

## Noxious Weed Advisory Committee

April 25, 2007

Present at meeting: Jonathan Rife, Harley Ernst, Terri Schulz, Margaret Paget, George Beck, Moe Schifter, Eric Lane, and Kelly Uhing

Present via conference call due to spring snow storm: Ray Berges, David Anderson, Jeff Connor, Sarada Krishnan, and Bill Wilkinson.

Absent: Don Hardin, Tom Long, Roc Rutledge, John Taylor

1. Minutes – motion to approve by George, second Margaret. No discussion. Motion pass
2. Review progress on past action items from committee  
Arrange follow up with Tom on letter to county commissioners

George reviewed the letter he has drafted to CDOW and we discussed amending: a program that provides training and education, land management, CDOW staff capable of addressing local issues, Jeff- written into job descriptions, George – lack of leadership to support field needs, Eric – outreach to landowners through ignorance, Moe – locally CDOW doesn't attend weed meetings and avoids issue (probably out of ignorance), George – State Parks is a good example, CC to DNR executive director

George reviewed the letter he has drafted to CDOW. Is Pam Hutton the right person. Jonathan – drifting snow; George –take better advantage of LTAP for weeds; Moe – invite them to meet at a later meeting; Jeff – what is the effect of mag chloride - sidebar; Dave – research RFP are often available, perhaps a good fit for the mag chloride issue;

Terri moved George seconded to have David Anderson contact CDOT about the research RFP and use on mag chloride.

Terri moved, Moe second, send once reviewed and corrected.

Bill – many concerns regarding Pinyon Canyon Maneuver Site. Spread of Russian knapweed and African rue. George – use their equipment cleaning procedures as an example of positive action but list some concerns about application of standards, etc. Dave – they're working on it and have develop a strategic plan and inventory. Bill- where are they and what do they plan to do? Bill will draft a letter and route for review.

3. Review status of Department funding items  
Write in later – mention putting together legislators, Jeff – connection to bark beetles and climate change,

Terri moved letter to Commissioner requesting budget, Harley second. Update last years. Terri to write.

Discussed how EQIP went and new allocation for USFS and what the future may bring.

4. Site-lead approach update

Terri provided 4 handouts. Reviewed page 19 of state strategic plan. 4/11 phone call was brainstorming activity. NZ has site-led approach focused on lands managed by their Dept of Conservation. Values listed in handout (botanical/wildlife value, etc.). Ways could include utilizing the state parks natural areas program (78 sites), potential conservation areas ided by CNHP, TNC ids conservation areas through ecoregional planning, wilderness areas, research wilderness areas, rare species.

AG: prime farm land and some kind of easement, lands with easements, productivity, maybe some crops have bigger issues with weeds, ranches that have earned awards for conservation,

Enrolling people in the program: a place in each county to promote weed management, nominate or merit based, black eye award, most improved,

Weed fund dollars could flow there, weed management areas could be site-led approaches

Questions: how large an area to focus on, how to prioritize, do we just start somewhere to get things started.

George – involving decision-makers could help later with things like the weed fund

Jeff – not just rare plants but plant communities. Dave – NREL at CSU is collecting data on weed location data. Maybe use these data to alert us to the proximity of weeds to high value areas. Terri- Uncompahgre Plateau Project keeping areas that are weed-free. Harley – can we create weed-free areas

Eric – spectrum of areas that are impacted or not impacted

Bill – will there need to be a monitoring component? Once designated, what next? Terri – areas receiving weed funds will have some defacto monitoring. Jeff – a table with all sites and a field to indicate whether monitoring is sufficient.

Terri- perhaps a broad, all inclusive list that covers 30-50% of state but select a short list to prioritize for funding and attention. Prioritization when there is a benefit.

George – with the lack of resources to invest, maybe we start with protected areas with few weeds. On the ag side, maybe we rotate every year between crops for emphasis.

Subcommittee – look into NRCS, American Farmland trust, Cattlemen Stewardship awards,

5. Review and discuss efforts to develop management plans

Review list in June – reassess timeline.

## **6. Review status of Department request to reinstate funding to Weed Fund**

The Department's efforts to restore funding to the Noxious Weed Management Fund in FY08 suffered from the confusion and inherent problems caused by change in leadership in the Governor's office. Governor Owens and his staff delayed or deferred action on many budget requests, including our request to restore funding to the Fund. Governor Ritter and his staff also delayed taking up all the Department's budget requests as they assumed power early in the legislative session. Consequently, neither governor advanced our request for funding.

