

# Nebraska Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

*Do what you can, with what you have, where you are...*

*-Theodore Roosevelt*







# Justification



## ❖ Who We Are

- ❖ Nebraska covers 49,201,900 acres. 1.6%, or 785,000 acres is State or Federally owned with 695,000 open to hunt. *This is the third lowest in the nation, with a smaller percentage of public land than Texas.*
- ❖ NE Population 1.929 million. Licensed Hunters Statewide- 183,056 License Percentage vs. (Nationwide Percentage)- 9.5% (4.4%)
- ❖ Fishing Licenses- 230,020 Statewide Fishing License Percentage vs. (Nationwide License Percentage)- 12% (9.5%)

## ❖ All Is Not Lost

- ❖ Vibrant NE Game and Parks Open Fields and Waters enrolls ~305,000 acres.
- ❖ Constitutional Right to Hunt
- ❖ Water rights reserved to people and limited statutory right to portage non-powered vessels onto private property abutting natural streams.





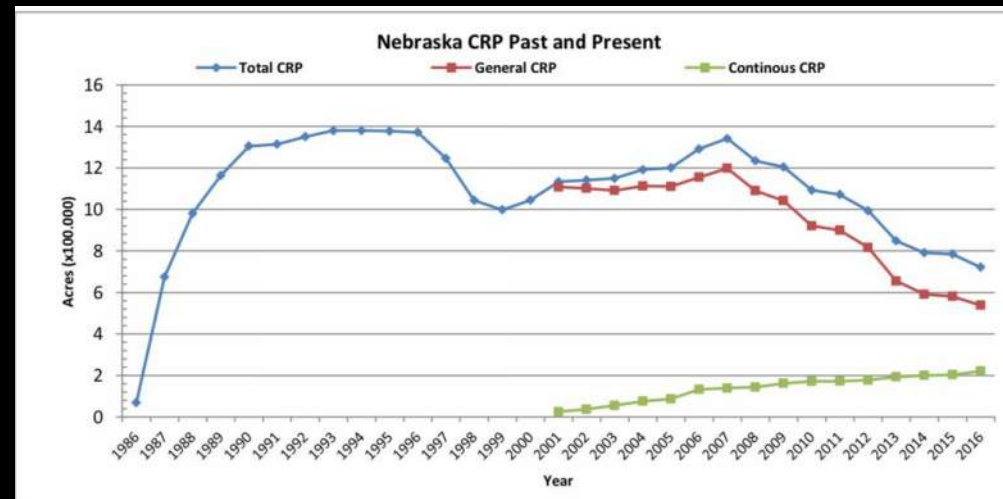
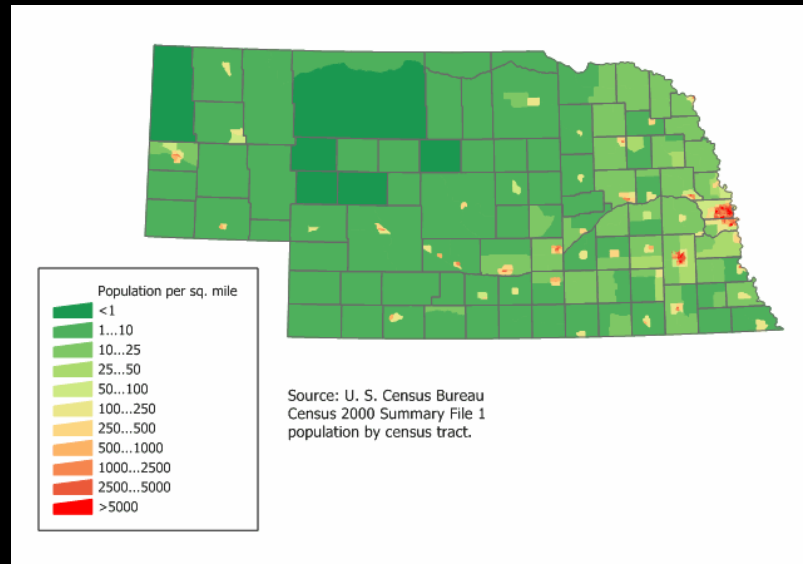
# Treasures



- ❖ Nebraska has a tremendously varied landscape including everything from tall and short grass prairie to the world famous Sandhills
- ❖ Nebraska has over 80,000 river miles, in the top 5 in the Nation.
- ❖ Populations of EVERY Big Game species in the Lower 48 except Mountain Goat
- ❖ World-famous wingshooting: Prairie Chickens, Sharptail Grouse, Bobwhite Quail, Ringneck Pheasants, Sandhill Cranes and the Central Flyway.
- ❖ Premier Turkey hunting destination
- ❖ Cold and warm water river fisheries with 197 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers and vibrant lake fisheries on over 77,000 square miles of lakes.



