

**Noxious Weed Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
Colorado Department of Agriculture – Broomfield, CO
Meeting held at the Carson Nature Center, Littleton, CO
January 28, 2016**

Introductions and Attendance:

Present: David Blach, Elizabeth Brown, Larry Hoozee, Lauren Kolb, Scott Nissen, Hal Pierce, Larry Sargent, Matt Scott, Kelly Uhing, Larry Vickerman, Jim Walker, Shawn Wissel

Absent: Pat Hayward, Evan Jeffries, Matt Moorhead, Karn Stiegelmeier, Tom Talley

CDA Staff: Steve Ryder, Patty York, Cecily Mui

Minutes from the Last Meeting:

No changes and accepted.

Orientation of Committee and Elections of Officers:

Committee voted to keep the same officers, and that was accepted. CDA staff will continue to take meeting minutes until there's a volunteer for the office of Secretary.

Steve gave an overview of the Noxious Weed Act (role and responsibilities of the state, local government, private landowners; the List A, B, and C noxious weeds structure; the Watch List in the Rule; enforcement concepts; committee structure and responsibilities defined in the Act; cooperation between agencies; funding for weed control).

Kelly brought up the question of the necessity of having the majority of the board within a county to be held by landowners with a minimum of 40 acres; this is a challenge for small and urban counties like Denver and Broomfield. Steve said that he will give that some more consideration.

Roles of the committee – Annual review of the Rules of the Noxious Weed Act; outreach and feedback to and from the local community; make recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture (weed designation, research, management, compliance, etc.); provide input to the staff

CDA Updates:

Larry Vickerman asked about parrotfeather at Cheyenne Mountain Zoo; suggested speaking with a staff member there (Bob) who was insistent on planting various species of exotic plants, including noxious weeds. This might be a location to focus on for control.

Patty provided List A outreach material to new members.

Rulemaking Summary:

Cecily provided an update on the List B rulemaking process, available tools on the CDA website, and an update of the 2015 rule update.

Hal asked if CDA helps coordinators with decisions about containment, suppression etc. based on reported acreage. Cecily said yes and that the determination is also based on site access, resources, distribution, etc.

Lauren asked if acreage numbers were based on gross acres or infested acres. It was explained that all reported acres were based on infested acres which is the acres of cover should all known plants of that species grew next to each other within the quarter quad.

EDRR Framework:

Patty currently has 3 flow charts of EDRR processes and has formed a committee to assist with the EDRR framework development. She explained that the overall concept for early detection and rapid response is to treat weed infestations when they are still small enough to have not caused detrimental environmental and/or economic harm. She also explained that Colorado's take on EDRR is also to include a "prevention and preparation" section. She discussed some of the rapid response actions which, in the past, has included a crew to assist with control.

The EDRR document will have both a framework and a strategic plan component. The goal is to provide a draft by the next advisory committee meeting in April.

The EDRR committee is working on defining the components of the EDRR framework, and especially the various assessment pieces. Some ideas discussed were to split up the List A species into "present" and "prevention" species, depending on if they are in the state yet, and to add an EDRR plan to List A fact sheets. Patty is also contacting adjacent states to discuss EDRR, species of concern, and collaboration.

Hal asked about input from the states to the west and south because they have not yet responded and have species that are potential threats to CO. Steve talked about the weed management differences between the various programs of adjacent states. Patty talked about known noxious weeds close to Colorado in the southwest region. The committee talked about organizations and regional meetings that brings states together for discussions and collaborative efforts for eradication. The committee also talked about other species of concern moving towards CO, such as buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*) and *Ventenata dubia*.

Scott talked about CSU research on Esplanade (Indaziflam) that targets seedlings and provides a long soil residual. This chemical doesn't have a Rangeland label, but it is acceptable in natural areas. Despite cost, this might give an option for sites that are difficult to access; and with residual action over years, this can be cost effective.

Patty will be traveling this summer to provide more outreach on EDRR.

Elizabeth asked about the national EDRR framework and how Patty is integrating her plan to those ideas. Patty said that is where the current EDRR concept came from, and she will plan to incorporate any new and pertinent ideas from it, but that her focus is a design at the state level.

Steve asked the committee for ideas on how we can keep potentially invasive plants out of the state. These ideas can be incorporated into the Prevention and Preparation and Network parts of the EDRR framework.

Larry Sargent asked about the reporting process to get information from people on the land to the state. Patty talked about the current “Weed Spotter Form” that is available online, along with ideas that are being considered for the Strategic Plan such as utilizing citizen science, mobile app reporting, etc.

