



PRIVATE LANDS PARTNERS DAY 2015 NORTH PLATTE, NE



Landowners and conservation partners gathered in North Platte, Nebraska September 22-25 for the 8th Annual Private Lands Partners Day. In what has become the nation's premiere event for showcasing public-private conservation partnerships attendees were treated to a tour of the Sandhills Ecosystem and western Nebraska, and able to interact with conservation agency leadership from across the country. Landowners from Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska shared their stories of partnership. With ample time for sharing lessons learned both formally and informally this event continues to inspire conservation partnerships nationally while serving as a forum for improved communication between landowners and conservation partners.

Facts and Figures

- Almost 200 attendees from 32 states and the District of Columbia
- Attendees from state and federal agencies, conservation groups, universities and 80 landowners from around the country

Sponsors included:

- Ducks Unlimited
- Nebraska Environmental Trust
- World Wildlife Fund
- Nebraska Game and Parks
- UNL-Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Platte Valley Bank
- Platte River Basin Environments
- Pheasants Forever
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Nebraska Cattlemen
- The Nature Conservancy
- National Wildlife Refuge Association
- Nebraska Land Trust
- Crane Trust
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Western Nebraska Bank
- National Audubon Society



For More Information
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Private Lands Partners Day 2015

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Sandhills Convention Center
North Platte, Nebraska
September 22 – 25, 2015

Meeting Hosts:



Day 1 - Tuesday, September 22 - Sandhills Convention Center

- 4:00 P.M. Registration Open Until 7:00 P.M. (will be open again Wednesday 6:30 - 8:00 A.M.)
- 5:00 P.M. Reception
- 6:00 P.M. Heavy hors d'oeuvres & Refreshments

Day 2 - Wednesday, September 23 - Gather at the Sandhills Convention Center

- 6:30 – 8:00 A.M. Registration
- 8:00 A.M. Welcome and Opening Remarks - Dan Ashe, *Director USFWS*
- 8:15 A.M. Welcome to Nebraska - Mike Foley, *Nebraska Lieutenant Governor*
- 8:30 A.M. Break - Get ready for the field trip & load buses
- 9:00 A.M. Field Trip - Travel to 1st Site
- 10:30 A.M. Dismal River Overlook: Sandhills Geology and Hydrology - Doug Hallum, *University of Nebraska - Lincoln*
Eastern Red Cedar Invasion and Impacts to Grasslands - Dirac Twidwell, *University of Nebraska - Lincoln*
- 11:30 A.M. Travel to 2nd Site
- NOON --- Sack lunch at Higgins Ranch
- 12:30 P.M. Brief Ranch History and Grazing Considerations - Tom & Chris Higgins, *Sandhills Ranchers*
Beginning Rancher Opportunity and Grazing Management - Shane Keller, *Sandhills Rancher*
Grazing and Wildlife Management in the Sandhills – Bill Vodehnal, *NGPC*
- 2:00 P.M. Travel to Site #3
- 2:30 P.M. Water Control Structures - Matt Miles, *Sandhills Rancher*; Kyle Graham, *USFWS*
How the Sandhills Task Force Began - Byron Eatinger, *Past President Sandhill Task Force*;
Johnny Mike Lee, *Sandhills Rancher*
- 3:30 P.M. Travel to Site #4
- 4:00 P.M. Swan Lake: Lake Renovations - Zac Brashears, *NGPC*; Bruce Beebout, *New Clear Lake Club*
- 5:00 P.M. Travel to Seneca Community Center
- 5:30 P.M. Social
- 6:00 P.M. Dinner at Seneca Community Center
- 7:00 P.M. Keynote Speaker - PFW National Chief and Team Leader, John Schmerfeld & Matt Filsinger
History of Seneca and Other Sandhills Lore – AB Cox, *Sandhills Task Force President*
- 8:30 P.M. Depart for the Hotel in North Platte
- 9:45 P.M. Arrive at Hotel

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Meeting Hosts:



