

## Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 Matching Grants Project: Rio Grande Conservation District: Noxious Weed Partnership

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

The Rio Grande Conservation District estimates that control of noxious weeds found in Rio Grande County costs about \$137-\$150 per acre and is prohibitive for many private landowners. **Increased development in the county has meant more land disturbance and generally reduced landowner expertise in good land management practices - both factors leading to the increased observance of noxious weeds.** Noxious weeds are a serious and pervasive problem in maintaining both productive agricultural land and wildlife habitat. Partnering with Rio Grande Weed District the Rio Grande Conservation District **targeted small acreage landowners to develop integrated pest management (IPM) plans** to most successfully address noxious weed problems and provide **cost-share as an incentive to apply IPM recommended treatments.**

### What was achieved?

- **1,112 acres of land received IPM plans and 1,202 acres treated** for noxious weeds using grant funds
- **Noxious weed treated were** hoary cress (481 acres), perennial pepperweed (240 acres), Russian knapweed (180 acres) and Canada thistle (301 acres)
- **Awareness heightened of less prevalent (and therefore more successfully controlled) noxious weeds.** Landowners who had large infestations of Canada thistle did not always understand that most important treatment might be for smaller infestations of other less-established species - particularly hoary cress, perennial knapweed and Russian knapweed.
- **Rio Grande Weed District focused their resources on treatment of the encroaching yellow toadflax (250 acres+) and small black henbane (5 acres) infestations** found mostly on county rights of way and canal ditch banks. They also assisted private landowners who had these weed infestations.
- Rio Grande District conservation technician conducted a **30 minute radio interview (aired 3 times)** about noxious weeds and the concept of integrated pest management for most effective weed control.
- **Flyers about noxious weeds posted throughout the county and backed up by education push** from contacts that will continue through the winter of 2009 - already new landowner interest in 2009 treatments.



*Hoary cress has an "allopathic" competitive growing advantage, which means it release chemicals that prevent other plants growing near it. Even after spraying (picture right) reseeding with desirable plants that can establish in the chemically altered soil, or mechanical treatment to break up the chemicals before reseeding, will be critical to preventing future weed infestation.*