



Dave Heineman
Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Ann Bleed
Director

August 8, 2007

IN REPLY TO:

TO: Jasper Fanning, Dan Smith, Mike Clements, John Thorburn, Ron Cacek,
Rod Horn, Kent Miller, Ron Bishop

FROM: Ann Bleed *AB*

SUBJECT: Request for Partners for Environmental Trust Proposal on "*Reduced Water Use through Water Management Education*"

The Department of Natural Resources is currently working with the UNL Biological Systems Engineering Department and a water team including Nebraska's pivot manufacturers to develop a Environmental Trust grant proposal entitled "*Reduced Water Use through Water Management Education*". The purpose of the grant is to ensure that producers are aware of and know how to use the tools for saving water that are currently available. The initial activities will initially be targeted to fully and overappropriated basins.

A three level educational program is proposed, with each level including progressively more advanced material. The information will be delivered through a wide range of formats possibly including radio and television programs, special meetings with producers and workshop and training classes. We are also hoping to have training classes for those working for pivot manufacturers and other production advisers. The grant would be used to develop the water-use reduction education program and to hire a an Extension educator who would be responsible for developing the material in consultation with partners and then working with partners to schedule on-site workshops, deliver portions of workshops and interface with client groups. The current program budget is expected to be about \$100,000 per year for three years.

Our expectation is that the Department of Natural Resources will act as project sponsor and the University and the Pivot manufacturers will be project partners. It is our hope that your NRD would also be willing to be a partner. We would of course be interested in any funding you could commit to the program, but we are also interested in your willingness to help arrange and sponsor producer meetings in your districts.

If you are willing to be a partner would you please contact Steve Gaul at DNR and write a **letter to be included with the Environmental Trust application indicating the specific activities, staff hours, material and associated costs you would be willing to contribute on an in-kind basis for this effort.** The letter should specify the contribution to be made and confirm the

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partner's commitment to the project. Although a cash contribution would also be appreciated, it is not essential as any in-kind assistance you can provide (such as holding workshops, creating and distributing material and promotional efforts) is important. The Environmental Trust application is due no later than September 4. To assist in putting the grant together, **we would like to receive any letter agreeing to partner, including the value of the related in-kind contribution, by no later than August 29.**

At this time we do not have a copy of the full proposal, although I have attached the brief material currently available. We do expect to have additional material available shortly and I will send it to you as soon as it is available. We have received a substantial verbal commitment of both cash and in-kind staff time from a team of the pivot manufacturers.

With the fully and overappropriated status experienced in much of western and central Nebraska, it has become important that we reduce water use in the most economic manner possible. I believe this program would provide excellent educational opportunities to irrigators working to reduce use. If you have any questions on the program, please don't hesitate to contact me, Steve Gaul (402-471-3955) of my staff, or Dr. Ron Yoder of the University of Nebraska. If we do not hear from you, we will follow up in a few weeks concerning your decision on this important proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

On a separate matter, I have enclosed summary paragraphs for four water conservation related research proposals being considered by the University of Nebraska Water Resource Advisory Panel. We anticipate submitting Environmental Trust grants for most of these and believe that if they are submitted it will be important to coordinate them with existing activities in your districts. I have included them so that you are aware of the potential efforts.

Attachments

cc: Ron Yoder
Dean Edson
Charlie Meis
John Davis
Dave Thom
Robert Moaney