RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AMENDMENT TO THE CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION EASEMENT GRANTED TO THE NEBRASKA LAND TRUST

Grantors: Ronald F. and Carol J. Patterson

WHEREAS, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-104, the County has the power to do all acts in relation to the concerns of the County necessary to the exercise of its corporate powers; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-103, the powers of the County as a body are exercised by the County Board; and,

WHEREAS, the Conservation and Preservation Easements Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§76-2,111 to 76-2,118 provides that the creation of conservation and preservation easements shall be approved by the appropriate governing body; and

WHEREAS, at Resolution 2010-057, the County Board approved the placement of approximately 174.84 acres of property in Sarpy County, owned by Ronald F. and Carol J. Patterson into a conservation and preservation easement held by the Nebraska Land Trust, Inc. (hereinafter the “Original Easement”); and,

WHEREAS, Ronald F. and Carol J. Patterson have proposed amending the Original Easement by adding approximately 56.52 acres into the protected property, which will also be held by the Nebraska Land Trust, as further described in the Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement, a copy of said Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement is attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein; and,

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Land Trust is a charitable, non-profit organization and meets the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. §76-2,111(3)(b) to be a holder of said easement; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §76-2,112, the proposed Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement was submitted to the Sarpy County Planning Commission for evaluation of its conformity with the Sarpy County Comprehensive Development Plan. The Sarpy County Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement on August 21, 2018; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SARPY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THAT said Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement is in conformity with the Sarpy County Comprehensive Development Plan and the purposes of the Conservation and Preservation Easement are consistent with the Conservation and Preservation Easement Act and said Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement is hereby approved.

Rsln Amend Patterson Cons & Pres Easement
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the County Board authorizes the Chairman of the Sarpy County Board to sign the Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement document showing approval of the easement.

The above Resolution was approved by a vote of the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners at a public meeting duly held in accordance with applicable law on the 11th day of September 2018.

Attest

SEAL

Sarpy County Board Chairman

County Clerk
I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. APPLICANTS:
Ronald F. & Carol J. Patterson
22202 Armbrust Lane
Gretna, NE  68028

B. PROPERTY OWNER:
Ronald F. & Carol J. Patterson
22202 Armbrust Lane
Gretna, NE  68028

C. LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lot 1, Deer Hollow, as surveyed platted and recorded in Sarpy County, Nebraska and all right, title and interest of the Grantors in the Easement for Well and Water Line filed with the Register of Deeds of Sarpy County, Nebraska and indexed therein in Inst. No. 2005-12232.

D. SUBJECT PROPERTY LOCATION: Southwest of Hwy 31 and Armbrust Lane.

E. SUBJECT PROPERTY SIZE: Approximately 6.41 acres.

F. EXISTING ZONING AND FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS:
 Zoning:  AG (Agricultural Farming District)
 Future Land Use Designation:  Agriculture

G. REQUESTED ACTION(S): To amend an existing Conservation and Preservation Easement to include an additional 6.41 acre parcel.

H. PURPOSE OF REQUEST: To dedicate a conservation easement over the landowner's property to the Nebraska Land Trust for perpetual conservation and preservation.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. EXISTING CONDITION OF SITE: The subject property contains a large area of woodlands consisting of primarily mature oak trees and a spring fed stream that flows to the Platte River.
### B. GENERAL VICINITY ZONING AND LAND USE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECTION FROM SUBJECT PROPERTY</th>
<th>FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION (reference attached map)</th>
<th>CURRENT ZONING DESIGNATION (reference attached map)</th>
<th>SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTH</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Undeveloped farm land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Undeveloped farm land and woodlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>AG/AGR</td>
<td>Undeveloped woodlands and creek; large lot residential structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Undeveloped farm land and woodlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AG = Agricultural (20 acre minimum lot size)
AGD = Agricultural Development (10 acre minimum lot size)

### C. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:
- Sarpy County Comprehensive Plan
- Sarpy County Zoning Regulations: Section 9 - AG Agricultural Farming District

