

NEBRASKA
- GAME  PARKS -

2025
INFORMATION GUIDE



TIME OUTDOORS IS TIME WELL SPENT

From Game and Parks



In 2024, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission continued to lead the charge in conservation and outdoor recreation, achieving significant milestones that underscore our commitment to stewardship of Nebraska's amazing natural resources for our residents and visitors.

Our strategic focus remains on caring for our resources and increasing public access and opportunities, developing our team, and engaging with the public. We took many steps toward achieving this in 2024:

- We upgraded and expanded campgrounds and campsites, completed cabin updates and added new family-friendly cabins, and completed a new learning treehouse and interactive stream at our state parks and recreation areas. We updated boat ramps and docks and improved angler access, while also improving our fish hatcheries to increase productivity and reduce water use. We enrolled over 435,000 in our walk-in access program, and we completed the Venture Park projects at our four Platte River Valley parks. We also provided 2,300 nature education programs across the state.
- We prioritized workforce recruitment to help conserve our states natural and recreational resources and serve the public by promoting Nebraska as a prime location to work and live. We also invested in the professional development of our team and developed a retention and recognition program.
- We informed the public on outdoor recreation opportunities and our conservation work across a wide range of channels. We also continued our Beneath

Nebraska Skies marketing campaign to reach new audiences and build awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities; this was ranked as the best communication campaign by our conservation peers. We also provided excellent customer service in person, over the phone, and online, and developed new online features to improve our customer purchase experience.

This year, Game and Parks also celebrated 50 years of the Hunter Education program and the over-5,000 volunteer instructors that have reached more than 200,000 students. Their work has reduced hunting accidents more than 80% since 1974. These and other volunteers are an integral part of Nebraska's conservation community. Volunteers share their passion and knowledge about hunting, fishing, boating and kayaking, nature, wildlife, and history, and assist with hands-on conservation project in our state parks, waters, and habitats.

You help us achieve our mission, and we invite you to join our efforts: There are numerous ways to get involved. Together, we can cultivate a vibrant environment that future generations will cherish all while supporting Nebraska's outdoor economy. It has an annual economic impact of over \$4 billion, with \$1.95 billion in retail sales while supporting over 24,800 jobs across our great state. Your involvement makes a difference, and we look forward to embarking on this journey with you as stewards of Nebraska's fish, wildlife, park, and outdoor recreation resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy McCoy". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Timothy McCoy
Director





Mission

The mission of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is stewardship of the state's fish, wildlife, park, and outdoor recreation resources in the best long-term interests of the people and those resources.

We were tasked with this mission when the Nebraska State Legislature created the precursors to our organization in 1879, first with the Nebraska Fish Commission, which was followed by the Nebraska Game and Fish Commission in 1901. Management of our state parks was added in 1921.

Economic Impact

Outdoor recreation contributes significantly to our economy and our quality of life. In Nebraska, hunting, fishing, boating, wildlife viewing and visiting state parks support more than 24,800 jobs and have an economic impact of over \$4 billion.

In 2024, there were approximately:

- 188,791 licensed hunters
- 249,139 licensed anglers;
- 496,202 park entry permits purchased, resulting in nearly 7 million park visits
- 126,000 shooting sports participants
- 77,080 registered boats

By the numbers

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission owns or manages a number of properties around the state for recreational use or for the conservation of wildlife, including:

- 8 state parks, comprising 31,994 acres
- 60 state recreation areas, comprising 65,427 acres
- 10 state historical parks, comprising 2,497 acres
- 2 state recreation trails, comprising 4,144 acres and 324 miles
- 5 fish hatcheries, which raise and stock 55.5 million fish in 270 public waters
- 281 wildlife management areas, encompassing 184,422 acres

Wildlife management areas provide wildlife habitat and public access. Nebraska Game and Parks also oversees the Open Fields and Waters program, which enrolls private lands for walk-in access for hunting, fishing and trapping.

