



**Nebraska Invasive Species Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**May 8, 2026**

**Nebraska Department of Agriculture, 245 Fallbrook Blvd, Suite 200, Lincoln, NE 68521**

**Voting Members Present:**

Trevor Johnson  
Justin King  
Dennis Schroeder  
Jonathan Spurgeon  
Kristopher Stahr  
John Thorburn  
Josh Nelson

**Voting Members Absent:**

Steven Jara  
Jonathan Nikkila  
Kimberly Stuhr  
Kim Todd

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Justin Krahulik

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Travis Connot  
Chris Helzer  
Ritch Nelson

## **Advisory Support Members Present:**

Natalia Bjorklund

Carson Jones

Gary Stone

James Thiele

1. Call to order- Trevor Johnson called meeting to order 10:00 AM CST.
2. Approval of April 2026 Meeting Minutes- Kris Stahr approved the meeting minutes, Josh Nelson seconded, motion carried.
3. Agenda:
  - a. Council Coordinator Hiring Update (Spurgeon): Interviewed 5 people for the initial round of interviews. Then they interviewed 2 people for final interviews and decided to hire Paugels. Hiring committee included Mike Archer, Josh Nelson, and Alicia Hardin.
  - b. Invasive Species Awareness Week (Stahr):
    - Volunteer Call
      - o For Sip, Snack, and Stop the Spread on Thursday, May 28th we need 1-2 more volunteers to be at tables to talk to guests and answer questions
    - Table decor/Prize Basket Donations
      - o We need display pieces for tables at Sip, Snack, and Stop the Spread. We have the zebra mussel shoe, silver and bighead carp mount, and phrag displays. We need 2-3 more table displays
        - King offered to bring a possible PCV pipe display with zebra mussels on it
        - Bjorklund said she is bringing insects
      - o Please consider donating items for trivia prize winner baskets. We currently have donations from REI, Earl May, NGPC, NDA.
        - King offered donating Scheels gift cards
    - Final walk through/KYNI Day
      - o For Know Your Nebraska Invasives Day on May 30th, we need 1 more volunteer for Asian carp fry, 1 for the welcome booth, and 1 for Kit the Raccoon mascot
      - o We have put advertising about Invasive Species Week in the NebraskaLand May edition, will do a Pure Nebraska segment on May 20th, a radio segment on May 13th, flyers will be

handed out at the Saltdogs baseball NGPC take over night game 5/20, and information on NISAW events are in the NGPC agency newsletter

- We will be having a final walkthrough for KYNI Day at Schramm State Park on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May at 1:00 PM CST to finalize where all of the events are going to go and anything else we want to discuss
  - All are welcome
- Other needs?
  - Members suggested contacting legislatures about NE-ISAW
- c. Wildlife Hay movement (All): Chris Helzer suggested putting out information on invasive species to look out for in the hay donations from across the state and from out of state. Johnson wrote a best management practices document for the hay donations to go out to whoever needed it. NAISMA then created a pamphlet out of the document made by Trevor. The document has since been handed out to ranchers out west in the sandhills, and the related county weed directors have been handing it out also.
- d. Council Chair Discussion (Johnson & Stahr): Due to agency limitations on social media and public appearances, Johnson is stepping down as chair so that it can be adequately represented by another Council Member. Stahr offered to step in as chair for the rest of the calendar year. Nelson asked if the Vice Chair would take over for the chair, but Johnson stated that the Council has no bylaws to require this. Johnson motioned to approve Stahr as chair, seconded at 10:20 AM CST. Motion carried.
- e. Council Vacancies (All): Stahr asked if any members had contacted anyone for potential individuals to fill the UNL positions. Members said that no one has reached out to find any potential individuals. Council will continue to recruit until filled.
- f. Council Member Term Updates (All): Council was discussing if everyone's terms are up at the end of the year calendar or not. Members are encouraged to think about if they want to continue with the council and reapply next year or not. Johnson said he will send out a link for appointment application. Members mentioned this would be a good thing for new Council Coordinator to look into and get solid information on when everyone's term ends.
- g. June/July Meeting Needs: Members discussed if the council feels like they want or need a break from meetings for June/July. A few of the members feel confident in new Coordinator's abilities and familiarity with the Council to

not have a June or July meeting. Members mentioned that this is a question for Council Coordinator on if she wants to have June/July meeting or not.

4. Member/Supporter Updates/Comments

- a. Dennis Schroeder: Brome is heading out already; faster plant growth than normal; look into making outreach items to inform the public that this isn't going to be a normal year.
- b. Gary Stone: No update, land is dry, .5 inches of moisture over the last month, not much growing
- c. Carson Jones: No updates from NDOT
- d. Justin Krahulik: No updates
- e. Trevor Johnson: Ben Beckman with Cedar County extension has a presentation on how climate change is creating longer growing seasons. Leafy spurge is up and growing, thistles are behind due to no moisture.
- f. Kris Stahr: Jena and Grace have been working on invasive species week, lots of time and effort have been spent on this. Watercraft inspectors starting next week/weekend. We will have 8 people statewide. The low water in western lakes kind of helps boat inspectors catch more boaters. Aquatic weeds are growing rapidly, mainly eastern half of state. Curly-leaf pondweed growing widespread across the lakes. Got call from a gal about buying a fern at plant store and found a Cuban tree frog. Never called back or heard anything from her. Permanent biologist position is posted and opened for hiring. Let us know if you know of someone near Alliance looking for summer job, we need to hire that 3-month position still.
- g. Justin King: Not much going on for NPPD for invasive species. Will do some digging to see if he can find some gift cards or swag for invasive species week. Won't be available for invasive species week.
- h. Josh Nelson: Spurge is popping, musk is on its way, lots of rosettes around, seeing knotweed. All weed superintendents will be out sending letters, looking more into how knotweed is spreading, noticed how it follows the train tracks and the Platte River. They could see it from the helicopter. Farmers almost done with planting couple cold days might have stunted some of their bean seeds.
- i. James Thiele: No updates
- j. Jonathan Spurgeon: No updates
- k. John Thorburn: Started field season for NRD, doing education events. Groundwater levels have dropped around 3 feet over last couple years.

- l. Natalia Bjorklund: Entomology inspectors are in the field setting traps and conducting nurse inspections. Had a meeting with USDA to talk about what pests they really care about.
- 5. Goals/objectives for next meeting: Members decided to let new Coordinator handle the logistics for the next meeting.
- 6. Adjourn: Stahr adjourned the meeting at 10:45 AM CST