

MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

November 5, 2012

Tracy Corr opened the meeting on Monday, November 5, 2012 in the Mayor's conference Room, County/City Building, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Twenty citizens and four staff attended:

Tracy Corr -- 40 th & A St NA	Jeff Schwebke -- Arnold Heights NA
Sue VanHorn -- Country Club NA	Ann Bleed -- East Campus CO
Carolyn Brandle -- Eastridge NA	Pat Anerson-Sifuentez – Everett NA
Ruth Johnson – Hartley NA	Kurt Elder – Haymarket Assn
Myrna Coleman -- Highlands NA	Scott Richert – Indian Village NA
Larry Evermann -- Irvingdale NA	Dennis Hecht -- Meadowlane Area
William Carver -- Near South NA	Kent Prier -- Taylor Park NA
Luci Prier -- Taylor Park NA	Chris Cashmere – West A NA
Mike Fitzgerald -- Witherbee NA	Fred Freytag -- Witherbee NA
Russell Miller – Lincoln Neigh. Alliance	Lin Quenzer -- Mayor's Office
Jon Carlson -- Mayor's Office	Wynn Hjermstad -- Urban Development Dept
Meghan Sullivan -- Stronger, Safer, Neighborhoods	Shirley Schoening Scheuler – LPS/CLC
Chris Beutler -- Mayor	Brent Meyer – Weed Control Superintendent

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tracy began with a welcome and called for introductions. The room was filled and extra chairs had to be brought in. Tracy asked for a volunteer to prepare meeting notes. Ann Bleed volunteered. Attendees checked in on the sign-in sheet.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Beutler reported that the financing for phase 1 of the new ice center is now in place. Construction will begin this spring.

The Mayor also said he had received four proposals for redevelopment at 21st and N Street. He indicated he has not had time to review these proposals.

Finally, the Mayor urged us to help get people out to vote and encourage them to vote for the bond to improve the city's storm sewers. He pointed out that a bond issue was the only way the city had of funding these much needed improvements.

WEED CONTROL – BRENT MEYER, SUPERINTENDENT OF WEED CONTROL

The main speaker was Brent Meyer, Superintendent of the City County Combined Weed Program. His comments and slides can be found in the documents attached to these notes. Mr. Meyer did an excellent job of explaining:

- The benefits of combining the City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement Program and the Lancaster County's Noxious Weed Program;
- Why it was important to control weeds and worthless vegetation;

- Who is responsible for weed control, the restrictions in place, and how they are enforced in Lincoln and Lancaster County;
- How multiple agencies get involved to enforce these and other health and welfare related restrictions through the Problem Resolution Team;
- How in some cases, such as a garden of native plants, what appears as a weed to one person, is a natural area to another;
- What plants are particularly invasive and need to be identified early before they spread; and
- How to join the new Weed Watcher Team.

Following the presentation, members of the roundtable asked how the City deals with overgrown trees and trees like mulberry trees. Mr. Meyer said there is no ordinance dealing with trees, with the exception pertaining to trees that are threatening the structure of a building or that are otherwise a health or fire hazard. Trees growing in chain link fences are a particular problem. He said there may be of a way of addressing certain species of trees, but if such an ordinance were passed, it would need to also be funded. For now, more education about trees and weeds in general would be helpful. The Mayor asked if bio-controls were considered to manage weeds. Mr. Meyer pointed out that the most invasive weeds are imported from other countries and in their native countries, there are natural controls. The problem is that there are no such controls in this country.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gene Hanlon, our recycling coordinator, announced that the Solid Waste Planning Committee was holding an open house on the Solid Waste Plan 2040 on November 13, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Lancaster Health Department (Training Room) at 3140 N Street.

SET DECEMBER AGENDA

The next meeting of the Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable is Monday, December 10, 2012, 5:30 P.M., in the Mayor's Conference Room, County/City Building, 555 South 10th Street, 3rd floor. The discussion topic for the meeting will be focused on what projects are underway downtown.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6.45 P.M.

Submitted by Ann Bleed

NEBRASKA'S NOXIOUS WEEDS

It is the duty of each person who owns or controls land to effectively control noxious weeds on such land.