- a record 435,594 land acres are enrolled in Open Fields and Waters, including 41.8 stream miles and 39 ponds and lakes

Resources

Financials

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is predominately funded by user pay, which includes revenue from the sale of hunting and fishing permits and stamps, sale of state park entry permits, and fees for camping, lodging and activities in Nebraska's state parks and recreation areas. In 2024, approximately 89% of the agency revenues were generated through user pay and federal reimbursement, and approximately 11% came from the State General Fund.

Aside from the General Fund, 18 specific funds have been established for agency use. All funds are subject to budgetary authority provided by the legislature and the governor. These funds include: Game Cash Fund, Park Cash Fund, Habitat Cash Fund, Federal Funds, Fort Atkinson National Park Service Federal Fund, Nebraska Outdoor Recreational Development Act Fund, Recreational Trails Federal Fund, Aquatic Habitat Fund, Wildlife Conservation Fund, Game Law Investigation Fund, Cowboy Trail Fund, Wildlife Education Fund, Hunters Helping the Hungry Fund, Nebraska Snowmobile Trail Fund, State Park Improvement and Maintenance Fund, Game and Parks Capital Maintenance Fund, Water Recreation Enhancement Fund, and the Trail Development and Maintenance Fund. Many of these funds are restricted, meaning that their revenues may only be spent for uses designated under state law and may not be transferred to the general fund.

The agency's major funds, their revenue sources and what they are used for are described in greater detail below:

GENERAL FUND is supported by money collected by the State Department of Revenue, deposited with the State Treasurer and appropriated by the Legislature. General Fund money is appropriated to the Commission for those operating activities that are not self-supporting (primarily operations of the state park system, law enforcement, and nongame and endangered species activities); administrative activities that are general in nature, applicable to the entire agency and difficult to prorate among the various other funding sources; and activities that extend beyond the statutory use of the various cash funds.

GAME CASH FUND derives its revenues from user fees for various resident and nonresident permits related to game, including big game (antelope, big horn sheep, deer, elk, turkey) permits, small game hunting permits, fishing permits, and lifetime permits. This fund was the agency's second largest source of funding in 2024 and is the primary funding source for fish and wildlife activities. This fund is restricted to funding only those activities related to the support of fish and game, the provision of boating facilities, administration and enforcement of the State Boat Act,

production of publications, administration, construction, operation and maintenance of fish hatcheries and for the distribution of fish.

PARK CASH FUND was the agency's largest source of funding in 2024. Revenues in this fund are derived from user fees for park entry permits, lodging, camping, activities, equipment rentals and facility use rentals. The Park Cash Fund is dedicated to the administration, improvement, maintenance and operation of the state park system comprised of state parks, recreation areas, trails and historical parks.

HABITAT CASH FUNDS are generated through user fees from habitat and migratory waterfowl stamps. They are supported primarily from the sale of the stamps tied to hunting and fishing activities, respectively.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND receives money via the state income tax checkoff program and from gifts and donations. The Wildlife Conservation Fund can only be used to pay for collection costs and to carry out the provisions of the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act.

WILDLIFE EDUCATION FUND receives a portion of the money from issuance and renewal of the Mountain Lion Conservation Plates. This fund supports youth education programs relating to wildlife conservation practices.

FEDERAL GRANTS were the agency's 2024 third largest "cash" funding sources. They include reimbursable and direct grants. Federal grant awards are received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and other Federal agencies. The awards define what the funding is to be used for and are typically reimbursable awards. Grant monies may reimburse a cash fund or be spent as direct federal funding.

NEBRASKA OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT FUND is restricted to the development, operation and maintenance of areas of the state park system. The primary source of revenue is the Nebraska Tobacco Products Tax. The portion of the tax earmarked for NORDA is the equivalent of one cent on a conventional package of cigarettes. This fund is critical to the development and maintenance of the state park buildings and amenities infrastructure.

GAME AND PARKS CAPITAL MAINTENANCE FUND is to be used to build, repair, rehabilitate, modify, or improve any infrastructure within the statutory authority and administration of the Commission. Revenues in this fund are derived from sales taxes on non-farm ATVs and motorboats.