# Trials



- ❖ Population/Access mismatch...1.1 of 1.9 million in Omaha and Lincoln
- ❖ Openly hostile Chair of Natural Resources committee and legislative agenda
- ❖ Incomplete and restrictive stream access laws
- ❖ Nebraska Bureau of Education Lands and Funds (BELF) holds 1.3 million acres not accessible to public hunting





# Mission Statement



*Nebraska Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is here to speak for our greatest legacy; Nebraska's lands and waters. We will educate. We will preserve. We will steward. We will ensure that our children receive the legacy that was given to us, improved and protected by the people who have come to love it.*

*We belong to the land.*

# Getting To Work

- ❖ Short Term Goals (3 month horizon)- **Public Awareness**
  - ❖ Chapter Acceptance
  - ❖ Membership Growth and Awareness through R3, Pint Nights and non-traditional events.
- ❖ Mid-Term Goals (9 month horizon)- **Relationship Building**
  - ❖ Partnerships with established conservation orgs for events, habitat improvement, and legislative agenda
  - ❖ Established R3 presence statewide
  - ❖ Complete Chapter Structure
  - ❖ NE G&P Partnership- Cleanups, habitat improvement, OFW Growth, Rulemaking.



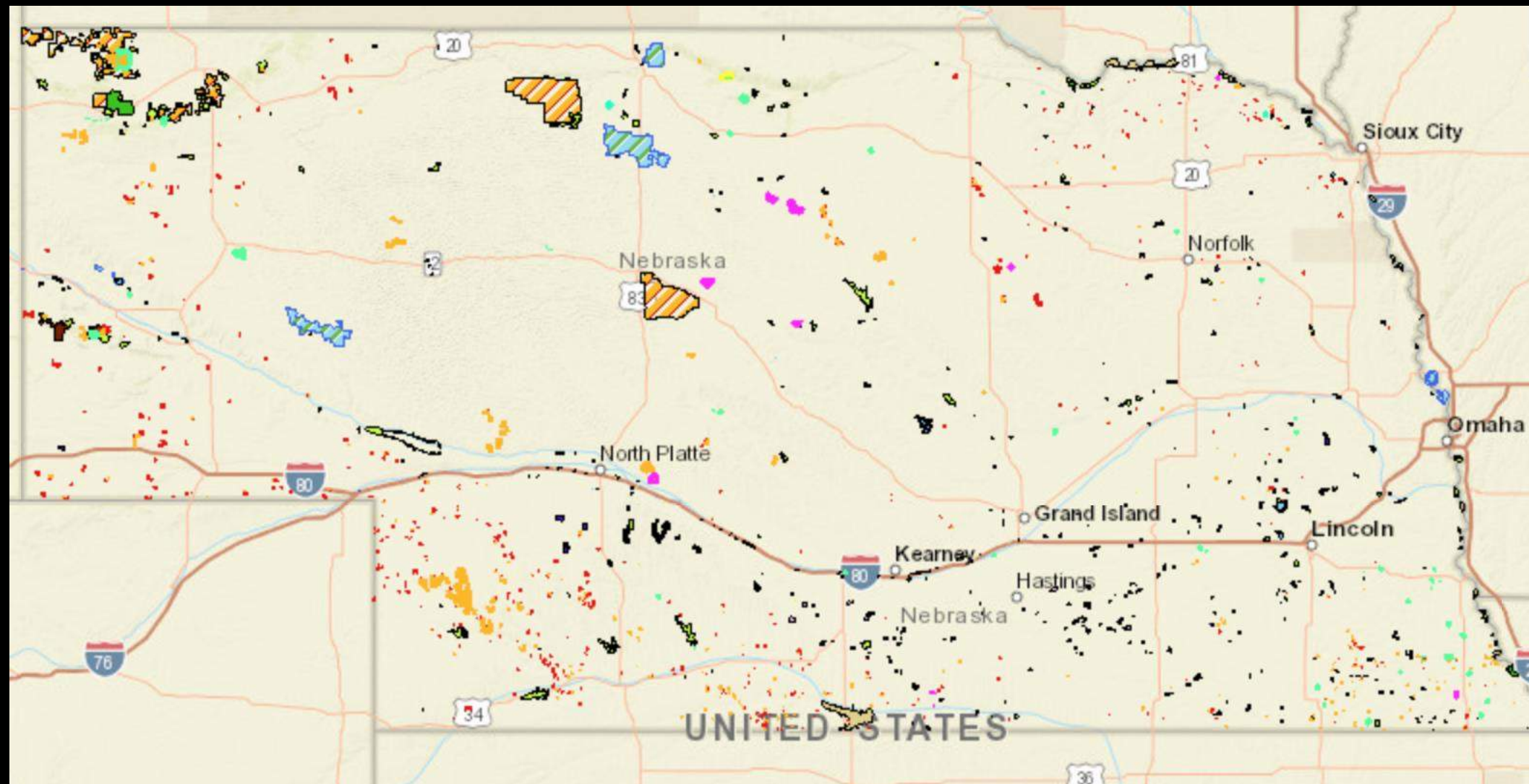


# Getting To Work Continued



- ❖ Long Term Goals (2 years)- ***Changing The Landscape***
  - ❖ Seek more and better access to naturally flowing streams and rivers.
  - ❖ Increased Wild & Scenic Protection Miles
  - ❖ Public Land Growth and Connection
  - ❖ Grow Open Fields and Waters by 10%
  - ❖ Work with BELF Board of Directors to begin to open BELF land to public hunting and fishing.