Day 3 - Thursday, September 24 - Sandhills Convention Center

- 8:00 A.M. **Partners for Conservation Updates and Overview** - Jim Stone, *PFC Chairman*; Steve Jester, *PFC Executive Director*; David Houghton, *National Wildlife Refuge Association President*
- 8:30 A.M. **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Update and Overview** - Heather Johnson, *Regional Coordinator*; Kenny Dinan, *Nebraska State Coordinator*
- 9:00 A.M. **Sandhills Task Force - Ranching and Conservation** - AB Cox, *Sandhills Task Force President*; Shelly Kelly, *Sandhills Task Force Executive Director*
- 9:45 A.M. **BREAK - Visit Displays**
- 10:15 A.M. **Nebraska Conservation** - Craig Derickson, *NRCS State Conservationist*; Alicia Hardin, *NGPC Assistant Division Administrator*
- 10:45 A.M. **Growing Conservation and Successful Ranch Communities through Grassbanking** - Leo Barthelmess, *Montana Landowner*; Brian Martin, *The Nature Conservancy*
- 11:15 A.M. **What I've Learned From 40 Years of Mistakes - Rock Hills Ranch** - Lyle Perman, *South Dakota Rancher*
- NOON – **Luncheon - Guest Speaker:** Mark Brohman, *Nebraska Environmental Trust*
- 1:00 P.M. **Restoring an Imperiled Ecosystem Through Partnerships** - Salem Saloom, *Alabama Landowner*
- 1:30 P.M. **Habitat Restoration for Livestock and Wildlife Co-habiting Together** - Jim O'Haco, *Arizona Landowner*
- 2:00 P.M. **Monarch Butterflies and Prescribed Fire: Innovations for Private Lands Success** - Pete Berthelsen, *Pheasants Forever Director of Habitat Partnerships*
- 2:45 P.M. **BREAK - Visit Displays**
- 3:15 P.M. **Ranching to Conserve, Conserving to Ranch - The Gracie Creek Ranch** - Bob Price & Lindsey Smith, *Nebraska Ranchers*
- 3:45 P.M. **Management Knowledge, Cooperative Conservation, and Complex Systems** - Grady Grissom, *Colorado Landowner*
- 4:15 P.M. **Wrap-up of Conference (PFC, PFW, STF)**
- 5:00 P.M. **End Day Session**
- 5:30 P.M. **Banquet Reception**
- 6:30 P.M. **Conference Closing Remarks** - Noreen Walsh, *Regional Director USFWS*
- Special Guest Presentation:** - Michael Forsberg, *Flyover Country -Twenty Years Photographing the Great Plains*



Private Lands Partners Day Attendees 2015

	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	State
1	Susan	Abele	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Reno	Nevada
2	Jacob	Alishouse	Nebraska Land Trust	Lincoln	Nebraska
3	Timothy	Anderson	US Fish & Wildlife	Corpus Christi	Texas
4	Daniel	Ashe	FWS	Washington	DC
5	Laurel	Badura	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Funk	Nebraska
6	Bill	Barby	KGLC	Protection	Kansas
7	Dominic	Barrett	Partners for Fish and Wildlife	Lakewood	Colorado
8	Leo	Barthelmess	Ranchers Stewardship Alliance	Malta	Montana
9	Bruce	Beebout	Clear Lake Fishing Club	Valentine	Nebraska
10	Melody	Benjamin	Nebraska Cattlemen	Lincoln	Nebraska
11	Peter	Berthelsen	Pheasants Forever, Inc.	Elba	Nebraska
12	Andy	Bishop	Rainwater Basin Joint Venture	Grand Island	Nebraska
13	Jared	Brandwein	National Wildlife Refuge Association	Virginia Beach	Virginia
14	Zac	Brashears	NE Game and Parks Commission	Valentine	Nebraska
15	Mark	Brohman	Nebraska Environmental Trust	Lincoln	Nebraska
16	Judd	Brooke	Private Landowner	Perkinston	Mississippi
17	Homer	Buell	Shovel Dot Ranch	Bassett	Nebraska
18	Doug	Christensen	NRCS	Lincoln	Nebraska
19	Barbara	Cooksley	Sandhills Task Force	Anselmo	Nebraska
20	Mark	Cookson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Yreka	California
21	Duane	Coombs	Smith Creek Ranch	Austin	Nevada
22	A.B.	Cox	Sandhills Task Force	Mullen	Nebraska
23	Zack	Cox	Rancher	Mullen	Nebraska
24	Don	Cox	Rancher	Mullen	Nebraska
25	Jack	Crews	Ute Creek Cattle Co	Bueyeros	New Mexico
26	Lemoyne	Dailey	Rancher	Theford	Nebraska
27	Rhonda	Dailey	Rancher/Spouse	Theford	Nebraska
28	CalLee	Davenport	U.S.Fish & Wildlife	Portland	Oregon
29	Russell	Davis	Wineinger-Davis Ranch Inc.	Ordway	Colorado
30	Mike	DeCook	Rancher	Lovilia	Iowa

