Corps From Page 1A

tion plan that provides payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) to the local government entities because the decrease in property tax revenues will impact local services like schools, parks and fire departments.

According to Carol Wortmann, Cedar County Treasurer, Cedar County has received a PILT payment in June of every year since the beginning of the project. The June 2012 payment to Cedar County, which was for 3,424 acres - meaning there are additional PILT acres in Cedar County besides

the Wynot area — was for \$11,177. An estimation from the Cedar County Assessor's office for what the actual taxes would have been for the Audubon Bend area is \$78,282, which demonstrates quite a loss to the county tax rolls.

Corps personnel physically reviewed the existing landscape and set up a six-step plan to identify problems, examine the condition of the land and develop any opportunities that could be beneficial to its future development.

The Wynot hearing allowed the public to offer alternative plans to the project, including access points, parking areas, potential sites uses, native plantings and restoration of other native features which have been lost with the conversion to farmland.

"We don't pretend to know

more about this area than many of you here tonight who still remember the property before it was farmed," said Ruth Bentzinger, environmental resources specialist with the Corps. "So we welcome you to give us your ideas to bring the natural habitat back.'

Bentzinger said the degradation of the ecosystem has contributed to the loss of habitat and several wildlife species.

There is also also concern about the severe loss of cottonwood tree population along the MNRR. Cottonwood trees have been the home of bald eagles along the MNRR, and restoring those native trees is vital to the nesting, roosting and wintering of the birds.

The Corps wants to restore the habitat for the fish and wildlife and has also included biological opinions to direct the restoration keeping in mind the sturgeon, lease tern and piping plover.

"We also hope to add recre-ational and education opportuni-ties to the site plan," said Bentzinger. "Passive recreation which will be compatible with wildlife will be our goal and that will include activities like canoeing and walking trails. Hunting will also

be available eventually." She said the Corps hopes to see school field trips, scouting excursions and nature clubs, as well as family activities, come to observe nature as long as they are aware of the maintenance of the Audubon Bend project.

While evaluating the landscape along Audubon Bend, Corps officials have noted natural features such as an artesian well, duck

ponds like the Oxbow Pond, the deterioration of the St. Helena Chute, a historic channel of the MNRR, and also the loss of native Cottonwoods almost to the point of extinction. They are also concerned with the disconnect of the flood plain with the MNRR due to the high banks along the south shore of the Missouri River.

The Corps crews have already begun working in the area. An access road for public use has been graded and signage about the area has been erected. Photo points have been created so development of the area can be tracked. Fencing the area has begun and 1 1/2 miles have been completed with a total of 4 1/2 miles needed. Four irrigation wells have been decommissioned, junk removal continues and noxious weed control is a prime objective. Rangers are also enforcing the land use policy.

Hundreds of acres of the property are still being leased as farmland until the ultimate use of all the acres is converted to natural habitat. To date, the Corps has planted 245 acres back to native grass, placed 10 acres of hardwood tree species and started the regeneration of cottonwood trees on 30 acres. It is also closely monitoring the natural regeneration of Cottonwoods in the flood plain.

"Until the mitigation of the Audubon Bend acres is complete, we are dedicated to preventing any further degradation of the area," said Bentzinger. "We are asking for your ideas to complete the site plan."

Taxes

From Page 1A

plex tax returns and typically file closer to the April 15 deadline or obtain an extension, according to the IRS.

The key forms that require more extensive programming changes include Form 5695 (Residential Energy Credits), Form 4562 (Depreciation and Amortiza-tion) and Form 3800 (General Business Credit). A full listing of the forms that won't be accepted until later is available on IRS.gov.

Stone said people who anticipate their tax return at a certain time each year will be inconvenienced.

"The IRS has said the first re-funds may not come out for up to 21 days after Jan. 30," he stated. "People potentially are not going to see refunds until the third week in February. Typically, they've been able to get them about a month earlier.'

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInland-Voyage

Neb. Gov. Seeks \$1.7M **For Park** Upgrades

BY GRANT SCHULTE Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. - Gov. Dave Heineman asked lawmakers for \$1.7 million to upgrade camping services at two Nebraska state parks on Thursday, saying the changes would draw more local and out-of-state tourists. Heineman said his budget request would boost tourism at Mahoney State Park, in eastern Nebraska, and the Lake Mc-**Conaughy State Recreation Area** in the western part of the state. The Lake McConaughy proposal includes 84 full-service camp sites with hook-ups for water, sewage and electricity. Nebraska Game and Parks Director Jim Douglas said many of the proposed upgrades were designed to accommodate larger campers that use more electricity. "This will provide great dividends for all Nebraskans and our visitors," Douglas said. Many of the facilities would include accommodations for horse riders. Nearly a million people visited the recreation area in 2010, generating more than \$44 million in retail sales. Sen. Ken Schilz of Ogallala, whose district includes Lake Mc-Conaughy, said the upgraded facilities could draw more residents from nearby Colorado. The lake is about 30 miles from the Colorado border, and a three-hour drive from Denver. Tourism is the low-hanging fruit that's out there, that's available, that we can really expand on," Schilz said. The Mahoney State Park plan would add new cabins with woodburning fireplaces, fully equipped kitchens and decks. The park also drew nearly 1 million visitors in 2010, and generated more than \$52 million in retail sales. Sen. Bill Kintner of Papillion, whose district includes Mahoney State Park, said the state investment would accommodate a growing public interest in the parks. The conservative Republican lawmaker said Nebraska's Game and Parks Commission runs "a pretty lean, mean and tight ship," and is mostly self-funded. Those of you who know me know that I don't spend taxpayer money lightly, and it's very tough for me to step up and say we need to spend more money," Kintner said. "This is one of those needs where there is a demand. "And we're going to meet this demand, and I think that once we meet that demand, we'll have more people visiting and this will easily pay for itself.



Sioux Falls . 6600 West 12th St. . 334.9027 Mitchell • 1500 North Main • 996.9820 Yankton • 2320 Broadway • 665.3446 Watertown • 17 West Kemp • 886.5883 Pierre • 540 South Garfield • 224.7200 Sioux City • 2500 Transit Ave. • 274.5926 Fargo • 2520 South University Dr. • 237.3360 Aberdeen • 3315 6th Ave. SE • 225.0812 Worthington • 1401 Oxford St. • 376.3882

unclaimedfreightfurniture.com UNCLAIMED FURNITURE

The #1 Furniture Retailer in the Area! 🖻 🗃