

Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 Matching Grants Project:
San Miguel Basin: Sulphur Cinquefoil Control

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

Sulphur cinquefoil is a B-listed state noxious weed that spreads very aggressively and, like all noxious weeds, degrades land productivity and ecological value by eventually crowding out useful and native species. In 2007, 200 acres of Sulphur cinquefoil was found on public and private lands south of Norwood in San Miguel County. This relatively small, isolated occurrence means county-wide eradication is possible and the infestation became a high priority target for the San Miguel County Weed Program. **The San Miguel Conservation District partnered with the San Miguel County Weed program to reach a goal to eradicate 90% of the infestation within 2 years and treat 100% of remaining infestations every year until eradication in 5 years.** Through the strategic coordination and activity of the County Weed Service and the US National Forest Service (USFS), and assistance from the San Miguel Conservation District, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and CSU Extension Service, the 2008 infestations on private and public lands were mapped and treated.

What was achieved?

- **4,000 acres of land surveyed** for Sulphur cinquefoil occurrence and mapping
- **500 acres of land infested and 100+ acres of treatment needed and accomplished**
- **All potentially affected landowners (11) agreed to allow mapping and treatment**
- **Infestations found on 9 private properties - all treated**
- **All public land infestations mapped and treated**
- **Access to infested public forest land restricted** until after treatment of infested area to prevent spread of seeds.
- **Mapping very detailed** -to single plant level in order to ensure complete eradication.
- **Follow-up scouting done in September 2008** to monitor effectiveness of treatment and search for further undiscovered populations - only one more patch of 5-7 plants discovered.
- **Future years treatments committed and planned for to complete eradication** - expect minimum further 3 years required



To make weed eradication a reality eagle-eyed weed scouts need to locate, identify, map and mark every last plant for spot treatment - sometimes over several hundred acres. This aggressive approach is well worth it for early infestations of noxious weeds.

Populations of noxious weeds grow exponentially and once they reach a critical size cannot readily be eradicated. Instead, annual costly treatment is needed simply to keep them in check and prevent further infestation and land degradation.

Sulphur cinquefoil plant targeted for treatment