

**Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
September 18, 2019  
Central Platte NRD  
Grand Island, Nebraska**

1. Call to order – Brent Meyer called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Meyer welcomed all members and asked for introductions.

Task Force members present:

Kevin Adams  
Matt Lukasiewicz  
Brent Meyer  
Arden Wohlers  
Dave Zorn  
Rodney Ely  
John Erixson

Mike Sarchet  
Mark Czaplewski  
TJ Walker  
Dr. Shuhai Zheng  
Dr. Tala Awada  
John Orr  
Tammy Zimmerman

Task Force members absent:

Patrick O'Brien  
Larry Heyen  
Ryan Chapman  
Mike Reed

Charles Brooks  
Roderick Imm  
Rich Tesar

Guests:

None

NDA Staff:

Mitch Coffin

2. Review and Approval of June 19, 2019 Minutes:

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

### 3. Old Business:

- a. RVMTF Fact Sheet – Zimmerman reported the fact sheet has been updated. (handout) Mitch will have it put on the webpage and send all members the link to the page. Zimmerman will see if the RVMTF page can be moved to the departments rotating banner on the front page.

### 4. New Business:

- a. 19/20 Grant Award Summary – Mitch provided a handout (attached) of the FY19/20 grant requests and awards. Five of the seven applications were approved. There is \$456,000.00 available and the total requests was \$571,102.00. Czaplewski reported there has been some discussion among several groups to create a trust fund for possible future work on river systems. This idea is in the early stages at this point.
- b. Meyer presented the process for elections scheduled for January 2020. Vice-Chair moves to Chair and an election for Vice-Chair would be held. (handout)

### 5. Work Groups

#### a. Goals, Objectives, and Reports

Czaplewski stated the document has been created and stands until a need to update. There is a need to continue funding into the future. State Senators need to be made aware of how this may impact one of Nebraska's natural resources. River issues need to be brought to the forefront of old and particularly to new Senators. How will the recent floods impact river basins?

#### b. Vegetation Management and Treatment

Erixson reported on a possible Forest Service Grant in the Big Blue watershed to develop a multistate project with Kansas. Forest Service grants are designed to reduce ladder fuels and could apply to riparian areas. The timeline is to award grants in November 2019, with spending approval in June 2020. Sarchet suggested the need to work with the state and local FFA for projects. Look into PIE Grants through NET. Sarchet stated that North Platte NRD wants to be involved. The National Envirothon <https://www.nrdnet.org/nebraska-envirothon> will be held in Nebraska in 2020. Media coverage was good in the early years because it was something new.

c. Survey and Monitoring

Aerial surveys on Lower Platte shows more problems in tributaries than in the main channel. Can a drone be used to conduct video surveys?

d. Education and Awareness

It would cost \$4,000 - \$5,000 to put on FFA instructor training. State FFA could apply for a PIE Grant with the Task Force signing on as a co-partner. Everyone needs to share the RVMTF link with other agencies and partners. Awada stated that she has a person at UNL looking for stories. Projects should try and get media to highlight their work after a decade of work.

Working Lunch

e. Funding and Incentive

Some NRDs are actively involved with projects either by funding or support while others just aren't involved. Walker stated that Game & Parks has programs for Private Lands to help with non-noxious weeds and Game & Parks wants to be involved.

f. Vegetation Water Use

Awada shared a document on Water Consumption by riparian vegetation (handout). While it provides a lot of data readers need to be cautious as many factors come into play when collecting this type of data. What can the Task Force do with such data and who might be the target audience?

Public Comment - There was no one present for public comment.

Open Discussion

As a new member, Zorn asked about the history of the funding for these projects. Meyer explained that the Legislature appropriated one million dollars a year for two years. A tremendous amount of work was accomplished those first years. There was a period that the Legislature did not provide funding even though projects acquired funding through several sources but was not long term. Last year and this year the Legislature has appropriated \$456,000 to assist projects. Some NRDs continue to support their local projects as well as funds through Nebraska Environmental Trust and other environmental groups. Meyer stressed that this is a state problem and the Legislature should continue to support and fund to protect the waters of the state. The current projects must spend their funding on or before June, 30, 2020.

### Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 18. Meyer asked the members to volunteer to host. Location to be determined.

Arden moved, Czaplewski seconded to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned