

Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force Meeting Minutes
Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary
Gibbon, NE
December 16, 2025
1:00 p.m.

1. Call to order

- Reed called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Welcome from Center Director, Marcos Stoltzfus

3. Introductions

Task Force Members Present:

Mike Reed	Ryan Chapman
Tammy Zimmerman	Brent Meyer
Katie Hickle	Brad Edgerton
Tyler Weishahn	Eli Goff
David Zorn	

Task Force Members Absent:

Kevin Adams	Jeff Kanger
Larry Heyen	Tala Awada
Lance Philben	NARD Representative
Mike Sarchet	T.J. Walker
Rich Tesar	Andrew Tonnies
John Erixson	

Guests:

Sen. Teresa Ibach- Nebraska Legislature District 44
Marcos Stoltzfus- Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary
Cody Wagner- Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary
Melissa Mosier- Audubon Great Plains
Sherry Vinton- Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Brent Davis- Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Trevor Johnson – Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Tim Stortz- Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Paul Moyer- Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Nick Sanderson- Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Shannon Smith- Nebraska Invasive Species Council
Josh Nelson- Sarpy County Weed Control Authority
Todd Boller- Fillmore County Weed Control Authority

4. Presentation from Cody Wagner, Conservation Program Manager at Rowe

5. Review and approval of October 21 meeting minutes

- Motion by Chapman, 2nd by Edgerton

6. Legislative Review 168 (Senator Teresa Ibach)

Sen. Ibach discussed LR 168 and associated hearing held on October 31. Sen. Ibach has told the Governor's Policy Research Office (PRO) that money appropriated for the riparian program can only be used for that purpose. In addition, she has had discussions with Director Bradley (DWEE) on the use of the Water Resources Cash Fund for vegetation management. Sen. Ibach plans to introduce legislation to appropriate \$2 million for riparian vegetation management. The legislation will need to go in front of the appropriations committee. She said that the Nebraska Environmental Trust will fund the program for now, but it is not sustainable. Sen. Ibach emphasized the need for multi-year funding. She will continue to carry the flag for riparian vegetation management in the Legislature. Meyer brought handout on Nebraska Department of Agriculture's mid-biennium budget request to eliminate FY26/27 riparian funding. He asked if the Legislature has a say in that? Ibach mentioned the out of state funding (from PRRIP) contingent on Nebraska continuing to fund projects. Meyer expressed concern that if out of state funding is lost, it may not come back. Director Vinton stated that entities looking for multi-year funding should look to NET. Grant applications can be funded for up to three years. Meyer thanked Sen. Ibach for her support. He said Kansas is going to sue the State of Nebraska, not the Weed Management Areas when the state doesn't meet its water compact obligations. Hickle asked if the Task Force has been involved with the Governor's Water Quality and Quantity Task Force? Sen. Ibach mentioned they are meeting today in Norfolk and she would circle back with PRO. Reed mentioned the infographic being created that would be finished in January. He also said there is a need for a statewide weed management area plan which could be housed in the Department of Water, Energy and Environment (DWEE). Chapman asked if there was a written product from LR 168? Sen. Ibach said Rick Leonard would have it.

7. Public Comment

No public comment

8. NE Dept. of Agriculture Grant Riparian Projects 2025

Johnson went over the total amounts invoiced to NDA from riparian grant recipients. Platte Valley WMA has spent \$253,251 out of \$300,000 on helicopter and drone applications on the Platte River as well their landowner chemical cost share program. Twin Valley WMA has spent \$14,250 out of \$20,000 on surveying the Little Blue River. Southwest Weed Management has not spent any money to date but has lined up a contractor for spring applications.

9. Nebraska Environmental Trust Funded Project Summary

Johnson presented summary of recent Weed Management Area awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Discussion on NET grants ensued. Chapman said you can lose points for ongoing projects or lateness. He mentioned LPNNRD was not funded in the most recent NET grant awards. Nelson asked if you could lose points for including noxious weed control? Meyer said NET doesn't want to fund regulatory issues. Reed discussed flying the river and seeing more channelization and sand bar establishment due to phragmites and purple loosestrife. He also praised recent NRD contributions to riparian vegetation management in recent years

10. Task Force Riparian Infographic Update

Reed provided an update on the infographic. Nelson submitted invasive species that impact each area of the state and Audubon Society provided information on wildlife impacted. Reed said Awada will have UNL media assist with putting everything together. A draft will be ready in January. Hickle showed map of interstate water compacts and map of NDA grant dollars split between WMA's since FY16/17.

11. Next Meeting

Potentially March 25 in Lincoln. Meeting after next in north central NE.

Meeting adjourned.