

Noxious Weed Advisory Committee Meeting
October 24, 2007
Colorado Department of Agriculture, Lakewood

- Meeting commenced at 9:12 am
- **Members present:** Harley Ernst, Sarada Krishnan, Margaret Paget, Jonathan Rife, John Taylor, Bill Wilkinson, Eve Pugh, Heather Knight, Steve Anthony, Scott Nissen, Ken Lair, Tom McClure, Jimmy Dunn
- **Excused:** Moe Schifter, Roc Rutledge, Jay Jutton
- **Nikki Simpson** from the Department of Agriculture recorded the minutes.
- **Introductions of board and eight new members:** Introduce themselves, where from and what profession:
 - Eve Pugh Eastern Adams County-private landowner;
 - Heather Knight- Environmental Organization, The Nature Conservancy;
 - Steve Anthony- County rep, weed manager for Garfield county;
 - John Taylor-Silverthorne, At-large;
 - Harley Ernst-outgoing Chair, landowner, wheat and cattle producer, will now be serving on the CACD;
 - Jonathan Rife- County Weed Supervisor, Douglas county weed inspector;
 - Scott Nissen-weed scientist, CSU;
 - Ken Lair-Resource Specialist, Platte Valley Conservation District Bureau of Reclamation-restoration and invasive species management, lives East of Platteville;
 - Tom McClure-US forest service, invasive species range ecologist (federal representative);
 - Sarada Krishnan- Green Industry, Denver Botanic Gardens;
 - Bill Wilkinson-producer; CO livestock association, NE of Trinidad, Las Animas Weed Board;
 - Jimmy Dunn- producer, Conejos county;
 - Margaret Paget: represent municipalities for the state, City of Wheat Ridge
- **Kelly handed out the Noxious Weed Act, Strategic Plan.**
 - Weed Act: page 11 discusses the state weed advisory committee. Harley mentioned Attendance policy (not in act)- if there is more than one unexcused meeting the committee recommends to the Commissioner for that member to resign from the committee, if you are unable to attend there are option for conference calls, participation in sub-committees also weighs extreme importance, please remember attendance is very important. Kelly went over notes from last November: the committee advises the Department of Agriculture on weed management plans, techniques for eradication, suppression, and department's performance on implementing the weed law as well as what weeds should be listed, where, etc. The committee is not directly part of the department; the chair runs the meetings, not Kelly. Kelly reiterated that each member should initiate networks and it is important for the committee to act as liaisons to their

networks and the constituencies they represent. Kelly handed out the noxious weed list as well as the rules for the weed act. List A species are destined for eradication, List B for eradication, containment, suppression and is up to local governing body, List C like cheatgrass, provide educational assistance on these to local governing body. Scott questioned the listing of Hydrilla in the survey sent out to County weed supervisors. Is there information about this species to say that it may grow in Colorado? Harley commented that if there is an opportunity, even if small, for the weed to survive in the state, we want to take care of it right away. Bill brought up that Hydrilla is not yet known to be in Colorado, Kelly will double check the survey to see if Hydrilla has had an occurrence. Sarada asked about water hyacinth. Harley mentioned that adaptation could be a potential problem as well. Kelly states that is what the committee is about, determining potential species invasiveness. Kelly said that we are currently collecting surveys for List A & List B species (refer to handout passed out at the meeting). Crystal Andrews- (EDRR) collects the information and formulates a map that is sent out to counties so they can mark for eradication, suppression, etc. Perennial pepperweed and houndstongue were done last year. The committee provides input for which weeds to do which year. The weed act is available through lexis nexis, rules are not available from our website yet. The maps that were passed around go with the act, quarter quad maps go out separately, but are used for the act. New weed managers can contact Crystal to get the quarter quad map information.