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31	John	Denton	Ducks Unlimited	Grand Island	Nebraska
32	Craig	Derickson	NRCS	Lincoln	Nebraska
33	Deb	Dillree	Blackfoot Challenge	Ovando	Montana
34	Kenny	Dinan	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Wood River	Nebraska
35	Michael	Disney	USFWS KS PFW	Manhattan	Kansas
36	James	Dodson	J. F. Welder Heirs	Corpus Christi	Texas
37	Cynthia	Dohner	USFWS	Atlanta	Georgia
38	Deborah	Donner	William H. Donner Foundation	Denver	Colorado
39	Jim	Douglas	Nebraska Game and Parks	Lincoln	Nebraska
40	David	Durando	Durando Family Ranches	Wauchula	Florida
41	Doyle	Durando	Durando Family Ranches	Wauchula	Florida
42	Byron	Eatinger	Sandhills Task Force	Theford	Nebraska
43	Mary	Eatinger	Rancher	Theford	Nebraska
44	Mike	Edwards	USFWS	Klamath Falls	Oregon
45	Michelle	Everson	Fish & Wildlife Service	Atlanta	Georgia
46	Matt	Filsinger	USFWS	Falls Church	Virginia
47	Bryan	Fisher	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Lacey	Washington
48	Aron	Flanders	U.S. Fish and Wildlife	Manhattan	Kansas
49	Jim	Fleecs	Fleecs Ranch	Hershey	Nebraska
50	Karl	Fleming	FWS Partners Program Utah	Brigham City	Utah
51	Kurt	Forman	USFWS	Brookings	South Dakota
52	Tom	Frazer	Rancher	North Loup	Nebraska
53	Craig	French	French Ranch	Malta	Montana
54	Maureen	Gallagher	USFWS	Denver	Colorado
55	Seth	Gallagher	Intermountain West Joint Venture - SGI	St. Paul	Minnesota
56	Julie	Geiser	NGPC	North Platte	Nebraska
57	Juancarlos	Giese	Valentine National Wildlife Refuge	Valentine	Nebraska
58	Erika	Gnuse	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.		Nebraska
59	Kyle	Graham	USFWS	Soldotna	Alaska
60	Grady	Grissom	Rancho Largo Cattle Co.	Fowler	Colorado
61	Steve	Guertin	U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE	Washington	DC

