

**Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2017
Ramada Inn
Kearney, Nebraska**

1. Call to order – Greg Ibach called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Ibach welcomed all members and asked for introductions. Task Force members present:

Gloria Erickson	Roderick Imm
Dr. Scott Josiah	Brian Crabtree
Matt Lukasiewicz	Greg Ibach
Brent Meyer	Rich Tesar
Kevin Adams	Larry Heyen
Jeff Hoffman for Karie Decker	Patrick O'Brien
Dr. Shuhai Zheng	Ryan Chapman
Arden Wohlers	Mark Czaplewski

Task Force members absent:

Mike Clements	Mike Sarchet
Dr. Tala Awada	Don Kraus

NDA Staff:

Tammy Zimmerman	Mitch Coffin
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2. Review of Task Force Purpose and Responsibilities – Ibach presented a handout outlining the purpose of the Task Force. The members agreed this was a good document to follow. Ibach updated members on the budget process regarding the grant funding of one million dollars as outlined in LB1038. Ibach stated that it has been recommended that this funding be reduced to \$500,000.00 for FY 17/18 because of the state's revenue shortage. The budget process is a step by step process and budget hearing continue to address the shortfall.
3. Election of Officers – Ibach asked for nominations for Chairman. Tesar nominated Brent Meyer as Chairman, Adams seconded this nomination. Motion carried. O'Brien nominated Matt Lukasiewicz for Vice-Chair, Imm seconded; motion carried.

4. Mitch Coffin provided a history (handout) of the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force funding beginning with the first allocation in 2007 to 2017. Meyer stated this is waters of the state, and the original 4.5 million of funding appropriated by the Legislature in 07/08 & 08/09 helped to save 67 million in the lawsuit with Kansas over streamflow's of the Republican River.
5. Mitch gave an overview (handout) of the statewide noxious weed infested acres data provided by counties from 1990 to 2016. It was noted that infested acres has decreased over 66% during this timeframe while an additional eight noxious weeds have been added to the state noxious weed list.
6. During lunch the members discussed what the next steps of the Task Force should be.
 - Establish Priorities – Conveyance of water has been a concern from the beginning. The goal has been to improve water delivery especially in the case of the Republican River. Projects on the Republican have proven by removing unwanted vegetation, logjams and vegetated sandbars that water conveyance is greatly improved as well as reducing the chances of lowland flooding during a high water event. Many of the projects have moved up onto the banks of rivers and streams to provide habitat improvement. This has shown landowners that these riparian areas have value in grazing opportunities as well as recreation. Invasive vegetation contract has covered a wide range of plants in riparian areas. While its felt that landowners may not have the equipment or means to treat vegetation in these areas it is strongly believed that landowners need to be made responsible for controlling noxious weeds. Noxious weeds need to be controlled outside riparian areas and upland sites as these continue to re-infest riparian areas.
 - Determine Resources – While projects have done a good job of soliciting partners it is felt that there may be partners that haven't been identified or utilized. Task Force members are urged to contact possible partners in their location and work with their locate Weed Management Area.
7. General Discussion.
 - Need to get Task Force members on the river systems;
 - All river systems have priority;
 - Address off river infestations;
 - Landowner responsibility;
 - Identify Problems, develop solutions, measure activities;
 - Determine resources;
 - Videos that have been produced;
 - Invasive vegetation, what is there and what is coming?

- Committees/Workgroups;

Survey and Monitoring;

Streambed Ownership;

Vegetation Management Goals and Objectives; (Invasive species, habitat improvement, education)

Cost and Effectiveness; (Historical information)

Is there a need for subcommittees?

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 31, 2017.