

Minutes of the August 12th and 13th meeting of the Colorado State Noxious Weed Advisory Committee, held in Rifle and Glenwood Springs

The Colorado State Noxious Weed Advisory Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) met at noon at the Garfield County offices at the Garfield County Airport on August 12th, 2014, for the purpose of visiting some noxious weed control work in the area. Steve Anthony, Garfield County Vegetation Manager, hosted this event. Committee members in attendance were: Pat Hayward, Matt Scott, George Beck, Fred Midcap, Ken Harper, Fran Pannebaker, and Randy Malcom. Attending from the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) were Steve Ryder, Patty York, Cecily Mui and Jess McKinney. Also in attendance were Hal Pearce of the U.S. Forest Service, and Mr. Pannebaker. After lunch Steve Ryder called the gathering to order, introductions were made, then Steve Anthony spoke about what we would see on our tour of weed work in his area of the state. With a large amount of oil and gas development in Garfield County he explained that the state of Colorado regulates the well pads, but pipeline revegetation and weed management work is under the jurisdiction of county government. A discussion of the regulatory process ensued.

The group then carpoled to three different sites around Rifle. The first site visited was the Beaver Creek area south of Rifle, where pipeline revegetation was observed. With hundreds of miles of pipeline buried in the rugged terrain of the area, Steve A. spoke of the challenges to good noxious weed control and the importance of having an effective regulatory system in place. Then we travelled to a second site where we saw some of the work being done on the Silt to Rifle Tamarisk and Russian Olive Project. Steve A. explained some of the various approaches which have been undertaken within this project, and the comparative effectiveness of each. Next we travelled to a third site where a biological control project on Russian Knapweed is being conducted. Jess McKinney of the state insectary has worked on this project and explained it to us. An insect called a Gall Midge (*Jaapiella ivannikovi*) was released onto Russian knapweed at this site. These are small flies that create galls on the growing tips of the plant, decreasing plant biomass and its ability to flower. She said ongoing observations and evaluations will be needed to determine the effectiveness of this biocontrol measure. This concluded our field trip, which was very interesting and informative for the Committee.

On August 13th, 2014, the Committee met for its regular quarterly meeting, which took place at the Glenwood Springs Community Center in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Committee members present included: Shawn Wissel, Fred Midcap, Matt Scott, George Beck, Pat Hayward, Ken Harper, Fran Pannebaker, Jim Walker, and Randy Malcom. In attendance from the CDA were Steve Ryder, Patty York, and Cecily Mui. Also attending were Steve Anthony, and Laurie Mingen, Executive Director of the Colorado Weed Management Association (CWMA). Committee members unable to attend were: Karn Stiegelmeier, Ed Norden, Louis Bridges, Jack Flowers, Ben Duke, Matt Moorhead, Larry Vickerman, and Elizabeth Brown.

Fred called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.. After a time of introductions and welcome, minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Steve, Patty, and Cecily then talked about some of the ongoing weed work at CDA and the Committee had some discussion on various aspects of this work. Pat asked about the weed mobile app, whether it was for the general public or not. Steve said this app has been developed with the assistance of a consulting firm and should be ready to be released by year's end. Cecily said it is for use by the general public. There is a need for 4 new members to serve on the Committee. Steve said notices/advertisements would be sent out to solicit prospective new members, with a particular need for representation from the San Luis Valley, and also the northwest part of the state. Cecily spoke about using a species of rust to control Canada thistle. There appears to be good potential for this rust to be effective. George said this rust species does not seem to affect other organisms, and may be especially effective on Canada thistle around ponds and areas of higher humidity. Some of the work of the Poudre Invasive Species Partnership was discussed, especially biocontrol agents for Dalmatian toadflax control, which are proving very effective. Also, the work of the developing San Juan Cooperative Weed Management Area was discussed. Yellow toadflax and Oxeye daisy are the target species of concern there.