### III. ANALYSIS / STAFF COMMENTS

#### A. GENERAL:
- The request to amend the existing conservation and preservation easement to include an additional 6.41 acres of land is by the same property owners who have previously negotiated terms with the Nebraska Land Trust as specified in the attached Amendment to Deed of Conservation and Preservation Easement document.
- The subject property is in an area of the County that has several unique environmental and cultural features including a mature oak woodland with a spring fed stream that flows to the Platte River. The perpetual conservation of this area is an ecological benefit in preserving some of Sarpy County’s natural beauty.
- The Conservation and Preservation Easement restricts the construction of new structures outside of designated areas and does not allow logging or clearing outside of these designated building envelopes; prohibits commercial or industrial uses as well as commercial feed lots; and restricts commercial wind energy and solar power generation along with other uses that could deteriorate the quality of the preserved land. Further detail is provided in the easement document.

#### B. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:
The request to conserve the property through a conservation and preservation easement is in conformance with the Conservation Zone and the future land use designation of Agricultural.

#### C. OTHER AGENCY REVIEW/COMMENTS:
The application was sent to each of the five cities in Sarpy County as well as other area jurisdictional agencies or departments that may have an interest. Any comments received are attached to
this report for your review. Note: The County Attorney’s staff has reviewed the document and does not request any revisions.

IV. **PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the Revised Conservation and Preservation Easement agreement between the Patterson’s and the Nebraska Land Trust as it is consistent with the Sarpy County Comprehensive Plan’s future land use designation of Conservation Residential as well as the County’s Zoning Regulations.

V. **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Revised Conservation and Preservation Easement agreement at their August 21, 2018 meeting.

**MOTION:** Korth moved, seconded by Sotak, to recommend **Approval** of the Revised Conservation and Preservation Easement agreement between the Patterson’s and the Nebraska Land Trust as it is consistent with the Sarpy County Comprehensive Plan’s future land use designation of Conservation Residential as well as the County’s Zoning Regulations. **Ballot:** Ayes – Sotak, Davis, George, Whitfield, Ackley, Huddleston, Giff, Korth, Malmquist, and Lichter. Nays: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Torczon. Motion carried.

VI. **ATTACHMENTS TO REPORT:**

A. Conservation and Preservation Easement Document  
B. Sarpy County Current Zoning Map  
C. Sarpy County Future Land Use Map

VII. **COPIES OF REPORT SENT TO:**

A. Ronald F. & Carol J. Patterson, property owners  
B. Dave Sands, Nebraska Land Trust  
C. Public Upon Request
AMENDMENT TO DEED OF CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION EASEMENT
for the Patterson Farm in Sarpy County, Nebraska

THIS AMENDMENT TO DEED OF CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION EASEMENT (hereinafter "Amendment") executed this 11th day of September, 2018 by and between Ronald F. Patterson and Carol J. Patterson, husband and wife, as joint tenants (hereinafter "Grantors"), who reside at 2202 Armbrust Lane, Gretna, Nebraska, 68028, and THE NEBRASKA LAND TRUST INCORPORATED, a Nebraska nonprofit association, with its principal office located at 9200 Andermatt Drive, Suite 7, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68526, Lincoln, Nebraska (hereinafter "THE LAND TRUST" or "Grantee"), for the purpose of amending the DEED OF CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION EASEMENT filed with the Sarpy County Register of Deeds at 2010-16610. The Grantors and THE LAND TRUST are referred to collectively as the Parties.

Recitals:

WHEREAS, the Grantors own in fee simple certain real property, approximately 56.52 acres in Sarpy County, Nebraska as described in Exhibit "A" (herein referred to as the "Protected Property"), which was protected though a Conservation and Preservation Easement (hereinafter "Easement") executed by the Parties on June 15, 2010 and filed with the Sarpy County Register of Deeds at 2010-16610; and

WHEREAS, the Grantors wish to add approximately 6.41 adjacent acres to the Protected Property, as described in the attached Exhibit "B" (hereinafter "Parcel D"); and
WHEREAS, Parcel D includes oak/hickory woodlands near Schramm State Park, which has been designated an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society, due to these woodlands importance as habitat for migratory and nesting songbirds; and

WHEREAS, Parcel D is adjacent to a significant Native American archeological site owned by the Nebraska State Historical Society; and

