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Nebraska Natural Heritage Program Presented National Award



Mary Klein and Jim Stuart

August 30, 2006, Lincoln, Neb.-- The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Nebraska Natural Heritage Program was presented NatureServe's Conservation Impact Award for outstanding scientific advancement at a Commission meeting in Lincoln Aug. 30.

The Nebraska Natural Heritage Program was presented the award for its role in developing the scientific methodology and data products used in the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project. The award was presented by Mary Klein, president and chief executive officer of NatureServe, the non-profit conservation group that coordinates an international network of 80 similar natural heritage programs across the United States, Canada, and Latin America.

"The exceptional efforts of the staff at the Natural Heritage Program have led to important improvements in conservation planning at the state level," Klein said. "This award commends the program's scientific excellence and leadership. By earning NatureServe's Conservation Impact Award, the Nebraska Heritage Program has earned international acclaim for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The Natural Legacy Project itself is a model wildlife action plan that we hope other states will emulate."

The Natural Legacy Project, part of a nationwide effort to develop State Wildlife Action Plans for every state, is the first attempt to develop a statewide blueprint to conserve all of the state's wildlife and biological diversity. "It's one of the largest collaborative efforts ever undertaken on behalf of conservation in the state's history," said Rick Schneider, an ecologist and coordinator of the Nebraska Natural Heritage Program. "We're very proud to receive this award which celebrates the efforts of all the partners who worked together to develop this project."