



# The Nebraska Environmental Trust

*preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations*

**Dave Heineman, Governor**

*Mark A. Brohman, Executive Director*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **West Central Weed Management Area Receives Grant from Nebraska Environmental Trust**

Lincoln, NE – April 1, 2010 – West Central Weed Management Area announced today that it will receive \$400,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the “Invasive Species Control Along the Platte River”. The Trust Board announced funding for the project at its meeting on April 1, 2010 in Lincoln. This is the second year of award with a potential for third year funding totaling \$1,000,000. The project is one of the 88 projects receiving \$14,970,328 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year.

The Platte River of south central Nebraska is known for its wildlife habitat and for a diverse range of flora and fauna. Historic and present water development on the Platte River and its tributaries has altered the river's hydrology, reducing flows and changing flow chronology. These changes have had a detrimental effect on wildlife habitat available and the vegetation community that is present. Within the Platte River valley invasive species such as phragmites, salt cedar, reed canary grass, Russian olive, and purple loosestrife are present and have out-competed native vegetation. These species have reduced biodiversity by out-competing native vegetation and forming monoculture stands.

The Platte Valley Weed Management Area and WCWMA will embark on a three year plan to remove dead phragmites that were chemically treated in 2008 by Nebraska Department of Agriculture funds and controlling invasive species throughout the rest of the project area. The project will incorporate an integrated weed management philosophy and an applied research approach that is supported by the state's Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force.



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The primary goal of this project is to improve native wildlife habitat and river channel flow conveyance through the eradication and clearing of invasive vegetation species. Long term management will be done by working with the landowners to implement grazing systems focusing on maintaining native wildlife habitat. A secondary goal is to develop a long-term set of "best management practices" for phragmites based on efficacy of treatments, cost effectiveness and wildlife habitat benefits. A "Best Management Guide for Invasive Species" will be published and given to landowners that will explain management options while also maximizing wildlife habitat and forage quality for grazing.

By combining these objectives in a regional watershed approach the project will help restore water conveyance and critical wildlife habitat for game and non-game animals along the Platte River in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992. Using revenue from the Nebraska Lottery, the Trust has provided over \$157 million in grants to 1,231 projects across the state. Anyone – citizens, organizations, communities, farmers and businesses – can apply for funding to protect habitat, improve water quality and establish recycling programs in Nebraska. The Nebraska Environmental Trust works to preserve, protect and restore our natural resources for future generations.

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