- **Review/approve October meeting agenda:** Harley opened to added items to agenda, under County Commissioners letter-Harley wanted to add CDOT Kelly has information to be added to the CDOT.
- **Review/approve minutes from June:** Harley made a motion to approve the June minutes, Margaret seconded, motion passed.
- **Review progress on past action items**
 - **Handbook sub-committee:** Steve Anthony has volunteered to serve on this committee with Sarada and John. Members will meet soon to determine what items should be included in the handbook to give to new members.
 - **Letter to county commissioners** on Canada thistle and need for input and support to advance weed management efforts: Harley and Raymond Burgess see thistle as the next bindweed problem and have not seen any dollars for it. There was discussion on whether we want to support a letter to county commissioners. Harley thinks we should go statewide. Bill brought up a pilot program for Tamarisk because a private entity embraced the problem and that's where funding came from (EQIP also). He recommended that the board look for outside help with Canada thistle. Harley found Canada thistle to be strong right under salt cedar, but NRCS won't put dollars into the thistle. Funding for thistle should be separate from that for the Russian olive trees and salt cedar. Harley recommends letter to NRCS as well as county commissioners. Scott states advantages with the herbicide 'Milestone' that can be used in riparian areas and does not need private

applicators' licenses. The product will help, upwards of two years of complete control. Harley asked about Milestone in wheat and Scott says that it is tough on wheat but pasture grass it is very selective and in riparian areas, Milestone is the only product that does not affect groundwater. Harley wants to know if the committee is stepping out of bounds by supporting products. Bill commented that maybe the committee can be an enabler to get corporate and county weed managers to embrace this with county weed management to get some cost share or funds. Maybe the committee can just be an enabler, nothing further. Kelly encourages developing good relationships with county offices and NRCS, always working on improving these relations. Steve recommended referring back to University for factsheets about Canada thistle would be the best factor. With letter to commissioners we need to evaluate the list that goes to county. Ken stated that historically NRCS has considered Canada thistle as an agronomic weed that does not pose economic thresholds, and there are other agencies that agree. The County commissioners may also look at this as a manageable agronomic weed. Colorado NRCS does not provide chemical recommendations. Tom-directs landowners to county weed specialist as well as gives recommendations. Heather suggested raising the priority on management of Canada thistle to create some sort of partnership with irrigators and ditch companies so that we can also deal with riparian areas. Other programs to consider: HPP-habitat partnership programs; Larimer County cost share program for weed treatment, this may be another avenue to prioritize list of species; a demonstration program partnership with DOW; water users to encourage counties that may be behind in these areas. Harley-states thistle is an economic threat and how do we get the farmer and the county weed managers to treat the same way, the same year. Harley feels that we need to have human communication with CDOT to start with and then the county commissioners. We need to work together on the program. Jim Walker is the new weed coordinator for CDOT. He also is their avalanche coordinator during the winter. Tom and Kelly met with supervisor of CDOT regarding concerns about the weed coordinator position being split for weed and avalanche duties. The response was very defensive and not much progress has been made. They did open the position internally and externally, though Jim was internal CDOT worker. Tom suggests putting weeds in the restoration work part of CDOT. Since the letter for CDOT got attention, Harley feels that can we get the same with county commissioners. Kelly - CDOT is part of the Noxious Weed Management Team. Kelly suggested that if the committee would like CDOT to come to one of our meetings we can ask. Harley would hate to have to use the enforcing agency; CDOT is supposed to spray weeds. Kelly is going to pass around the letter that was sent to CDOT. Scott: Minnesota transportation funded research to help with weeds (leafy spurge) is coming up. John states most of this comes down to education. Harley - education is one of the biggest jobs of this committee. Ken - asked if the argument for CDOT was that it would take more money from another program to fund the weed problem. Kelly said that was correct. Scott - does the person they hired have any weed experience? Kelly - Jim was in charge of weed management for the specific county he used to work in; he has attended weed meetings and does have a passion for weed management.

He has vented frustration with CDOT ignoring the problem. Jimmy agrees he should be invited to a meeting. Heather- send letter to supervisor/CDOT when Jim Walker does good work with weeds so that the committee is supporting what he does. John - maybe we should send the CDOT letter copied to him and invite him to this meeting. Tom - concern with crossing the other weed board and where do they overlap and who is supposed to do what. Harley is more concerned about EQIP and NRCS letters than the county commissioner letter for this particular moment. Let's be careful about what we do but let's be sure that we DO do something.

