Looking Ahead to 2015: Your Input is Valued!

The Gunnison County Weed Management Program welcomes feedback from all Gunnison Basin residents. As planning for the 2015 field season begins, we would greatly value your input. Please take a few minutes to consider any or all of the following questions and send your replies to the Weed Management Program at: jmugglestone@gunnisoncounty.org

If you would like to mail your replies, please send them to PO Box 915, Gunnison, CO 81230. Or, call 970-641-4393 to discuss your thoughts and ideas.

1. During the 2014 field season, did the efforts of the Gunnison County Weed Management Program meet your needs and/or expectations? How can we better serve you during the 2015 field season?

2. Are there specific areas in the Gunnison Basin that you think require additional attention as weed control efforts are carried out in 2015?

3. How can the Weed Management Program most effectively reach out to citizens of the Gunnison Basin to raise awareness about noxious weeds and their control?

4. Do you have any suggestions for improving Gunnison County's Reclamation Permit application and/or inspection processes?

5. Other than the goals for 2015 listed in the column to the right, are there any other priorities that you would suggest the Weed Management Program consider?

6. Please share any other thoughts, suggestions or ideas you think the Weed Management Program should consider.

Thank-you very much for your time and for sharing your thoughts. Your ideas and suggestions are valued and will be carefully considered. We look forward to serving you in 2015!

2015 Goals

- Provide all Weed Management Program cooperators with fair value by ensuring that the price charged for noxious weed management services is comparable to the market rate.
- Seek and receive grant funding to cover the costs of a seasonal position for the Weed Management Program. Align equipment purchases and project goals with plans for increasing personnel and work output.
- Keep the Reclamation Permit inspection program current, avoiding any backlog of permits awaiting inspection.
- Ensure large-scale soil disturbances associated with Gunnison County projects, such as the Antelope Hills water line, Taylor Canyon road improvements and North Valley sewer line extension are regularly monitored and treated as necessary for noxious weeds.
- In addition to chemical weed treatment methods, continue to expand the use of integrated approaches to weed management including cultural, biological and mechanical approaches.
- When chemical weed management approaches are used, seek the safest effective products on the market
- Continue to raise awareness of the CO Dept. of Agriculture's Certified Weed Free Hay Program and expand the Weed Management Program's efforts to offer certification for local hay producers.
- Secure grant funding to complete a large scale re-vegetation project following road widening in the Quartz Creek Subdivision near Pitkin.

Grant-funded noxious weed treatments were carried out on horseback in difficult-to-access areas of the Soap Creek & Blue Creek drainages in 2014

Gunnison County Weed Management Program

2014 Annual Report

Continuing to Grow

It's been a year of growth for the Gunnison County Weed Management Program. In 2014, the Program was able to increase its output of noxious weed treatments in the Gunnison Basin for the third straight year. Program revenue grew by approximately 15% as a result of completing more contracted work for cooperators, adjusting fees for service and pursuing grant funding for noxious weed control projects. Our goal of eliminating a multi-year backlog of 400+ Gunnison County Reclamation Permits awaiting closure has been completed. The Program's work with Gunnison Basin hay producers has continued to grow, and we assisted with the certification of 589 acres of noxious weed-free hay through the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Weed-Free Forage Program in 2014. We continue to see an increasing trend of Gunnison County residents and businesses looking to the Weed Management Program for advice and assistance with noxious weed management, re-vegetation and other land management issues. By these and numerous other measures, the Program continued its growth and expanded its service within the Gunnison Basin in 2014.

Still, there is a huge amount of work that remains to be done. We estimate that there are over 1800 acres of state-listed noxious weed infestations on public and private lands in the Gunnison Basin. While addressing 812 of those infested acres during the 2014 growing season felt like a formidable accomplishment, it is overshadowed by a nagging awareness of what the Program is not able to accomplish with only one field-based staff person. We see noxious weed infestations in some areas of the Basin continue to expand. Due to time constraints, we must often prioritize between completing work in the field, timely responsiveness to Gunnison County residents requesting assistance and the necessary administrative work the Program requires. In short, during the growing season, the Program's workload far exceeds its staff capacity.