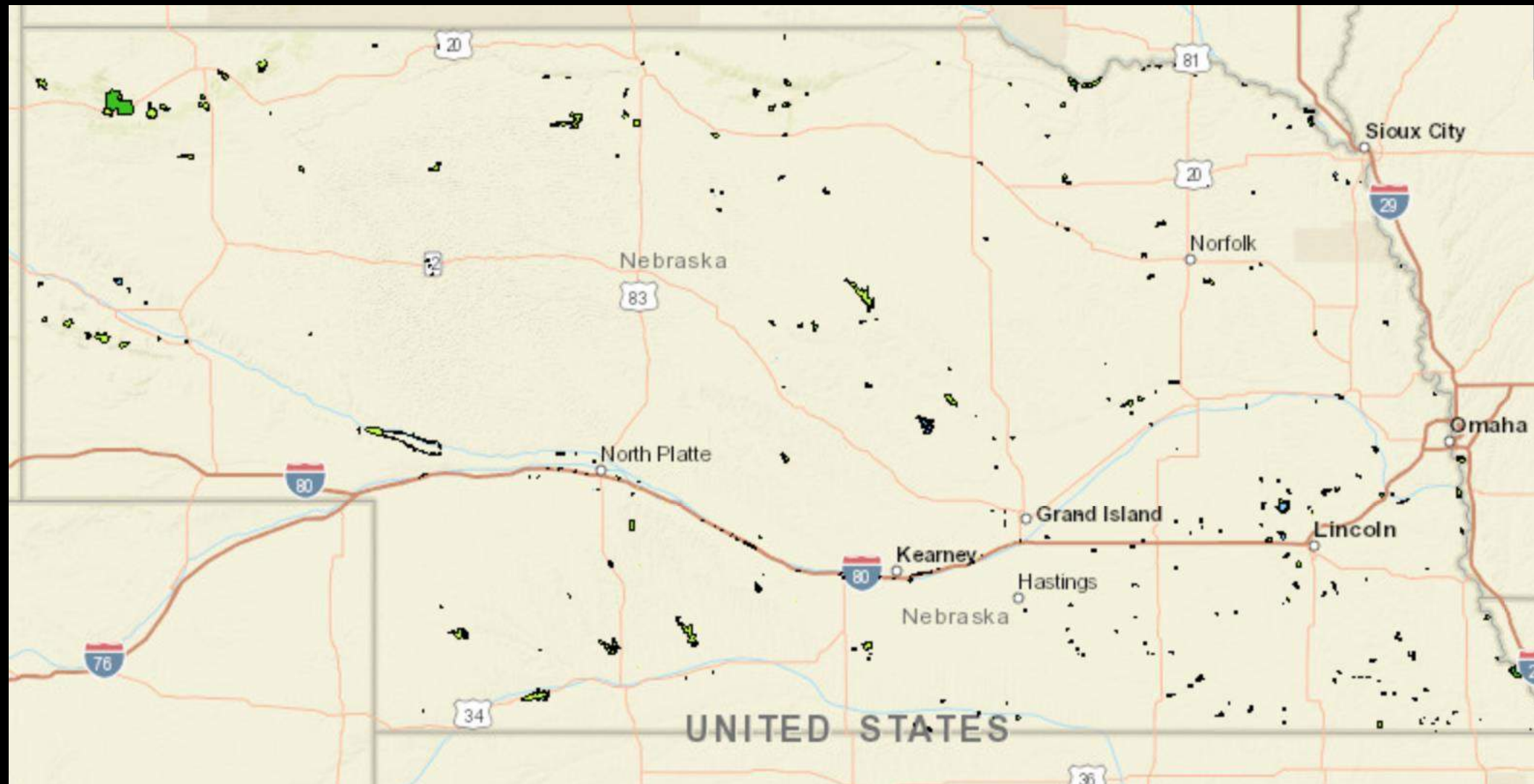
# Our Lands: All Publicly Available



Though Nebraska public lands and waters access is limited compared to many western states but the diversity of landscapes and abundance of life make up for it