Next, Laurie Mingen of CWMA spoke about the role her organization plays in Colorado to help with weed control. CWMA has about 200 members and does a lot of education work, including Weeds 101 workshops, and the Spring Training School to train and certify weed control employees of various entities around the state. They publish a yearly calendar, as well as a variety of weed booklets including Garden Smart Colorado—A Guide to Non-Invasive Plants for your Garden, to help educate Coloradans about noxious weeds. George Beck is a presenter at many of their workshops. CWMA needs more members to help with their ongoing work to protect Colorado's native habitat. Laurie also spoke of their work with the General Assembly to improve funding for weed control. CWMA was instrumental in securing significantly more funds for CDA to grant out to local entities this year. They also oversaw the drafting of Economic Impact Study on noxious weeds which was used by the Legislature in considering funding levels in this area. This study was discussed, especially whether it will be updated from time to time. Steve expressed a concern for reporting back to the state legislature as to how the new funds were utilized. Cecily mentioned that in her conversations with water conservancy districts there is a real lack of understanding of noxious weed issues, but a willingness to learn. She suggested the possibility of CWMA reaching out to these entities to help with this needed education. Also, it was mentioned that many weed districts have trouble finding good seasonal weed employees. Could CWMA help with improving the availability and pay schedule of seasonal workers? A discussion of pay rates ensued. Fran said she knows of no land/weed managers in her area that are tied into CWMA's education services, and wondered what could be done to help connect CWMA to these folks since they could provide such a valuable service in this regard. George said since CWMA hired a lobbyist to work on their behalf within the state legislature, CWMA's status as an organization has been

enhanced significantly. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Laurie and CWMA for the important work they are doing.

Next was a discussion of the assessment of aquatic invasive plants. Steve said the assessment forms used for invasive plants are geared more for terrestrial species rather than aquatics. CDA commissioned a study led by Scott Nissen of Colorado State University (CSU), to compare and collate the two types of assessments. Steve said a valid assessment tool needs to catch invasives while leaving noninvasives alone. This can be difficult due to lack of knowledge or experience with new plants. The practical aspects of plant assessments, including working with the nursery industry, how terrestrials and aquatics are handled via an administrative protocol, a specie's relationship to the Noxious Weed Act, etc., were discussed by Steve. In an assessment process each plant receives a score: there are many factors to consider within the assessment. CSU will report to the CDA when their study of the assessment tools is complete.

Next, Steve talked about the process for "listing" a plant, i.e., for placing it on one of the state's noxious weed lists. He said the assessment form is used, then additional questions are considered, such as, is it a federally recognized weed, its mode of reproduction, risk in Colorado to become invasive, costs/benefits of listing it, and what kind of enforcement procedures to use. Also, external stakeholders are contacted. Then, it's submitted to the Committee for a recommendation to list or not. Steve Anthony asked about economic concerns, such as plants imported from other states for sale in Colorado, or plants sold via the internet. Patty then talked about hairy willow-herb, which is on the state's Watch List and is proposed to be moved to List A. It is found in parts of Colorado, especially near Purple loosestrife sites, mostly in Jefferson County, some in northeast Colorado, in wetland areas, and it spreads in waterways. She talked about its assessment by CDA, and, its economic impact. It currently is not in the nursery trade, and CDA's goal is to eradicate it while populations are relatively small. Steve encouraged the Committee to ask around to determine if people are seeing it and have concerns about it. A discussion ensued as to whether to list it, or not. George said he questions the willingness of county officials to control it, if it's listed, and asked if state monies could be used. Steve thought state monies would be available for any List A species, but that the primary responsibility for control measures is placed on the counties. George said if state efforts could help eliminate this weed it would be a victory for the CDA weed program. Shawn said it would be easier to get the weed controlled if it's placed on List A: a species does not receive much money if it's just on the Watch List. Fran expressed concern that the weed be treated now, and that it be placed on List A. Patty said some locales are currently treating it, and the species can be placed on a local weed list, by a county or municipality, even if it's not on the state list.