While I am proud of the Weed Management Program's continued growth and the positive impacts our work makes in the Gunnison Basin, I recognize that, for the health of the Basin's ecosystems and economy, we need to continue to do better. Working to increase the Program's growing season staff capacity will be of primary importance in 2015. I am requesting funding assistance from the Colorado Department of Agriculture for an additional staff position during the 2015 growing season. I look forward to the next Gunnison County budget cycle, when I plan to take a close look at how we can work within our current budget to make increased growing season staffing capacity a permanent reality. Increasing growing season staff capacity is the most critical hurdle that the Weed Management Program faces as we continue to work toward our commitment to our cooperators and Gunnison County residents to sustainably, safely and effectively care for the agricultural, recreational, natural, and developed lands that we all value. I have been honored to manage the Weed Management Program in 2014, and look forward to 2015 as a year of continued growth and ever-improving service to the lands, ecosystems and people of the Gunnison Basin.

Jon Mugglestone
Coordinator, Gunnison County Weed Management Program

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2014 Highlights

The Gunnison County Weed Management Program coordinates noxious weed control in the Gunnison Basin, provides educational and consultative services focused on land management, certifies weed free hay and inspects reclamation projects. Below, please find a few of the accomplishments the Weed Management Program was most proud of in 2014:

- Over 812 acres of noxious weeds were treated on federal, state, county, municipal and private lands throughout the Gunnison Basin.
- 65 reclamation permit inspections and reports were completed by the Weed District Coordinator and Office Manager.
- Consultations and on-site visits were carried out with over 110 private landowners, agency representatives and businesses.
- Seven Certified Weed Free Hay inspections were completed for local hay producers and the Colorado Department of Agriculture, for a total of 589 acres certified.
- Weed Management Program revenue increased approximately 15% from 2013, as price increases for service were implemented, cooperators increased service requests and grant funding was received.

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State-Listed Noxious Weed Control

Over 812 acres of state-listed noxious weeds were treated using chemical and mechanical control methods during the 2014 growing season. Treatment locations, acreages, hours worked and cooperators' annual monetary contributions to the Weed Management Program's efforts were as follows. For additional details about any of these treatments please contact the Weed Management Program Coordinator.

Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres
NPS	CONE Island	9.63
($3500)	Dillon Pinnacles	0.13
	Dry Gulch	0.22
	Elk Creek	0.47
	East Elk Creek	0.10
	Red Creek	0.89
	Wilson's Landing	0.30
	Lake Fork	0.30
	Old Stevens	0.21
	Soap Creek	7.61
	Beaver Creek	2.17
	Total Acres	**22.03**
	Hours Worked	**42**
USFS	Kebler Pass	12.86
($5000)	Marshall Pass	1.75
	Gothic/Scohfield	1.03
	Red Creek	1.95
	Slate River	1.48
	Washington Gulch	0.27
	Cement Creek	3.67
	Taylor/Spring Ck.	8.82
	Needle Creek	0.77
	Irwin area	0.21
	Brush Creek	1.76
	Alpine Plateau	13.90
	Total Acres	**48.47**
	Hours Worked	**62**
CDP&W	Sapinero SWA	1.69
($900)	Dome Lakes SWA	0.60
	Total Acres	**2.29**
	Hours Worked	**9**
CDOT	SH 114	68.85
($22,000)	SH 133	59.96
	SH 135	97.28
	SH 92	12.18
	US 50	109.39
	SH 149	19.39
	Total Acres	**367.05**
	Hours Worked	**268**
Hinsdale Cty.	CR 30, 33, 20	6.54
($1600)	**Total Acres**	**6.54**
	Hours Worked	**16**
Saguache Cty.	CR 14PP	19.78
($2427.11)	CR 15GG	1.17
	CR 17GG	1.13
	CR 24UU	0.67
	CR KK14	6.17
	CR NN14	3.23
	Total Acres	**32.15**
	Hours Worked	**24**

Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres
Town of Pitkin	Streets/Alleys	1.12
($300)	**Total Acres**	**1.12**
	Hours Worked	**3**
City of Gunnison	Streets/Alleys	3.94
($1200)	Water Treatment/Wetlands	1.01
	Total Acres	**4.95**
	Hours Worked	**24**
Town of CB	Block 79	1.54
($1800)	Butte Ave Rec Path	0.23
	Ditch Headgate	0.19
	Gravel Pit	1.75
	Maintenance Yard	2.62
	Total Acres	**6.33**
	Hours Worked	**18**
Town of Mt. CB	Rec. Path	3.64
($2507.50)	Gothic Road	5.36
	Parking Lots	1.37
	Total Acres	**10.37**
	Hours Worked	**24**
BLM	Rainbow Lake	0.97
($5000)	Red Creek	1.03
	Cabin & Alder Ck.	0.31
	BLM 3072	0.50
	BLM 3090	10.80
	Soap Creek	0.75
	BLM 3092	0.50
	Blue Creek	2.25
	Sapinero Mesa	2.10
	Blue Mesa	1.75
	Dome Lakes Area	2.00
	Alpine Loop	2.00
	Slate River	0.50
	Total Acres	**25.46**
	Hours Worked	**55**
Gunnison Cty.	CR 2	0.32
($109,296)	Marble Area Roads	1.40
	CR 4	2.20
	CR 7	0.30
	CR 8	3.97
	CR 9	0.41
	CR 10	5.14
	CR 11	0.29
	CR 12	24.66
	CR 16 & 19	0.50
	CR 17	13.68
	CR 18	0.84
	CR 20	0.32
	CR 21	1.54
	CR 24	2.77
	CR 25	9.65
	CR 26	10.60
	CR 27	9.54

Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres
Gunnison Cty.	CR 29	0.92
(continued)	CR 32	6.45
	CR 38	15.38
	CR 43	0.17
	CR 45	1.35
	CR 46	1.05
	CR 48	0.63
	CR 50	0.36
	CR 54	0.12
	CR 62	0.95
	CR 75	0.25
	CR 76	14.84
	CR 77	1.17
	CR 209	0.27
	CR 265	1.67
	CR 317	3.66
	CR 710	0.08
	CR 720	0.82
	CR 721	3.52
	CR 726	0.35
	CR 727	10.05
	CR 730	38.34
	CR 734	4.50
	CR 737	5.82
	CR 738	5.67
	CR 740	2.81
	CR 742	15.47
	CR 771	0.63
	CR 811	2.69
	CR 813	0.49
	CR 818	0.76
	CR 826	0.21
	CR 858	7.28
	CR 864	19.28
	CR 888	1.65
	Antelope Hills Waterline	3.41
	Allen Homesites	0.33
	Basin Industrial Park	6.05
	Castle Mtn. Subdivision	5.69
	CB Maintenance Facility	1.60
	Dos Rios Subdivision	2.76
	Fairgrounds	0.75
	Goose Creek Gravel Pit	0.27
	Meridian Lake Pk Subdiv.	0.54
	N. Elk Meadows Subdiv.	0.31
	Panoview Subdivision	0.47
	Riverbend Subdivision	1.23
	Somerset	0.37
	Whitewater Park	1.37
	Tincup	0.38
	North Valley Sewer Easmt.	2.11
	Total Acres	**285.43**
	Hours Worked	**724**
Private Landowners		
($0)	**Total Acres**	**0.75**
	Hours Worked	**4**

Education & Outreach

Raising public awareness about noxious weeds and their control is a critical goal of the Gunnison County Weed Management Program's work. In 2014, the Weed Management Program led and contributed to numerous educational and outreach efforts, including the following:

- Over 110 phone consultations and site visits were carried out by the Weed Management Program in 2014 to assist property owners and managers develop noxious weed control and re-vegetation plans for the properties they own and care for.