- **BREAK**
- Kelly- **Fact sheets** are in the process of being done, Nikki is currently working on them.
- **Noxious Weed Management Team (NWMT):** The purpose of the team is to formalize a cooperative relationship between federal and state agencies in Colorado. The weed management team has been operating under an expired MOU – but next meeting will regroup the MOU and update it. Revising the MOU so that the new governor can sign, looking at including the CWMA, as well as Colorado County weed supervisor team representative. There are guidelines in place but we can redirect it right now. Tom – the MOU is pretty vague currently, current assessment of the group. Harley - are there any producers on the board. Tom – expanding to include farm bureau, conservation districts, etc. Ken – this is an advisory group that should have more influence on providing recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture. It seems that action needs to be taken with CDOT or whoever- this group seems to be the one that can do it. Bill- if we were to get weed fund back, that interest would follow money, if there was more money would CDOT be more interested. Kelly- they have the money it is more a matter of priority. Kelly – Russell George is the director of CDOT now, committee can come in and advise Commissioner Stulp to meet with CDOT, DNR, etc. Going through proper channels may be a more effective way to communicate the issue. Bill – does CDOT realize that there is a responsibility for highways/medians/etc.? Kelly - CDOT was one of the signees on the plan, they also have their own weed management plan however; the person in charge had never seen their own plan. Kelly and Tom may be able to report between the two groups. Scott - possibly need private landowners to threaten to sue for right's-of-way spreading weeds on private land.
- **NWMT discussion continued:** Ken - in an advisory role, but could include the other management group to a certain extent, up to us to see where others have input as a coalition – we should be communicating. Steve - back to executive order in 97 on Tamarisk, that was effective for awhile, there is a hierarchy or chain of command, there should be some way to have a state agency to do what we are telling everyone else to, maybe an executive order may work for a few years. Harley – should we be writing them or are we overstepping bounds for the Commissioner (should he be writing them). Heather - what is the hierarchy.

Kelly updated Cindy Lair on what the discussion is and asked why the two have not previously blended or communicated in the past. Using CDOT as an example – how do we approach them to get better answers. Is the committee overstepping bounds or should the committee advise the Commissioner? Cindy – send the letter to the Commissioner to get his input, he will be limited in his position to get things moving, think it is a political necessity to do that first. And that the committee should not have to feel restrained to stick with the department on issues, other avenues: legislature, meet with agriculture committee, should have a game plan so that the needs are received well, historically it has not been as prioritized, more collaboration between state agencies - is on paper but has not actually been put in place. The legislature would be a good place, but for now go to the Commissioner of Agriculture and the Ag Commission for their assistance. Harley – law sunshine in 2013 but we should not wait until then to interact with legislation, we need to be more proactive. Jimmy- we need to access the progress made and the effect of the problem to report to the Commissioner. Tom – the background of the committee did not exist before the MOU (formed in 2003). Cindy- 1st step, request presence of Commissioner Stulp to come to a meeting and see how he might be able to help the committee. He can't create miracles but he would give it a real effort and may be possible to take to the cabinet committee where it really needs to be discussed to make it a priority for all departments (spec. CDOT). Harley – let's go as far as we can to get the issues out, caution the new board to not be scared to try. Scott - keeping Commissioner informed would be “politically correct”. Cindy – yes we want the Commissioner along the way so he is not broadsided to build a partnership and we would provide him with effective arguments (Ken). Tom – we need to gather specifics, what we want them specifically to do (CDOT). Kelly takes recommendations from the committee to the commissioner (whether agree or not). Harley – the main thing is to work together. Cindy - good to have tangible points that we can provide to CDOT and other agencies of what the basic objectives they need to be accomplishing. Issues such as leadership, communication, structure authority, funding, protocol for managing, and how they interact with counties. This list we can give to John and then set these points. They need it on paper. Tom - out of line to present recommendations through DNR and involve other departments? Cindy – DNR themselves need to take care of things in respect to weeds, not just focus on CDOT, no state agency is exempt from this. Kelly - a similar letter was sent to DOW but no one has heard any reply, Harley - mine reclamation board too. Harley - would like to recommend updating the weed team memorandum. Cindy – should the event of the signing be more ceremonial, that would put them on the spot to support. Tom - attach some numbers to it, question how do you get kudos to good guys and prodding to get bad guys moving and get things to happen. Heather – like having quantitative measure of state and federal agencies such as 10% increase in effectiveness of weed control, Eve- plan of work with attainable goals, Heather – does it mean weed mgmt plans for every agency; there is some kind of recognition. Cindy - maybe we should plan to do during summer time at a state park and have a media event. Eve - media may help us being proactive and get public support. Heather – weed mgmt plans for all

species on the list –is that an effective tool? Kelly - it may be a good start. Cindy - list B was staggered due to the time it takes to complete the project, over time counties were overwhelmed on managing all lists on list B - if staggered then they could have time to gear up programs. It doesn't make sense to wait for plans for weeds, but that is how it was set up. Harley – do we want to get that in high gear to get that started? We will now proceed full speed on ALL management plans. Steve reminded that we should look at the list as the first step. Harley concluded that the county commissioner letter will be rounded up by the next meeting, that the committee should have the Commissioner and a CDOT representative here at the next meeting and the list should be put together (for what areas need improving and possibly how).

