



Nebraska Invasive Species Council

Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2025

In-Person: Treehouse Classroom, Schramm Education Center, 21502 NE-31, Gretna, NE 68028

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/91235287505> | **Meeting ID:** 912 3528 7505

Voting Members Present:

Trevor Johnson (Chairperson)
Steven Jara
Justin King (Vice Chairperson)
Josh Nelson
Kim Stuhr
John Thorburn
Kim Todd

Voting Members Absent:

Jonathan Nikkila
Dennis Schroeder
Jonathan Spurgeon
Kristopher Stahr

Non-Voting Members Present:

N/A

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Derek Asche
Chris Helzer
Justin Krahulik
Ritch Nelson
Travis Connot

Advisory Support Members Present:

Natalia Bjorklund
Carson Jones
T.J. Walker

Advisory Support Members Absent:

Jeremy Gehle
Lorri Grueber
Kassie Karssen
Jena Paugels
Mitch Renteria
Bret Schomer
Gary Stone
James Thiele

Guests Present:

Scott Erthum
Krista Lang
Erik Prenosil
Blayne Renner

1. Call to order – Trevor Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:05 am CST.
2. Review and approval of [September 2025 Meeting Minutes](#) – Trevor Johnson moved to approve the minutes, Josh Nelson seconded, motion carried.
3. [2025 Annual Report Survey](#) – The 2025 Annual Report Survey is now available through October 24 for members to complete. Members can also submit photos to be used in the annual report in the [Photo Submission Folder](#). Thank you to those members who have already submitted the survey. Shannon Smith reminded council members that these numbers are not only used by the Council for the Annual Report, but they are also used by other organizations as well. For example, the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project used last year's numbers to update their 10-year plan this year, and a PhD student researching woody encroachment effects on grassland birds asked if she could reference that the Council classifies eastern redcedar as a problematic native.
4. [Updated Nebraska Terrestrial Invasive Plants List](#) and [List Disclaimer](#) – The Terrestrial Invasive Plants Workgroup updated the current list of terrestrial invasive plants, along with the categories. There is a second sheet for problematic native plants. Chris Helzer wrote up a disclaimer to go before the list stating that the list is

not official for the state of Nebraska and the criteria that was used to determine which species are on the list. Shannon Smith updated the language in the disclaimer to reflect some changes that Dennis Schroeder recommended. Smith will create a finalized list this week to share with the Council this week and will reach out to Natalia Bjorklund to get the list of restricted species so that can be added to the list.

5. [NISC Website Updates](#) – Shannon Smith is now working on the terrestrial invasive plant pages. Any council members with website feedback or suggestions can email Smith. Josh Nelson recommended an “invasive species of the month” to highlight on the homepage each month. Smith will add our first invasive species of the month this week, which the Council decided to feature common reed (*Phragmites australis*).
6. Upcoming Events – Jena Paugels and Kris Stahr are both presenting at the [North American Invasive Species Management Association 2025 Annual Conference](#) in Lake Tahoe, CA from November 3-6, 2025. Paugels is presenting “Nebraska Invasive Species Awareness Week: The Creation and Execution of the First Annual Event Focusing on Invasive Species Prevention in Nebraska” and Stahr is presenting “Starting From Scratch: Nebraska’s Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Efforts”. Shannon Smith will be presenting on the updated terrestrial invasive plant species list at the [Nebraska Association of County Officials \(NACO\) Annual Conference](#) on December 18, 2025, at 11:00 am CST in Kearney.
7. Member/Supporter Updates/Comments:

Natalia Bjorklund – Cut down from 4 to 3 inspectors for budgetary reasons. There was a probable confirmation of a federally quarantined pest found in a state trap, but cannot confirm species until results come back. They will set up traps for the next three years to confirm there is no established population of the species in the state. Invasive jumping worm has been confirmed in Douglas, Lancaster, and Platte County.

Scott Erthum – The Canada thistle rust biocontrol project finished up for the year. They partnered with The Nature Conservancy, who returned inoculant for 26 different sites in various affected counties throughout the state. No new rust material can be imported, but they can farm any rust that they currently have to produce more. Other biocontrol projects had 56 releases throughout the state.

Steven Jara – Nebraska Forest Service is conducting various tree plantings around the state. The plant used for wildfire fighting returned home. Currently working on prescribed fire and fire prevention in the state. There have been 1,000 acres of wildfire this season, mostly related to burning items. If burning items on a property, a burn permit is required.

Trevor Johnson – Nebraska Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Program finishing up field season, now working on county program evaluations. Twin Valley Weed Management Area found phragmites and johnsongrass while surveying the Little Blue River.

Carson Jones – Nebraska Department of Transportation is wrapping up programs for the fiscal year.

Justin King – Nebraska Public Power District is conducting monthly zebra mussel sampling at their power plants.

Krista Lang – Works in oak woodland restoration for Northern Prairies Land Trust, helps to manage invasive vegetation at Rock Creek Station State Historical Park, Indian Cave State Park, and Schramm Park State Recreation Area. Working on spraying sericea lespedeza infestation and bush honeysuckle at Indian Cave. Schramm has infestations of sericea lespedeza, tree-of-heaven, perennial sweetpea, bristly locust (which is native in Southeastern US), and privet.

Josh Nelson – Preparing information for [Legislative Review168](#) to create a simple handout for senators and legislative committees. Finished helicopter spraying along the lower Platte River last week. Went on KZUM FM 89.3's How's It Growing with Shannon Smith last Wednesday, October 1, to talk about invasive ornamental plants and updates on noxious weeds in the state. Also presented with Smith at the Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management and Natural Legacy Project Joint Conference on the Council's updated terrestrial invasive plant species list updates on Wednesday, October 8.

Erik Prenosil – Conducts stream, water, lake, and fish sampling for Nebraska Department of Water, Environment, and Energy. If invasives are found during sampling, they will reach out to Aquatic Invasive Species Program through Nebraska Game and Parks. Will conduct fish tissue sampling and collect macroinvertebrates to determine water quality.

Blayne Renner – Wild parsnip and teasel found in Saunders County, will reach out to the Saunders County Weed Control Authority and Trevor Johnson with location.

Kim Stuhr – Dealing with morning glory (field bindweed) infestation on property.

John Thorburn – Working on setting up prescribed burn association in Gosper County. Will be testifying on [Legislative Review 168](#) on behalf of the natural resources districts. Review will take place on Friday, October 31 at 1:30 pm CST.

Kim Todd – Backyard Farmer is accepting 60-90 second shorts/reel ideas to post on social media accounts. Email Todd with any ideas that you have.

T.J. Walker – The Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force will meet October 21, 2025, at the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District office in Wahoo. The meeting is open to the public, all are welcome to attend. Nebraska Game and Parks Commission secured a grant for eastern redcedar control at Merritt Reservoir. Game and Parks is continuing work on cheatgrass control in the Panhandle and southwest Nebraska and hoping to move forward with treatment at the start of the growing season in spring. The cheatgrass control program will include a cost share for chemicals with landowners on both public and private lands.

8. Next Meeting Date – Friday, November 14, 2025, 10 am – 12 pm CST – Shannon Smith will be out of town so the meeting will be online only.

9. Goals/Objectives for Next Meeting:

- Complete the Annual Report Survey by October 24
- Upload photos to folder for Annual Report
- Review final terrestrial invasive plants list

10. Tour – Oak Woodland Restoration Efforts at Schramm State Park Recreation Area with Jennifer Ruyle, Outdoor Education Specialist, and Krista Lang, Northern Prairies Land Trust.

11. Adjourn – Johnson adjourned the meeting at 11:08 am CST.