During the legislative session, freshman legislator Representative Gibbs introduced a bill to utilize severance tax funds over the next four years for riparian restoration – largely tamarisk removal. The House Agriculture Committee amended the original bill to place the funds in the Weed Fund and the legislation would have allowed the Department to utilize a portion of the funds for other weed management priorities. However, severance tax revenues are projected to fall for the coming year(s) and this bill, along with a number of others, were scuttled.

The Department will be preparing its budget request for the next fiscal year and Eric feels confident that it will include restoration of funding to the Weed Fund and possibly additional staff positions.

### **NRCS EQIP**

The NRCS involved George Beck, Cindy Lair, and Eric Lane in the evaluation of proposals for invasive plant management projects. The group reviewed the proposals and made recommendations to NRCS about prioritizing proposals for funding. There was a delay in announcing accepted proposals but the process has been completed and contracts have been drawn up to utilize up to \$1 million for weed management in the next several years across Colorado.

### **USFS Funding**

The Department has secured a funding commitment again this year from the US Forest Service's Forest Health Protection Program, State and Private Forestry Branch. The funding allocated has dropped from \$280,000 to \$261,000. In anticipation of funding, the Department issued a call for proposals, evaluated them, made preliminary allocation decisions, and began the contracting process. CDA is still completing paperwork with USFS to secure the funds and then contracts with local partners can be completed.

### **Review and discuss efforts to develop management plans**

The plans for houndstongue and perennial pepperweed have been completed and CDA will hold its public hearing with the Ag Commission shortly. In addition, the Republican River watershed will be including the saltcedar management plan calling for eradication in most of the watershed (except an area around Bonny Reservoir) over the next several years.

Eric met with the Sedgwick County weed board and county commissioners to discuss how to address Canada thistle more effectively. The meeting was productive. However, there seems to be little emerging consensus among Sedgwick, Phillips, and Yuma Counties about how to approach the issue. The Department will continue to work with agricultural communities on the eastern plains to devise a more productive approach to Canada thistle management.

Plans for spurred anoda, Venice mallow, and yellow nutsedge remain unfinished. Kelly will be working this summer to develop these plans for implementation in 2008.

#### 7. EDRR update (Kelly)

Kelly provided committee with handouts detailing CDA's Early Detection and Rapid Response State Framework. She explained the purpose of the framework is to provide direction reporting procedures for people when they find rare noxious weeds in Colorado. Items of the framework includes creating a list of target species, establishing a pathway of reporting, develop procedures for vouchering specimens, emphasize public outreach efforts, establish an active detection network of professionals with specific responsibilities to detect invasive species, planning, and rapid response – ATTACK!

Once in place, this framework will fit nicely with the Plant Assessment Form and Ranking Criteria for potential noxious weeds.

#### 8. Plant Assessment Form (PAF) and Ranking Criteria

Kelly provided handouts for both projects to the committee members. The PAF is near completion and will be ready soon to post on CDA's website. It will provide users the ability to complete the form for a plant species they believe should be designated as noxious by scoring species using the criteria and to document supporting evidence. The form was adapted from the Cal-IPC PAF and now includes a fourth section for agriculture. The due date for completed forms to be submitted to Kelly is mid-August.

The Ranking Criteria was also adapted from Cal-IPC and was designed to support categorized lists of invasive plants by ranking each plant's level of impact, invasiveness, distribution for wildlands and agricultural lands. The Ranking Criteria and the PAF will be used in conjunction with each other.

#### 9. Weed ID playing cards and Weed ID booklets (Kelly)

Kelly distributed the new decks of weed id playing cards that were funded by GLCI, CWMA, Adams County, Boulder County, and CDA. The cards feature 52 Colorado noxious weeds. Due to the deck popularity they are going fast. Kelly will look into reprinting costs.

CWMA has come out with a ninth edition of their famous weed id booklet. This is the best one yet. Kelly distributed copies of the booklets to committee members.

10. Agenda and arrangements for next meeting (Harley/Terri)

Items for the next meeting's agenda will include a review of the Rules species list and a reassessment of completion.

It was reaffirmed the next field tour will be held on June 20<sup>th</sup> and the meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The location will be either Craig or Sterling.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30.

DRAFT