



**Nebraska Invasive Species Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**October 11, 2024**

**Keim Hall, Room 150, UNL East Campus, 1825 N 38th St, Lincoln, NE 68503**

**Online Meeting Link: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/943583959182>**

**Voting Members Present:**

Steven Jara  
Trevor Johnson  
Justin King  
Josh Nelson on behalf of Brent Meyer  
Jonathan Nikkila  
Dennis Schroeder  
Kris Stahr  
Kim Stuhr  
John Thorburn  
Kim Todd

**Voting Members Absent:**

Brent Meyer  
Jon Spurgeon

**Non-Voting/Advisory Support Members Present:**

Natalia Bjorklund  
Carson Jones  
Kassie Karssen  
Jonathon Knacke on behalf of Bret Schomer  
Dave Nielsen  
James Thiele

**Non-Voting/Advisory Support Members Absent:**

Travis Connot  
Jeremy Gehle

Lorri Grueber  
Chris Helzer  
Mike Koenig  
Justin Krahulik  
Ritch Nelson  
Mitch Renteria  
Bret Schomer  
Gary Stone  
T.J. Walker  
Jennifer Weisbrod

**Guests Present:**

Blayne Renner  
Rob Schultz  
Madison Woehrle

1. Call to order – Paugels called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM CST.
2. Review and approval of [September 2024 Meeting Minutes](#) – Thorburn moved to approve the minutes, Jara seconded, motion carried.
3. NAISMA 2024 Annual Conference – September 30-October 4, 2024, Missoula, MT – Smith attended along with Meyer, Erthum, Nelson, Schultz, Reed, Boller, and Shuck from NWCA. NWCA participated as a sponsor for the event and hosted a booth in the exhibition hall of the conference. Meyer presented on “Managing Invasives and Increasing Water Conveyance in Nebraska’s Riparian Areas” focused on phragmites removal and control work during Aquatic & Riparian Invasive Species session. NAISMA 2025 will be in Lake Tahoe, CA in early November.
4. 2024 Adaptive Management Plan – Completed – Smith submitted the [final plan](#) to the Governor’s Office and Agriculture Committee of the Legislature on September 30, 2024, after final approval from NISC members on Friday, September 27, 2024. Thank you to the adaptive management plan workgroup (Stahr, King, Johnson) that helped organize and write the plan and to councilmembers that provided final approval on the plan prior to submission. The next adaptive management plan is due October 2027 with the option to update every year if needed.
5. 2024 Annual Report – Due by December 15, 2024 – Smith requested members complete the [annual report survey](#) by today: Friday, October 11, 2024. Smith plans to extend the deadline to Friday, November 15, 2024, for members to complete the

survey since only four have been submitted. Smith will send out a new calendar invite for extended deadline to members along with reminders. If the survey is too time-consuming, members can also submit information about their organization to Smith in whatever format works best for them. The main goal of the annual report is to highlight invasive species management and education/outreach work that members want to be included in the report as well as any recommendations for the Legislature to better manage invasive species across the state. Smith also noted that the annual report should include work being done by agricultural/non-agricultural public interest members. Members can review the [annual report notes](#) to add any ideas and/or feedback they would like the council to consider when putting together information for the annual report.

Smith will also reach out individually to members that still need to complete the survey to determine the best method to obtain report data from them. She will begin emailing individuals this week.

Thorburn suggested sending out the survey questions in advance for future annual reports to allow members to determine what information will be needed from their organization to prepare prior to beginning the survey.

Thank you to the annual report workgroup (Stahr, Nielsen, Thorburn, Jara) who helped create the survey and to members that already completed the survey.

6. Photo Submission Requests – Deadline extended to November 15 – Smith is seeking photos from members related to invasive species and invasive species management and/or research in the upcoming reports. Smith would also like members to send individual photos of themselves to include in the annual report. Members can submit photos to Smith directly via email or upload them directly to the [photo submissions folder](#). Thank you to members that already submitted photos. Smith will reach out to members that she needs individual photos of via email in the upcoming weeks.

7. Council member/supporter updates:

Paugels – Aquatic Invasive Species program for Nebraska Game and Parks Commission completed over 8,500 watercraft inspections from Memorial Day through Labor Day this year. Inspections are now complete for the season. Paugels will be heading down to the Western Regional Panel in Grand Junction, CO to meet with western states about aquatic invasive species management. NGPC also began zebra mussel veliger analysis, and no new detections have been found yet.

Thorburn – Platte River Resiliency Foundation working on endowment fund on riparian weed management. The foundation hired several fundraiser trainers to meet with next month to move forward with figuring out how to hire someone from the endowment fundraiser position. Platte Valley Weed Management Area is also currently doing weed spraying via a helicopter. Several weeks ago, a contractor pilot hired by PVWMA accidentally hit a power line with his helicopter and was seriously injured. Fortunately, he is currently recovering in the hospital.

Jones – Nebraska Department of Transportation is entering a Climate Change Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service due to monarch butterflies soon being listed as federally endangered species. The CCA will change roadside vegetation management practices, including mowing, herbicide use, and other practices, in 2025. NDOT is trying to get ahead of the monarch listing by revising some of its practices now through an agreement with USFWS that requires NDOT to follow a strict contract of policies and procedures.

Todd – Leading a tour after the meeting today of Keim Hall’s courtyard, the Backyard Farmer Garden, and the newly completed arboretum stormwater management planting. Currently teaching five classes for the fall 2024 semester: Planting Design, Woody Plants for Landscapes, Edible Landscapes, Landscape Management Solutions, and Herbaceous Landscape Plants. BYF filming wrapped up for the season after the Nebraska State Fair. The news editor is putting together reels, shorts, and other quick programming for social media. If you have any ideas of invasive species topics to use for future BYF programming, email Todd with any ideas. Topic segments can range from 90 seconds to three minutes.

Johnson – Working on updated weed watchlist project with weed county authorities but hasn’t received a lot of feedback yet. Reach out to Johnson via email if you have any suggestions for the 2025 weed watchlist.

Jara – Nebraska Forest Service is currently hiring several forester positions across the state as well as a fire program lead. They are also preparing for tree planting season and plan to plant 100,000 tree seedlings at Pine Ridge. Fire season is still going so NFS is on high alert with current dry, windy conditions.

Nelson – Weed management areas are currently performing helicopter spraying on riparian areas for phragmites control which will continue until the first heavy freeze occurs. Meyer is currently up in Ogallala, NE to work on legislation with Nebraska Association of County Officials.

Karssen – Renteria is away at a training this week. Karssen just returned from the Nebraska Natural Legacy Conference in North Platte, NE. Currently working on year-end wrap-ups and audits as fiscal year 2024 ends. Some fluctuation with staffing and roles at their USFWS office as someone took a new position in South Dakota and a new team member will join on October 21.

8. Next meeting date – Friday, November 8, 2024, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm CST, at Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, 8100 S. 15 St., Suite B, Lincoln, NE 68512. Thank you to Thorburn for securing space at the NARD building for this meeting.
9. Goals/objectives for next meeting:
  - a. create outline for annual report
  - b. send out survey to current voting/non-voting/advisory support members to determine who will renew their 2-year term on the council, also to include a question to determine who is interested in serving as council chairperson and co-chairperson
10. Adjourn – Paugels adjourned the meeting at 10:32 am CST, Thorburn seconded, motion carried.