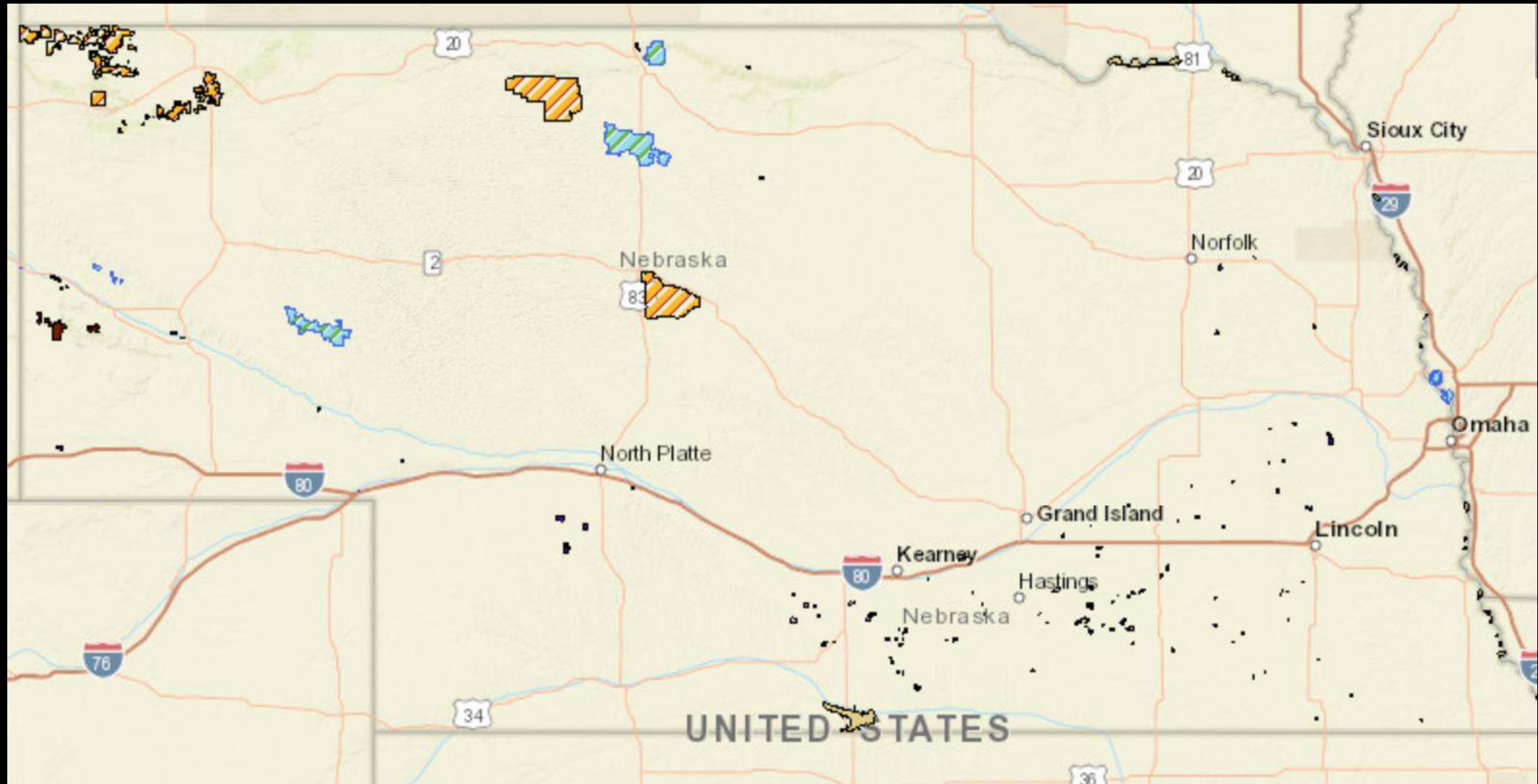


# Our Lands: Game & Parks Property



236,118 acres

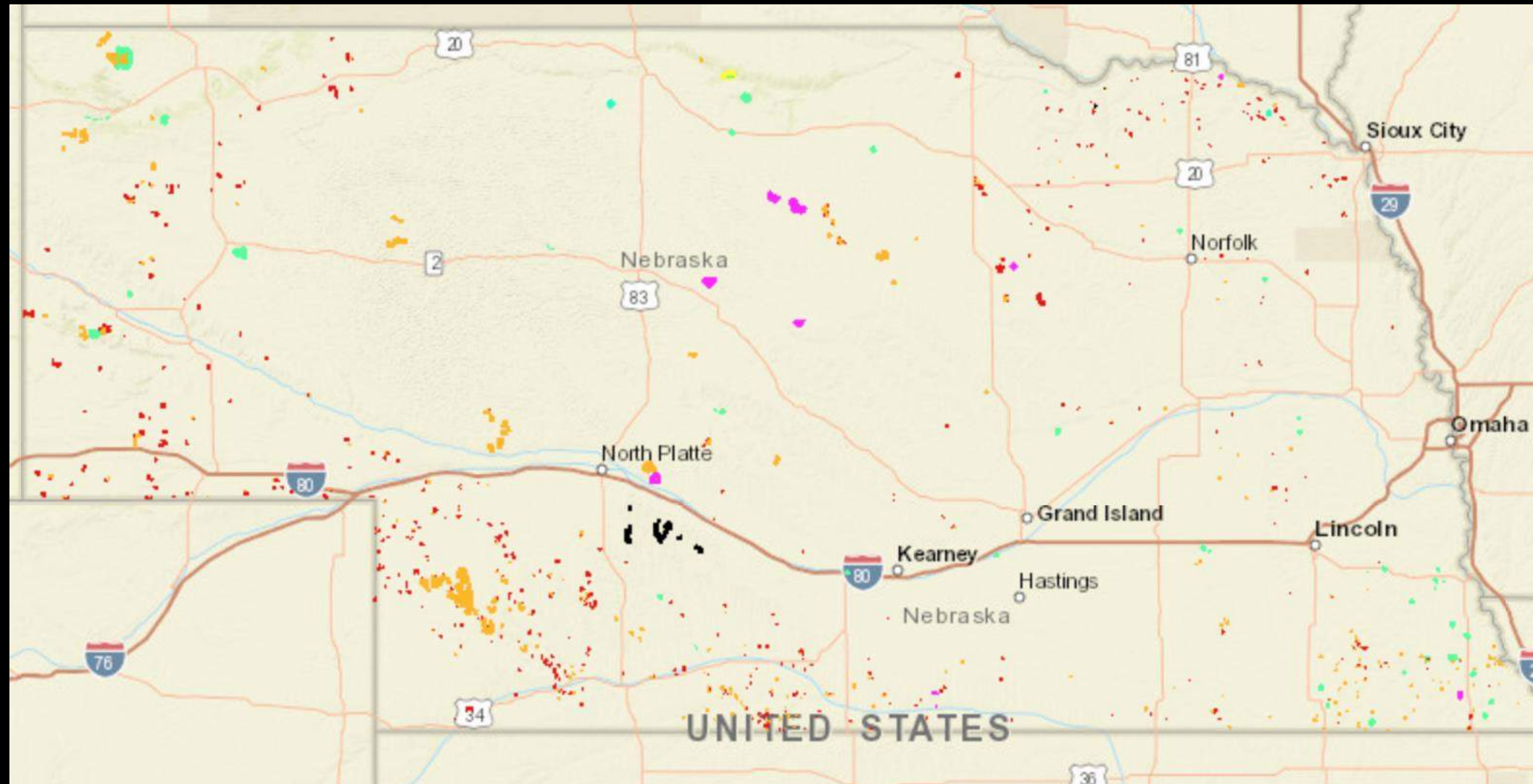
# Our Lands: Federal Land



549,346 acres composed of National Forest, NWR, WPA



# Our Lands: Open Fields and Waters



OF&W enrolls approximately 346,000 acres statewide. While OFW doesn't generally enroll huge pieces, it is the program that gives LOCAL access to Nebraskans.

# Nebraska Chapter Events

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The newly formed Nebraska Chapter board quickly lined up multiple events for the first half of 2020 after initial kick off meeting in January. Events included pint nights, collaborations with other conservation organizations, tabling outdoor enthusiast events and namely Tall Tales and Tall Pints event held in conjunction with the 85th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference held in Omaha in March.

Sadly as excitement for a Nebraska BHA Chapter was at a high just after the Tall Tales and Tall Pints event the Covid Pandemic began. Following slides detail successful events.





# PF Collaboration



## Hops and Habitat with Pheasants Forever- 18 February, 2020

42 attendees, 5 new individual members and a family membership!  
Drew Larsen, Director of Habitat Education for PF attended and spoke.







# Pint Night



Pint Nine Brewing Pint Night- 29 February, 2020

23 Attendees, 1 New Member







# Nebraska Bowhunters Banquet



Ramada Inn, Kearney NE -6 & 7 Mar 2020  
305 Attendees







# Tall Tales and Tall Pints



The Old Mattress Factory, Omaha, NE- 11 March, 2020

142 Attendees, 9 Memberships







# Fly Fishing Film Tour



Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, Omaha, NE- 12 March, 2020

75 Attendees, 2 New Memberships

- ❖ Great collaboration with Backwoods Outdoors Store in Omaha. Attendance ~30% due to Coronavirus



