



Vegetation management up close and personal—that was the focus of a two day tour sponsored by Twin Valley Weed Management and Southwest Weed Management on July 6-7. The tour, attended by 30 people including state senators and various agency representatives, focused on riparian work done along the Republican River over the past two years.

Day one took attendees to the western end of the Republican River on sites near Benkelman and Bartley. In this area, invasive Russian Olive and Eastern Redcedar have been removed within 100 feet of the river channel to enhance streamflow.

Since 2007, Southwest Weed Management Area has cleared over 2,000 acres with impressive results—as the invasive trees have been removed, water flow quickly improves, often creating marshy wetlands in areas just cleared.

Wildlife activity has also notably increased along the river channel.

Julie Huddle of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln also spoke to the group regarding a research site near Bartley, monitoring the water usage rates of riparian vegetation.

Day two of the tour took place on the eastern end of the Republican basin, near Inavale.

The group canoed down a five-mile stretch of river to get a feel for how Twin Valley Weed Management Area's efforts have impacted the Republican River.

Twin Valley has completed a three-phase process in its riparian work—starting with the spraying of phragmites along the river channel. The group also removed log jams and fallen timber from the channel, and is now deep-disking islands to encourage an unobstructed streamflow.

Both Twin Valley Weed Management and Southwest Weed Management have received funding from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture for their projects.

These agencies combine the expertise and manpower of several entities, including local weed superintends, Natural Resources Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Districts, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, among others.