

Public Lands Access

The Public Lands Access Program oversees the Department's public access efforts by which the Department collaboratively enhances opportunities for the public to enjoy wildlife by identifying lands and waters that are closed to the public or that do not have sufficient access and work with all interested parties to meet recreation and other access needs.

The Department's Heritage funded access efforts included:

- **Cradle Ranch Access Project:** The Department provided \$21,000 towards this project in exchange for 5 years of hunter access to the ranches. This funding was matched by \$189,000 of National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funding and landowner efforts. This project included working with the rancher, and NRCS for a grassland restoration and some wildlife waters on the ranch.
- **Elkhorn Ranches:** The Department provided \$15,000 towards this project in exchange for 3 years of hunter access to the ranches. Access through this ranch was a priority to ensure access to nearly half of the Department's Game Management Unit 36B. The project included working with the landowner to improve 100 acres of grassland and provide year round water for wildlife on the ranch.
- **Catalyst Paper Company:** This project ensured access across private property to U.S. National Forest land beyond. The Department provided \$50,000 towards this project in exchange for 10 years of hunter access to the ranches. This project included providing funding to Catalyst Paper to build dikes to use water disposed by the paper plant to create moist soil units for waterfowl, provide water for wildlife, and potentially create riparian habitat for several riparian obligate species.
- **Wengert Ranch Access Project:** The Department provided \$21,000 towards a project that entailed working with the rancher, and NRCS to provide funding for several wildlife waters on the ranch. This funding was matched by \$180,000 of NRCS funding and landowner efforts in exchange for 5 years of hunter access to the ranches.
- **O'Haco Ranch Access Extension:** The Department provided \$14,000 towards this project in exchange for an extension of 1 year of hunter access through the ranch to U.S. Forest Service lands beyond the ranch. This project included working with the landowner to ensure that 2 wells will keep water in 8 drinkers on a year round basis for wildlife.