



Awareness. Accountability. Cooperation. Commitment. Coalitions. Opportunity.

Those are the fundamentals for an effective approach to the management of invasive species, According to Mike Sarchet of Minatare, Neb., a member of the Nebraska Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force.

Sarchet was among many speakers at the 17th annual North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) conference, held Sept. 21-24 in Kearney.

Topics ranged from biological control to early detection and rapid response, with reports from Nebraska, Colorado, Minnesota, Kansas, Wyoming, Utah and Canada. While the subject matter was varied—one theme remained—working together in the fight against invasive species.

The conference brought together over 250 people from 22 states and Canada. Taking center stage were riparian restoration efforts on the Republican and Platte Rivers in Nebraska.

Senator Tom Carlson of Holdrege, District 38, kicked off the conference with a discussion of the Nebraska Legislature's efforts in the battle against riparian invasive species, and the benefits of clearing these plants from the river channels.

"We must finish the work on the Republican and Platte Rivers. Water is the lifeblood of the Nebraska economy," Carlson stated. "We need to insure that it is available now, and for future generations."

A new documentary based on work done in the Republican Basin made its debut at the conference.

"A River Tamed: Nebraska's Republican River," chronicles the history of the basin, the Republican River Compact and riparian restoration efforts over the past five years by the Twin Valley and Southwest Weed Management Areas.

"The documentary provides a good history of the Republican River and showcases the great work that has been done recently to return it to the way it looked 20 years ago," said Mike Clements, manager of the Lower Republican Natural Resources District.

The recovery project on the Republican River in Nebraska has brought together various agencies from one end of the state to the other, including local weed control authorities, Natural Resources Districts (NRDs), Nebraska Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Environmental Trust and Nebraska Game and Parks, among others.

"It's an accumulation of everybody's efforts, and that's what it takes to get this kind of work done," said Bruce Rumsey, Clay County Weed Superintendent and a member of the Twin Valley Weed Management Area.

The theme of collaboration continued as attendees toured work done on the Platte River from Elm Creek to Gibbon. The group was able to see untreated areas, in comparison with areas where phragmites had been sprayed.

The aftermath of control methods such as shredding, burning and island disking were also

seen, in addition to a helicopter demonstration and a lesson on processing invasive riparian plants into useful products by the Nebraska Forest Service.

The focus on the Republican and Platte Rivers gave out-of-state visitors a look into the battle against riparian invaders, such as phragmites, to model their own statewide efforts after the projects Nebraska has already undertaken.

The North American Weed Management Association was formed to foster cooperation among noxious weed managers throughout North America—in the exchange of information, education, training, weed management practices, programs and technologies.

The group conducts an annual conference and trade show to present a forum for national speakers and enlightenment on state issues, and field tours to inform members on local issues.