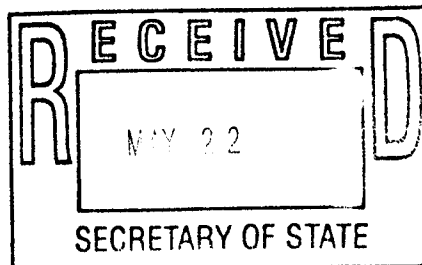




May 15, 2001

Mr. John A. Gale, Chair
Nebraska State Records Board
Suite 2300, State Capitol
Box 94608
Lincoln, NE 68509-4608

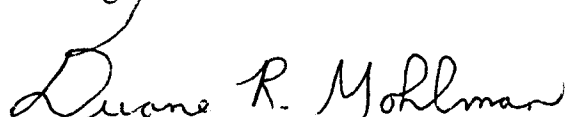


Dear Mr. Gale:

Attached is our *Application for State Records Board Grant to Improve Access to Public Information*. This application details our proposal entitled *Archiving and Digital Access to the Conservation and Survey Division (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) Aerial Photography Collection*.

We look forward to hearing from you concerning the status of this application. If we can be of further assistance, or if you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards:



Duane R. Mohlman, Data Systems Coordinator
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Leslie M. Howard, GIS Specialist
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Application for State Records Board Grant to Improve Access to Public Information

Agencies desiring grants from the Nebraska State Records Board for projects to improve access to state government information should complete this application and follow any procedures outlined in this application and any accompanying materials.

1. Name of agency applying for grant

Conservation and Survey Division
Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2. Title or brief description of the project

Archiving and Digital Access to the Conservation and Survey Division Aerial Photography Collection.

3. Grant request amount

\$25,000

4. Will there be a fee for accessing records associated with this project?

There will be no fee for accessing the collection. However, we would like to charge a nominal fee to cover the cost of any media.

5. If yes, provide any statutory reference or authorization for the fee.

n/a

6. Please describe the project in detail (you may attach this description).

The Conservation and Survey Division (CSD), University of Nebraska-Lincoln, houses a large and valuable collection of tens of thousand aerial photographs. The majority of these 9"x9" photographs were taken between the 1930s and 1970s. The aerial photography collection is a critical and widely used resource for natural resource planners, land managers and owners, educators and the public. In addition, many of the land areas have multiple images spanning different time periods. The spatial and temporal aspects of the aerial photography make for a unique and historically significant collection.

Currently, the collection only exists as hardcopy photographs. The only availability to our clientele is to physically visit our office. When photographs are requested, our only option is to have high quality copies made from the UNL Printing and Duplicating office. The cost of duplication is significant and adds to the handling and wear of the original photography. Due to the age and heavy use of these photographs, a significant portion of the aerial photography collection is rapidly deteriorating. In order to preserve the collection for future users, it is necessary to digitally archive the collection as soon as possible.

In the fall of 2000, we were fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC). This grant allowed us to purchase the equipment (large-bed scanners, two personal computers with significant storage, and various supplies). However, the remaining money, which is for personnel, is now nearly depleted.

With these grant funds from the State Records Board, which would be used almost entirely for personnel, we could continue to scan the photographs without interruption. Other than personnel, the only additional expense we anticipate is additional disk space. In addition, with these grant funds, we could make excellent progress over the 2001 summer since many of our current student-workers would be available for more hours.

The photographs are being scanned on a county basis. In the near future, it is our hope to make the completed counties digitally accessible. We are currently reviewing policies to make them available upon request via FTP, email attachments, and/or a media source--whichever meets the customer's needs. We are also exploring the possibilities of making some or all of the data available through our web site.

7. Please describe whom the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be and projected activity for access or use of the proposed service.

A significant portion of CSD's primary clientele would benefit from this project. The clientele include natural resource districts; local, county, state and federal agencies; land owners and land resource planners; earth science educators and school districts; consultants; the general public; and more. Currently, all of our customers must come to our office to research the aerial photography collection. If copies of any photographs are needed, which is usually the case, customers must pay the cost of reproduction (currently \$5.00 per photograph) and incur a waiting period (usually 24 to 48 hours). With these funds, the collection would be more readily available (FTP, email attachments, or possibly the web) making access more efficient and inexpensive for all.

Of equal importance is the fact that CSD itself would be a beneficiary. As mentioned, because of age and heavy use, the aerial photography collection is deteriorating. With these funds, the collection would not only be made more accessible at little or no charge, but would be permanently preserved and archived.

