



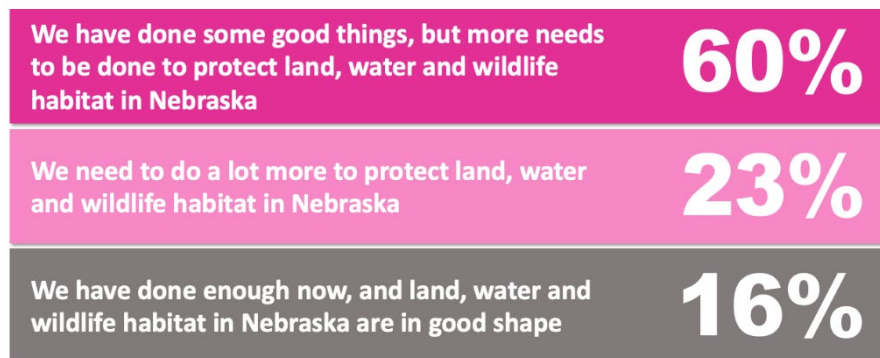
NEW BRIDGE
STRATEGY

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Lori Weigel & Kathryn Hahne / New Bridge Strategy
DATE: November 29, 2021
RE: Survey of Nebraska Voters Shows Overwhelming Support for the Use of Conservation Easements by the Nebraska Environmental Trust

A recent statewide survey of Nebraska voters¹ conducted by New Bridge Strategy demonstrates that Nebraska voters believe that there is still more to be done on conservation in the state. They perceive a number of conservation-related projects as extremely or very important to undertake, and say that the loss of working farms and ranches is a serious problem. Two-in-five say they are aware of the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and almost all of them view the entity positively. After a brief, neutral explanation of the NET, the vast majority of Nebraskans hold a favorable view of it and its mission. Importantly, more than nine-in-ten support NET using conservation easements in order to conserve land, water and wildlife habitat in the state – slightly more than support outright acquisition. Support for utilizing easements is overwhelming across party lines and throughout the state.

Specifically, the survey found that:

- **Nebraskans see a need for additional conservation efforts in the state, with more than four-in-five saying that more needs to be done to protect land, water, and wildlife habitat in the state.** We asked participants to tell us which of three statements best represents how they feel.

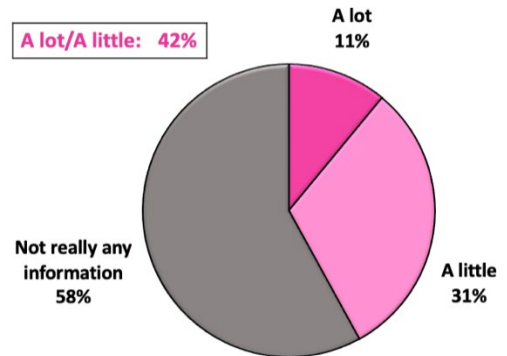


The view that more needs to be done in Nebraska to conserve land, water and wildlife spans partisan affiliation with 79 percent of Republicans, 84 percent of Independents and 83 percent of Democrats saying that more needs to be done in Nebraska to protect land, water and wildlife.

¹ **Methodology:** November 10-16, 2021, New Bridge Strategy completed 504 interviews among registered voters throughout the state of Nebraska. Interviews were conducted online as well as on landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for the full sample is +/-4.38 percent; margins of sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. Some percentages may sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

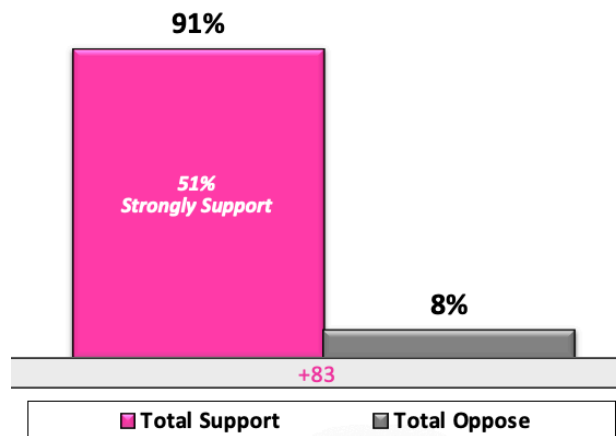
Sportsmen and sportswomen are more likely (88 percent more needs to be done) than non-sportsmen/women (81 percent) to say that more needs to be done. This is also true regardless of the size of the community or region of the state.

- Two-in-five say they have heard of the Nebraska Environmental Trust; among those aware of it, they are overwhelmingly favorable.** Just over one-in-ten (11 percent) say they have heard a lot about the Nebraska Environmental Trust, while another 31 percent say they have heard a little. Fully 79 percent who had heard of the Trust said they had a “favorable” opinion, with a significant 38 percent saying they have a “very favorable” opinion. Only 11 percent hold an unfavorable impression.