2024 calendar year revenue sources

Source	Amount	% of Total
Direct Federal Funds	\$18.39 M	15%
Camping and Lodging Fees	\$16.19 M	13%
Hunting Permits and Stamps	\$15.33 M	13%
Federal and State Grant Reimbursements	\$13.86 M	11%
General Fund Appropriation Expended	\$13.29 M	11%
Park Entry Permits	\$9.75 M	8%
Motorboat, ATV and UTV Sales Tax	\$6.84 M	6%
Miscellaneous	\$6.55 M	5%
Fishing Permits and Stamps	\$5.94 M	5%
Investment Income	\$4.88 M	4%
Donations	\$3.85 M	3%
Concessions and Admissions	\$2.82 M	2%
Hunt/Fish Combination Permits	\$1.82 M	2%
Tobacco Products Tax	\$1.31 M	1%
Boating Registration	\$1.17 M	1%
Total Revenue Sources	\$121.99 M	100%

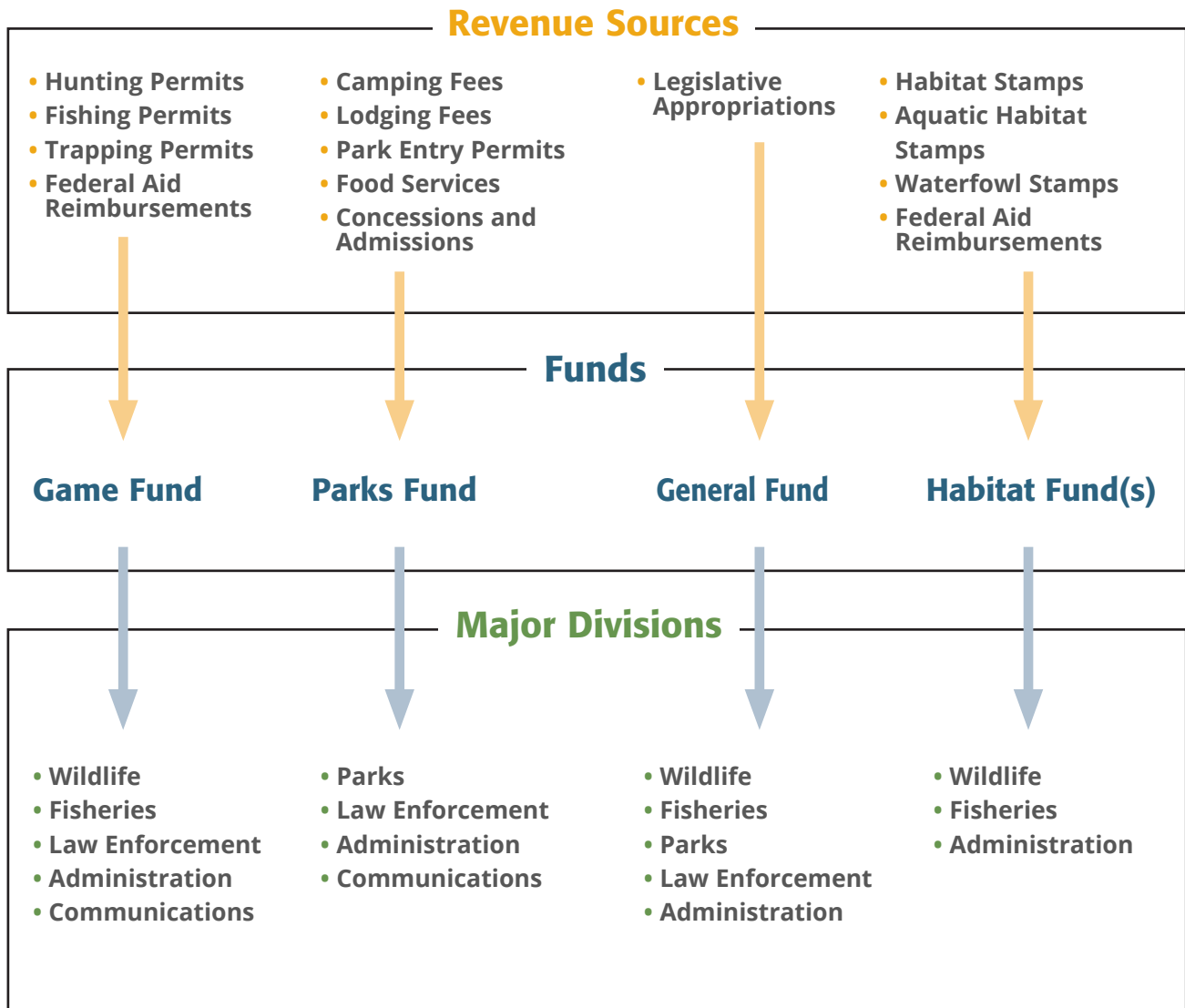
2024 calendar year expenditures

Source	Amount	% of Total
Parks	\$35.3 M	27%
Capital	\$30.5 M	24%
Wildlife	\$24.8 M	19%
Law Enforcement	\$9.7 M	8%
Fisheries	\$9.5 M	7%
Administration	\$7.4 M	6%
Communications	\$5.7 M	4%
Planning, Engineering and Construction	\$5.1 M	4%
Fish and Wildlife Education	\$0.8 M	1%
Total Expenditures	\$128.8 M	100%

How we are funded

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is predominately funded by user pay, which includes revenue from the sale of hunting and fishing stamps and permits, sale of state park entry permits, and fees for camping, lodging and activities in Nebraska's state parks and recreation areas.

In 2024, approximately 89% of the agency revenues were generated through user pay and federal reimbursement, and approximately 11% came from the State General Fund. Revenues from permit sales, federal grants and other sources are placed into several funds, including Game Cash Fund, Park Cash Fund, General Fund and Habitat Fund. Money in these funds is then used to pay for specific programs, as illustrated in the diagram below:





COMMISSIONERS

District 1	Kent McNeill, Papillion
District 2	Donna Kush, Omaha
District 3	Ken Curry, Columbus