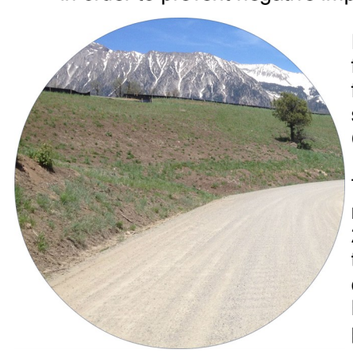
- Newspaper ads focused on raising public awareness of noxious weeds and options for their control appeared in the Gunnison Country Shopper throughout the growing season, spurring many inquiries to the Weed Management Program from citizens interested in receiving advice about effective and safe weed management on their properties.

- During the 2014 field season, the Weed Management Program continued its role meeting with hay producers wishing to have their crop certified as weed-free by the Colorado Department of Agriculture. The local production of "Certified Weed-Free" hay is a win-win scenario in our County: the spread of weed seeds is limited on ecologically and economically important lands, heavy demand for weed-free hay can be met during the hunting season and weed-free hay producers and retailers can often fetch a premium price as a result of the designation. The Weed Management Program Coordinator, acting as a contractor for the Colorado Department of Agriculture, inspected the fields of seven Gunnison County hay producers during the 2014 growing season, certifying 589 acres of hay fields as noxious weed-free.

- The Weed Management Program partnered with CSU Extension in May to fund a local workshop focused on aquatic weed management taught by Dr. Scott Nissen from Colorado State University. This workshop, attended by 20 people, was responsive to requests from local weed management professionals, partner agency staff and landowners for information and guidance on identifying and safely managing noxious weeds in aquatic environments in the Gunnison Basin.

Reclamation Permit Inspections

Gunnison County's Reclamation Permit program seeks to ensure that soil disturbances associated with development are reclaimed adequately to prevent current and future soil erosion and noxious weed problems. Following development activities such as home building, road construction or installation of utilities, the Weed Management Program's on-site inspection of reclamation work provides assurance that property owners and developers have adequately re-vegetated soil disturbances and controlled noxious weeds in order to prevent negative impacts to the environment and neighboring property owners.



In 2014, Gunnison County revised its Reclamation Permit filing requirements. Reclamation Permits must now be filed for projects in which soil disturbance exceeds 10,000 square feet, or anytime soil disturbances occur within Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat.

The Weed Management Program completed 65 reclamation inspections and reports to property owners in 2014. Completion of these permit inspections means that the Weed Management Program has completed its goal of eliminating the previous backlog of outstanding Reclamation Permits. Going forward, all outstanding permits will be inspected every year.

2014 Highlights

Continued from front page

- A $2000 grant from CO Dept. of Ag allowed for contracted treatment of an isolated and remote population of oxeye daisy in the Blue Creek Drainage.
- Funds from the Soap Creek Cooperative Weed Management Area fund were used for contracted noxious weed treatments on horseback in difficult-to-access drainages in the Soap Creek area
- Gunnison County signed on to the San Juan Mountains Cooperative Weed Management Area MOU, increasing opportunities for regional cooperation in addressing noxious weeds.
- Educational newspaper ads aimed at raising public awareness of noxious weeds and treatment options ran in the Gunnison Country Shopper on a bi-weekly basis throughout the spring, summer and fall.
- An educational workshop in Gunnison focused on aquatic weed management, funded in partnership with CSU Extension, was attended by 20 people.
- The Weed Management Program continued to make strides toward improving environmental stewardship and safety efforts by using an integrated approach to weed management, reducing pesticide use, and using EPA-registered Reduced Risk Pesticides while making significant progress toward reducing noxious weed problems throughout the Gunnison Basin.
- The Weed Management Program expanded contracts with private weed control service providers, ensuring large scale noxious weed problems around Marble, in the North Fork Valley and along Highway 50 were addressed in a timely and economical manner.