

## NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN for PARK COUNTY, COLORADO

**Background:** In 2000 Park County developed and implemented a noxious weed management plan, which was written to comply with the requirements of HB90-1175; The "Colorado Weed Management Act" which was signed into law on May 7, 1990. The 1990 act was superceded by the "Colorado Noxious Weed Act" (HB96-1008) on May 23,1996. In 2003 the Colorado General Assembly passed and Governor Owens signed into law a number of revisions to the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. Specifically, these revisions directed the Commissioner of Agriculture to restructure the state's noxious weed list, and implement state noxious weed management plans for specific noxious weed species. The Noxious Weed Management Plan for Park County is written to conform with the 1996 law and to the 2004 revisions of the "**Colorado Noxious Weed Act**" ('ACT').

### Requirements of the Colorado Noxious Weed Act

Among other things, the Colorado Noxious Weed ACT of 1996 requires each county and municipality to adopt a noxious weed management plan. The plan is to address the management of the state noxious weeds "Designated by rule". The 'Act' further directs each Board of County Commissioners to appoint a local Weed Advisory Board whose power and duties are as follows:

Local advisory boards shall have the power and duty to:

- a) Develop a recommended management plan for the integrated management of designated noxious weeds and recommended management criteria for noxious weeds within the area governed by the local government and governments appointing the local advisory board. The management plan shall be reviewed at regular intervals but not less often than once every three years by the local advisory board. The management plan and any amendments made thereto shall be transmitted to the local governing body for approval, modification, or rejection.
- b) Declare noxious weeds and any state noxious weeds designated by rule to be subject to integrated management.
- c) Recommend to the local governing body that identified landowners be required to submit an individual integrated management plan to manage noxious weeds on their property.

Each county or municipality may declare additional noxious weeds for inclusion in the plan, but only after a public hearing. The Colorado Department of Agriculture has developed rules pertaining to the 1996 ACT; and has adopted new permanent rules (119-CR 5 (2003) of 2004) for the administration and enforcement of the 'ACT'. The most significant changes made to the 'ACT' in 2004 pertain to the classification of noxious weeds into one of several categories (C.R.S.35-5.5-108).

1. **List A:** rare noxious weed species that are subject to eradication wherever detected statewide in order to protect neighboring lands and the state as a whole. All populations of List A species are designated by the commissioner for

eradication.

2. **List B:** noxious weed species for which the commissioner, in consultation with the state weed advisory committee, local governments, and other interested parties, develops and implements state noxious weed management plans designed to stop the continued spread of these species.
3. **List C:** noxious weed species for which the commissioner, in consultation with the state weed advisory committee, local governments, and other interested parties, will develop and implement weed management plans designed to support the efforts of local governing bodies to facilitate more effective, integrated weed management on public and private lands. The goal of such plans will not be to stop the continued spread of these species but to provide additional educational, research and biological control resources to jurisdictions that choose to require management of List C species.

The current State A,B,C Listed weed species is an addendum to this management plan.

The 1996 Noxious Weed Act also requires that each municipality shall provide for the administration of their weed management plan. The 'ACT' allows for cooperative planning and plan administration among counties and municipalities. Additionally, the 'ACT' establishes the position of State Weed Coordinator in the Colorado Department of Agriculture, and creates a State Noxious Weed Management Fund. The Department of Agriculture may make special grants from this fund to local entities for the management of State noxious weeds.

#### **Objectives of this Plan**

The main objective of this plan is to meet requirements of the Colorado Noxious Weed Act of 1996 and revisions of 2004. This plan provides policy and guidance for the control and reduction of noxious weeds in Park County. This plan is for the use of all landowners and managers, both public and private.

#### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the Park County Weed Advisory Board that Integrated Vegetation Management principles be used in the control and reduction of noxious weeds. The Colorado Noxious Weed Act of 1996 defines Integrated Vegetation Management as "the planning and implementation of a coordinated program utilizing a variety of methods for managing noxious weeds, the purpose of which is to achieve desirable plant communities. Such methods may include, but are not limited to, education, preventive measures, good stewardship and the following techniques:

The techniques listed and described are biological, chemical, cultural and mechanical control measures. Of these techniques, chemical control can be most controversial. Therefore, county sponsored herbicide activity will be conducted only by certified public or commercial applicators, as licensed by the State of Colorado.

It is understood that all applicators will carry such liability insurance and/or bonding as is required for certification and

further that any chemicals used will be applied strictly according to the manufacturers label.

The Park County Weed Advisory Board assumes no liability for the mis-use of chemicals, and relies solely upon the integrity and judgment of the applicator to apply herbicides properly.

The Teller-Park Weed Coordinator will advise landowners of the need and feasibility of weed control. However, only the Certified applicator will make recommendations of the suitable chemicals and method of application. Private landowners will be encouraged to do their own herbicide control work where they wish to do so. They will also be advised to strictly follow the manufacturers label when applying chemical herbicides.

### **History and Current Situation**

Park County has had a roadside (herbicide) control program and private landowner (volunteer) weed control off and on since 1991. The efforts over the years have helped control weeds. In accordance with the 2000 Weed Control Plan, Leafy spurge, Russian knapweed, spotted knapweed, yellow toadflax, Canada thistle, musk thistle, and Diffuse knapweed were the primary targets.

For the most part, herbicides have been quite effective in limiting the spread and reducing the density of weed infestations. However, in some areas, chemical control efforts have been less successful. There are infestations of Leafy spurge that have been targeted for biological control. When chemical control has become a necessity in any wet or sub-irrigated environment, only herbicides which are approved for aquatic use are used to reduce the threat of water pollution.