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62	Brent	Haglund	Sand County Foundation	Madison	Wisconsin
63	Doug	Hallum	UNL West Central Research and Extension Center	North Platte	Nebraska
64	Richard	Hannan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Portland	Oregon
65	Alicia	Hardin	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Lincoln	Nebraska
66	Mike	Harris	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Atlanta	Georgia
67	Dave	Hebbert	Sandhills Task Force	Hyannis	Nebraska
68	John	Hendrix	USFWS	Tulsa	Oklahoma
69	Steven	Hicks	Fort Niobrara/Valentine NWR Complex	Valentine	Nebraska
70	Chris	Higgins	Higgins Ranch	Valentine	Nebraska
71	Tom	Higgins	Higgins Ranch	Valentine	Nebraska
72	P.J.	Higgins	Higgins Ranch	Valentine	Nebraska
73	Lynn	Higgins	Higgins Ranch	Valentine	Nebraska
74	Mark	Hogan	USFWS WYPFW	Lander	Wyoming
75	Kathy	Hollar	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Portland	Oregon
76	Wieteke	Holthuijzen	National Wildlife Refuge Association		
77	David	Houghton	National Wildlife Refuge Assn	Antrim	New Hampshire
78	Bruce	Jaggers	.	Eustis	Florida
79	Jarod	Jebousek	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Corvallis	Oregon
80	Steve	Jester	Partners for Conservation	Blanco	Texas
81	Heather	Johnson	USFWS	Denver	Colorado
82	Joel	Jorgensen	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Lincoln	Nebraska
83	Shane	Keller	Keller Ranch	Valentine	Nebraska
84	Shelly	Kelly	Sandhills Task Force	Sutherland	Nebraska
85	Mike	Kelly	Sandhills Task Force	North Platte	Nebraska
86	Dan	Kelly	Kelly Ranch	Sutherland	Nebraska
87	Hod	Kosman	Platte River Basin Environments	Scottsbluff	Nebraska
88	Brice	Krohn	The Crane Trust	Wood River	Nebraska
89	Joseph	Krystofik	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Conway	Arizona
90	James	Kurth	U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE	Washington	DC

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91	Nancy	Labbe	World Wildlife Fund	Hudson	Colorado
92	Ted	LaGrange	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Lincoln	Nebraska
93	Marian	Langan	Audubon Nebraska	Denton	Nebraska
94	Judy	Lantor	US Fish and Wildlife	Lacey	Washington
95	Brent	Lathrop	The Nature Conservancy	Cheyenne	Wyoming
96	Johnny Mike	Lee	Lee Ranch	Brownlee	Nebraska
97	Tuda	Libby Crews	Ute Creek Cattle Co	Bueyeros	New Mexico
98	Terry	Mansfield	Partners for Conservation	Cheney	Washington
99	Skip	Marland	Rancher	North Platte	Nebraska
100	Brian	Martin	The Nature Conservancy	Helena	Montana
101	Tim	McAbee	Rancher	Hyannis	Nebraska
102	Jared	McJunkin	National Wild Turkey Federation	Wamego	Kansas
103	Scott	McLeod	USFWS	Bismarck	North Dakota
104	Todd	McWha	Landowner	North Platte	Nebraska
105	Laura	McWha	Landowner	North Platte	Nebraska
106	Tom	Melius	USFWS	Bloomington	Minnesota
107	Jim	Merzenich	Landowner	Corvallis	Oregon
108	Karen	Merzenich	Landowner	Corvallis	Oregon
109	Warren	Mickey	PFC	Charles Town	West Virginia
110	Reva	Mickey	Landowner	Charles Town	West Virginia
111	Joe	Milmoe	USFWS	Falls Church	Virginia
112	Dina	Moore	Partners for Conservation	Kneeland	California
113	Julie	Morris	National Wildlife Refuge Association	Nokomis	Florida
114	Wayne	Morton	Landowner	Osceola	Missouri
115	Emily	Munter	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	North Platte	Nebraska
116	Erin	Myers	USFWS	Immokalee	Florida
117	Greg	Neudecker	USFWS	Ovando	Montana
118	Chad	Njos	NDGLC	Bowman	North Dakota
119	John Lee	Njos	NDGLC	Bowman	North Dakota
120	Bill	Noonan	USFWS CO PFW	Evergreen	Colorado
121	Jeanne	O'Haco	O'Haco Cattle Company	Winslow	Arizona

