Gunnison County Weed District

2012 Annual Report

Land Stewardship With You in Mind

Oftentimes, noxious weed management is a balancing act. Because state-listed noxious weeds degrade wildlife habitat, displace native plant species and negatively impact economically important lands, Colorado law requires County governments throughout the state to proactively manage and prevent the spread of noxious weeds. In Gunnison County, noxious weed management is imperative to protecting the health of public and private lands that our citizens value for their ecological importance, for the recreational opportunities they provide and for the agricultural and commercial operations they support.

Still, valid concerns may occasionally arise regarding *how* noxious weeds are managed. Some may wonder if chemicals that are often used for controlling weeds are safe for the environment and its inhabitants. What about the safety of people, livestock, pets and ecosystems?

The Gunnison County Weed District is balancing concern for ecological health and the well-being of our County's citizens with an effective basin-wide weed management program by:

- Using an integrated weed management approach that includes not only chemical control methods, but also mechanical and biological approaches whenever possible and practical
- When herbicides are used, we always strive to select products that are recognized by the EPA's Reduced Risk Pesticide Initiative for low-impact on human health, low toxicity to non-target organisms, low potential for groundwater contamination, low use rates and low pest resistance potential.
- Minimizing the amount of herbicides used by employing the lowest effective chemical use rates, precisely "spot treating" weed infestations and thoughtfully timing applications with weed life cycles to maximize effectiveness and minimize the need for re-treatment of weed occurrences
- Spreading the word about safe and effective noxious weed management by providing consultations and educational opportunities to Gunnison County citizens who manage weeds on public and private lands

In short, it is the Weed District's primary goal to continue to make strides toward reducing noxious weed problems in Gunnison County while always making the health and well-being of our County's people, animals and ecosystems the first priority.

No matter who you are, please consider this Annual Report not only an opportunity to review what the Gunnison County Weed District does, but also an invitation to share your thoughts. Whether you have questions about the Weed District's work, would like advice about your own land management issues, or would like to offer any feedback, we are always eager to provide assistance and information and, perhaps even more importantly, to listen to your views and requests. Call or e-mail us any time or, even better, please take a few minutes to send your replies to the questions on the last page of this report. Your thoughts will be extremely valuable as the Weed District plans and prioritizes weed control, reclamation and education efforts for the 2013 field season. Thank you!

Jon Mugglestone
Coordinator, Gunnison County Weed District

2012 Highlights

The Gunnison County Weed District 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 District was most proud of in 2012:

- Over 690 acres of weeds were treated on federal, state, county, municipal and private lands throughout Gunnison, Hinsdale and Saguache Counties using chemical and non-chemical weed control approaches.
- 170 reclamation permit inspections and reports were completed by the Weed District Coordinator and Office Manager.
- Phone consultations and on-site visits were carried out with over 80 private landowners, agency representatives and businesses.
- The Weed Management Safety Workshop in March provided over 50 attendees with information on current best practices for safe weed management.
- 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.

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State-Listed Noxious Weed Control

Over 690 acres of noxious weeds were treated using chemical and mechanical control methods in 2012. Treatment locations and acreages, as well as cooperators' annual monetary contributions to the Weed District's weed treatment efforts were as follows. For additional details about any of these treatments please contact the Gunnison County Weed District Coordinator.

Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres
NPS ($3500)	Neversink Island	10.41
	North Willow	0.82
	Riverway	0.16
	Bay of Chickens	0.89
	Dillon Pinnacles	0.17
	Dry Gulch	0.99
	Soap Creek	0.48
	Cooper's Ranch	0.42
	Elk Creek	4.05
	East Elk Creek	2.34
	Red Creek	0.65
	Wilson's Landing	0.35
	Highway Pullouts	0.60
	Beaver Creek	4.04
	Total	**26.37**
USFS ($4000)	Alpine Plateau	1.66
	Rainbow Lake	8.59
	Red Creek	6.94
	Marshall Pass	10.27
	Needle Creek	0.28
	Kebler Pass	1.93
	Los Pinos Area	1.00
	Total	**30.67**
WAPA ($1551.50)	Powerline Rds.	14.78
	Total	**14.78**
CDOW ($1500)	Sapinero SWA	1.50
	Gunnison SWA	0.73
	Total	**2.23**
CDOT ($22,000)	SH 114	0.06
	SH 133	70.31
	SH 135	110.82
	SH 92	8.79
	US 50	89.16
	SH 149	4.34
	Total	**283.48**
Hinsdale Cty. ($750)	CR 30, 33, 20	8.06
	Total	**8.06**
Saguache Cty. ($1996.11)	CR 14PP	38.13
	CR 17FF	0.78
	CR 17GG	0.36
	CR 18VV	21.36
	CR 24UU	0.28
	CR NN14	5.56
	Total	**66.47**
Town of Pitkin ($250)	Streets	0.09
	Total	**0.09**
City of Gunnison ($1000)	Streets	1.82
	Water Treatment	0.37
	Total	**2.19**
Private Landowners ($0)		**0.43**

Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres
Town of CB ($500)	Streets, Public Works, Gravel Pit, Block 79, Trails	6.45
	Total	**6.45**
Town of Mt. CB ($2457.49)	Bike Path, Gothic Rd., Park, Pkg. Lots	8.41
	Total	**8.41**
Gunnison Cty. ($107,962)	CR 3	10.86
	CR 4	2.07
	CR 7	0.20
	CR 8	0.55
	CR 9	0.25
	CR 10	1.99
	CR 12	18.42
	CR 16	0.10
	CR 17/Ant. Hills	8.98
	CR 18	0.49
	CR 21	1.27
	CR 24	6.75
	CR 25	8.71
	CR 26	12.54
	CR 27	7.10
	CR 28	0.15
	CR 29	0.98
	CR 32	0.33
	CR 33	0.06
	CR 38	9.28
	CR 43	0.27
	CR 45	0.83
	CR 46	1.37
	CR 47	0.38
	CR 48	0.50
	CR 56	0.09
	CR 59	0.19
	CR 62	0.05
	CR 75	0.20
	CR 76	7.10
	CR 265	10.31
	CR 317	6.67
	CR 723	1.52
	CR 727	1.40
	CR 730	40.59
	CR 734	5.83
	CR 737	8.73
	CR 738	4.16
	CR 740	2.44
	CR 742	0.81
	CR 743	1.66
	CR 749	1.78
	CR 765	0.41
	CR 811	2.69
	CR 813	4.12
	CR 818	0.39
	CR 864	9.94
	CR 867	0.71
	CR 887	5.36
	CR 888	0.25
	Other County--maintained roads and properties	28.75
	Total	**240.58**

Education & Outreach

Raising public awareness about noxious weeds and their control is a critical goal of the Gunnison County Weed District's work. In 2012, the Weed District led and contributed to numerous educational and outreach efforts, including the following:

The Gunnison County Weed District, CSU Extension and J. Barry Weed control company partnered to host the Weed Management Safety Workshop in Gunnison in March. This day-long conference featured Dr. Sandra McDonald, a weed scientist and pesticide safety expert of national renown, who led over 50 natural resource professionals, agricultural producers, municipal employees and local property owners in discussions highlighting best practices for managing weeds with public safety and environmental health in mind.

In May, the Weed District Coordinator presented to 40 attendees at the 22nd annual Western Colorado Community Forestry Conference hosted by the Colorado State Forest Service. This presentation focused on weed management and other landscape health goals and objectives, such as maintaining tree health and creating and maintaining wildlife -friendly habitats and landscapes.

During the 2012 field season, the Weed District renewed 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.

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 District from citizens interested in receiving advice about effective and safe weed management on their properties.

In fact, over 80 phone consultations and site visits were carried out by the Weed District in 2012 to help property owners and managers develop noxious weed control and re-vegetation plans for the properties they own and care for.

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 District'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.

During the 2012 field season, over 170 on-site reclamation inspections and reports to property owners were completed by Ann Wood, the Weed District's fantastic office manager, and the Weed District Coordinator. This represents approximately half of the backlog of outstanding reclamation permits that were on file at the beginning of 2012. The Weed District hopes to complete all remaining outstanding permit inspections in the next 1-2 years.

2012 Highlights

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- The Weed Coordinator completed training to carry out Certified Weed Free Hay inspections for the Colorado Department of Agriculture and completed five certifications for local hay producers.
- Mapping data and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System data was collected for all weed occurrences treated.
- The Weed Coordinator presented at the Western Colorado Community Forestry Conference in May, speaking about balancing weed management with other landscape health goals and objectives.
- The Weed District's informational booth and presentation at the Gunnison Garden Festival in April provided over 100 attendees with information on weed control and reclamation.
- Coordinator provided information on weed control and reclamation at an Antelope Hills HOA meeting in May.
- Participated in an inter-agency effort to develop Best Management Practices for road maintenance in order to prevent the spread of weeds and shared this information with Gunnison County Public Works employees during a presentation in April.
- In May, the Weed District Coordinator assisted WSCU Environmental Studies students in planning for sustainable land management practices at the Cold Harbor Sustainability Center.
- In July, the Weed District Coordinator led a group of 8-10 year olds from the City of Gunnison Garden Camp on an educational walk discussing identification and uses of native and exotic plants in Gunnison County.

Looking Ahead to 2013: Your Input is Valued!

The Gunnison County Weed District is always receptive to feedback from all Gunnison Basin residents. As planning for the 2013 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 District Coordinator 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 2012 field season, did the efforts of the Gunnison County Weed District meet your needs and/or expectations? How can we better serve you during the 2013 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 2013?