Noxious Weed Grants and Funding:

Steve provided a history on grant funding in the noxious weed program (State and Private Forestry and Ag Management Fund). The grant funds have been structured to guide weed management prioritization, especially List A species. In the last few years, the state legislature provided additional funding to the state for weed management which has been very helpful. This helps address the unfunded mandate complaints from land managers and owners. Currently, grant funding consists of the state legislative funds and State and Private Forestry (SPF), and our program provides grants through the SPF and Noxious Weed Fund. This year the proposal requests were over \$1 million, with an available fund of approximately \$700,000. Some of the funds are already allocated, i.e. grant admin support, natural disaster funds, etc.

Steve talked about the state’s fiscal year obstacles (July 1st – June 30th) with the grant funds. Our program is proposing to the legislature a rollover option so that grant awards can match the field season and minimize the administrative demands on our partners during the field season.

Mapping System Improvements:

Patty presented on the online mapping system which is a free, user friendly tool for mapping.

She showed the List B reporting tools at the quarter quad level and the new “Import from Prior Year” function. Hal asked about data updates and access permission to the system. Patty also talked about the benefits of trend and historic data. Elizabeth asked about state and federal reporting. Committee chatted about data access, uniformity, sharing, and monitoring sites with past infestations.

Patty showed List A reporting tools that collect data at the polygon level. She demonstrated the Site Annual Reporting tool that shows polygons and % cover or number of plants; Hotspots Mapping; and map Printing. Mapping data can provide trend data over time. She also discussed concerns for public access to property specific data; the state will eventually provide List A data at the quarter quad level. The staff can export data as shapefiles. Many of these functions are new with the recent Phase 3 updates.

The mapping software will be revised to a new platform in about a year, but it will keep all the same functions. The current software should not be going offline as the new system develops.

Steve also talked about other noxious weed data collection systems, like the EDDMapS system.

Strategic Plan Follow-up:

Steve provided background information on the 2001 strategic plan (developed soon after the Noxious Weed Act, outreach, the 4 goals in the plan, 12 working groups).

Cecily summarized the strategic plan work session at the last NWAC meeting. She presented the 5 goals/themes that came out of the group discussion and possible objectives that clarify each goal.

Goal 1: Educate everyone about noxious weeds. Hal suggested that we should also emphasize the environmental impacts of why we should care about the importance of noxious weeds (ecosystem services) along with economic impacts. What will ultimately be lost if we do nothing (e.g. wildlife habitat). Also add health impacts.

Elizabeth said that Parks and Wildlife has shifted their education campaign from one of awareness to desired behavioral changes. She also asked about funding for education in the weed fund grants. Cecily explained that for the most part, NWF are used for on the ground weed control but that there are possibilities in the future for a more robust campaign, especially with CWMA and Healthy Landscapes.

The committee discussed enforcement outreach and understanding responsibilities at the local level.

Goal 2: Adequate and sustainable funding and resources. Steve mentioned that there are many tiers to these objectives and maybe they should be better defined (federal, state, and local government levels) because there is a need for support at the various levels. Elizabeth said that one of their problems within DNR is that there are no dedicated funds for weed management and that in order to be effective there has to be.

Goal 3: Effective and measurable integrated weed management. Hal sees a weak link in information sharing between the various agencies, counties etc. and that is something that should be included. Steve mentioned that maybe CDA can emphasize a message concerning the act and educating the responsibilities of counties and municipalities per the Act's weed management expectations.

Goal 4: Accountable and collaborative partnerships. It was mentioned that we should use some of the counties with better programs as models to show what can be done on a larger scale. (publicize success stories.) Emphasizing effective/functional partnerships that add value as opposed to just partnering to partner.

Goal 5: Preserve healthy lands and restore degraded lands. Kelly mentioned a potential for identifying healthy lands through the use of partnerships such as CNHP who have already done the work. Hal suggested finding some kind of a process to determine the desired condition for the area of concern vs. healthy and degraded.

Some committee members felt that it's still important to mention agricultural lands specifically in the goal, as it does in the current Plan's goals. There is a need to better define the types of lands we are talking about. Highlight the successes seen in agriculture. Split decisions on ideas behind emphasizing agricultural lands or finding a way to define all lands.

The goals/major themes brought forth by the committee seem to incorporate the current goals and these have evolved to better define the current needs.

Steve talked about next steps in the strategic plan development process (surveys and stakeholder meetings). David asked about the target audience, attempt to get broad demographics, and what is our criteria for an “effective survey.” Steve said that the survey can be customized.

Agenda Items and 2016 Meeting Suggestions:

Topical suggestions include presentations from other land managers (USFS, BLM, CPW, state wildlife refuges, CNAP, CPW, etc.), Seed Act review, and field tour (Larimer County).

There are suggestions for a committee visit to Gunnison County (municipal and county programs, Gunnison sage grouse, CDOT restoration project with CSU, Curecanti National Recreation Area), or possibly Camp Hale/Eagle County.

Next Meeting:

2nd or 3rd week of April - Possibly Wed. 4/13, and we can consider other meeting sites.

Respectfully submitted by Cecily Mui with assistance from Matt Scott.