# COVID Event Cancellations

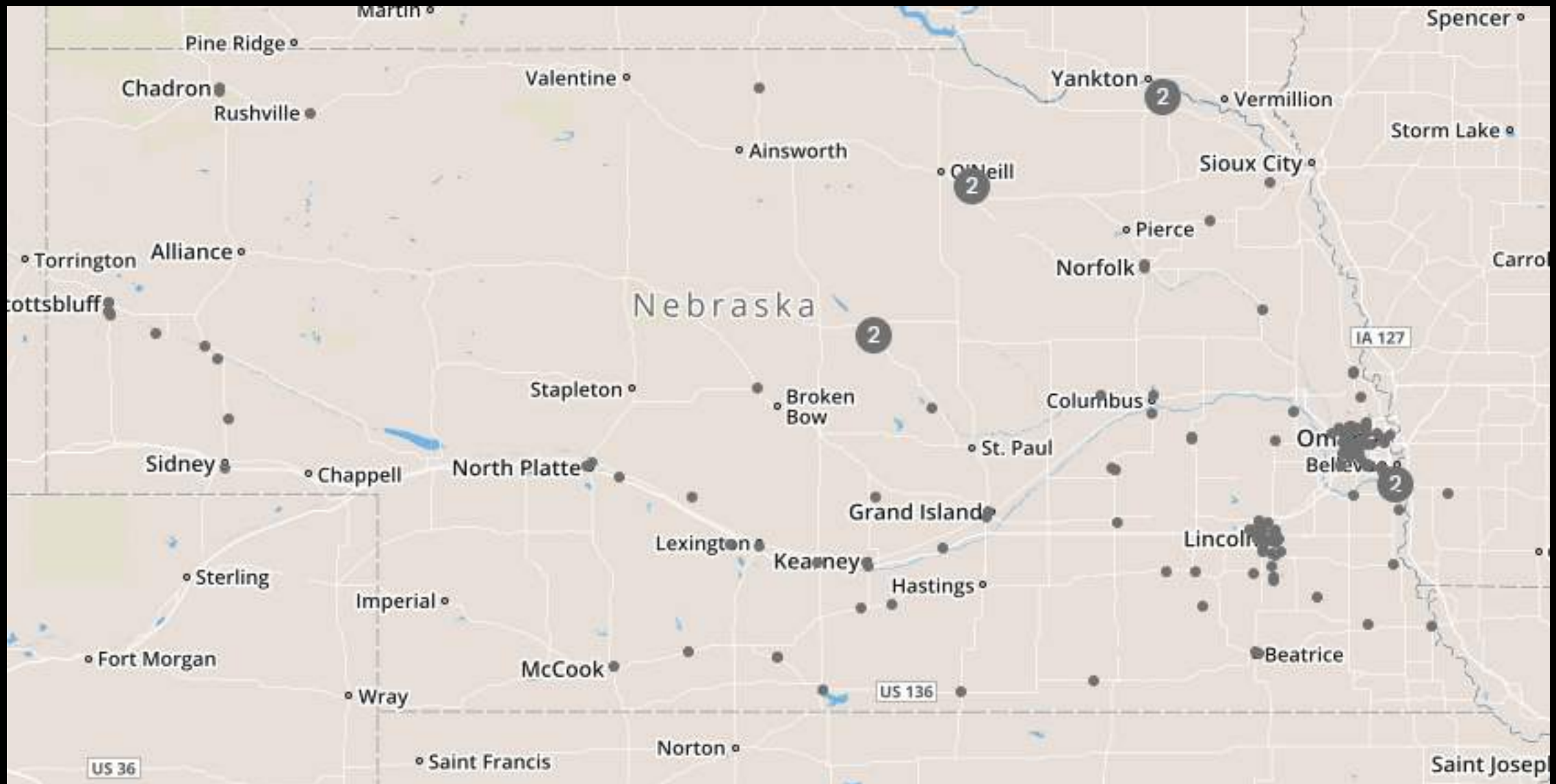
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- ❖ Pint Night, Fanatics, Kearney, NE
- ❖ Cabela's Spring Fishing Event, Cabela's, La Vista, NE
- ❖ Lower Platte Pheasants Forever Banquet, Ashland, NE
- ❖ Kearney Gun and Coin Show, Kearney, NE
- ❖ Republican Valley Pheasants Forever Banquet
- ❖ NE BHA Board of Directors Turkey Hunt, Halsey NF



# Membership

Nebraska Membership at 158 Strong



# Conclusion



- ❖ Only those who've lost, realize what's missing. We are in a unique position to appreciate and protect what we still have and to move the bar upward.
- ❖ Active, large, and motivated board. Unique experiences and backgrounds.
- ❖ COVID has been a challenge, but has really just pent up our energy. We are on fire and ready to roll.





# Board of Director Bios



# Adam Leitschuh- Chairman



Adam was born in Colorado but spent majority of his youth growing up camping and fishing in the Sierra Nevada's of Northern California. Adam started hunting shortly after high school and expanded his opportunities after moving to Idaho to attend college at Boise State University. Adam hunted in California on summer and winter breaks until gained residency in Idaho to afford tags on a college student's budget. He spent free time around school, work and rugby schedule scouting, camping, hunting or fishing on public lands. After graduating with a construction management degree work took Adam to North Dakota and then Montana. While working on a project in Great Falls, MT Adam met his wife who is an Air Force Officer. His wife's career took Adam back to North Dakota where he helped start the North Dakota Chapter of BHA and then on to Nebraska. Adam, his wife and young son who was born in May of 2019 now reside in Plattsmouth and Adam had to stay involved with BHA. As luck would have it shortly after Adam's family moved to Nebraska the new chapter was starting. In the past ten years he has had the opportunity to hunt multiple western states full of public land including Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and New Mexico and Eastern states such as Ohio which is at the opposite end of the public land spectrum. Growing up surrounded by public lands and waters and traveling and moving around the country Adam experienced firsthand how easy it is to take public lands and waters for granted when it's there. Without people acting that may not always be the case. No matter where that public land or water is how small or large it deserves our attention and protection.



# Erik Dippold- Secretary

Erik was born in Northwestern Pennsylvania on the edge of the Hickory Creek Wilderness and 500,000 acres of Allegheny National Forest. This early “backyard” forever changed his perspective and hunting and fishing followed quickly, chasing whitetail, turkeys, and small game and fishing the cold water Allegheny. After a year in college in suburban Maryland, and joining the Navy in 1998 though, it became increasingly hard to find the time and places to wear out boots and chase critters. After a nearly 7 years, Erik found himself in Washington State and immediately started doing both again. “I figured out that the common link between the PA of my youth and Washington was easy access to public ground, and while I had a ton to learn, (What’s a bonus point?!) I felt like a kid again.” Since, Erik has hunted nearly every Western State for nearly every Western game animal, and came to BHA, through the Meat Eater series. “I finally got an education about what makes public land and wildlife conservation go, and had to get involved.” Erik has a degree in Government and Economics from Cornell University, is an active duty Naval Aviator and a BHA life member. He is married with two little girls who love outdoor adventures, and pink princess dresses.