L.L. Berry, Bugwood.org



Pink to purple flowers



Mature seedhead

Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

Musk Thistle




Large yellow leaves (bracts)



Stems/leaves have milky sap

Leafy Spurge



View in winter



Young seedhead



Mature seedhead

Phragmites

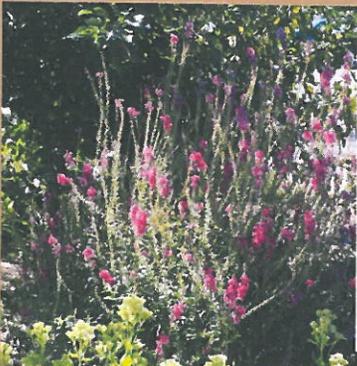


Japanese Knotweed



Giant Knotweed

Knotweed




Purple to magenta flowers

Purple Loosestrife




Pink to purple flowers

Canada Thistle




Pink to white flowers

Saltcedar



Spotted Knapweed



Diffuse Knapweed

Spotted and Diffuse Knapweed




Purple flowers

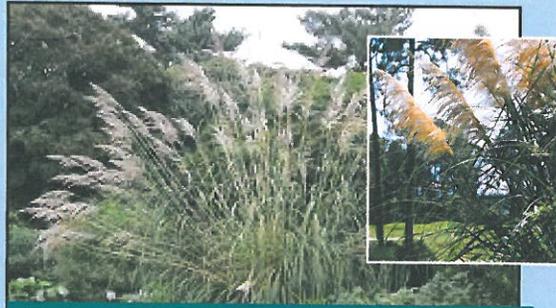
Plumeless Thistle

Phragmites vs. Ornamental Grasses

"to help identify Invasive Phragmites vs. Ornamental Nebraska grasses"



Maidengrass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)



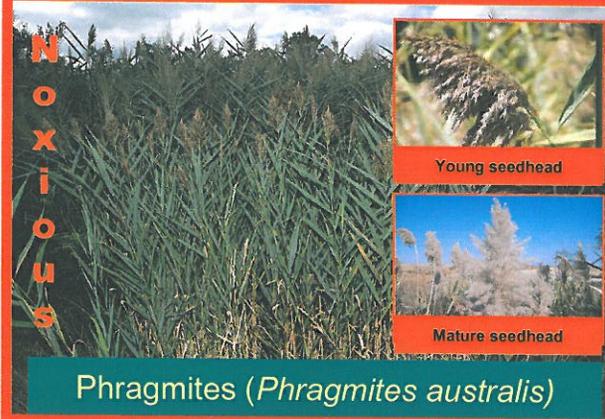
Hardy Pampas (*Saccharum ravennae*)



Rubygrass (*Melinus nerviglume*)



Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)



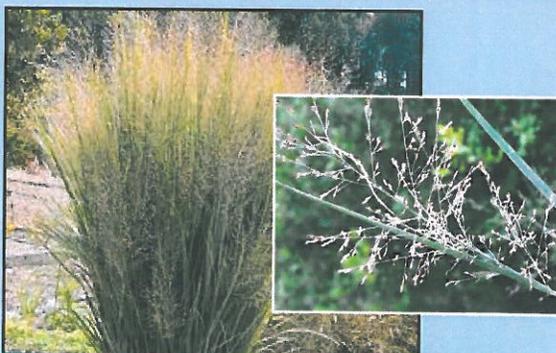
Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*)



Fountaingrass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*)



Giant Sacaton (*Sporobolus wrightii*)



Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)



Moorgrass, purple (*Molina caerulea*)

Join our "NEW" Weed Watcher Team

Can you help look for these pesky plants?



Become a Weed Watcher Volunteer and learn how to detect and Report these invasive plants before they get out of hand

What is the Weed Watcher Program? The Lancaster County Weed Watcher Program trains and supports volunteers to look for and report harmful invasive plants.



Why Become a Weed Watcher? Weeds cause real problems by Disrupting ecosystems and Decreasing the value of our land. Weeds grow so prolifically that they displace native plants. You can help keep them out by looking for and reporting these plants.

What does a Weed Watcher Do?

1. **Learn the weeds**



2. **Look for weeds.**

3. **Document weeds**



4. **Report weeds.**

For more information about becoming a Weed Watcher Volunteer
Contact Lancaster County Weed Control: 402-441-7817
weeds@lancaster.ne.gov <http://lancaster.ne.gov/weeds>



Weed Control Authority - Weed Abatement Program

City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program

Weeds & Worthless Vegetation

When plants are overgrown they become a nuisance and unacceptable to the general public and need to be controlled. Lincoln's ordinance specifies that weeds or worthless vegetation must not grow higher than six inches above the ground.

Why should these plants be controlled? *Affects on Property Owner*

- They are heavy users of soil moisture.
- They crowd out desirable plants.
- They reduce property value.
- They become a misdemeanor law violation if not controlled.

Other Adverse Affects

- They are unsightly.
- They attract pests.
- They may cause health problems.
- They are a fire hazard.
- They are aggressive spreaders.
- They adversely affect the appearance of the neighborhood.

How to Control Undesirable Plant Growth

Prevent the Germination of Weeds

- Plant and maintain desirable vegetation.
- Use temporary vegetative covers.
- Use mulches and ground covers on bare areas.
- Use pre-emergent herbicides.

Control Weeds that do become Overgrown

- Have a timely mowing and weeding schedule.
- Use post-emergent herbicides.
- Do a complete job.
- A few overgrown weeds look as bad as a lot of weeds.

