

Program 307 – Nebraska Resources Development Fund

Program Description

The Resources Development Fund provides grant and/or loan funds to political subdivisions for natural resources projects. Natural Resources Districts are the most common project sponsors, but cities, counties and irrigation districts have also been sponsors. Projects are generally multipurpose in nature, but often include flood damage reduction, sediment and erosion control, recreational development, groundwater recharge, improved irrigation water management and fish and wildlife enhancement. Projects must be economically and financially feasible, and development plans must be satisfactory and minimize impact to the natural environment. Since the inception of the fund in 1974, a total of 65 projects totaling over \$81.5 million have been approved across the state.

The Resources Development Fund Act created a dual administrative structure with certain responsibilities delegated to the Director of Natural Resources and others to the Natural Resources Commission. The primary function of the Director is to determine project eligibility for NRDF assistance. The Director also determines the type of assistance appropriate: grant, loan, or a combination thereof. To accomplish these responsibilities, the Director has adopted appropriate rules and regulations, evaluations standards, specifications, and guidelines for implementation. The Director and the Director's staff, along with personnel from other state agencies as appropriate, review each application and the Director must find that a project is economically, financially, and technically feasible as well as environmentally acceptable in order for it to be eligible for assistance from the fund.

After the Director has submitted a recommendation to the Commission, the Commission determines the level of assistance, the priority for funding and the annual obligation of funds to each approved project. Once a project is approved by the Commission, the Director and staff are responsible for developing a contract for the administration of the project grant and/or loan and the payment provisions of a loan. The Department is also responsible for monitoring completed projects to make sure that they are being maintained and operated as agreed upon by the sponsor.

Program Objectives

The Nebraska Resources Development Fund is intended to help fund efforts to conserve the State's natural resources and enable other uses beneficial to Nebraskans. State agencies or political subdivisions propose projects with purposes such as pollution abatement, reduction of flood damages, improvement of public irrigation facilities, preservation and development of fish and wildlife resources, providing of public outdoor recreation lands and facilities, and preservation of the waters of Nebraska for all beneficial uses. The Fund was established with the intent that it be used only after possible funding through other sources has been explored.

Specific goals and objectives for the program are as follows:

1. To meet the projected financial need of approved projects and to allocate funds to project sponsors that makes the most efficient use of the fund while allowing each project to proceed in an orderly and efficient manner.
2. To assist sponsors in the preparation of project proposals and applications.
3. To act on project proposals and applications in a timely manner.
4. To administer the program in a fair and efficient manner.
5. To ensure that all reimbursements made through the program are correct and properly documented and authorized.
6. To continually monitor completed projects to ensure that they are being properly maintained and that the projected benefits are being achieved.
7. Utilize the available funds to leverage other available funds so as to make the best use of available state dollars.

Performance Measures

The primary measures of the success of this program are:

- Effective use of State dollars to leverage other sources of funding available to each project
- Successful completion of approved projects
- Realization of expected benefits to the State and its citizens which exceed costs over the life of the project.

This can best be achieved by keeping a balance of new projects, projects under construction, and projects nearing completion in the mix of approved projects. The following chart lists information for projects currently in progress, and summarizes results since inception of the program.

Projects in Progress	Project Cost	NRDF Cost Share Allocation	Federal Contribution	Total Project Benefit	Planned Completion Date
Lake Wanahoo	\$ 48,073,080	\$ 9,204,000	\$ 9,701,254	\$ 77,519,792	2011
Leigh Dam	\$ 5,727,677	\$ 3,697,950	\$ -	\$ 15,000,000	2010
Little Sandy Creek	\$ 3,472,279	\$ 2,708,655	\$ -	\$ 10,392,246	2009
Lower Turkey Creek	\$ 5,942,000	\$ 4,124,167	\$ -	\$ 18,616,000	2010
Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Creek	\$ 26,984,081	\$ 8,899,006	\$ -	\$ 474,024,000	2012
Western Sarpy	\$ 18,765,978	\$ 4,686,118	\$ 4,363,890	\$ 53,133,500	2010
TOTAL	\$ 108,965,095	\$ 33,319,896	\$14,065,144	\$ 648,685,538	
		NRDF Cost Share			
Program Inception to Date	Project Costs	Allocation	Federal	Local	
Number of Projects 69	\$ 236,000,000	\$ 93,000,000	\$79,000,000	\$ 64,000,000	