After a brief description of the Trust, over eight-in-ten say they have a favorable opinion, and only 9 percent hold an unfavorable impression. More than three-quarters of voters of each party (77 percent of Republicans, 83 percent of Independents, and 93 percent of Democrats) have a favorable opinion of the Nebraska Environmental Trust after more information.

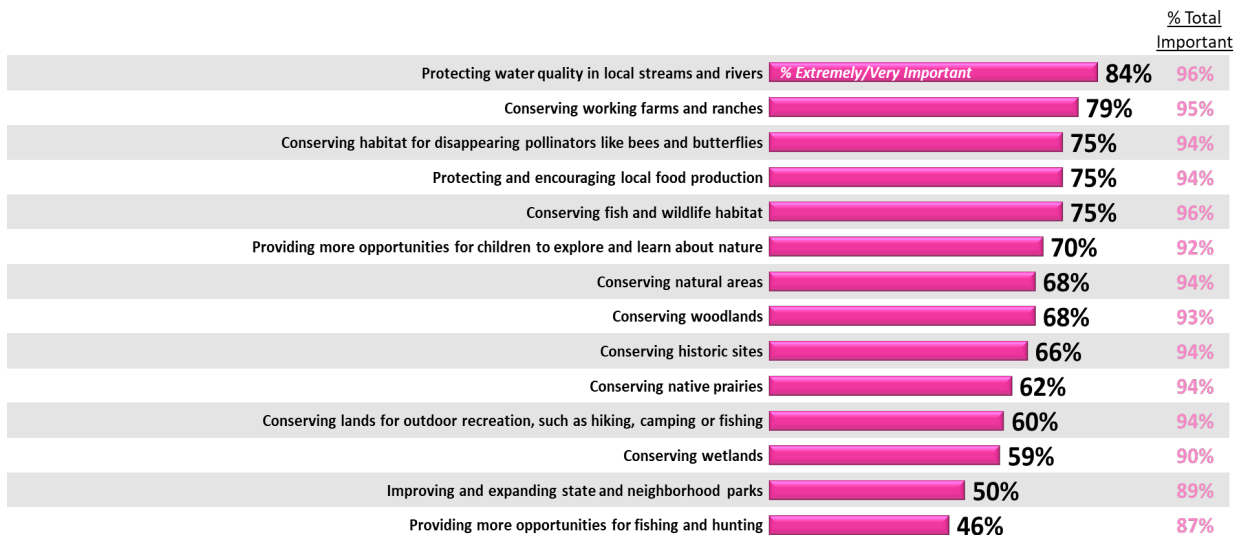
- More than nine-in-ten Nebraskans support the use of conservation easements by the Nebraska Environmental Trust.** As the following graph illustrates, Nebraskans express overwhelming and strong support for the NET “working with willing landowners to come to voluntary agreements, a tool known as an easement - to keep farms and ranches in agricultural use and other privately owned property conserved as natural areas, like prairies or wildlife habitat.” In fact, support exceeds opposition by an 83-point margin, and even slightly exceeds the level of support for acquisition (88 percent support; 47 percent strongly support). A majority strongly support NET using easements as a tool to meet its mission.



Utilizing easements as a conservation tool is supported across all major segments of the Nebraska electorate, including:

- ✓ 92% of men and 91% of women;
- ✓ 96% of 18-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds, 84% of 45-54 year olds, 87% of 55-64 year olds and 91% of voters ages 65+;
- ✓ 95% of moderates, 87% of conservatives, and 96% of liberals;
- ✓ 92% of voters whose families earn all or part of their income from farming/ranching;
- ✓ 97% of urban voters, 87% of suburban voters, 93% of small town voters and 85% of rural voters;
- ✓ 86% of hunters, 87% of anglers, and 94% of non-sportsmen;
- ✓ 92% of voters in the Omaha media market, 93% of voters in the Lincoln & Hastings-Kearney media market, and 92% of voters in the rest of the state, and
- ✓ 98% of Democrats, 96% of independents, and 86% of Republicans.

- **Some of this support for easements may be grounded in the importance that Nebraskans ascribe to the type of conservation efforts that the Nebraska Environmental Trust undertakes, in particular, conserving working farms and ranches.** The vast majority of Nebraskans say it is important for the Trust to use lottery funds to meet a wide range of conservation goals, with water, agriculture and wildlife topping the list as one can see here:



In fact, most voters say the loss of family farms and ranches is an extremely or very serious problem in Nebraska (59 percent extremely or very serious problem; 85 percent at least somewhat serious problem). Republicans and Independents are particularly concerned about this loss of family farms and ranches with 60 percent of Republicans saying it is an extremely/very serious problem and 52 percent of Independents saying it is an extremely/very serious problem.

In summary, Nebraska voters overwhelmingly support doing more to conserve and protect land, water and wildlife in the state. Voters view the Nebraska Environmental Trust favorably and support it using conservation easements as a tool to conserve land in Nebraska. Support for the use of easements is evident throughout the state and with all key sub-groups.