WHEREAS, Parcel D includes portions of a tributary to the Platte River, upriver from a Metropolitan Utilities District well field that provides drinking water to the Omaha area; and

WHEREAS, Parcel D provides scenic views which can be seen from Nebraska Highway 31; and

WHEREAS, Parcel D will benefit continued agriculture operations by the Grantors, by preventing development on the border of a working farm; and

WHEREAS, all of the above constitute the Conservation Values of Parcel D; and

WHEREAS, the Grantors desire to conserve the Conservation Values and present status of Parcel D by adding it to the Protected Property through this amendment to the Easement, for the purpose of conserving the present status and Conservation Values of Parcel D and to prevent the use or development of Parcel D for any purpose or in any manner which would conflict with the maintenance of the Protected Property in the present condition for both this and all future generations except as explicitly provided for in the Easement; and

WHEREAS, the Parties hereto recognize the agricultural, natural, historic, and scenic character of Parcel D and the Parties hereto have the common purpose of conserving the aforesaid Conservation Values of Parcel D (hereinafter "Conservation Purposes"); and

WHEREAS, THE LAND TRUST wishes to accept the addition of Parcel D to the Easement as provided in Sec. 76-2,112, R.R.S. Neb., 1943 (as amended); and

WHEREAS, the present status of the aesthetic, agricultural, historical, ecological and natural condition of Parcel D at the date this Amendment becomes effective, is evidenced by reports, photographs, maps and scientific documentation possessed at the present time. Said evidences of the condition of Parcel D are referred to collectively as the Baseline Documentation Report dated _____________, 2018, which is incorporated herein by reference; and

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to Article V, Paragraph B of the Easement, entitled "Amendments/Assignment", for the reasons given, and in consideration of various considerations and their mutual promises, covenants, terms, conditions, and restrictions contained in the Easement which shall also encumber Parcel D, Grantors voluntarily grant and convey to THE LAND TRUST, and Grantee voluntarily accepts, the addition of the 6.41-acre Parcel D to the Easement, an immediately vested interest in real property defined by the Act and of the nature and character described in this Amendment, exclusively for the purpose of conserving and forever maintaining the Conservation Purposes of the Protected Property.
Grant of Addition of Parcel D to the Easement

Grantors, for themselves and their beneficiaries, successors and assigns (collectively, "Grantors"), hereby irrevocably grant, transfer and convey to THE LAND TRUST, its successors and assigns, this Parcel D to the Protected Property encumbering Parcel D in perpetuity with all provisions contained in the Easement, as authorized by and subject to all provisions of the Code and the Act. The conveyance and addition of Parcel D to the Easement is a donation from Grantors to the Grantee.

Effective Date:

This Addition to the Easement shall be effective when signed by the parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed the addition of Parcel D to the Conservation and Preservation Easement the date and year first herein set forth.

By: ______________________________________
    Ronald F. Patterson, Owner and Grantor
    [Date]

By: ______________________________________
    Carol J. Patterson, Owner and Grantor
    [Date]

STATE OF ____________ )
    ) ss.
COUNTY OF ____________ )

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me on this ___ day of __________, 2018, by Ronald F. and Carol J. Patterson, Owners and Grantors.

______________________________________
NOTARY PUBLIC
ACCEPTANCE

This Addition and Amendment to the Conservation and Preservation Easement is hereby accepted by THE NEBRASKA LAND TRUST INCORPORATED, Grantee herein.

By: ___________________________ ___________________________
    David S. Sands, Executive Director                          Date

STATE OF NEBRASKA )
                     ) ss.
COUNTY OF _______________ )

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of ___________ 2018 by ______________________, Executive Director of The Nebraska Land Trust Incorporated.

______________________________
Notary Public
By Resolution duly adopted on the 11th day of September, 2018, the Board of Commissioners of Sarpy County, Nebraska, approved this Amendment to the Conservation and Preservation Easement as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 76-2112 as to that portion of the property within the easement lying within its jurisdiction.

