

Weed Awareness

2008 Annual Report

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was also inspected as a result of being observed by an inspector. A total of 63 inspections were made on the 44 sites. Inspectors found 19 violations on 13 acres. No violations were found on the other 25 sites. Landowner notifications included four legal notices, 15 reminder letters and one personal contact. Landowners controlled 13 sites. Follow-up will be made on all 19 violations.

Phragmites—Non-native Phragmites was designated a new noxious weed early in the year. We found 32 phragmites sites in 2007. We have since determined these sites plus 38 sites found in 2008 are all non-native and, therefore, noxious. These sites cover almost 140 acres (see the map on back page of this insert). Landowners are being notified of the location sites and options for control. We will be working with landowners in 2009 to arrive at an acceptable control plan.

Other Noxious Weeds—Canada thistle inspections were made on five sites. Landowners controlled two of the three sites found infested. Saltcedar was controlled on all three sites found.

City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program

The City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Ordinance requires owners of land within the city limits to maintain the height of weeds and worthless vegetation below six inches. Three seasonal inspectors are used in administering this program. Most inspections are carried out as a result of complaints. There were 171 properties pre-selected for inspection because of past violations and the lack of response to correct the violations. There were 1,921 complaints on 1,837 properties. Over 280 additional properties were inspected with significant violations where it appeared there was no regular maintenance performed.

It required 4,647 inspections to make the initial and follow-up inspections on 2,117 sites on 902 acres. Violations were found on 1,663 sites on 602 acres. Complaints were made on 455 sites that did not have a violation when inspected within three days of the complaint. These sites either were not in violation when the complaint was made, or they were cut prior to the inspection. Notifications of violations were made with 820 legal notices, 738 reminder letters, 59 published in the paper and 243 personal contacts. The 1,441 sites cut by landowners were 87% of the violations. This was 5% less than the previous year. Forced cutting was contracted on 207 sites, 92 sites more than in 2007.

Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force Report

On May 1, 2007, Governor Dave Heineman signed into law LB 701, comprehensive water legislation that included riparian vegetation management activities. The legislation created the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force and assigned it specific responsibilities:

1. Develop and prioritize vegetation management goals and objectives;
2. Analyze the cost-effectiveness of available vegetation treatment; and
3. Develop plans and policies to achieve such goals and objectives.

The legislation also requires the task force to make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. The 2007 and 2008 reports have been submitted and can be found at www.agr.ne.gov under the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force button. Governor Dave Heineman appointed the task force members on June 21, 2007 representing state agencies and a cross-section of water and vegetation management interests. Russell Shultz, Lancaster County weed

control superintendent, was appointed representing the Nebraska Weed Control Association.

Work groups were created to aid the task force in identifying, and then framing, issues critical to meeting the goals and objectives. It was determined work groups could solicit information from, and include in discussions, experts who are not task force members. Any final decisions, however, will be made solely by the task force.

The Vegetation Management and Treatment Work Group is framing a plan of attack on invasive riparian vegetation.

The Streambed Ownership Work Group is addressing the need for clear designation of ownership within the streambed.

The Education and Awareness Work Group is looking at ways of sharing information about successful riparian vegetation management activities with the general public and landowners

The Survey and Monitoring Work Group is working on the identification of infestation location, composition and extent.

The Vegetation Water Use Work Group is looking at water usage by riparian vegetation and, whether or to what extent, vegetative water use can be determined to affect stream flow.

LB 701 also created a grant program for management of riparian vegetation, and stated the Legislature's intent to appropriate \$4 million for 2007 and 2008 for this purpose. Since July 1, 2007, these projects have made tremendous progress in attempting to deal with a huge problem. Six projects have treated over 10,000 acres on 338 miles of the Republican and Platte Rivers. Almost \$3.5 million were expended as of Dec. 15, 2008. Senator Tom Carlson has introduced LB 98 in the 2009 Unicameral session to extend the Riparian Vegetation Management Grant Program and the work of the task force.



Phragmites crowding out the Platte River



Spraying saltcedar at Lake McConaughy

North American Weed Management Conference Comes to Nebraska in 2009

The 17th Annual North American Weed Management Association Conference and Trade Show will be at the Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE September 21–24, 2009. The theme is “Response to the Riparian Invasion—Improving the Health of Our Riparian Areas.”

The North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) is a professional association of individuals interested in managing invasive plants. Their annual conference highlights the efforts of the state or province of the conference location.

The Nebraska Weed Control Association will host this year's conference. Lancaster County Weed Control Superintendent Russ Shultz is program chair.

The Conference

The riparian plant invaders present a unique challenge and threat across North America—very invasive weeds which can gobble up the narrow, but

extremely important, riparian areas quite rapidly. These threats in Nebraska were addressed at the 2006 “Threats to Nebraska Rivers-Invasive Plants Conference.” The governor established a riparian vegetation management task force and the legislature provided \$4 million of grants for use in 2007 and 2008. With the help of these funds, weed management areas are expending about \$7 million to fight the invading riparian vegetation over this two year period. Conference attendees can hear and see the results of this effort and learn about future planned-actions including what we should be doing to get ready for the next riparian plant invaders.

Speaker Topics

The Governor is scheduled to give the welcome with Senator Tom Carlson giving the keynote on Nebraska's Riparian Vegetation Management Plan. Other speakers will address Nebraska's response. Their topics will be Nebraska Weed Management Areas and Natural

Resources Districts Leading the Way, Nebraska Vegetative Management Grant Program Projects, NRCS Assistance, Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act Amendments Responding to Needs, Nebraska On-Line Weed Management Program, Multi-State Cooperative Riparian Efforts, Status of the North American Phragmites Explosion, Getting Ready for the Next Riparian Plant Invaders, and an example awareness program.

Tour

A tour will show the problems and responses on the Platte River. Attendees can see the invasion of non-native plants in the streambed and adjacent riparian areas. See the results of the weed management areas' projects, Rowe Sanctuary efforts, and herbicide, grazing and burning trials.

More information and registration information will be available online at <http://nawma.org> or <http://neweed.org> or contact the Lancaster County Weed Control office at 441-7817.

Weed Free Forage Certification Program

You can prevent potential noxious weed infestations by insisting on Certified Weed Free forage. As a buyer, you should be aware that noxious weed infested forage products can cost you hundreds or even thousands of

dollars down the road. Ask your forage supplier to have their hay certified prior to harvest. Forage growers must call the Lancaster County Weed Control Authority one to two weeks prior to harvesting. There is no charge for the field inspections. There is a small charge for the cost of bale tags.

Nebraska carries out its Weed-Free Forage Certification Program in accordance with the standards of the North American Weed Management

Association standards.

Certified weed-free forage products include: straw, alfalfa/grass hay, forage pellets/cubes, alfalfa hay, grain hay and grass hay. Weed free forage is required on many U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands, in National Parks, Bureau of Reclamation land, military locations, tribal lands as well as National Fish and Wildlife refuges. The Nebraska Department of Roads

requires weed-free forage on highway projects. Restrictions may apply to other lands administered by provincial, county, state or federal agencies.

If you have questions about certification regulations or weeds not allowed in certified forage, please see the North American Weed Management Association's (NAWMA) Web site at <http://www.nawma.org> for a complete list of weeds and regulations.