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Our mission: to inspire and educate individuals to take daily actions to improve and beautify their community environment.

**KCCB Board of Directors**  
President: Steve Dodd  
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Members: Karin Forrest, Jim Peterson, Rachel Brandenburg  
Exec. Director: Dana Stahl  
Assistant Director: Cindy Cruse  
**Presentations:** Contact us for free environmental programs for youth groups, schools or community organizations.

**Financing** is provided by the Litter Reduction and Recycling Grant Program, Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy, Cass County, local business partners and members. KCCB is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

**NEBRASKA**  
DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY  
Close the loop...Buy recycled!



**"Thank You"  
2024 KCCB Partners**

American Exchange Bank,  
3B Homestead  
Beaver Lake Association,  
Black Hills Energy  
DC's Waterhole  
Citizen's State Bank,  
City of Louisville,  
City of Weeping Water,  
Cornerstone Bank,  
Elmwood-Murdock Merchants  
Association (EMMA),  
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Plattsmouth Animal Hospital,  
Plattsmouth Chamber,  
Plattsmouth Hy-Vee,  
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SCC Learning Center at Plattsmouth,  
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Village of Cedar Creek,  
Village of Eagle,  
Village of Elmwood,  
Village of Manley,  
Village of Murray,  
Village of Union,  
Weeping Water Chamber

**Be the change and sign up to be part of a  
litter cleanup today!**

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It's that time of year again, the perfect time to partake in a litter cleanup to help keep Cass County looking beautiful going into the summer months. We need all of you no matter how long or far you can go on a cleanup. Sign up today to help us out. We have plenty of funds available to help a club or school fundraise by cleaning up litter as well. Need suggestions? We have high priority areas that need cleaned up and many different opportunities to help. No amount of time is too small to volunteer. Last year, through the help of volunteers, we collected over 2,000 lbs. of litter!



**Pumpkins, pumpkins, everywhere!  
Over 5,000 Lbs. collected!**

Our 4th annual pumpkin composting and re-use collection looked a little different this year. Instead of hosting a two day collection, we partnered with Hosanna Lutheran of Plattsmouth to host a month long collection



The animals of 3B Homestead were delighted to get a delicious snack!

so residents could drop off their pumpkins at their convenience. To say the event was a success would be an understatement! We were flooded with pumpkins from beginning to end! The project worked seamlessly and we had hundreds of pumpkins to deliver to hungry animals who were excited to get a new snack to munch on. Thousands of pounds of organic materials were kept out of landfills to feed to domestic and wild animals as well as used for composting. We are so thankful to Hosanna Lutheran for partnering with us on this new endeavor! Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle. Keep up the good work Cass County!

**Conestoga Enviro Club "recycled" Holiday craft event!**

For three years now KCCB has been leading a monthly afterschool Environmental club in which they learn how to care for the environment better by engaging in fun activities, doing litter cleanups and gathering the schools recycling for pick up. Each December, to celebrate their success, we host a Holiday party in which we create a Christmas theme ornament or decoration made completely out of reused or all natural materials. This year Stephanie Wolcott with Simply Home Sweet Home led the event this year. 20 students participated in this fun event!



Students create their Holiday masterpieces using all recycled items





## Plattsmouth resident shares his tale of “Trash to Treasure”

### Sustainability Spotlight

Julie and Steve Dodd have lived in Plattsmouth for the past twelve years after spending decades living abroad. Steve never imagined lessons he learned abroad would become essential for solving a community trash problem in the future. Steve shares his story of sustainability learned the hard way when they returned to living stateside.

Upon retiring from the military, the Dodd’s moved back to Nebraska and bought our house on an unmaintained hilly dirt road, it seemed like a paradise living in a forest on a hill overlooking the beautiful Missouri River. It was beautiful, peaceful, and secluded, but with that, also hard to access. We had settled back into the American way of life, throwing everything into the trash bin. At the time, I thought we were being good stewards only filling a 40-gallon trash bin once a week. When winter came and the trash truck had trouble traversing the hills in our neighborhood, there was a big problem. The local trash company cancelled all contracts in our neighborhood, we called and called and called and we couldn’t find anyone that wanted to offer trash services. The community was in a panic, what would we do with our trash?

It didn’t take long before the lessons I had learned abroad came back to me. There was a solution, and it was something we had already been doing for many years abroad. I suggested that we start reducing our waste, recycling, and composting to reduce the amount of trash we create. This could potentially reduce about 80% of our trash. Additionally, we came up with the solution to share a community dumpster at the bottom of the hill. This would take a concerted effort to use the dumpster for only things that absolutely needed to go in the landfill since combined it is a much smaller space than we all previously had. Though there was a learning curve, we all managed to adapt. It forced us all to think about how much trash we create and how much can be diverted with minimal effort! Trash doesn’t just disappear; it must go somewhere!

The Dodd’s learned about zero waste communities through their opportunity to live around the world through Steve’s career with the US Navy. Stationed in Japan, they learned about minimal packaging and zero waste. “Everything was separated into recyclable bundles and compostables each week for curbside pickup. Since Japan is an island nation, with 90% of the population living on 10% of the land mass, they had to use everything, waste nothing and have no room for landfills. It was a very different concept from how we grew up in rural America with an abundance of land to bury our unwanted discards. We also had similar experiences in Germany and Canada where everything was recycled and single-use items minimal.



Steve Dodd modeling sustainability in the community

Steve is the president of Keep Cass County Beautiful and has the goal of creating a circular economy in Cass County. “This is not only essential for our environment but would make Cass County even more attractive to young families and business owners in the area.” Steve states. In addition to his experiences, Steve has also been inspired from his love of science and being exposed to the Buddhist concept of everything being connected. We are all connected, we live in a beautiful universe and it’s our duty to all work together and keep it that way. Steve works with his neighbors, church, schools, and community to continually advocate for greener choices and assists in making change. Steve stated that he believes the biggest issue facing the world today regarding sustainability is that in the US, we are a very wealthy country and we have gotten used to a lot of conveniences that aren’t very green due to this. Convincing people to change when they are comfortable with where they are is often difficult. We need to develop a different mindset regarding waste.

Steve states that he believes we are on the cusp of great change and emerging technologies and morphing attitudes and that he sees a bright future for Cass County and our children. His dream is that in the future, he sees businesses producing their own electricity from solar panels, schools that are self-sustaining with energy to raise revenue. He hopes that composting will be the norm for households, schools, and businesses. We have so many opportunities, we just must pick a direction and start.

## Elmwood-Murdock Reaches their goal of recycling a thousand pounds of plastic films to earn a free recycled bench!

The Elmwood-Murdock community has met the ambitious goal of recycling 1,000 lbs. of plastic films to earn a free park bench for Elmwood park. Both schools along with FCCLA students and Bits and Pieces Thrift store have been collecting since October. The FCCLA Students will pick out the park bench and there will be a ribbon cutting event this spring to donate the park bench to Elmwood. If you have a group or school that is interested in taking the Nextrex pledge to earn a park bench, reach out to [director@keepcasscountybeautiful.com](mailto:director@keepcasscountybeautiful.com) for more information or visit [nextrex.com](http://nextrex.com)

