

Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 Matching Grants Project:
Gunnison Conservation District: Noxious Weed Control Promotion

What natural resource problem(s) did the project address?

The Gunnison Conservation District has a history of helping landowners treat noxious weed species and working with other partners to keep weeds in the Upper Gunnison watershed at manageable levels. One of the herbicides that is most widely recommended for controlling a wide range of noxious weed species is a relatively new product called Milestone. Milestone is highly effective, very specific to target species, requires only small amounts of chemical per acre (about 7oz) and has a residual effect of only 6 months in the soil. It is not volatile and because of its low use volume and thus low leaching risk, can be used to treat riparian areas up to the water edge. Landowners in the Gunnison district have reported highly favorable results with the use of Milestone and the District believed that if the cost could be reduced from the usual \$22/acre, many more acres of noxious weeds would be treated. With this in mind, they applied for a small grant to offer **50% cost-share of Milestone to landowners who were treating Colorado A or B listed noxious weeds**. Landowners incurred the cost of applying the herbicide.

What was achieved?

- **490 acres of noxious weed treatment accomplished in the Gunnison basin** - targeted species were absinth wormwood, black henbane, canada thistle, scentless chamomile, dalmation toadflax, yellow toadflax, leafy spurge, oxeye daisy, russian knapweed, wild caraway.
- **Maps of treated areas given to Gunnison County Weed Control Program** to promote co-operative efforts.
- **Landowners completed worksheets** with information about species, application rates and environmental conditions and **sites will be monitored in 2009 to assess success of treatment and need for re-treatments**.
- Including in-kind costs of Milestone application, **landowners provided 2:1 in matching funds**
- **District identified future opportunity** to contact landowners who participated to **treat absinth wormwood in the Ohio Creek drainage** and focus future efforts on aggressively treating the species in that area.



Before and after pictures of treatment of absinth wormwood by the highly effective - yet relatively environmentally friendly - Milestone herbicide. Absinth wormwood was introduced by European settlers for its medicinal value and has escaped cultivation to become an aggressive noxious weed that crowds out native vegetation.