David K. Coons
Chairman, Board of Commissioners of Sarpy County, Nebraska

Attest:

Sarpy County Clerk

Approved as to form:

Sarpy County Attorney
EXHIBIT “A” (Page 1 of 2)

Map and Legal Description of the 56.52-acre Protected Property
EXHIBIT “A” (Page 2 of 2)

Legal Description of the 56.52-acre Protected Property

**PARCEL A** - The South Half of the South Half of the Southeast Quarter (S1/2 S1/2 SE1/4) of Section 35, Township 13 North, Range 10 East of the 6th P.M., Sarpy County, Nebraska; EXCEPT those tracts deeded to the State of Nebraska, Department of Roads in Warranty Deed recorded August 20, 1984 in Book 159, Page 2320; and in Warranty Deed recorded August 20, 1984 in Book 159, Page 2321; and in Warranty Deed recorded March 31, 1986 in Book 161, Page 649; and in Warranty Deed recorded March 31, 1986 in Book 161, Page 650; in the records of Sarpy County, Nebraska.

**PARCEL B** – Tax Lot Four (4) in the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter (NE1/4 NE1/4) of Section 2, Township 12 North, Range 10 East of the 6th P.M., Sarpy County, Nebraska; EXCEPT those tracts deeded to the State of Nebraska, Department of Roads as conveyed in Warranty Deed recorded August 20, 1984 in Book 159, Page 2322; and in Warranty Deed recorded March 31, 1986 in Book 161, Page 649; and in Warranty Deed recorded March 31, 1986 in Book 161, Page 651; AND ALSO EXCEPT those tracts platted as Deer Ridge Replat I, recorded December 30, 1998 as Inst. No. 98-37625; and as Deer Hollow, recorded January 11, 2005 as Inst. No. 2005-1070, in the records of Sarpy County, Nebraska.

**PARCEL C** – A tract of land in the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter (SE1/4 SE1/4) of Section 35, Township 13 North, Range 10 East of the 6th P.M., Sarpy County, Nebraska and being described as follows: Beginning at a point 963.90 feet North of and 33.00 feet West of the Southeast corner of said Section 35; thence South along the West right of way line of State Highway No. 31 for a distance of 134.90 feet; thence Southwesterly along a tangent curve having a radius of 549.69 feet for a distance of 167.70 feet; thence West for a distance of 267.62 feet; thence North for a distance of 300.00 feet; thence East for a distance of 293.00 feet to the point of beginning; EXCEPT that part conveyed to The State of Nebraska by Warranty Deed recorded August 20, 1984 in Book 159, Page 2319 in the records of Sarpy County, Nebraska.
EXHIBIT “B” (Page 1 of 3)

Map, Survey, and Legal Description of Parcel D
EXHIBIT “B” (Page 2 of 3)

Map, Survey, and Legal Description of Parcel D
EXHIBIT “B” (Page 3 of 3)

Map, Survey, and Legal Description of Parcel D

Legal Description
Lot One (1), Deer Hollow, a subdivision in Sarpy County, Nebraska and all right, title and interest of the Grantors in the Easement for Well and Water Line filed with the Register of Deeds of Sarpy County, Nebraska and indexed therein in Inst. No. 2005-12232.
Vicinity Map - Current Zoning

Lot 1, Deer Hollow Conservation Easement
Lot 1, Deer Hollow
Conservation Easement

Legend
- Agriculture
- Residential Estates
- Low to Medium Density Residential
- Medium to High Density Residential
- Mixed Use Area
- General Commercial
- Business Park
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Future Land Use
Sarpy County, Nebraska

Amended 9-12-2017
AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF NEBRASKA  

County of Sarpy  

Being duly sworn, upon oath, Laura Estep-Bronk deposes and says that she is a Sales Representative or Ron Petak deposes and says that he is the Executive Editor of the Bellevue Leader, Papillion Times, Gretna Breeze and Springfield Monitor, legal newspapers of general circulation in Sarpy County, Nebraska, and published therein; that said newspaper has been established for more than one year past; that it has a bona-fide paid subscription list of more than three hundred; that to this personal knowledge, the advertisement, a copy of which is hereto attached, was printed in the said newspaper once each week, the first insertion having been on:

Wednesday, August 8, 2018

Gretna Breeze
Bellevue Leader
Papillion Times
Springfield Monitor

And that said newspaper is a legal newspaper under the statutes of the State of Nebraska. The above facts are within my personal knowledge.