Who is Responsible for Controlling Weeds?

Lincoln's weed control program places the responsibility for cutting vegetation on the property owner. Citizens are responsible for controlling weeds and worthless vegetation growing on their property and in the area from the property line to the center of the alley or street abutting the property.

Inspection

An inspector may visit property as a result of a complaint or their observation that there may be overgrown weeds and worthless vegetation. If there are overgrown weeds, the owner is issued a notice requiring cutting and/or removal within five days.

Owners that don't perform timely cutting of their weeds and worthless vegetation are subject to having the cutting and removal done by the City or a contracted weed control service.

Contracted Weed Control Service

If a weed notice is not complied with, the City may have the cutting and/or removal done. The owner will be billed for all costs associated with this cutting. This will include the cost of the contracted cutting and/or removal, and related clerical and inspection costs. This resulting cost will be significantly greater than if performed by the owner or someone the owner hires to do the work.

Special Assessment

Any unpaid bills will become a lien on the property and a special assessment levied. These special assessments, plus interest, have to be paid before land can be sold.

How to Report Overgrown Vegetation

Any citizen may call the Weed Control Office at 441-7817 to report a location with overgrown vegetation.



City of Lincoln / Lancaster County Combined Weed Program

- By Interlocal agreement in 1996 the City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement Program combined with Lancaster Counties Noxious Weed Program.
- Lancaster County Board of Commissioners are responsible to carry out the Combined Program.
- A move that created a more efficient and stronger agency.
- Making it more convenient for the citizens of Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Weed Control Operations

- Enforce the State of Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act for Lancaster County including the City of Lincoln.
 - All Noxious weeds are required to be controlled by the landowner.
- Enforce the Weed Abatement Program for the City of Lincoln.
 - Weeds and worthless vegetation must be kept below 6 inches by the property owner.

Weeds & Worthless Vegetation

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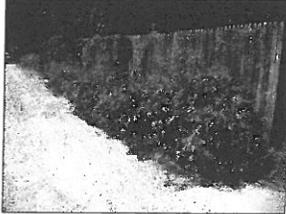
- They are heavy users of soil moisture.
- They crowd out desirable plants.
- They reduce property value.
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Other Adverse Affects

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Inspections inside city limits in 2012

- 5,272 inspections on 2,265 parcels for weed abatement
- 806 inspections on 434 parcels for noxious weeds inside city limits.
- 6,078 total inspections on 2,699 parcels in Lincoln as of Oct. 31, 2012.
- 1,455 complaints from the public

Contracted Weed Control Service

- If a weed notice is not complied with, the City may have the cutting and/or removal done. The owner will be billed for all costs associated with this cutting.
- This will include the cost of the contracted cutting and/or removal, and related clerical and inspection costs. (currently \$100.00)
- This resulting cost will be significantly greater than if performed by the owner or someone the owner hires to do the work.

Special Assessment

- Any unpaid bills will become a lien on the property and a special assessment levied.
- These special assessments, plus interest, have to be paid before land can be sold.

30" Height Restriction

(between sidewalk and street)

- Ordinance 12.20.070 Enforced by Public Works - Greg Topil
- Deals with overgrown planted vegetation.
- Must follow sight distance regulations at intersections.
- Maximum 30" above the curb.
- Weed Control will handle if its weeds or worthless vegetation.



Trees & Bushes

- Multiple Agencies get involved
- Weed Control will remove saplings if we are able to mow over them.



Trees & Bushes

- Parks & Rec
 - Forestry – Bob Weyrich
- Public Works
- LES
- Weed Control



Brush piles

- Health Department
- Brush piles are a health issue and a potential rodent problem.



Natural Yards?

- Is a property that claims to be wildflowers and ornamental grasses ok?



PRT – Problem Resolution Team

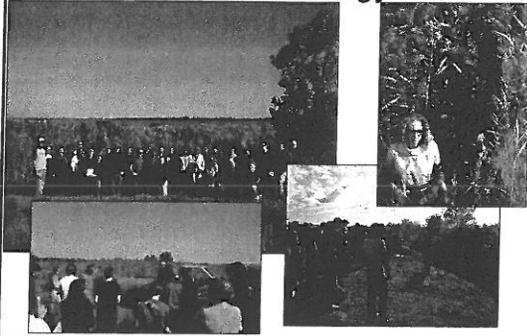


Enforcements

- To date in 2012 we've done 178 force controls
- In 2011 we did 269 force controls in