- **Lunch**
- **Side note during lunch: Cindy Lair – trip to Guam**
 - The first week of January there will be extension specialists from the Northern islands of Guam to learn about our invasive prevention efforts. They would like to learn about EDRR and it would be great if the other winter advisory board meeting was during the time of their stay so that they could be invited to attend.
- **Review status of Department request to reinstate funding to Weed Fund**
 - Kelly described, in brief, the history of the fund and informed that Governor Ritter approved the request for the weed fund to be reinstated with moneys from interest on unclaimed property. Now we proceed to legislature, at some point everyone will need to contact their networks and local representatives to draft a bill. The total request was for \$500,000 with \$325,000 for the weed fund and the rest allocated to hire two FTE positions. Kelly will know more in a month and get back to everyone. She will send out an email to everyone so that the committee is on the same page along with a heads up email. The timeframe we are looking at is December/January.
- **Review progress of weed surveys/mapping for species up for 2008 management plans**
 - Maps go out hopefully this Friday. Early December is when the management plans will be written. The Agriculture Commission has the ultimate approval/denial of changes in early May and then the plans go in effect July 1, 2008.
- **GLCI progress**
 - Grazing lands conservation initiative – The position of the High Plains Weed Specialist has been filled by Mike Rigirozzi who will start on December 3, 2007. The grant is for 3 years which will start on December 3, 2007. The project is to create/strengthen coalitions between counties, Conservation Districts, etc on 6 target species for the eastern plains of Colorado.

- **Update on Plant Assessment Form (PAF)& Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR)**
 - The PAF was made to assist in determining if potential invasive species should be added to the noxious weed list. George Beck and Terri Schulz spent a lot of time on this project. Kelly did a test run and it seemed to have worked perfectly. Kelly suggested about possibly having an alert list in addition to the Noxious List. Tom asked how the watch list would differ from List A? Kelly didn't have an exact answer, it could be just an alert list due to time constraints of actually listing species (use in the interim while the species is being investigated to determine if it qualifies and where on the list). Steve said that the state of Tennessee has a "weeds to watch for" list and the only difference is that the watch list does not have legal implications, but just provides awareness to the public. Tom stated that it could include species that need further evaluation. Scott said "APHIS has to develop something like the PAF for US importation". Denver Botanic Gardens is developing test plots at their Chatfield location to test potential Plant Select plants for invasiveness before introduction. Sarada stated that DBG does not endorse plants with invasive potential. Scott said that the Green Industry and CDOT need to know what to do. Tom mentioned it is hard to do because most test plots test 5 different environment places, but what about the other 50 locations. Sarada – the Green Industry do not want to be the cause of the problem and that education is key with them. Steve mentioned that at the next meeting the committee should discuss the Nursery Act, Seed Act, and Noxious Weed List because there are cracks between them. Ken said that some seed mixes have no noxious seeds where others can have up to 2% or more. Tom agreed that cheatgrass for example can have up to 200 seeds/lb. This is a concern.

- **Realignment of subcommittees and assignment of members, election of leadership positions**
 - Subcommittees will be next meeting, please think about where you would like to serve.
 - New Chair position: Bill Wilkinson and Jonathan Rife were nominated. Jonathan was voted as the committee's new chair.
 - Vice Chair position: Steve Anthony and Margaret Paget were nominated. Margaret was elected as the committee vice chair.
 - Secretary position: Eve Pugh, Sarada Krishnan, John Taylor, and Heather Knight were nominated. Sarada is the new Committee Secretary.

- **Agenda, arrangements for next meeting, set dates for 2008**
 - The 2008 meeting dates are as follows:
 - January 2, 2008 at the Colorado Department of Agriculture Lakewood Office.
 - April 29-30, 2007 in Sterling, CO.
 - June 18-19, 2007 near the Purgatoire River (Trinidad, Walsenburg)
 - October 29th at the Colorado Department of Agriculture Lakewood office.

- **Meeting Adjourned 1:35pm**