8. Estimated timeline for implementation

Because of last fall's NITC grant, the equipment has been purchased and is currently being used. Several UNL student-workers have been trained, hired, and are currently on the job. Therefore, implementation would be immediate since it would be a continuation of a current project. It is important to mention that with these funds, we would be able to keep our current staff employed, and not have to incur a break in the project thereby causing us to hire and train another group of student-workers.

And, as mentioned before, with summer break coming soon, our current student-workers would be able to work additional hours.

9. Agency contribution to project

The Conservation and Survey Division (CSD) will continue to provide:

- Office space
- Project equipment previously purchased with the NITC grant
- Miscellaneous office supplies
- Supervision and project management by the two current full-time managerial/professional computer personnel (Duane Mohlman and Les Howard)
- Technical support from our part-time computer technician (as needed).

10a. Has this project ever been submitted as a budget request (explain)?

No

10b. Does the project require additional statutory authority (explain)?

No

10c. Why is the grant money needed for the project, and, if applicable, how will the service be sustained once the grant money is expended?

As part of our internal technology and strategic action plans, the Conservation and Survey Division has focused on making our natural resource data more easily and widely available to our clientele. For example, over 60 GIS datasets, approximately 100,000 geologic logs from well registration records (thanks to a previous State Records Board grant), statewide digital raster graphic coverage, and the Nebraska elevation dataset, are all available via the web. The availability of the aerial photography collection in digital format would be another significant contribution toward the implementation of this plan.

Unfortunately, CSD does not have the financial resources to make our massive aerial photography collection electronically accessible or to digitally archive it. The NITC grant allowed us to purchase the equipment, hire and train the student-workers, and perform an extensive amount of scanning. However, and in the near future, that grant will run out of money. Thus, we would use most, if not all, of the requested \$25,000 for just personnel costs. This would have two immediate benefits: 1) the project keeps going without interruption, and thus, 2) means we don't have to spend the resources hiring and training another crew. Therefore, we feel this \$25,000 would allow us to make excellent progress on this important project.

11. Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of state agency services or access to those services (you may attach a separate sheet if needed)..

The aerial photography collection is rapidly deteriorating due to age and amount of use. We need to preserve it before this resource is permanently lost. Thus, digitally archiving seems to be the most effective and efficient method. In addition, this means that we can make this resource electronically available to the citizens of Nebraska. This eliminates trips to our office, reduces everyone's cost, and improves turn-around time.

12. Please describe how this project will (you may respond to any or all of these criteria in your answer, attach additional pages if needed).

1) Improve the efficiency of agency operations;

Our two primary project goals are to digitally preserve and archive the CSD aerial photography collection and make the collection more widely available and more easily accessible. We feel this will improve our agency's efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating the need for our clientele to make multiple trips to our office, the expense of reproduction, and wait time. These efforts will also greatly expand citizen/clientele access to government information by making this product available to anyone, anywhere as well as reduce the cost and bureaucracy (no need to reproduce). Further, it encourages use of technology and serves as another example of government e-commerce whereby cost is reduced while delivery of service is improved. These efforts will also improve the collaboration between agencies and the general public by providing an often-preferred digital or electronic product.

2) Facilitate collaboration among state agencies;
and

3) Facilitate collaboration between state agencies and other public institutions;

A significant portion of our clientele are other state agencies and public institutions. Many of these agencies and institutions prefer a digital or electronic product over hardcopy (in this case hardcopy photographs). We feel having the aerial photography collection available in digital format will be of great help to other state agencies and public institutions.

4) Support public/private partnerships in the delivery of public services

13. Contact person for any questions regarding this application.

Duane R. Mohlman, Data Systems Coordinator
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Proposed Budget:

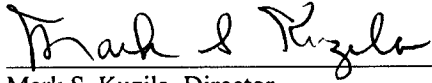
Personnel (UNL student-workers and temporaries)	\$23,000
Data Storage	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
TOTAL	\$25,000

Agency Director

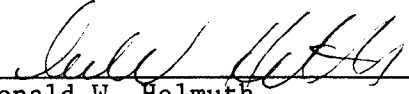
Board of Regents
University of Nebraska

Signed this 7th day of May, 2001

Date: 5-11-01



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Please Return to:

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Lincoln, NE 68509-4608