3. How can the Weed District 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?

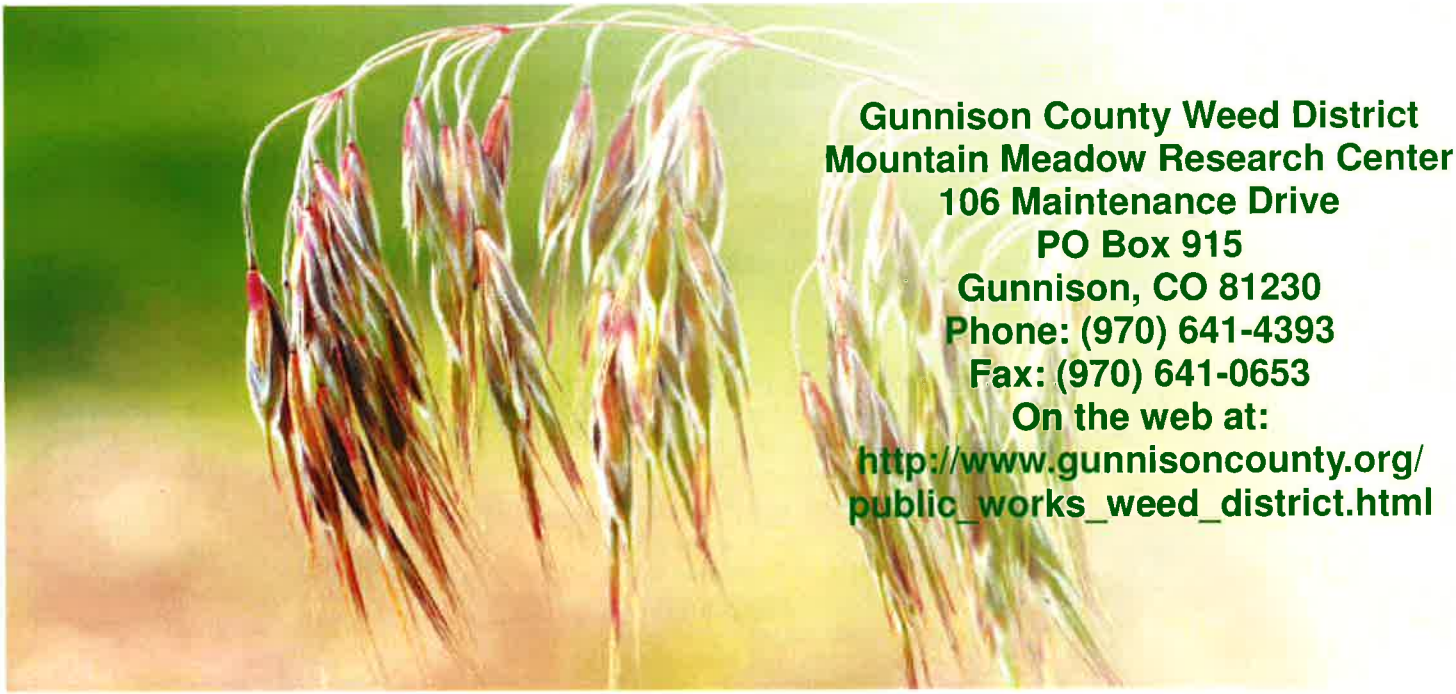
5. Other than the goals for 2013 listed in the column to the right, are there any other priorities that you would suggest the Weed District consider?

6. Please share any other thoughts, suggestions or ideas you think the Weed District 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 2013!

2013 Goals

- Provide all Weed District cooperators with good value by ensuring that the Weed District's work meets or exceeds the market value of established weed control contracts.
- Eliminate the current backlog of overdue reclamation permits awaiting closure by completing all outstanding reclamation permit inspections.
- Ensure large-scale soil disturbances associated with Gunnison County projects, such as the installation of the Antelope Hills water line and Taylor Canyon road improvements, are regularly monitored and treated as necessary for noxious weeds.
- Expand weed control contracts with private businesses for treatments in the Somerset, McClure Pass and Marble areas as well as along Highway 50 east of Gunnison.
- Improve upon 2012 acres treated for noxious weed infestations for all cooperators throughout Gunnison, Saguache and Hinsdale counties.
- In addition to chemical weed treatment methods, continue to expand the use of integrated approaches to weed management including cultural, biological and mechanical approaches.
- Continue to raise awareness of the CO Dept. of Agriculture's Certified Weed Free Hay Program and expand the Weed District's efforts to offer certification for local hay producers.
- Continue development of record keeping procedures that are in compliance with the EPA's newly-emerging National Pollution Discharge Elimination System regulations.



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http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/public_works_weed_district.html