# Casey Hunter- Treasurer



Casey is a native Nebraskan. Growing up he would split his time between Omaha and Boston as his father played for the Red Sox in the early 70's – the family lovingly refers to that time as “BC” – before cash. When Casey was not in Boston learning how to mingling with the “greats” he was back home in Omaha doing what young boys do – playing until the street lights came on. At age 9, Casey's Dad invited him on his first hunt – from then he was hooked. Yes- those hunts fed the family, but also they were the foundation of many great memories between father and son. Casey and his dad would spend every weekend of every open season together in a blind, stand or field until the time came when his dad hung up the shotgun. Casey's love of the outdoors and feeding his family from the land shifted to the streams when he discovered fishing. He developed life long relationships with his fishing buddies-whom he still fishes with 32 years later. Access to public lands and public waterways are responsible for many of Casey's closest relationships and fondest memories. Advocating for public access and keeping the sport ethical and viable for the next generation is his passion. Involvement with BHA is a natural progression for Casey to advocate the mission of public land owners. Casey received his B.S from Concordia University and currently is the Branch Manager for the leading forklift Manufacturer in the Country. He is married with 3 children and is forever counting the days until the next open season.



# Ryan Sewell- Board Member

Ryan is a fifth generation Omahan, married with two teenagers, and works as a litigation attorney. Growing up, he spent countless hours with his Dad in a bass boat on public lakes within the Omaha metro and in the field pheasant and quail hunting with the family's German Shorthairs and English Setters. After college and law school, his outdoor life took the path of slow "deactivation" (R3 parlance), while starting a family, raising young kids active in sports, building a career, and believing—wrongly—that he did not have time to own a bird dog or access to quality upland hunting ground. That changed in 2016, when a friend offered him a Pointer pup. That pup changed everything. He began charting adventures with Nebraska G & P's "Public Hunting Atlas" and hiking hundreds of miles in Nebraska's public prairies in pursuit of grouse, pheasant and quail. Ryan cherishes the experiences his family has enjoyed because of access to Nebraska's land and waters and joined BHA's cause to ensure others have the same opportunities.



# Kyle Smith- Board Member



Kyle is an avid outdoorsman who enjoys hunting, fishing, archery, and anything related to the outdoor lifestyle. He grew up along the banks of the Missouri River. Some of his fondest memories come from the public lands that surrounded his hometown. Since he was young, Kyle has been very dedicated to archery and bow hunting. Chasing whitetails was his passion. He knew that eventually he wanted to go out west and explore the mountains. In 2015, he and his friend walked into the backcountry of a Colorado wilderness for the first time. Eight days later, he was able to harvest a beautiful bull elk with his bow. DIY and on an over the counter tag. It sparked a new passion. He wanted that opportunity to exist for anybody willing to put in the work. He wanted his kids to be able to do the same thing he did. He wanted to protect our western public lands for generations to come. This eventually led him to BHA. Protecting our wild places and promoting public access are very important to him. He believes we have to unite as an outdoor community and actively fight for our rights, especially in Nebraska. Kyle, his wife, and daughter live in the southeast part of the state. He has a bachelor's degree in Recreation Management and Environmental Science. He has been working in the field of conservation for the past ten years as a wildlife biologist.



# Seth Stender- Board Member

Seth is a 28 year old-lifelong Nebraskan. He currently resides in Waterloo with his wife, Kelci and nephew, Kadan. Born in Omaha, raised in Blair, Seth was destined to love the outdoors. His entire family, immediate and extended, is chalked full of outdoorsmen and women. Many of his earliest memories include camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, foraging and exploring public lands. As Seth reached high school his athletic career started to take time away from his outdoor pursuits. That trend continued in to college. Once out of college Seth jumped head first back in to hunting and fishing. That included a deep dive in to conservation and public lands in America. Through several sources, he was introduced to BHA and had to be involved. Now days he spends his time outside big game, waterfowl, or upland bird hunting, as well as fishing, foraging, and hiking. The majority of these activities occur on public lands or waters and Seth knows that's not an accident. As a member of the BOD for the Nebraska Chapter, Seth is committed to working with his fellow members to be the voice for our public lands in Nebraska.



# Michael Storrs- Board Member



Michael was born in Northern California. Growing up his family has lived in California, Alaska, Georgia and Nebraska. His family settled in the McCook area when he was 15. After Tech school he moved to Kearney to begin his career as an industrial electrician. In 2013 he moved his family to McCook where they currently reside. Michael grew up hunting a variety of species including pheasants, quail, and Sandhills mule deer. When he was 18, he went on his first Colorado elk hunt which helped instill his love for western hunting. His love of the outdoors is something he is trying to pass on to his two daughters. He looks forward to the day when his daughters are toting their own shotguns and chasing roosters on the high plains with him. But until then his family enjoys taking advantage of the many lakes Southwest Nebraska has to offer where they fish, hunt, hike and like to go boating.

