

Ms. Hayes –

LB 701 (2007) did provide legislative intent for \$2 million annually for vegetation management beginning in FY 07-08. The state is currently early in the second year of that process and funds have been allocated to projects in the Platte and Republican Basins. While we do not administer those funds, DNR is a member of the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force. The Task Force is administered through the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. DNR is currently participating in the process of preparing an assessment of resources available to quantify non-beneficial consumptive water use by riparian vegetation in Nebraska. The Task Force's report is expected to be published by December, 2008. The material DNR produces will be available for incorporation into ultimate Task Force reporting. There are multiple methods for analyzing water use by vegetation with the appropriate method depending upon the situation. We are not currently able to accurately quantify water quantity impacts of the activities that have occurred under the program. It should be noted that water quantity changes are not the only types of benefits that can be created by these types of programs. For instance, water conveyance may be improved by some of the project activities. Water otherwise utilized through evapotranspiration by the invasive species could theoretically be converted to beneficial uses, either agricultural or environmental, that may have economic value while providing little additional streamflow.

Steve

From: Hayes, Tanya [mailto:thayes@leg.ne.gov]
Sent: Thursday, August 21, 2008 5:01 PM
To: Gaul, Steve
Subject: Question regarding the Republican Valley River

Mr. Gaul:

As Division Head for the Natural Resources Planning division, I thought it best to begin with you given the nature of my inquiry.

I realize the Republican Valley River has been a hot topic in the Legislature these past few years, and will continue in 2009.

It is my understanding we allocated \$4 million to remove vegetation in the lower Republican River Valley and retain as much water as possible.

My question is this: By spending \$4 million, how much of an increase in water did we gain? How many acres/feet of water did we create by removing that vegetation from the river banks?

I'm having difficulty locating the results of this project.

Any information you could offer would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Tanya Hayes

Tanya L. Hayes
Senior Legislative Aide
Office of Senator Pete Pirsch
Legislative District 4
State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604
Phone: 402-471-2621
FAX: 402-479-0904
thayes@leg. ne.gov