Ron Petak
Executive Editor

Laura Estep-Bronk
Sales Representative

Today’s Date
Signed in my presence and sworn to before me:

Notary Public

Printer’s Fee $30.43
Customer Number: 40638
Order Number: 0002112814
STATE OF NEBRASKA

County of Sarpy

Being duly sworn, upon oath, Laura Estep-Bronk deposes and says that she is a Sales Representative or Ron Petak deposes and says that he is the Executive Editor of the Bellevue Leader, Papillion Times, Gretna Breeze and Springfield Monitor, legal newspapers of general circulation in Sarpy County, Nebraska, and published therein; that said newspaper has been established for more than one year last past; that it has a bona-fide paid subscription list of more than three hundred; that to this personal knowledge, the advertisement, a copy of which is hereto attached, was printed in the said newspaper once each week, the first insertion having been on:

Wednesday, August 29, 2018

Gretna Breeze
Bellevue Leader
Papillion Times
Springfield Monitor

And that said newspaper is a legal newspaper under the statutes of the State of Nebraska. The above facts are within my personal knowledge.

Ron Petak
Executive Editor

Laura Estep-Bronk
Sales Representative

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
SARPY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Notice is hereby given that a regular meeting of the Sarpy County Board of Commissioners will be held on Tuesday, September 11, 2018, at 3:00 P.M. in the Sarpy County Board Room, Sarpy County Administration Building, 1210 Golden Gate Drive, Papillion, NE. A Public Hearing will be held on the following:

Ronald and Carol Patterson have submitted an application for consideration of an Amendment to an existing Conservation and Preservation Easement to add an adjacent 6.41 acre parcel legally described as Lot 1, Deer Hollow, as surveyed, platted and recorded in Sarpy County, Nebraska. Generally located southwest of Highway 31 and Buffalo Road.

Richard Homes LLC has submitted an application for consideration of a Revised Final Plat (Phase I) of a subdivision to be known as Hills of Aspen Creek, Lots 1-267, inclusive and Outlots A through G, inclusive; being a platting of Tax Lots 1A1 and 1A2 located in the Southeast Quarter of Sec 20, Twp 14 North, Rng 11 East, of the 6th P.M., Sarpy County, NE. Generally located northwest of 180th Street and Cornhusker Road.

An agenda for the meeting, kept continually current, is available for inspection at the Sarpy County Planning Department, Sarpy County Administration Bldg., 1210 Golden Gate Drive, Papillion, NE.

2117220; 8/29

Printer's Fee: $18.97
Customer Number: 40638
Order Number: 0002117220
Farm now, farm forever

693 acres south of Gretna protected by easements from encroaching Sarpy development

BY DAVID HENDEE
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

A deal that started with a handshake seven years ago now is protecting a Sarpy County farm from future development with an iron grip.

The 693-acre Ron and Carol Patterson farm south of Gretna is the second-largest patch of protected property in Nebraska's smallest and fastest-growing county. Only Fontenelle Forest in Bellevue preserves a larger swath of Sarpy land.

The Pattersons permanently protected the property as a working farm by selling conservation easements designed to shield it from incompatible land uses and excessive development. The Nebraska Land Trust in Lincoln holds the easement.

The Pattersons said they wanted to preserve not only the farmland, but the property's mature oak and hickory woodlands, spring-fed creeks with rocky streambeds, scenic views, historic American Indian sites and pioneer wagon ruts.

Ron Patterson said he and his wife didn't want the farm to be ripped up for homes on acreages or in subdivisions.

"Imagine what you could do with this 700 acres," he said. "You're talking lots of money and a huge development. But we couldn't stand it."

Carol Patterson said the couple couldn't be happier about preserving the farm forever.

"It'll be here after we die, nice and green and welcoming to Omaha and Lincoln," she said.

The farm lies in the scenic Schramm Bluffs above the Platte River in western Sarpy County. It is west of Nebraska Highway 31, the road from Interstate 80 to Schramm Park State Recreation Area and the Platte River Valley.

The Platte cuts through a limestone ridge, creating steep bluffs and rolling farmland with deep ravines that shelter oak and hickory woodlands. These bluffs provide some of the best wildlife habitat in eastern Nebraska. The woodlands of bur oaks, red oaks, black oaks, bitternut hickory and other hardwood trees are especially important for migrating songbirds.

