

Minutes of the Colorado State Noxious Weed Advisory Committee meeting held on April 30th, 2014, at Denver Botanic Gardens, 8500 W. Deer Creek Canyon Road, in Littleton, Colorado

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m. by Steve Ryder, state weed coordinator, with these members present: Shawn Wissel, Matt Scott, Pat Hayward, Louis Bridges, Ed Norden, Fred Midcap, Larry Vickerman, Ben Duke, Karn Stiegelmeier, Jim Walker, and Randy Malcom. Members absent were: Ken Harper, Fran Pannebaker, Jack Flowers, Matt Moorhead, George Beck, and Elizabeth Brown. Attending from the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) were Steve Ryder, Patty York, and Cecily Mui. Introductions followed, with Matt Scott being welcomed as a new member of the committee, and appreciation expressed to Larry Vickerman of Denver Botanic Gardens for hosting our committee at their Chatfield Reservoir location. Minutes of the November, 2013, meeting, and notes of the January, 2014, meeting were discussed and approved as submitted. Fred Midcap was elected chairman of the committee, Larry Vickerman vice chairman, and Randy Malcom secretary, all to serve through the remainder of 2014.

Next, we discussed a CDA staff briefing paper outlining some weed work around the state. Pat had a question about the San Juan Headwaters Partnership. Steve said that is an organization in the making, involving San Juan, San Miguel, La Plata, and Ouray Counties. These areas have a lot of federal lands and very little local tax base to address noxious weed issues. Initially the Partnership is an effort to educate the public—jeep clubs, fishermen, mountain enthusiasts, and others—about weeds and to help with weed identification and reporting. The Forest Service is willing to help as well and already does some spraying and biological control work. However, noxious weeds are plentiful in ski areas, and with little county money available much more needs to be done to address this issue. Louis said there are Title II federal monies available from Resource Advisory Committees (RAC) that can be used for weed work by multiple entities including Forest Service and county governments. These funds are also used for road and water projects; there are several RAC's around the state, and it might be possible for the San Juan Headwaters Partnership to benefit from this resource.

Pat asked about Forest Service grant monies. Patty said funding has increased, which will be helpful. Steve said the Joint Budget Committee of the state legislature increased weed work funding to \$700,000. This came about largely because of lobbying efforts by the Colorado Weed Management Association (CWMA) and support within the state legislature. Ed asked how purchasing a new office complex for CDA might impact the state's weed funding. Steve said as long as the economy of the state is good, there should be no reduction in funds for the noxious weed program.

Larry asked about the West Metro Weed Workshop held this spring in Golden. This event involved the cities of Golden, Arvada, Lakewood, Westminster, Wheat Ridge, and Broomfield, and its purpose was to educate municipalities on noxious weed law

and compliance, and to encourage them to become more active in addressing List A species, especially myrtle spurge. Steve said there was a good turnout at the meeting, some cities are reluctant to make greater commitments, but more cooperation is developing. Larry said El Paso County, especially Colorado Springs, has a lot of myrtle spurge. Patty said during Denver's "purge the spurge" event door hangers were placed on 1,000 homes to encourage spurge awareness.

Fred asked Cecily to talk about her tour of northeast Colorado counties, where she had met with county officials to encourage weed control efforts. She said good discussions took place in Morgan and Washington Counties, but there is limited support from their county commissioners. Phillips and Yuma Counties have very good programs. Fred said in Morgan County not much has been done on weeds, partly because of the term-limiting of county commissioners. A discussion of special weed districts and boards of commissioners ensued. Ben said Elbert County had a good weed program, but when new commissioners came on board it was discontinued. He said the support of county commissioners is essential. Ed and Karn talked about educating county commissioners, and recommended that all new commissioners be apprised of weed issues when they take office. Steve said CDA would be glad to work with Colorado Counties Incorporated (CCI) to try to accomplish this goal. Cecily said 44 counties are treating weeds, 10 counties have limited programs, and 10 have no weed program. The list of cooperating and non-cooperating counties was examined and will be updated by Cecily.

Jim asked if there were any questions for the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). He said more people and equipment are dedicated to weed work than ever before, thanks to support from CDA and to agreements with various counties to assist CDOT with spray work. He believes these cooperative efforts between CDOT, county governments, and other entities are essential to good weed control efforts.

