

NEBRASKA RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FUND

PROGRESS REPORT

August 26, 1974

The Nebraska Resources Development Fund Act of 1974 created a fund to assist in the development and wise use of Nebraska's water and land resources. It can be used to provide grants and/or loans to local political subdivisions of the state or an agency of the state, or it can be used by the Natural Resources Commission to acquire an interest in a project in the name of the state.

The Act created a conjunctive administrative system with certain delegated responsibilities to the Natural Resources Commission, and other delegated responsibilities to a statutorily created "Advisory Board." The Advisory Board is made up of agency representatives from the following eight state agencies:

Department of Economic Development
State Office of Planning & Programming
Department of Water Resources
Game & Parks Commission
Conservation & Survey Division
Department of Agriculture
Department of Environmental Control
Nebraska Natural Resources Commission

Advisory Board Function & Progress

The primary function of the Advisory Board is to determine project and program eligibility for Resources Development Fund assistance. The board must also determine the type of assistance appropriate; grant, loan or a combination thereof. To accomplish its responsibilities, the board must adopt appropriate rules and regulations, evaluation standards, specifications, and guidelines for implementation.

To date, the board has held four meetings. It has adopted Procedural Rules and Regulations that govern its internal operations, which has been approved by the Attorney General's office and filed as required by law.

Presently, the Advisory Board is working on a system and procedure for determining project and program eligibility. It must decide what basic types of projects are eligible and also adopt standards to determine whether such projects are feasible. Not only must the projects be engineeringly sound, but they must also be economically and financially feasible and environmentally acceptable.

To accomplish its task, the Advisory Board has broken down into four study committees: Engineering, Economics, Environmental and Eligibility. The committees have been very active in drafting their project evaluation criteria. Adoption of the evaluation criteria is expected at the September Advisory Board meeting.

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Once the evaluation criteria has been adopted, it will be necessary to prepare the operational rules and regulations and any other necessary supporting material such as policy, guidelines and accepted evaluation procedures.

Commission Function & Progress

The Commission's primary administrative functions begin once the Advisory Board has reviewed the applications, determined their eligibility and referred those eligible on to the Commission. Determination of priorities for eligible programs or projects is a responsibility solely of the Commission. Prior to an allocation of funds, the Commission must enter into an agreement and negotiate other necessary documents to be assured that the state investment is protected.

Presently, the Commission staff is working on various administrative procedures, agreement considerations, and security assurances. The Commission's Program Committee will meet in early September to discuss staff findings, and to make recommendations for drafting the operational rules and regulations.

Rules and regulations prepared by the Advisory Board will be merged with those prepared by the Commission and submitted as one document. Public hearings will be held on them in late October or early November. Appropriate modifications will then be made and adoption by the Advisory Board and the Commission is expected in January.

One million dollars of General Fund monies was appropriated to the fund for each of the Fiscal Years 1975 and 1976. To date, no funds have been spent or obligated. We anticipate that preliminary applications will be accepted in November or December of 1974 and no funds will be obligated until at least March of 1975.



Dayle E. Williamson
Executive Secretary
Nebraska Natural Resources Commission

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