

**Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
March 16, 2023  
9:00 a.m. CST  
UNL Extension Center  
North Platte, NE**

1. Call to order – Mike Reed called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Reed welcomed all members and guests and asked for introductions.

Task Force members present:

Mike Reed	Brent Meyer
Dave Zorn	Rich Tesar
Mike Sarchet	Ryan Chapman
TJ Walker	Tammy Zimmerman
John Erixson	Nate Munter
Dr. Shuhai Zheng	

Task Force members absent:

David Carr	James Skavdahl
Larry Heyen	Kevin Adams
Dennis VanWey	Dr. Tala Awada

Guest:

Mark Frickel (NFS Conservation Forester)

NDA Staff:

Mitch Coffin

2. Review and Approval of November 17, 2022, Minutes:

Tesar moved to approve the minutes, Zimmerman second, motion carried.

3. Member Updates:

Reed reported on behalf of Lower Platte Weed Management Area. They have increased the use of drones in the past year. Some helicopter and airboat

applications have taken place as well. Had some issues with some helicopter missed target points and off target applications.

Reed brought up the current Legislation (LB 116) that could potentially provide 6 million dollars for riparian and floodplain work on noxious and invasive weeds. He identified three Weed Management Areas that are lacking leadership and guidance. Not sure how to get them to be more active and productive.

A question was asked is there a need to research other herbicides for phragmites control.

Lower Platte Weed Management Area has partnered with UNL to research infrared mapping of perennial plants using drones.

The question was asked can funding be carried over from one year to the next.

Sarchet reported that High Plains Weed Management Area may be disbanding and may be resurrected by Panhandle Area Development. He also believes there is a need for more drones and drone operator training.

Meyer supports the concept of a statewide coordinator working with all Weed Management Areas.

Several members were concerned about the amount of phragmites that they noticed along the interstate east of North Platte.

Erixson supports education of youth and research at the local levels. He also reported that the Forest Service is working on some possible forest service funding targeted for the North Platte basin. He is working with Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

Chapman feels that a Statewide Coordinator would be helpful to assist with educational events.

Munter would like to know more about the grant process.

Zheng stated DNR is interested in reducing flooding.

Zimmerman stated that she is interested in the organization side. She reported that NDA has a new Director and budget administrator.

Walker wants to thank the NDA for making the grant process move along even though there seems to be hurdles. He believes in a Statewide Coordinator and that position should be an employee of NDA and guided by the Task Force.

Zorn stated that he plans to take an active role in Platte Valley Weed Management Area to address floodplain infestations of phragmites that so many members commented about today. He would like the Task Force to be involved in scoring grant applications.

Mitch provided handouts of the 22/23 grant cash summary.

Public Comment: None

Next meeting is scheduled for June 14-15. Location and time to be announced.

After lunch, members attended a tour sponsored by Nebraska Forest Service.

Mark Frickel, NFS Conservation Forester lead a tour of Cedar Canyon where staff is conducting a demonstrating. Cedar Canyon Demonstration Forest was established for the purposes of soil conservation, rangeland improvement, timberland improvement, fish and wildlife habitat maintenance, maintenance of natural plant species and ecology of the area, recreation, and aesthetics.