Next, Steve spoke about the annual Rule amendment. He said some at CDA want to get rid of the maps included in the Rule. However, he stressed the importance of the maps, to which George agreed. Steve reviewed some of the changes being made to the Rule, including updated management plans for Absinth wormwood. Garden

loosestrife will be added to the Watch List. Chinese clematis, plumeless thistle, spotted knapweed, black henbane, and oxeye daisy were discussed. Steve asked for approval from the Committee of the Rule to be proposed. The Committee took the following action: "A motion was made by George Beck, and seconded by Shawn Wissel, to recommend adoption of amendments to Rule CCR 1206-Draft 08114, as presented, with some additional mapping data to be inserted. Maintaining the maps as part of the Rule is recommended." This motion passed unanimously. Cecily said that with regards to mapping data, she is working with county governments to get better reporting of noxious weed infestations. Steve said consistency in reporting is an ongoing issue that CDA is working to address.

Next, Steve spoke about Weed Fund grants for year 2014-2015. With increased funding for weed work, more grants will be awarded for next year. There is concern about being able to properly monitor large numbers of grants. He would like to see grant applications involving multiple entities, to cut down on large numbers of small projects. Also, he anticipates needing additional help from the Committee to review applications, and would also like input from the Committee as to how the process might be improved. Altering grant applications to keep them succinct and precise is one possibility.

Next on the agenda was some discussion of the three topics around which the Committee's work is organized—(1) weed science and management, (2) partnerships and funding, and (3) policy and enforcement. Within weed science and management, Steve mentioned interest in re-evaluating each listed species based on changes in their acreage, sites, and distribution. As for partnerships and funding, the Ag Management Fund is no longer a source for weed funds. Concerning policy and enforcement, some discussion took place. Steve mentioned that the state of Colorado had never "enforced" on anyone, but has come close to doing so a couple times. The CDA can require weed law compliance of other state agencies. There are some state lands with noxious weed problems. Also CPW has been inconsistent at times in addressing weed issues. Matt said his crew found noxious weeds on state land today, and also at other times. George said there is no excuse for government entities to be out of compliance with state weed law, and would talk to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) about the matter. He emphasized the importance of all government agencies working together. Steve Anthony suggested an executive order from the governor to require state agencies to comply. Shawn said the letter sent out to county governments was a useful step to encourage weed law compliance. Then, Steve Ryder suggested to limit weed grants to those entities that comply with the noxious weed act, which was an idea well received by the Committee.

In closing comments I spoke about using the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to survey private landowners about their noxious weed populations, and gave to Steve a framework of possible questions that could be included in such a survey. This will be looked into further by CDA. George spoke about the Healthy Habitats Coalition (HHC), saying he is more optimistic than ever that Congress will

eventually pass this program into law. The current bill has strong bipartisan support, and focuses on the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior as the primary agencies. He encouraged writing letters to our senators to ask for their support of HR 3994, The Prevention, Management, and Control Act for Federal Lands. Fran spoke about weed management in her agency—few employees and low budget. She said the U.S. Department of Interior is providing a lot of money currently for establishing forbs for pollinator habitat. Pat spoke of a horticulture conference she attended—the trend is for smaller gardens and plants that do not spread. Shawn said he has been able to partner with several entities to fund Russian olive removal on about 3,000 acres, and plant beneficial species to replace them. This has been good for noxious weed control. Matt asked Cecily about biocontrol for houndstongue. This plant is found in southwest Colorado, and an insect from Canada is proving quite effective in controlling it. However, there are concerns this insect could harm *Hackelia* plants found in the Mesa Verde area. Appreciation was expressed to Steve Anthony for hosting us, and for the excellent field trip. The meeting was adjourned by chairman Fred Midcap at 2:55 p.m..

Respectfully submitted by,
Randy Malcom, secretary