



Five Rivers RC&D

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NEWS RELEASE

**Date of Release:
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Got Weeds? Cost-Share Program to Combat Invasive Weed Species Now Available

The Five Rivers Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. (RC&D) announced today that the Weed Management Area (WMA) will receive \$46,250.00 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust for the "Native Grassland Protection Against Invasive Weeds II" project. The Trust Board announced funding for the project at its meeting on April 4, 2013 in Lincoln. The \$46, 250.00 is the first year of the award with a potential \$46, 250.00 for 2nd and 3rd year funding totaling \$138,750.00 respectively for all three years. The project is one of the 134 projects receiving \$24,247,260 in grant awards from the Nebraska Environmental Trust this year. Of these, 87 were new applications and 47 are carry-over projects.

Native Prairies are the most threatened ecosystem in North America. With the increase of invasive species present in the area we see its negative impacts on these remaining landscapes and losses to our other grazing lands and native habitat. The lack of control reduces the production, profitability and sustainability of grasslands and causes economic hardships. This resulted in some grasslands being converted to row crop production because of difficulties and costs of controlling invasive weeds. Losing native prairies, oak woodlands, and plant diversity is resulting in significant impacts to our valuable native wildlife habitat, soil quality, water quality, and economic sustainability.

In 2011, the Five Rivers WMA received a total of sixteen applications from landowners in four different counties requesting aid in controlling the invasive species. Due to the higher than expected volume of applications from landowners seeking assistance, the Five Rivers WMA had to request to reallocate the funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust by increasing the amount dedicated to conservation implementation and decreasing the amount of funding for education in order to meet the needs of landowners and managers, which displays the interest and need for the cost share program. The WMA continues to educate landowners and managers and continually receives inquiries from new applicants seeking aid in controlling the invasive weed species.



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The WMA applied for \$90,000 for a three year cost share program that would assist in making effective invasive weed species control affordable for landowners, land managers, and entities. Seventy-five (75%) percent of the fees for the chemical and application will be funded by this grant. This program is available on a rating basis; dependent on severity of type of invasive weed(s), native prairie in an identified Biologically Unique Landscape, in kind or cash match (minimum requirement of 25%), and a five year maintenance agreement is required on any entity acquiring grant funds. Invasive Weed Species covered in this grant are: Sericea Lespedeza, Garlic Mustard, St. John's Wart, Caucasian Bluestem, and Cutleaf Teasel.

Grant applications from landowners, managers, and entities are now being accepted and will be reviewed by the WMA board. The first round deadline for applications has been set for June 1, 2013.

Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Environmental Trust in 1992. Using revenue from the Nebraska Lottery, the Trust has provided over \$195 million in grants to over 1,500 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. NET Executive Director, Mark Brohman, awarded the WMA with a check on behalf of the Environmental Trust in Tecumseh on April 24, 2013.

For more information and/or to apply, please contact your local County Weed Superintendent or contact Bobbie Meints at Five Rivers RC&D – 402-869-2355 or 5rivers.meints@gmail.com . Grant updates and WMA events can also be found by following us on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+!

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Pictured above: Front Row (L to R): Bobbie Meints, Five Rivers RC&D Executive Director, Lyle Weber, Saline County Weed Superintendent, Mark Brohman, Nebraska Environmental Trust Executive Director, Velda Koehler, Johnson County Landowner. Back Row (L to R): Rod Christen, Pawnee County Landowner & NET Board Member, John Bebout, Otoe County Weed Superintendent, Larry Bradbury, Pawnee County Weed Superintendent, Joe Wittwer, Nemaha & Richardson County Weed Superintendent, & Randy Group, Cass County Weed Superintendent.

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