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122	Jim	O'Haco	O'Haco Cattle Company	Winslow	Arizona
123	Bruce	Osborne	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Fairbanks	Alaska
124	Patrick	O'Toole	Ladder Livestock	Savery	Wyoming
125	Sharon	O'Toole	Ladder Livestock	Savery	Wyoming
126	Gregg	Pattison	USFWS	Prairie City	Iowa
127	Garnet	Perman	SD Grassland Coalition	Lowry	South Dakota
128	Lyle	Perman	Rock Hills Ranch	Lowry	South Dakota
129	Tom	Peterson	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	Grand Island	Nebraska
130	Ginger	Phalen	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Lacey	Washington
131	Paul	Phifer	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Hadley	Maine
132	Linh	Phu	USFWS	Falls Church	Virginia
133	Sergio	Pierluissi	USFWS	Doraville	Georgia
134	Gareth	Plank	Landowner		California
135	Melinda	Plank	Landowner		California
136	Joseph	Prenger	Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	Gainesville	Florida
137	Gary	Price	77 Ranch	Blooming Grove	Texas
138	Bob	Price	Gracie Creek Ranch	Burwell	Nebraska
139	Cathy	Price	Gracie Creek Ranch	Burwell	Nebraska
140	John	Ravenscroft	Sandhills Task Force	Nenzel	Nebraska
141	Chris	Redman	TEI- McMurtrey Ranch	Nenzel	Nebraska
142	Dr. Salem	Saloom	Saloom Properties, LLC	Brewton	Alabama
143	Chris	Schluntz	Nebraska Cattlemen	Republican City	Nebraska
144	John	Schmerfeld	USFWS	Falls Church	Virginia
145	John	Schmidt	USFWS	Elkins	West Virginia
146	Kirk	Schroeder	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Wood River	Nebraska
147	Janice	Shad			
148	Andrew	Shields	Roaring Springs Ranch	Frenchglen	Oregon
149	Gina	Shultz	U S Fish and Wildlife Service	Falls Church	Virginia
150	Shannon	Smith	USFWS	Falls Church	Virginia
151	Robert	Smith	Wildlife Mississippi	Stoneville	Mississippi

Private Lands Partners Day Attendees 2015

152	Lindsey	Smith	Gracie Creek Ranch	Burwell	Nebraska
153	Eric	Spadgenske	USFWS	Daphne	Alabama
154	Bill	Sproul	Partners for Conservation	Sedan	Kansas
155	Peggy	Sproul	Partners for Conservation	Sedan	Kansas
156	Kelly	Srigley Werner	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Columbia	Missouri
157	Shelley	Steffl	NGPC	Chadron	Nebraska
158	Gerry	Steinauer	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Lincoln	Nebraska
159	Casey	Stemler	USFWS/PPJV	Littleton	Colorado
160	Jim	Stone	PFC	Ovando	Montana
161	Marilyn	Tabor	Nebraska Environmental Trust	Lincoln	Nebraska
162	Jay	Tanner	Partners For Conservation	Grouse Creek	Utah
163	Diane	Tanner	PFC	Grouse Creek	Utah
164	Scott	Taylor	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Lincoln	Nebraska
165	John	Taylor	Quarter Circle T Ranch	Taylor	Nebraska
166	Laura	Taylor	Quarter Circle T Ranch	Taylor	Nebraska
167	Vern	Terrell	Nebraska Cattlemen	Hay Springs	Nebraska
168	Marjean	Terrell	Nebraska Cattlemen	Hay Springs	Nebraska
169	Brock	Terrell	Nebraska Cattlemen	Hay Springs	Nebraska
170	Michael	Thabault	Fish & Wildlife Service	Lakewood	Colorado
171	James A (Tony)	Thompson	Willow Lake Farm	Windom	Minnesota
172	Reese	Thompson	Partners for Conservation	Vidalia	Georgia
173	Ann	Timberman	US Fish & Wildlife Service	Grand Junction	Colorado
174	Alison	Truesdale	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Falmouth	Maine
175	Anne	Truslow	National Wildlife Refuge Assn	Antrim	New Hampshire
176	Dirac	Twidwell	UNL	Lincoln	Nebraska
177	Sally	Vaughn	Fleecs Ranch	Hershey	Nebraska
178	Sherry	Vinton	Vinton Ranch/NE Environmental Trust	Whitman	Nebraska
179	Bill	Vodehnal	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Bassett	Nebraska