Insects that attack specific noxious weeds have been released each summer since 1998. Two species of seed head gall flies and stem-boring beetles have been released at Diffuse knapweed sites. Over the same time period, four species of root feeding flea beetles were released on several Leafy spurge sites. And three species of seed head weevils and one stem-boring weevil species were released on Musk thistle.

### **Targeted Weeds**

Weeds covered under this plan are all included in the state noxious weed list designated by rule. In Park County, the following thirteen weeds will receive priority for control:

#### B-List species:

1. Leafy Spurge [*Euphorbia esula*]
2. Russian Knapweed [*Acroptilon repens*]
3. Diffuse Knapweed [*Centaurea diffusa*]
4. Canada Thistle [*Cirsium nutans*]
5. Musk Thistle [*Carduus nutans*]
6. Hoary Cress "whitetop" [*cardaria draba*]
7. Spotted Knapweed [*Centaurea maculosa*]
8. Yellow Toadflax [*Linaria vulgaris*]

9. Dalmatian Toadflax [*Linaria genistifolia*]
10. Perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*)
11. Black Henbane [*Hyoscyamus niger* L.]
12. Scentless Chamomile [*Anthemis arvensis* L.]
13. Oxeye Daisy [*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*]
14. Hoary Alyssum [*Berteroa incana*]

Russian thistle is becoming a problem in Park County. Where feasible, it will be treated. If infestations of weeds not included on the list become a problem, the required public hearings will be held, and weeds will be added to the Park County list as needed.

### **Coordination and Cooperation**

The Teller-Park Weed Coordinator will coordinate noxious weed control efforts among various landowners, including private, municipal, county, federal and state landowners and managers. In Park County, this includes, but is not limited to the following:

Park County Road & Bridge  
Fairplay  
Alma  
Farmers, ranchers and landowners  
School Districts  
Colorado State Land Board  
Colorado Division of Wildlife  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Forest Service  
Colorado Department of Transportation

Cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding will be entered into as needed.

### **Education**

The Teller-Park Weed Coordinator will seek out and disseminate educational materials concerning the identification, propagation, and control of noxious weeds. Various outreach and educational tools will be utilized, such as news releases, slide presentations, traveling exhibits, and field trips. Target groups include schools, farm and ranch organizations, service organizations, recreational groups, and individual landowners.

### **Biological Management**

Biological management of noxious weeds will continue to grow as more biological controls are developed. The use of biological agents will be integrated with other methods of weed control to lessen the use of chemicals whenever possible.

Noxious weed infestations in waterways and in sub-irrigated areas are of prime concern. Although we have had good success using flea beetles on Leafy spurge and seed head weevils on thistle in some

locations, there are different insects coming on the market that may prove even more effective. Park County will test new control agents as they become available, and continue to use agents that have proven effective.

One of the key elements of a successful biological control program is monitoring.

### **Chemical Management**

The use of herbicides is expected to remain our most effective tool for the reduction and control of noxious weeds. For example, there are no biological control agents available at the present time to attack Russian knapweed or hoary cress. Hoary cress infestations are currently growing and have become a problem in some areas of Park County.

Management of these weeds, as well as those subject to biological controls, calls for the sensible application of chemical herbicides. According to the policies stated previously, Park County will use chemical control methods when appropriate.

### **Cultural and Mechanical Management**

Cultural and mechanical control methods of noxious weeds are closely related. In essence, they both call for intensive and constant management of the vegetative community. The common key is to create conditions favorable for desirable plants at the expense of undesirable noxious weeds. When properly applied, these methods are effective as control measures as well as preventive measures.

Tools include proper irrigation, mowing, and burning, properly timed livestock grazing, plowing and seeding, to mention a few. In the long run, the intelligent application of these tools can be as effective as biological or chemical control methods.

The implementation of cultural and mechanical control methods is complicated. Many landowners do not understand the complex interrelationships involving plant competition, soil characteristics, climate and land use practices. However, the use of these methods will be encouraged whenever the opportunities arise.

### **Monitoring and Mapping**

Tracking the invasion and control of noxious weeds in Park County requires an effective system of monitoring. Previous efforts have consisted of plotting weed infestations and control activities on various maps as time allowed. The results were several sets of maps that present a picture of the task at hand.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management, in cooperation with other federal, state and Park County mapped the known noxious weeds infestations in Park County in 1998 and 1999, using the Geographic Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to create

maps. These maps can be easily updated, providing an understandable record of vegetative changes over time. The map information is stored in a digital format that can be overlaid with other maps that display previous vegetation, roads, streams, land status and other features of interest. Matching funds were made available to initiate the mapping of noxious weeds.

### **Funding**

The noxious weed control program in Park County is funded by various entities and administered by the Teller-Park Conservation District. Historically, weed control funds have been generated locally in response to the Colorado Weed Management Act of 1990.

The Colorado Noxious Weed Act of 1996 has superseded the 1990 Act. The 1996 Act provides for appropriations by the state legislature "for the purpose of funding noxious weed management projects". The Colorado Department of Agriculture is authorized to award grants from these funds to local weed control agencies.

The Teller-Park Weed Coordinator, at the direction of the Weed Advisory Board, and with the consent of the Teller-Park Conservation District, will apply for such grants as needed.

### **Review and Amendments**

The 1996 Colorado Noxious Weed Act requires that local noxious weed management plans be reviewed at least once every three years. Implicit in this language is that the Weed Advisory Board can conduct review and updating at any time. The County Commissioners must approve any changes to the Noxious Weed Management Plan. Mandatory review of this plan will be conducted by March 15, 2016.

Approved by:

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Park County Commissioner

Date