



# Northwest Nebraska Trails Association

April 14, 2021

Jacob Rissler  
President, Chadron Rotary Club

Dear Jacob,

This letter is to formally acknowledge the \$2,000 donation from the Chadron Rotary Club/Rotary District 5630 to Northwest Nebraska Trails Association, made in November, 2018.

The Chadron Rotary Club grant was the initial donation to NNTA's effort at raising \$88,000 that was needed by Nebraska Game and Parks to match a \$350,000 federal Recreational Trail Program grant for development of the Cowboy Trail between Hay Springs and Chadron. As the first donation to this project, the Rotary Club grant was a key catalyst in NNTA's successful fundraising campaign, which will allow completion of the western end of the Cowboy Trail, a 321 mile long rail-trail conversion that will provide a multitude of public recreational opportunities and enhance local tourism. NNTA is very grateful to Chadron Rotary Club/Rotary District 5630 for its support of this important project.

In September, 2019 when NNTA was challenged by Nebraska Game and Parks to raise the \$88,000 match, it was given a deadline of March 1, 2019 in order to assure access to the RTP funding. However, due to flooding on the completed eastern portion of the Cowboy Trail in spring, 2019, Nebraska Game and Parks was unable to begin work on the western segment of the trail, and the money has not yet been used. In February, 2020 NNTA received written assurance from Nebraska Game and Parks Director James Douglas that the \$350,000 commitment will be honored. NNTA has retained the Rotary Club grant, and other funds it received, and is ready to provide the matching amount to Nebraska Game and Parks when requested.

While 'on-the-ground' work on the western portion of the Cowboy Trail has not yet begun, Nebraska Game and Parks is currently engaged in the scoping and permitting process required to access the federal RTP grant. It is our understanding that work to deck bridges on the trail could begin this summer, thus bringing the project closer to completion.

In the meantime, NNTA has been using other funds it raised to help develop the western Cowboy Trail segment, including by having the railbed cleared of weeds and installing mile marker signs along the trail. NNTA also has secured an easement from Nebraska Northwestern Railroad to develop a five-mile long trail on the active railroad right-of-way from the end of the Cowboy Trail to downtown



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Chadron. An engineering study of this rail-with-trail has just been completed, and NNTA will be actively pursuing additional grants to complete the first phase of this important trail link. The Rail Trail Conservancy, a highly regarded national organization, recently made a significant donation to this effort.

Once again, the Northwest Nebraska Trails Association appreciates the support of Chadron Rotary Club and Rotary District 5630 for its efforts to develop, maintain and promote non-motorized trails in Northwest Nebraska, and for the \$2,000 grant it received for the Cowboy Trail project. In recognition of the grant, NNTA plans to install a plaque recognizing the Rotary Club grant on one of the bridges on the Cowboy Trail between Chadron and Hay Springs.

Thank you for the important part Rotary plays in making our region a vibrant and viable area for outdoor recreation.

George Ledbetter  
Treasurer  
Northwest Nebraska Trails Association