Cecily talked about lesser known List B species. CDA recommended that we de-list Venice mallow and spurred anoda, keep yellow nutsedge a List B, and move quackgrass from List B to List C. After some discussion it was moved and seconded to accept this recommendation from CDA. The motion passed.

Next, Patty talked about Watch List species. There are 2 species to consider removing from the list: hairy willow-herb and flowering rush. Hairy willow-herb (*epilobium hirsutum*) is found in Colorado. There are 11 native species of *epilobium* here, some of which are endangered species and need to be avoided in control work. It is present near Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield, and several locations along the Front Range. The total acreage is small, mostly located in Jefferson County. Flowering rush is not known to be present in Colorado. Colorado State University (CSU) is researching it. Its rare and protected in Europe, some forms do not flower, no treatment options are known, and it impacts fish. Flowering rush is found in northern states, including Nebraska, is not restricted in Colorado, and can be

purchased online. Both hairy willow-herb and flowering rush will be evaluated and CDA will recommend what to do with these 2 species by our next meeting in August.

Also, Patty talked about work on African rue. Its found only in Las Animas County, for sure, but generally inhabits arid areas, and is toxic to livestock. An African rue Task Force, whose members include Steve, Patty, and George, as well as Scott Nissen, Jim Sebastian (both from CSU), and Tim D'Amato (Larimer County), met in March of this year. The plan is to map its location this year, and put together a team to treat all known plants with a herbicide next year. There is an African rue look-alike (mockheather) that is found only in areas with gypsum soils and in the southern third of the state; care must be taken not to confuse the two.

Next was a discussion of the continuing effort to improve data collection with regards to noxious weed populations in Colorado, the goal being to obtain as accurate an assessment as possible of their distribution and impact. It had been suggested to ascertain if the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) could be utilized to survey private landowners concerning their noxious weed populations. Steve said he had contacted NASS about this possibility and found them receptive to the idea. A discussion followed with regards to how a survey would be constructed and the questions to be asked of landowners. I suggested seeking assistance from farm groups such as Farm Bureau and Farmers Union as well as NASS. Ben thought CSU Cooperative Extension might be a better option. Steve, Patty, and Cecily will look into this further and report back to the committee.

Next on the agenda was to be a discussion of the various lists of plants of concern and how they align with each other toward the purpose of properly accounting for each species. This will be postponed to the August meeting. We proceeded to a discussion of funding strategies for new General Fund monies in the coming fiscal year. The Colorado weed fund has been about \$200,000 per year the last few years. Next year it will be increased to \$725,000. Steve said it takes about \$250,000 to cover grant applications for List A weed work around the state, and these grants require the recipient to match state funds with funding from their own sources. He said typically 80-90% of state funds are used up in addressing List A grants. Some of the additional funds for next year will be used thus: \$100,000 for disaster relief efforts associated with noxious weeds, \$60,000 for a Front Range bio-control person, \$20,000 for phase II of the Economic Impact Study, and \$100,000 for additional grants. Also, CDA will request continuous spending authority from the legislature to allow for greater flexibility in dealing with Fiscal Year (FY) restrictions, and to allow CDA to rollover unused funds into the following field season. With more grant proposals being accepted next year there will be a need for more people from our committee to review applications, if possible, as well as a need to possibly place more guidelines on the types of grants awarded, such as minimum/maximum amounts. Currently, most grants require some action of weed control to take place, i.e., they are management-focused rather than education-focused. With increased funding more education-focused grants may be awarded. Shawn spoke to the review process for grant applications. CDA funded 38 grants

this year, and it takes a considerable amount of time, effort, and discussion to choose the winners. Steve said as more grants are awarded next year there needs to be an educational component to some, with a strategic approach utilized to maximize the effectiveness of the grant program. Lou suggested keeping the review process simple, for times when fewer dollars are available to award.

In closing remarks Karn said her county has fire mitigation projects ongoing, and that there are weed issues that could explode. Federal assistance for fire mitigation does not always require a weed control component. Shawn said the organization he works with does require weed control in reclamation contracts. Larry then talked about Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield. He said there are 21 List B and C noxious weeds on their property and they use burning, herbicides, and grass seeding to address these weed issues. There are 3 licensed herbicide applicators on staff, and this summer a weed mapping project will be conducted. Our meeting adjourned at 2:50, then Larry took us on a walking tour of weed sites, explained some of the operations/activities at Denver Botanic Gardens, and answered questions from the committee. The day concluded at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Randy Malcom, secretary