?
 - How is your organization making this work?
 - Are specific people responsible (i.e. – who is doing the tweeting) or is everybody play a part?
 - Do you have a marketing/advertising/educational role in your organization that leads this effort?