

**Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
January 25, 2018  
Nebraska Innovation Campus  
Lincoln, Nebraska**

1. Call to order – Brent Meyer called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. He thanked Tala Awada for hosting today’s meeting and furnishing lunch. Meyer welcomed all members and asked for introductions. He also asked those in attendance to share with the group what they hoped to achieve by being part of this group.  
Task Force members present:

Brent Meyer  
Dr. Shuhai Zheng  
Charles Brooks  
Matt Lukasiwicz  
Mike Sarchet  
Arden Wohlers

Larry Heyen  
Ryan Chapman  
Dr. Tala Awada  
Mike Reed  
Roderick Imm  
John Erixson

Task Force members absent:

Kevin Adams  
Mark Czaplewski  
Patrick O’Brien  
Rich Tesar

Karie Decker  
Gloria Erickson  
Rodney Ely  
Don Kraus

Guests:

Joe Stansberry Nebraska Forest Service

NDA Staff:

Tammy Zimmerman  
Mitch Coffin

Robert Storant

2. Review and Approval of October 5, 2017 Minutes:

Sarchet moved to approve the minutes, Erixson second, motion carried.

3. Old Business:

Meyer asked if there was any old business to discuss. No old business.

#### 4. New Business:

##### a. Statewide WMA Update

Meyer presented information (handout attached) on the history of WMA projects across Nebraska. Members were pleased with the amount of noxious and invasive weed control taking place across the state in the past 10 years. Brooks thanked Senator Carlson and his foresight to introduce LB701 which was instrumental in kicking off a statewide approach.

##### b. Current Grant Funding

Robert Storant, Chief Administrator, Nebraska Department of Agriculture provided an update on the current grant funding reduction. He stated the forecasting board on October 17, 2017 said tax receipts were down and a budget shortfall would need to be made up. The grant funding is considered "aid" so it does not enter into the overall department's budget. Which means the 2% reduction in grants does not apply to the departments operating budget. The 2% reduction comes to a total of \$9,500.00. Robert did state it might be possible for a 4% reduction in FY18/19. Meyer asked what the budget for Task Force expenses is and Robert stated there was originally \$15,000.00 available. Meyer also asked if there was funding available for a Task Force tour to see firsthand some of the projects across the state. Robert stated there should be but a proposal should be put together to insure funds are available. Brooks would like to see a financial report of the Task Force at each meeting and Robert said that he could supply that information.

##### c. Sustainable Funding

Sarchet said there is a need to target and create a battle plan regarding sustainable funding. What options are available where by fees could be collected to establish sustainable funding that is protected and always available for its intended use. Erixson though that Idaho collected a fee on licensed vehicles but wasn't sure. He said he would look into the Forest Service water unit regarding some possible funding. Is there a direct correlation between water quality and water quantity regarding noxious and invasive plants. Sarchet stated, projects are doing a disservice if they don't actively look at other funding sources and don't disregard any funding source.

Sarchet will reach out to Game and Parks for possible fees that could be collected through them. Brooks stated NRD's need to be challenged to participate in projects. Several NRD's are active partners in projects and just as many are not active in anyway. Erixson will look into Forest Service funding and see what might be available.

d. Terms of Officers

Meyer asked if there needs to be more structure for officer's terms. Sarchet suggested a three year term to provide for sustainable leadership and transition. Meyer will draft simple bylaws regarding officers terms and send out to the members for review.

e. Summer Tour

On a couple occasions the group has mentioned having a summer tour to experience projects first hand. It was suggested having a possible statewide tour as all projects are not doing the same thing. It would be a good opportunity for Task Force members and project coordinators to network on control sites. A state wide format would allow the invitation to state senators when touring projects in their area. Sarchet will work with Tesar to discuss a plan and Mitch offered to help with the logistics.

Nebraska Innovation Campus Tour – Members participated in a walking tour lead by Awada.

f. Phragmites Publication

Awada provided a phragmites publication (handout attached). The data shows 30% water savings. However, long-term savings is unknown along with environmental conditions does not provide consistent data. Hopefully more data will be available in the future.

Work Group Discussion – Updates

a. Goals, Objectives, and Reports – No Update

b. Vegetation Management and Treatment

Erixson reported that this work group did meet and discussed the need to look at other plants that haven't been focused on in the past. An example would be encroachment of eastern red cedar and cattails. Joe Stansberry (NFS) said he is looking at the methodology to identify plants through infer red technology, drone images. NRCS may have some red cedar data on the Republican River. He said there is a need to gather and collect existing data and key into different light signatures of plants. This idea may be a great project to involve multiple partners. Erixson and Awada will work together to gather more information.

c. Survey and Monitoring – No Update

d. Education and Awareness – No Update

e. Funding and Incentive – No Update

f. Streambed Ownership – No Update

g. Vegetation Water Use

Phragmites publication provided by Awada provided some insight on this issue.

Next Meeting – March 8 or 15 at a location to be announced. Adjourned