Education Opportunities – UNL Plant Pathology Class



Outreach

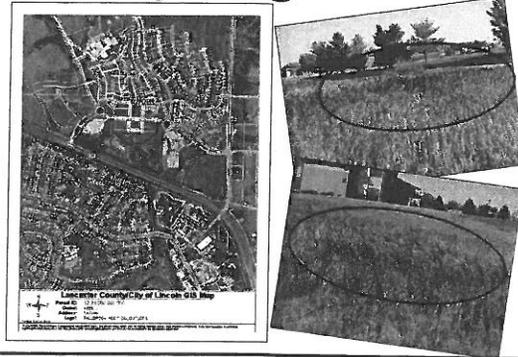


Weed Watcher Team

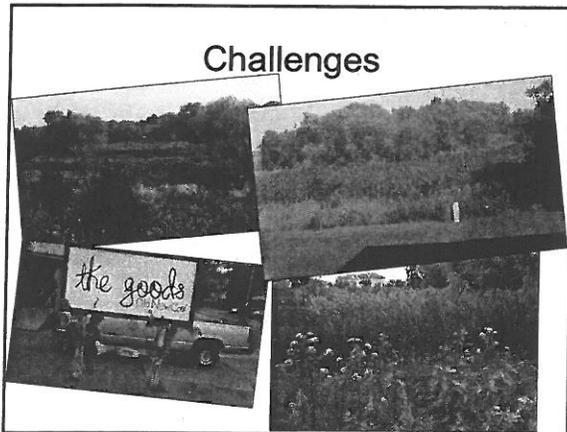
- Weed Watcher program trains and supports volunteers to look for and report harmful invasive plants.



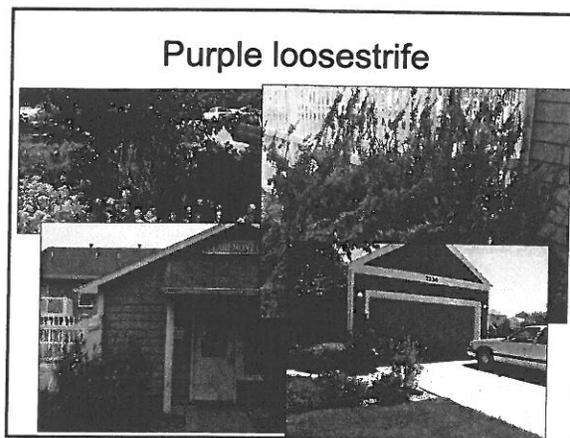
Phragmites @ Fallbrook



Challenges



Purple loosestrife



Saltcedar

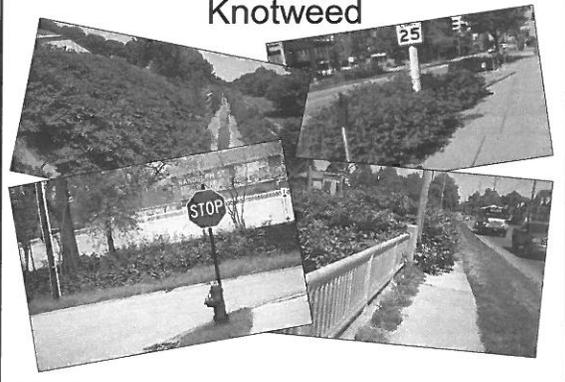


Canada thistle

- Golf courses
- Landscaping – moved in with nursery stock



Knotweed



Leafy spurge

- 318 locations in Lancaster County
- 64 of those are within Lincoln city limits
- 20.13% inside city limits



Musk thistle

- 373 locations in Lancaster County
- 193 of those are within Lincoln city limits
- 51.74% of our musk thistle inspections are inside city limits.



What will be next?

- 3 out of the last 4 noxious weeds added to Nebraska's Noxious Weed list were first sold as ornamentals.
- Our next candidate to become a noxious weed is still considered a crop in the south. (*Sericea Lespedeza*)
- Always be looking for something out of place

Giant reed / *Arundo donax*

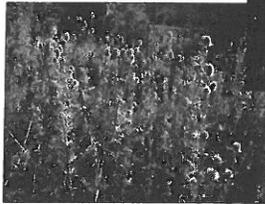


Chinese fleece vine, *Fallopia aubertii* aka: Lemon lace / silver lace vine



Cutleaf teasel

- Aggressive biennial
- Not currently widespread here



- On our list for EDRR (Early Detection Rapid Response)

Yellow floating-heart Benson Park, Omaha



How to Report Overgrown Vegetation

- Any citizen may call the Weed Control Office at 402-441-7817 to report noxious weeds or a location within the City of Lincoln with overgrown vegetation.
- Electronically on our web site at www.lancaster.ne/weeds
- Lincoln's Citizen Action Center <https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/asp/city/action/default.aspx>

Discussion

Brent Meyer, Superintendent
Lancaster County Weed Control
444 Cherrycreek Rd., Building B
Lincoln, NE. 68528
402-441-7817
bmeyer@lancaster.ne.gov
www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds