

# Looking Ahead to 2014: Your Input is Valued!

The Gunnison County Weed Management Program welcomes feedback from all Gunnison Basin residents. As planning for the 2014 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](mailto: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 2013 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 2014 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 2014?
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 2014 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 2014!

## 2014 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Continue development of record keeping procedures that are in compliance with the EPA's newly-emerging National Pollution Discharge Elimination System regulations.



## Pursuing Sustainability In Many Forms

Ensuring sustainability is a primary goal of the Gunnison County Weed Management Program. Of course, this means taking an ecologically-minded and safety-focused approach to all that we do to manage noxious weeds in order to sustain the long-term health of lands managed by Gunnison County and all of the Weed Management Program's Cooperators. It also means fostering the program's long-term fiscal sustainability.

Funding for the Weed Management Program is provided by Gunnison County, as well as 12 cooperators in the Gunnison Basin, ranging from county and municipal governments, to federal and state land management agencies. This collective, multi-jurisdictional effort to fund weed management on a watershed-wide scale allows the Gunnison County Weed Management Program not only to provide services to our cooperators within their respective jurisdictional boundaries, but also to pursue a Basin-wide approach to managing state listed noxious weeds. Of course, noxious weeds honor no boundaries, so weed control work carried out in one jurisdiction prevents the spread of weeds downstream.

Gunnison County's costs for maintaining the Weed Management Program have risen steadily over the years, while the price charged for noxious weed management services has varied considerably among the Program's cooperators. In order to ensure equity and shared responsibility for managing noxious weeds among all cooperating agencies throughout the Basin, to cover the true costs Gunnison County incurs to provide weed management services, and to ensure the long-term fiscal sustainability of the Weed Management Program, Gunnison County will begin charging all cooperators the same hourly rate for weed management services beginning in 2014.

For a few cooperators, this means costs will rise. While no one gets excited about paying more, discussions and correspondence with most of the Weed Management Program's cooperators indicate continued support for a watershed-wide approach to managing noxious weeds and a willingness to cover the costs associated with the services provided by the Weed Management Program within their jurisdictions.

Moving forward, the Weed Management Program will continue its commitment to pursuing sustainability. Whether implementing the most ecologically thoughtful and safe noxious weed management practices, helping Gunnison Basin residents and businesses implement their own sustainable land management approaches, or taking steps to ensure that the Weed Management Program remains financially healthy, we are committed to serving residents, businesses and visitors to the Gunnison Basin in a sustainable fashion for the long-term.

Please consider this Annual Report not only an opportunity to review what the Gunnison County Weed Management Program does, but also an invitation to share your thoughts. Whether you have questions about the Weed Management Program's work, would like advice about your own land management issues, or would like to offer any feedback, we are always glad to provide assistance and information and 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 Management Program plans and prioritizes weed control, reclamation and education efforts for the 2014 field season. Thank you!

Jon Mugglestone  
Coordinator, Gunnison County Weed Management Program

## 2013 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 2013:

- Over 780 acres of weeds were treated on federal, state, county, municipal and private lands throughout the Gunnison Basin using chemical and non-chemical weed control approaches.
- 130 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 90 private landowners, agency representatives and businesses.
- 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.
- Completed seven Certified Weed Free Hay inspections for local hay producers and the Colorado Department of Agriculture, for a total of over 400 acres certified.

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[http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/public\\_works\\_weed\\_district.html](http://www.gunnisoncounty.org/public_works_weed_district.html)

# State-Listed Noxious Weed Control

Over 780 acres of noxious weeds were treated using chemical and mechanical control methods in 2013. Treatment locations and acreages, as well as 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	Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres
<b>NPS</b> (\$3500)	Neversink Island	7.69	<b>Town of CB</b> (\$500)	Streets, Public Works, <u>Gravel Pit, Block 79, Trails</u>	<b>4.12</b>
	North Willow	0.08		<b>Total</b>	
	Bay of Chickens	0.66			
	Dillon Pinnacles	0.08	<b>Town of Mt. CB</b> (\$2457.49)	<u>Bike Path, Gothic Rd., Pkg Lots</u>	<b>8.08</b>
	Dry Gulch	0.10		<b>Total</b>	
	Lake Fork	0.04			
	Cooper's Ranch	0.56			
	Elk Creek	2.06			
	East Elk Creek	0.07			
	Red Creek	0.27			
	Wilson's Landing	0.29	<b>Gunnison Cty.</b> (\$107,982)	Marble Area Roads	73.08
	Highway Pullouts	0.27		CR 2	0.33
	Beaver Creek	0.45		CR 4	1.14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12.62</b>		CR 7	0.47
<b>USFS</b> (\$4500)	Alpine Plateau	3.78		CR 8	1.89
	Spring Creek	3.60		CR 10	3.75
	Red Creek	6.94		CR 12	7.76
	Marshall Pass	4.12		CR 17/Ant. Hills	5.84
	Lost Canyon	1.59		CR 18	0.95
	Needle Creek	0.65		Island Acres	0.48
	Rocky Brook	0.87	CR 21	0.53	
	Red Creek	7.49	CR 24	0.48	
	Los Pinos Area	0.97	CR 25	6.40	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30.01</b>	CR 26	3.96	
<b>CDOW</b> (\$1500)	Van Tuyl SWA	1.25	CR 27	4.46	
	Sapinero SWA	1.50	CR 28	1.02	
	Gunnison SWA	0.50	CR 29	1.96	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.25</b>	CR 32	1.33	
<b>CDOT</b> (\$22,000)	SH 114	29.27	CR 38	12.61	
	SH 133	99.31	CR 40	0.46	
	SH 135	70.88	CR 43	0.18	
	SH 92	11.27	CR 44	0.78	
	US 50	151.36	CR 45	0.39	
	SH 149	19.35	CR 46	0.77	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>381.44</b>	CR 47	0.38	
	CR 49	0.66			
<b>Hinsdale Cty.</b> (\$750)	CR 30, 33, 20	9.44	CR 59	0.15	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9.44</b>	CR 62	0.40	
<b>Saguache Cty.</b> (\$1996.11)	CR 14PP	24.30	CR 75	0.11	
	CR 15GG	0.23	CR 76	14.18	
	CR 17GG	0.31	CR 265	6.61	
	CR 18VV	3.25	CR 317	2.50	
	CR 24UU	1.03	CR 710	0.61	
	CR KK14	0.40	CR 721	0.85	
	CR NN14	0.34	CR 727	1.91	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29.86</b>	CR 730	12.06	
	CR 734	2.57			
	CR 737	3.66			
<b>Town of Pitkin</b> (\$250)	Streets/Alleys	2.17	CR 738	7.18	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.17</b>	CR 740	2.92	
<b>City of Gunnison</b> (\$1000)	Streets	0.86	CR 742	8.63	
	Water Treatment	0.40	CR 744	1.88	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.26</b>	CR 749	0.62	
<b>Private Landowners</b> (\$0)			CR 765	1.25	
			CR 771	0.55	
			CR 811	2.39	
			CR 813	3.34	
			CR 818	0.66	
			CR 864	7.73	
			CR 867	0.55	
			CR 887	4.09	
			CR 888	1.36	
			Other County-maintained roads and properties	76.94	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>297.76</b>		



## 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 2013, the Weed Management Program led and contributed to numerous educational and outreach efforts, including the following:

During the 2013 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 2013 growing season, certifying over 400 acres of hay fields as noxious weed-free.

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. An example of one of these ads is included to the right.

Over 90 phone consultations and site visits were carried out by the Weed Management Program in 2013 to help property owners and managers develop noxious weed control and re-vegetation plans for the properties they own and care for.

The Weed Management Coordinator also participated in the Gunnison Garden Show in the spring, fielding questions from over 100 attendees about noxious weeds and other land management issues.

## 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.



During the 2013 field season, over 130 on-site reclamation inspections and reports to property owners were completed by Ann Wood, the Weed District's fantastic office manager, and the Weed Management Program Coordinator. Completion of these permit inspections means that the Weed Management Program has nearly completed its goal of eliminating the backlog of outstanding reclamation permits. Going forward, all outstanding permits will be inspected every year.

## 2013 Highlights

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- Mapping data and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System data was collected for all weed occurrences treated.
- The Weed Management Program's informational booth and presentation at the Gunnison Garden Festival in April provided over 100 attendees with information on weed control, reclamation and landscape plant selection.
- In consultation with the County Manager and Public Works Director, the Weed Management Program Coordinator implemented changes to the pricing structure for weed management contracts, which will take effect in 2014.
- Information about noxious weed treatments in Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat was provided to the County Attorney's office and used in Gunnison County's Comments to the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the Endangered status of the Gunnison Sage-grouse.
- The Weed Management Program continued to make strides toward improving environmental stewardship and safety 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.

**Yellow Toadflax: A Gunnison County Noxious Weed**



Though once a popular garden plant, yellow toadflax has been designated as a noxious weed by the State of Colorado due to its aggressive growth and potential to negatively affect economic and natural resources.

**You can help!**

There are many beautiful alternatives to landscape plants that have been designated as noxious weeds.

Call the Gunnison County Weed District at 641-4393 for free advice about weed control and non-invasive landscape plant selection.