

**Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2018
Ainsworth Conference Center
Ainsworth, Nebraska**

1. Call to order – Brent Meyer called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He thanked Rodd Imm for hosting today’s meeting. Meyer welcomed all members and asked for introductions.

Task Force members present:

Brent Meyer	Kevin Adams
Dr. Shuhai Zheng	Ryan Chapman
Charles Brooks	Mark Czaplewski
Rich Tesar	Mike Reed
Mike Sarchet	Roderick Imm
Arden Wohlers	John Erixson

Task Force members absent:

Dr. Tala Awada	Karie Decker
Matt Lukasiewicz	Gloria Erickson
Patrick O’Brien	Rodney Ely
Larry Heyen	Don Kraus

Guests:

Kent Zimmerman, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

NDA Staff:

Dave Boschult	Mitch Coffin
---------------	--------------

2. Review and Approval of January 25, 2018 Minutes:

Reed stated that on page 3, under Work Group Discussion b. that mythology should be changed to methodology.

Sarchet moved to approve the minutes with the appropriate correction, Wohlers second, motion carried.

3. Old Business:

a. Drone Video

The drone video from the October 2017 meeting will be shown later in the meeting.

4. New Business:

a. New Members

Meyer announced that Tammy Zimmerman will represent the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

b. Financial Report – Task Force Account

Mitch reported that the Task Force Account was unavailable at this time and would be sent to the members.

c. Financial Report – Grant Funds Balance

Mitch provided a balance summary (handout attached) of the current projects that are funded. He stated that \$301,512.35 (64.8%) has been spent with a remaining balance of \$163,987.65 (35.2%). These funds are available until June 30, 2018.

d. Terms of Officers

Meyer provided a handout (attached) of the proposed Terms of Officers.

Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force

Officers

Officers shall consist of a Chair and Vice-Chair. The officers shall be elected by a majority of the members present of the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force at the first meeting of the calendar year. (beginning in 2017) The Chair shall serve (one) 3-year term. The Vice-Chair shall succeed the Chair.

Vacancies of the officers shall be filled by election by the members. Vacancy of the Chair will be filled by the Vice-Chair who will serve the remaining term of the Chair and serve no more than one succeeding 3-year term. Vacancy of the Vice-Chair will be filled by election at the next regular meeting and shall fill the remaining time of the Vice-Chairs term and succeed the Chair.

Imm moved to approve the Terms of Officers document, Czaplewski seconded, motion carried.

e. Summer Tour

Sarchet reported that he and Tesar had discussed as plan to have tours on the Platte River, Republican River, Nine Mile Creek and North Platte River. A possible agenda looks like;

**Load bus in Lincoln 8:00-8:30 leave for Kearney two stops on the way. Lunch and load up more of team, head south for Republican River stops. (area representatives select stops)
Arrive in North Platte for dinner and overnight.
8:00 a.m. leave for panhandle, several stops along the way. Lake Mac.
Lunch on Nine Mile creek - Several other western stops.
Oles for dinner (Paxton) 7:00 p.m.
Stay overnight in North Platte stops along trip back.
Arrive in Lincoln 2:00 P.M. Depart for home.**

Dates third or fourth week in September.

Members liked the idea but would like to include a stop on the Niobrara River. Sarchet stated it's important to get Task Force members and others on the river as the problems on the river are dramatic. Evening stops might include a social whereby people not able to attend the tour could network with Task Force members. Possible local invitees include; State Senators, Natural Resources Committee members, Agriculture Committee members, Game & Parks Commissioners, local community foundations, Senators to be and the media. Concerns are can all members attend and is there funding available for a bus, lodging, meals and other expenses? Sarchet and Tesar will update an outline for a tour.

f. Drone Video

Zheng showed the drone video that was taken during the October 5, 2017 meeting at Sokol Camp. Tesar narrated the video explaining to members where control activities have taken place along with where future control will be taken. Members agreed that this type of technology is a useful tool.

Work Group Discussion – Updates

a. Goals, Objectives, and Reports

Czaplewski reported that this work group does have a working document and he will touch base with the other members to get a new draft out to the membership for comments.

b. Vegetation Management and Treatment

Erixson reported the challenge is knowing where the problem is. He is working with neighboring states and one example is a possible joint project with Kansas. Erixson provided a handout, Geospatial Process for Remote Identification of Target Species (attached)

c. Survey and Monitoring

Tesar reported that he is working with Sarchet to line up a statewide river tour.

d. Education and Awareness

Sarchet reported that outreach with schools is needed. School groups are using drones and may be able to cooperate with projects for aerial survey. It was suggested to invite the State FFA Director to the next meeting. Mitch will follow-up on this. Chapman reported that the Natural Resources Committee holds a summer tour. He will look into this and see if the Task Force could be represented and/or attend.

e. Funding and Incentive

Sarchet reported there is a need to identify other funding sources and partners. Finding several diverse groups with many partners may be a good source for continued funding at the local level. Projects should develop goals and objectives. Sarchet wondered if the Task Force should host an annual weed management area conference. Is there a need for organized outreach and training? Each weed management area needs to get community and local support.

f. Streambed Ownership

The members agreed that the Task Force is not the right group to lead this activity. It was suggested to keep this work group active and be ready to support another group if legislation comes about.

g. Vegetation Water Use

Zheng is looking for any new water use data. He will work with Awada in search of water use data to bring to the group.

Public Comment

There was no one present for public comment.

Water Sustainability Fund

Kent Zimmerman, Department of Natural Resources provided two handouts (attached). This fund could possibly be utilized by projects. This fund usually provides 60% but may allow less matching funds in special cases.

Middle Niobrara Weed Awareness Group

Barb Small, Cherry County Weed Control Superintendent provided an overview for this group. The scenic corridor of the Niobrara River does not allow motorized boats on the river to control invasive species. A helicopter has been allowed but is expensive. They are not finding introduced phragmites on the river though a large patch was treated by Merritt Reservoir. There are no known infestations on the Snake River. They have been cooperating with Forest Service, Nebraska Environmental Trust and US Fish & Wildlife. Barb reported there is very little Russian olive on the Niobrara River but does need to be controlled. Erixson stated that the Forest Service may be able to assist.

Next Meeting – It was discussed to have the next meeting in the Scottsbluff area. The group would like to have an extra half day to tour the yellow flag iris at Agate Fossil Beds. Sarchet, Adams and Wohlers may host the next meeting. Possible meeting dates, last week of May, first two weeks of June. Meeting adjourned