Michael didn't come from a family who had land rights. It would be impossible for him to carry on his love for the outdoors if it were not for public lands and waters. He joined BHA to help keep our public lands and waters in the public hands. He values the importance it will have for his kids, grandkids and the generations to come.



# Kyle Broadfoot- Board Member

Kyle was born and raised in the mixed croplands and pastures of rural Southwest Nebraska. From an early age, Kyle's dad was taking him on weekend adventures of chasing ringnecks, quail, turkeys, and deer, along with setlining the river for channel cats. Early on, he learned that fair chase, safety, and conservation were even more important than actually harvesting game. As Kyle grew older and access to private land dwindled, he began to seek out the wilder places that public lands in Western Nebraska offered. His quests for whitetails transitioned to mulies, Eastern and Hybrid turkeys turned to Merriam's and Rios, and his rifle occasionally racked for a bow. His passion for public lands continued to grow, as well, the more he became involved in groups such as BHA, Pheasants Forever, and the Izaak Walton League. Currently, Kyle lives in Cambridge, NE where he works as a Physical Therapist Assistant at the local hospital. He has a wife and 3 kids and 1 giant yellow lab, Ruger, who refuses to find downed birds.





# Bill Grossniclaus- Board Member



Bill was born in the small South Central Nebraska town of Oxford, but spent his first formative years growing up on the front range of the Rocky Mountains with his mother, older sister, stepfather, and two older stepbrothers. Family outings found him following his brothers or catching small animals along the trout streams and lakes while camping. After the birth of his younger brother and sister the family returned to his hometown where he was reunited with his grandfather who would become the biggest influencer in his outdoor passion. Pheasants and duck led to bigger game, and with the guidance of a brother and Grandpa he found his ultimate passion in bowhunting. His first deer was a 3x3 mule deer buck at 17, and he has been fortunate enough to take trophy animals with both modern and traditional gear over the last 30 seasons. Bill has also been an avid trapper and predator hunter for over 25 years. Many weekends are spent checking long trap lines for bobcat, coyote, fox and raccoon. Bill often brags about being the best skunk and opossum trapper in Furnas county. Bill lives in Oxford with his wife of 24 years, his daughter and two sons, all avid hunters. Bill is very active in his community. He has been a member of the Volunteer fire department for 25 years where he is the current Fire Chief. He is a past City Councilman, President and board member of the local outdoor club/shooting club, and coach for little league baseball, football and peewee wrestling.



# Josh Kimminau- Board Member

Josh is a native of Nebraska, where he grew up on the Platte River in the South Central part of the state. Josh was exposed to the outdoors through adventures with family, friends and the Boy Scouts led by his father. Springs and summers were often spent in the johnboat fishing on the pond with friends and camping. Fall and winter was a time for hunting. Josh's father and uncle first exposed him to hunting by having him, and his brother, walk through the pheasant fields to help fill in the space between those carrying a shotgun. As Josh continued to enjoy the outdoors during his high school years, he joined a trip to the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota for a weeklong canoe trip. Having to pack in all their gear and portage from lake to lake was one of the most impactful events in his life. In college Josh found ways to hunt nearby public land, and eventually introduced his soon-to-be wife to hunting. Now that Josh has two daughters he works to teach them about wildlife and nature so that they will grow to appreciate the value these things bring to the world. As a father, husband, son and outdoorsman being an advocate for public access and ethical, fair chase hunting and fishing is one of Josh's passions. Involvement with BHA has been a natural progression to advocate the mission of public land access and improvement. Josh received his B.S from the University of Nebraska – Kearney. Today, Josh lives in Omaha with his wife and two wonderful daughters, and is currently a Field Trainer for Travelers Indemnity Company. His work takes him around Nebraska, Kansas and Western Missouri. Josh looks forward to the days when his fishing partners develop into hunting buddies. Until that day he enjoys the camping and fishing adventures his family experience.



# Peyton Briggs- Board Member



Peyton was born and raised in the panhandle of western Nebraska. Growing up, his life revolved around his family, friends, and the outdoors. Hunting, fishing, and camping on public lands in Nebraska and Wyoming were the highlights of his childhood. Through experiences like hunting for everything from squirrels to mule deer, and taking weekly fishing trips, Peyton's father instilled a love and respect for wildlife and wild places in him at a very young age. After enlisting in the Nebraska National Guard, Peyton moved to central Nebraska to attend college. Moving to less familiar territory led to him spending even more time exploring public lands. This included archery hunting for deer and antelope on National forests and grasslands, hunting waterfowl along the Platte River, and fishing public waters across the state. These experiences solidified his appreciation of America's public lands, and why it is so important to protect and preserve these special places. Peyton currently lives near Kearney, Nebraska with his wife Taylor and spends most of his time wandering between central Nebraska and the Wyoming border hunting, fishing and camping. He is looking forward to helping the Nebraska chapter of BHA advocate for our states public lands and waters.