Private Lands Partners Day Attendees 2015

180	Dave	Walker	USFWS	Falls Church	Virginia
181	T. J.	Walker	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Lincoln	Nebraska
182	Noreen	Walsh	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Denver	Colorado
183	Kelsi	Wehrman	Pheasants Forever	Nelson	Nebraska
184	Don	Wilhelm	USFWS	Arlington	Texas
185	Geoffrey	Wright	U.S.FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE	Falmouth	Maine



Board Members

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Ben Bailey, Lakeside
Melody Benjamin, Lakeside
Homer Buell, Bassett
Doug Christensen, Lincoln
Barb Cooksley, Anselmo
A.B. Cox, Mullen
Kenny Dinan, Grand Island
Byron Eatinger, Thedford
Eric Hansen, North Platte
Dave Heibert, Hyannis
Mike Kelly, North Platte
Ted LaGrange, Lincoln
John Ravenscroft, Nenzel*

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*Shelby Kelly, Sutherland
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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Nebraska Hosts Large Conservation Partnership Conference

The 8th Annual Private Lands Partners Day was held September 22 – 24 in the Nebraska Sandhills. It was hosted by the Sandhills Task Force, US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and a nationwide landowner group called Partners for Conservation and it was sponsored by many conservation organizations. It was a national gathering of private landowners and conservation partners from government agencies and nonprofit organizations designed to promote landscape level, voluntary collaborations to ensure that working landscapes continue to provide for both people and nature. Nearly 200 people were in attendance representing 30 states; a record attendance level. Roughly half of the attendees were landowners or managers and half were conservationists. Dan Ashe, Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, along with several of their Regional Directors and Headquarters staff attended the event. Also in attendance was Nebraska Lieutenant Governor, Mike Foley; Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Director, Jim Douglas; and Nebraska Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist, Craig Derickson.

Participants gained knowledge about the Sandhills during a tour on Wednesday which included stops along the Dismal River, at a water control structure near Brownlee, and a lake near Seneca. Speakers during the tour shared information about Sandhills hydrology/geology, eastern red cedar invasion, grazing plans/ranch management, conservation easements, conservation partnerships, stream/wetland restorations, lake renovations, and more. The evening was wrapped up at the Seneca Community Building with a prime rib feed and the sharing of "Sandhills lore" as told by A.B. Cox and Sandy Hanson. On Thursday, participants listened to presentations given by landowners from Nebraska and many other states including Alabama, Arizona, South Dakota, Montana, and Colorado. Each story talked about conservation and the benefits of using a partnership approach in their different landscapes.

Chris Higgins from the Higgins Ranch located between Valentine and Thedford shared their multi-generational sandhills ranching story. Holistic Resource Management training transformed their way of thinking and inspired them to increase their grazing management level and implement some conservation practices that would help their forage and soil resources. Drought tolerance and a healthy rangeland ecosystem are just a couple of benefits they have achieved. They utilized assistance from several conservation agencies and organizations to reach their goals.

Lyle Perman from South Dakota shared his story of expanding his ranch to include his son Luke and family in the operation. Grassland in their area is commonly converted to cropland but the Perman's feel the land should remain as grass and is well suited for raising livestock and providing wildlife

habitat. Lyle takes time to share his story of learning from conservation partners with other ranchers across the nation.

Private Lands Partners Day is hosted in a different state each year. This year was a great opportunity to share with a national audience the wonders of the Nebraska Sandhills; the rich ranching heritage, contiguous grassland, abundant water supply, and a successful grassroots partnership model. Nebraska is proud of its conservation community and values private landowners and their aptitude to care for their land.

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Photo caption: Private Lands Partners Day attendees weather the rain at the Dismal River overlook to witness the view and learn about Sandhills hydrology and geology.

