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## Board of Directors Meeting

February 11th, 2009

1. **Call to order** – The regular meeting the High Plains Weed Management Association was held February 11, 2009 at the Bluffs Business Center. President Jeff Schledewitz called the meeting to order at 1:29 p.m. Board members present: Jeff Schledewitz, Kay Grote, Owen Walker, Mike Marker, Dan Weinreis, Verlin Bruns, Gerald Davis, Robin Lapaseotes. Board members absent: Emily Munter, Terry McCord, John Berge. Others present: Dennis Beyer, Project Manager; Ron Moore, Panhandle RC&D; Georgette Jordening and Curtis Cloud, NRCS; Cris Burks, Dept. of Agriculture; Roy Lyles, North Platte NRD; Chris Kaiser, South Platte NRD; Scott and Glen Chase, Paul Cook, Brad Van Pelt, John Ewing, Justin Lane, contractors. Panhandle RC&D programs assistant Jennifer Rogers announced that she has accepted a position with Sen. Ben Nelson’s office and her last day with RC&D and High Plains will be Feb. 20. The Board thanked Jennifer for all the good work she has done for the Association.
2. **Approval of Minutes** – The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 15, 2009 meeting. Moved by Kay Grote, seconded by Gerald Davis, to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2009 meeting as presented. Unanimous. Motion carried.
3. **Treasurer’s Report** – The Board reviewed the Treasurer’s Report. Moved by Mike Marker, seconded by Gerald Davis, to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Unanimous. Motion carried.
4. **Bills-to-be-Paid** – The Board reviewed the Bills-to-be-Paid. Schledewitz explained to the board the balance due for the High Plains WMA’s share (\$60,000) of the phragmites test plot that is being conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in cooperation with High Plains. This agreement was made in June of 2008 prior to the board being officially formed. Moved by Robin Lapaseotes, seconded by Marker, to approve the Bills-to-be-Paid as presented and authorize payment of bills. Unanimous. Motion carried.
5. **Reports**
  - a. **Project Manager Report** – Dennis Beyer further explained the agreement with High Plains with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the phragmites eradication study and provided the Board with a copy of the memorandum of understanding High Plains signed with UN-L. The agreement is effective until June 2009, at which time the study will be funded through the Environmental Trust Fund. Beyer reported that Senator Carlson intends to support legislation to extend funding for LB701, which will include portions of the upper Platte River Basin. Beyer reported that High Plains is on the Nebraska Environmental Trust’s “short list” of approved projects for the coming year. Last year (2008) was the first year of the ETF funding for High Plains, and it is expected that funding will continue for a second year in the amount of \$200,000. High Plains also will get



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funds for its proposed follow-up/clean-up efforts on existing removal projects. Beyer reported that to date, approximately 2,500 acres of Russian olive trees have been removed on approximately 104 landowners. The entire project area has now been mapped and maps are available to view current projects and project status. Schledewitz reported that the contractors' work is going smoothly. Grote and Davis asked for a status report on the directives left by the Environmental Trust representatives during their visit in January and the status of dismissing a contractor based on performance evaluation. Schledewitz stated that these concerns would be addressed in closed session.

- b. **Communications Committee Report** – No report
- c. **Legislative Committee Report** – No report
- d. **Byproduct Committee Report** – Curtis Cloud reported that there has been interest expressed by local contractors and businesses about establishing a use/market for wood chips from the removal/disposal of vegetation. Twin Cities Development has expressed interest in coordinating by-product development and marketing. He advised the Board that if anyone has interest or needs more information, to talk to Marla Marx at Twin Cities Development or contact him.

## 6. Old Business

- a. **Environmental Trust Report Staff Update** – Discussed in agenda item 5.a. above.
- b. **Board Vacancy** – Board member John Berge has taken a new position in Washington, D.C. and will no longer be able to serve on the High Plains board. This will leave 10 members on the board. Schledewitz asked if Chris Kaiser of the South Platte NRD would be interested and able to fill the vacancy. Kaiser will consider serving on the board or see if there is another representative from the southern Panhandle who can serve on the board.
- c. **Field Coordinator Position** – Beyer has been working with the Nebraska Workforce Development to develop the job description for the Field Coordinator Position and to advertise the vacancy. The Board reviewed an advertising package available through the Star-Herald/Omaha World Herald that includes ad publication in papers in three states and website placement. The cost of the advertising would come out of the Information/Education budget. Moved by Marker, seconded by Davis, to approve the advertising of the Field Coordinator position with the Star Herald/Omaha World Herald newspaper. Unanimous. Motion carried.
- d. **Project Manager Job Description** – The Board reviewed the Project Manager job description that had been prepared. This job description will be kept on permanent file and used to evaluate the job performance of the Project Manager. Moved by Davis, seconded by Lapaseotes, to approve the job description for the position of Project Manager. Unanimous. Motion carried.

- 7. **New Business** – Contractor Paul Cook reported on behalf of several contractors that their work has been progressing well on the clean-up efforts on the Horse Creek and Shaw properties. Roy Lyles said he will continue to work with the contractors and landowners to make sure the work on the Storm Forestry jobs is completed satisfactory. Cook asked if the regular spring work will begin March 1 regardless of if High Plains has a Field Coordinator hired by then or not. The contractors were advised that the spring removal and treatment work that has been scheduled will continue as normal and that work will be coordinated with Beyer and Schledewitz, the county weed



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superintendents, and land owners. The issue of having to lay off work between the months of April and July for the migratory bird nesting requirements was discussed. Complete information on these requirements will be discussed with Emily Munter and the Game & Parks. The contractors asked if there would be enough work on the tributaries to justify steady for work those three months. Beyer and Schledewitz both said there should be enough work. The question was asked about getting a chipper in to dispose of the wood piles this spring. It was determined that any chipping of piles at this point will be between the landowner and any individual chipping business, but would not be a High Plains project. The contractors all stated they are looking forward to spring work and anxious to get started again. Schledewitz will be ordering in chemical Friday so work on spraying and treatment can continue, pending weather conditions.

Curtis Cloud reported on the special initiative that is available to remove Russian olive, salt cedar, Eastern red cedar throughout Nebraska. Funding for these projects will be based on a ranking system and will be dispersed throughout a statewide pool, so competition for the funding will be high. Cloud encouraged Board members and contractors to talk to landowners about applying for these special initiatives through the USDA-NRCS.

Georgette Jordening provided maps of the three major project areas (western Scotts Bluff County, central Scotts Bluff County, and Morrill County) showing details of Russian olive and salt cedar removal and treatment projects. These maps are available at the High Plains WMA and NRCS offices.

**a. Executive Session** – Moved by Davis, seconded by Marker, to enter into closed session at 2:58 p.m. for the purpose of personnel and contractor evaluations. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Moved by Walker, seconded by Weinreis, to come out of executive session at 3:26 p.m. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Chairman Schledewitz stated no decisions had been made in executive session.

- 8. Next Meeting time and date** – The next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 11, 2009, 1:30 p.m. at the Bluffs Business Center.
  
- 9. Adjournment** – With no further business to discuss, it was moved by Davis, seconded by Owen Walker, to adjourn at 3:30 p.m. Unanimous. Motion carried.