

Press Release

High Plains Weed management Received Grant from Nebraska Environmental Trust

Lincoln, NE – April 13, 2009 – High Plains Weed Management announced today that it will receive \$200,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the “North Platte River Invasive Species Control Project”. The Trust Board announced funding for the project at its meeting on April 2, 2009 in Lincoln. This is the second year of two grants totaling \$1,800,000. The project is one of the 82 projects receiving \$15,065,944 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year.

The funds from the Trust will be used to remove and control invasive species in the riparian areas of the North Platte River watershed. The current drought in Western Nebraska has forced landowners to evaluate every available option for water conservation. The High Plains Weed Management Association (consisting of eight panhandle counties) has taken on the responsibility to address the water loss caused by the expansive growth of invasive species. Three main invasive species (Russian olive, Saltcedar and Phragmites) are targeted to be controlled. Approximately 14,300 acres is expected to be treated.

The educational process will use newsletters, workshops and web pages to help landowners and others understand the value of cost sharing on this project. The project will also have a positive effect locally on the work force by creating jobs to stimulate the economy of the panhandle. Monitoring sites and test plots for existing and new technologies will be established. This will ensure the best results achievable.

The Russian olive will be sheared, stump treated and tree removed to areas not in the flood plain. Saltcedar and Phragmites will be treated and left standing to ensure complete eradication. The High Plains Weed Management Institute will be leveraging these funds with in-put from conservation partners and landowner participation. This collaboration will assist in restoring the riparian areas to their more natural states. The project will reduce water consumption benefiting the entire Platte River watershed. The possibility of flooding due to debris in the flood plain will be greatly reduced after it is removed. Restoring native habitat and pastureland will have a desired effect on the treated areas. This project will enhance the aesthetics of the entire watershed.

The Nebraska legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992. Using revenue from the Nebraska Lottery, the Trust has provided over \$142 million in grants to 1,134 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.

