



Nebraska Invasive Species Council

Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2025

Online Only

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/96773265900> | **Meeting ID:** 967 7326 5900

Voting Members Present:

Trevor Johnson (Chairperson)
Josh Nelson
Dennis Schroeder
Jonathan Spurgeon
Kristopher Stahr
Kim Stuhr
John Thorburn

Voting Members Absent:

Steven Jara
Justin King (Vice Chairperson)
Jonathan Nikkila
Kim Todd

Non-Voting Members Present:

Justin Krahulik
Ritch Nelson

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Derek Asche
Chris Helzer
Travis Connot

Advisory Support Members Present:

Natalia Bjorklund
Carson Jones

Mitch Renteria
Gary Stone

Advisory Support Members Absent:

Jeremy Gehle
Lorri Grueber
Kassie Karssen
Jena Paugels
Bret Schomer
James Thiele
T.J. Walker

Guests Present:

Kali Boroughs
Alicia Hardin
Brent Meyer
Erik Prenosil
Blayne Renner

1. Call to order – Trevor Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:01 am CST.
1. Review and approval of [October 2025 Meeting Minutes](#) – Kris Stahr moved to approve the minutes, Trevor Johnson seconded, motion carried.
2. [Nebraska Conservation Roundtable Infographic](#) – Alicia Hardin, NGPC representative and chairperson for the Nebraska Conservation Roundtable, joined the meeting to discuss the upcoming Senator's Breakfast that they will host on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at Billy's Restaurant in Lincoln. The breakfast is an opportunity for the roundtable to educate senators on a conservation issue in the state, and for this year's theme, the roundtable decided to highlight invasive species. Typically, 10-15 senators will attend each year. Hardin welcomes NISC members to attend the breakfast if interested. Shannon Smith, Kris Stahr, Jena Paugels, and possibly Trevor Johnson, if permitted by NDA, are interested in attending.

Smith is interested in procuring 10-12 invasive species-related items to display on the tables during the event with information cards to highlight the different pathways that introduce invasive species in Nebraska. Some items that could be displayed are the dried phragmites chicken purchased from Pier One Imports from Brent Meyer, the dried phragmites seedheads purchased from Hobby Lobby from

Brent Meyer, a floral arrangement using cut-leaf teasel, an emerald ash borer specimen suspended in alcohol from Natalia Meyer, noxious weed plant mounts from Trevor Johnson, a shoe covered in zebra mussels from the NGPC AIS Program, and a live crayfish, if it doesn't violate any restaurant health and safety codes. If anyone has any other items that they have to use for table displays, please email Smith.

Meyer asked Johnson if it was possible to provide a Weeds of the Great Plains book as outreach materials. Johnson said yes.

Nelson asked if we want to highlight problematic native species at the breakfast. Smith will check in with Hardin to find out.

Hardin emphasized that this isn't a lobbying event, it is an opportunity to educate senators and serve as a resource for them to understand more about invasive species issues. You can talk at the level you're allowed to talk at and do not have to comment on any specific legislative bills.

3. 2026 NE-ISAW/Know Your NE Invasives Day – Paugels wants to begin preparing for the next NE-ISAW/Know Your NE Invasives Day in Spring 2026 and would like to establish a sub-committee to start meeting. Anyone interested in serving on the sub-committee can email Paugels and Smith. The first planning meeting will be sometime in January 2026. Know Your NE Invasives Day will be held in either Lincoln or Omaha this year. Josh Nelson from the NWCA would like to serve on the sub-committee.
4. 2025 Annual Report – Smith is still working on the 2025 Annual Report, but will have a rough draft ready for review by Friday, November 21, 2025, and would like members to provide feedback by Friday, December 2, 2025, so we can review and approve the final draft at our next council meeting on Friday, December 12, 2025.

Since federal employees are back, Smith will send out a follow-up email to members who were unable to complete the annual report survey due to the federal shutdown next week.

Smith is also still seeking more photos to use in the report. Please email them directly to her or submit them via the [Photo Submission Folder](#). Thank you to those members and supporters who have already submitted photos to use.

5. [Nebraska Terrestrial Invasive Plants List](#) now on website – Smith added scouring rush (*Equisetum hyemale*) to the Problematic Natives list per the suggestion from Johnson. Johnson receives calls and comments related to issues controlling scouring rush, and since it can be difficult to manage, he sees value in adding it to the list for educational purposes. Council approved adding it to the list.
6. Member/Supporter Updates/Comments:

Trevor Johnson – completing paperwork for the 2025 fieldwork season, finishing up county program evaluations, attending the [Nebraska Association of County Officials \(NACO\) Annual Conference](#) next month in Kearney.

Carson Jones – No updates.

Brent Meyer – Provided supportive testimony for [Legislative Review 168](#) on Friday, October 31, 2025. Prior to hearing, NDA sent out a proposal to cut funding for the next fiscal year. Senator Ibach will carry the bill, had supportive conversation with the Agricultural Legislative Committee after the review. Attended the [North American Invasive Species Management Association 2025 Annual Conference](#) in Lake Tahoe, CA from November 3-6, 2025, which included a boat tour on Lake Tahoe on November 5. Next year's NAISMA conference will be at Virginia Tech in Alexandria, VA.

Josh Nelson – Attended [Legislative Review 168](#) virtually. Other members and supporters who attended in person were Brent Meyer, Shannon Smith, John Thorburn, Mike Reed, Rob Schultz, and Greg Shuck.

Ritch Nelson – NRCS is funded for the next full year. Funding will allow them to assist with eastern redcedar removal projects.

Blayne Renner – Sightings of cut-leaf and common teasel in counties where it is not listed as a noxious weed reported to NDOT. NDOT is encouraging control efforts.

Dennis Schroeder – No updates.

Jon Spurgeon – Federal shutdown is over. Continuing invasive carp work.

Kris Stahr – presented at the NAISMA Annual Conference on “Starting From Scratch: Nebraska’s Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Efforts”. Paugels also presented on “Nebraska Invasive Species Awareness Week: The Creation and Execution of the

First Annual Event Focusing on Invasive Species Prevention in Nebraska”. NGPC’s AIS Program is hiring 7 temporary AIS technicians next year. Job announcements will be out in mid-December, so please encourage any interested students to contact Stahr or Paugels. Zebra mussels have been confirmed in Sheridan Lake, located in Pennington County, South Dakota and part of the Black Hills National Forest.

Gary Stone – NE Extension educators across the Sandhills and Panhandle are organizing a 4-night online educational opportunity about invasive grasses on rangelands. The event, topics, and speakers will be finalized in January 2026.

John Thorburn – Provided supportive testimony [Legislative Review168](#) on Friday, October 31, 2025, along with Brent Meyer. NRD tree sales are starting up. Will also be presenting at NACO with Johnson and Smith in December. Republican River Basin experiencing a water shortage.

7. Next Meeting Date – Friday, December 12, 2025, 10 am – 12 pm CST – Nebraska Department of Agriculture
8. Goals/Objectives for Next Meeting:
 - a. Approve final draft of 2025 Annual Report
 - b. Determine who is attending NCR’s Senator’s Breakfast
9. Adjourn – Johnson adjourned the meeting at 10:55 am CST.