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Poudre Partnership Focuses on Protecting Land after High Park Fire

LAKESWOOD, Colo. – A first-of-its-kind project in Colorado has been developed in order to protect the land affected by the High Park Fire. The goal of the Poudre Partnership is to develop a cohesive noxious weed management program through a coordinated effort by federal, state, and local agencies in conjunction with land owners and managers.

“This is one of the most extensive noxious weed collaborations in Colorado’s history,” said CDA’s Noxious Weed Coordinator, Steve Ryder. “The invasion of these lands by non-native noxious weeds continues long after the fire is extinguished and we’re hoping to make a real difference with this project.”

The ultimate goal of the partnership is to develop a statewide model for future collaborative projects. The first effort will focus on the High Park Fire region including the Poudre River, North Fork Poudre River, Seaman Reservoir and city and county natural areas and open spaces.

Invasive weed species, primarily leafy spurge and Dalmatian toadflax, were present across various public and private lands at the time of the High Park wildfire in June 2012. These perennial weed infestations

have significantly expanded since the fire and need to be addressed before management becomes insurmountable and native plant communities become any more negatively impacted.

Noxious weeds have the ability to invade land, harm economic crops or native plant communities, can be poisonous to livestock, and can be a carrier of detrimental insects, diseases, or parasites.

The Poudre Partnership is comprised of three components: awareness, prevention, and treatment. The objectives include limiting or extinguishing the growth of noxious weeds, developing consistent actions from landowners and land managers, collaboration between federal, state, and local agencies, harmonizing priorities across agencies, and minimizing organizational costs. While agencies have worked cooperatively in the past, this is the first time they have all coordinated for a post-fire weed management strike.

- Year 1: inventory, survey, mapping and treatment of leafy spurge and Dalmatian toadflax along the designated lands in a coordinated fashion.
- Year 2: treatment and surveying for re-seeding and restoration.
- Year 3: treatment, restoration, monitoring, and photo documentation of project.
- An education component will also be developed including information posted at trailheads, parking lots, kiosks, and during community events.

Agencies involved in the Poudre Partnership include the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado State Land Board, Colorado Department of Transportation, US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, Larimer County Weed District, Larimer County Parks & Open Lands, the cities of Fort Collins and Greeley, and private land owners.

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