



Local Weed Management Efforts: What State and Federal Agencies Have Done Well



In a recent survey of county weed management professionals, many public landowners and managers were repeatedly commended for a variety of actions related to their noxious weed management programs as well as their contributions to local weed management efforts. Specifically, county weed management professionals praised agencies that provide or exhibit the following characteristics (arranged from most to least frequently mentioned):

A.) Strong and consistent cooperation with other public/private interests to actively manage local noxious weed problems, as indicated by:

- i.) Written cooperative agreements;
- ii.) Representation on local noxious weed advisory boards;
- iii.) Active participation and responsibility in the development of educational resources and workshops for the public as well as agency staff;
- iv.) Willingness to share resources and expertise; and
- v.) Engaged staff who create positive work environments (flexible, little paperwork, etc.) that facilitate weed management efforts across jurisdictional boundaries.

B.) An aggressive attitude and "can-do" mentality, as indicated by:

- i.) Widespread awareness of noxious weed problems among staff at all levels;
- ii.) Improvements in agency interest and funding;
- iii.) "Taking the initiative" when new noxious weed management needs arise;
- iv.) Allocation of available dollars to attack problems quickly;
- v.) Demonstrated commitment to resolving noxious weed problems; and
- vi.) Efforts to secure additional resources for local projects (grant-writing, etc.).

C.) Financial assistance provided to local weed control programs and projects, as indicated by:

- i.) Consistent and predictable funding; and
- ii.) Efforts to ensure that federal funds go to on-the-ground management efforts first.

D.) The preparation of management plans for agency properties or otherwise developing an organized approach to noxious weed management.

E.) Excellent management of specific species or problems, such as:

- i.) The Colorado Division of Wildlife's efforts to manage purple loosestrife in the Denver metropolitan area; and
- ii.) Soil Conservation District/Natural Resources Conservation Service efforts to promote management of Mediterranean sage in Boulder County among private landowners.

F.) Clear and frequent communication with county staff, as exhibited by:

- i.) Assigned agency staff members responsible for weed management information.

G.) Implementation of programs that prevent new problems from arising, such as:

- i.) The certified weed-free hay program in many state and federal agencies; and
- ii.) The use of weed-free seed and cleaned equipment.

Source: An Assessment of Federal and State Agency Weed Management Efforts in Colorado: A Report to the Colorado General Assembly. Colorado Department of Agriculture, April 1999.

The full report can be found at <http://www.ag.state.co.us/DPI/publications/assessment.pdf>



Local Weed Management Efforts: What State and Federal Agencies Have Done Poorly



In a recent survey of county weed management professionals, many public landowners and managers were criticized for a variety of faults related to their noxious weed management programs as well as their failures to participate in local weed management efforts. Specifically, county weed management professionals criticized agencies for their:

- A.) Poor noxious weed management efforts, as exhibited by:
 - i.) Lack of management plans or a failure to implement them;
 - ii.) Poor response times to weed outbreaks and poor timing of applications;
 - iii.) Lack of qualified personnel to manage noxious weeds;
 - iv.) Unreliable coordination within a given agency, i.e., a checkerboard approach among agency districts;
 - v.) Poor coordination with other landowners and managers when noxious weeds cross jurisdictional boundaries;
 - vi.) Poor management of specific noxious weed problems; and
 - vii.) Failure to mitigate practices that enhance noxious weed spread (road maintenance activities, movement of heavy equipment, etc).

- B.) Lack of adequate or stable funding to carry out effective noxious weed management efforts on agency properties or leased lands.

- C.) Poor cooperation with local noxious weed management staff and/or failure to acknowledge a problem, as exhibited by:
 - i.) Poor communication with other entities, including agency offices in the same resource area or management unit; and
 - ii.) Policies and practices that simply attempt to make the problem someone else's responsibility.

- D.) Heavy reliance upon county programs to manage agency properties, as exhibited by:
 - i.) Numerous contracts with multiple agencies; and
 - ii.) Failure of contracting agencies to fully participate in the identification of noxious weed problems or to mitigate practices that promote weed spread.

- E.) Lack of education for staff as well as the public that:
 - i.) Identifies the appropriate contacts to whom known and suspected noxious weed infestations should be reported; and
 - ii.) Informs the public of an agency's management efforts.

- F.) Failure to fulfill commitments with resources or the failure of federal dollars to reach on-the-ground efforts as a result of deductions by higher levels of bureaucracy, such as Washington, D.C. and regional offices.

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Local Weed Management Efforts: What State and Federal Agencies Can Improve



In a recent survey, county weed management professionals made a number of suggestions regarding improvements that public land management agencies could make to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their weed management efforts. They include:

- A.) Increasing financial and personnel resources to improve the effectiveness of management efforts such that agencies are better able to prepare management plans, conduct staff training, and manage their own weed problems successfully. Related suggestions include:
- i.) Streamlining budgets so that funds are available to each agency district for on-the-ground weed management efforts;
 - ii.) Pooling resources from all affected programs of an agency such as recreation, wildlife and watchable wildlife, timber, i.e., not just the range program;
 - iii.) Utilizing existing funds such as the Habitat Partnership Program (HPP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)/Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and Land and Water Fund, in part for weed management; and
 - iv.) Dedicating full-time personnel to deal with noxious weeds - a perennial problem.
- B.) Improving coordination and cooperation among federal, state, and local government agencies through the:
- i.) Development of formal agreements (MOUs) and resource sharing arrangements;
 - ii.) Active communication that informs counties of plans and actions each season;
 - iii.) Use of similar technology and strategies for an integrated and compatible approach to noxious weed management;
 - iv.) Assistance in the development of cooperative plans among private and public landowners in watersheds or among contiguous parcels; and
 - v.) Cooperative arrangements that, at a minimum, ensure containment of weeds.
- C.) Improving performance by:
- i.) Decreasing management response times to infestations;
 - ii.) Taking the initiative more frequently;
 - iii.) Committing to specific local noxious weed management plans or projects;
 - iv.) Reducing unnecessary red tape so that more energy is focussed on the weeds rather than the paperwork; and
 - v.) Improving staff capabilities so that weed management actions are more effective.
- D.) Improving educational efforts so that all employees and citizens recognize local noxious weed problems and can report weed infestations to a specific person or office.
- E.) Creating a noxious weed specialist position that coordinates agency weed management policy, develops management plans for properties, and conducts training to educate staff and weed management personnel.
- F.) Reducing reliance on county programs to become more self-sufficient and allow counties to work more closely with private landowners (note that this varies according to local needs).

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