Archaeological sites in the area indicate that it has sustained people for millennia. Historic resources on the farm include an abandoned farmstead with a limestone barn foundation and ruts from a mid-1800s trail that took wagons to a narrow crossing of the Platte, where the Interstate 80 bridges stand today.

Views along the edge of the property look 3 miles west across the valley toward Mahoney State Park, Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum and Quarry Oaks Golf Club.

Carol Patterson crosses a creek on her farm, which has been in her family since about 1920. The Pattersons have permanently protected the land from development with conservation easements.

To the south is a nearly 1,000-acre religious retreat being built by Gov. Pete Ricketts' father, Joe. The scenic region, however, is in the nation's 93rd fastest-growing county, based on census data, and the Pattersons have been fighting to save the bluffs from encroaching development since the housing boom of the last decade.

Then they heard about conservation easements from Dave Sands, executive director of the Nebraska Land Trust.

Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements that prevent commercial and residential development of the site forever. In Nebraska, they have been used on sites ranging from the Omaha metropolitan area to rocky buttes in the Panhandle.

continued next page
The Pattersons have been current farm family by the Pattersons and other landowners in the bluffs who advocated for preservation. County officials responded by designating 11,000 acres as the county's most important and vulnerable environmental district that should be preserved. Sands said many residents of the bluffs wanted more. "They wanted permanent protection," he said.

Voluntary conservation easements were the preservation tool of choice, Sands said. It was no surprise, he said, that working farms contained several of the best prospects of 13 properties ultimately assessed for conserving under an easement. Farm land in Sarpy County is among the best in the state, producing high yields without irrigation.

The Patterson easements are the latest in a series of negotiations in the bluffs. The farm consists of four parcels owned by the Pattersons and other family members. It remains private property.

The family's ownership of the land started about 1920, when Carol's great-grandfather, John Armbrust, bought 80-acre farms for three of his sons, including Carol's grandfather, Louie. Decades of expansion and evolving family ownership resulted in the current farm of nearly 700 acres.

Starting with the 2008 handshake between the Pattersons and Sands, the couple and the land trust agreed to seek permanent protection of the entire farm. A separate easement was needed for each parcel.

Landowners who grant conservation easements reduce the value of their land through relinquishment of development rights. In Sarpy County, the value of those rights is substantial.

To purchase the easements, the land trust obtained two grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, funded by state lottery proceeds. The grants allowed the land trust to obtain nearly $2 million in matching federal funds from the U.S. Agriculture Department's Farm and Ranch Protection Program.

Funding totaled $2.9 million, most of which the Pattersons used to purchase parcels from other family members.

Most landowners can't afford to give up valuable development rights without some compensation, such as the sale of conservation easements. The Pattersons donated a significant portion of their easements by selling them for less than appraised value, Sands said.

Other partners in the Patterson deal included the Papio-Missouri River and Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, eight foundations and numerous individuals. The final of the four easements was completed in September.

Ron Patterson said the land needed protection. "It's really virgin country," he said. "Few people have set foot on some of this land. What's here is going to be here. We're going to be gone."

Sands said few landowners have the opportunity to permanently protect a special place, and only a fraction of those take action.

"But even among this small and dedicated group of landowners, Ron and Carol Patterson have demonstrated a rare degree of determination, patience and commitment in the preservation of their farm," Sands said. "As Sarpy County continues to grow, the value of the Pattersons' commitment to conservation will grow, as well."

Contact the writer:
402-444-1127, david.hendrix@owh.com

HOW SARPY COUNTY'S EASEMENTS WERE FUNDED
Ron and Carol Patterson's farm is part of 1,240 acres protected in the Schramm Bluffs by eight conservation easements over the last seven years. Funding to purchase those easements included:

- Nearly $2.49 million from the U.S. Agriculture Department's Farm and Ranch Protection Program.
- Nearly $2.15 million in grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust.
- More than $966,000 in donations from landowners through bargain sales of easements.
- Nearly $355,000 in funds from Nebraska Public Power District and others.
- More than $50,000 from individuals and foundations to support transaction costs.

Source: Nebraska Land Trust