District 4	John Hoggatt, Kearney
District 5	Dan Hughes, Venango
District 6	Pat Berggren, Broken Bow
District 7	Doug Zingula, Sidney
District 8	Rick Brandt, Roca
At Large	Scott Cassels, Omaha

Director	Tim McCoy	402-471-5539
Deputy Director	Jim Swenson	402-471-5539
Assistant Director	Roger Kuhn	402-471-5512

CONTACTS

Switchboard		402-471-0641
Administration	Angela Janda-Craig	402-471-1542
Budget and Fiscal	Kay Mencl	402-471-5189
Communications	Christy Firestone	402-471-5593
Engineering	Tiffani Gerber	402-471-5571
Fish & Wildlife Education	Andrea Faas	402-471-5581
Fisheries	Tony Barada	402-471-5553
Human Resources	Dirk Hood	402-471-5453
Information Technology	Troy Kroeger	402-471-5646
Hunter Education	Kyle Gaston	402-471-6134
Law Enforcement	Jeff Clauson	402-471-5531
Parks	Jeff Fields	402-471-5499
Planning and Programing	Michelle Stryker	402-471-5425
Wildlife	Alicia Hardin	402-471-5448

Park Reservations	402-471-1414
Permits	402-471-1985
Nebraska Wildlife Crimestoppers hotline	1-800-742-7627

OFFICES

Headquarters	Lincoln	402-471-0641
Southeast District	Lincoln	402-471-0641
Southwest District	North Platte	308-535-8025
Northwest District	Alliance	308-763-2940
Northeast District	Norfolk	402-370-3374
South-central District	Kearney	308-865-5310
Bassett Service Center	Bassett	402-684-2921
Omaha Service Center	Omaha	402-595-2144
Schramm Education Center	Gretna	402-332-3901

ONLINE

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OutdoorNebraska.gov

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The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, facility, or service, should contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-0641, the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-2024, TTY/TDD 800-642-6112; Director, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



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