

Looking Ahead to 2017: Your Input is Valued!

The Gunnison County Weed Management Program welcomes feedback from all Gunnison Basin residents. As planning for the 2017 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 2016 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 2017 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 2017?
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 2017 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 2017!

2017 Goals

- Lead the formation of the Upper East River Valley Cooperative Weed Management Area and secure grant funding to cover the cost of a seasonal position to lead the group's efforts
- Secure grant funding that will support continued growth of private landowner assistance and cost share programs
- Contribute to Gunnison County's upcoming initiatives focused on trails and natural resources planning and management
- Identify opportunities for the integration of re-seeding and re-vegetation into weed management projects, and seek funding for implementation of Integrated Weed Management efforts
- Update mapping software in order to more accurately inventory Basin-wide prevalence of noxious weeds and increase efficiency and accuracy of daily record keeping
- Look for opportunities to increase "front-end" assistance to Gunnison County Reclamation Permit applicants in order to ensure successful re-vegetation and noxious weed control prior to post-construction reclamation inspections
- 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
- Seek funding opportunities to continue to increase staffing for the Weed Management Program



Partnering for Progress

The Weed Management Program (WMP) was fortunate to begin 2016 with Gunnison County's approval to add a new staff member to its ranks. Bradley Wigginton joined Jon Mugglestone as the Program's Co-Coordinator in April. As Co-Coordiators we will now be working full time for nine months during spring, summer and fall, with reduced hours during the three, less busy months of winter. This adjustment to the Program's staffing structure allows us to most effectively utilize limited budget dollars during critical growing season months when our services are in highest demand.

Working as a team has resulted in our Program's day to day operations growing more efficient, more effective, safer, and, frankly, more fun. Having a partner makes it easier to laugh when we are both, literally and figuratively, buried in the weeds. Certainly, there are times when our workload still exceeds our ability to accomplish all that we would like to get done throughout the Gunnison Basin. So, we continue to seek creative ways to not only to grow our Program's capacity, but also to better support our partners, both public agencies and private landowners, in achieving their noxious weed and land management goals and objectives.

For example, in 2016, Gunnison County was awarded a grant from the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) that funded the launch of the Weed Management Program's Private Lands Assistance and Cost-share Program. This funding allowed us to identify and prioritize noxious weed problems on private lands throughout the Basin, to increase our education and awareness-raising efforts and to provide technical and financial assistance to over 50 landowners seeking solutions to noxious weed problems. We will be requesting continued funding from the CDA for this initiative in 2017.

Also, the Weed Management Program is currently working with partners from the Town of Crested Butte, Town of Mt. Crested Butte and the Crested Butte Land Trust to seek funding for a seasonal employee in 2017 that will work across organizations to ensure that our collective and cross-jurisdictional noxious weed management goals are met in the Upper East River Valley. Working together and pooling our resources will increase each organization's capacity to address its own noxious weed challenges while also ensuring that we collaborate effectively to achieve our collective and cross-boundary land management goals.

As the 2016 Highlights (see column to right) show, we have enjoyed a busy and productive year. Please consider this Annual Report not only an opportunity to review what the Gunnison County Weed Management Program has accomplished in 2016, but also an invitation to share your thoughts about our work. We value the opportunity to serve all of our Program's federal, state, county and municipal partners, the citizens of Gunnison County and the ecosystems of the Gunnison Basin. Please let us know how we can better serve you.

Jon Mugglestone & Bradley Wigginton

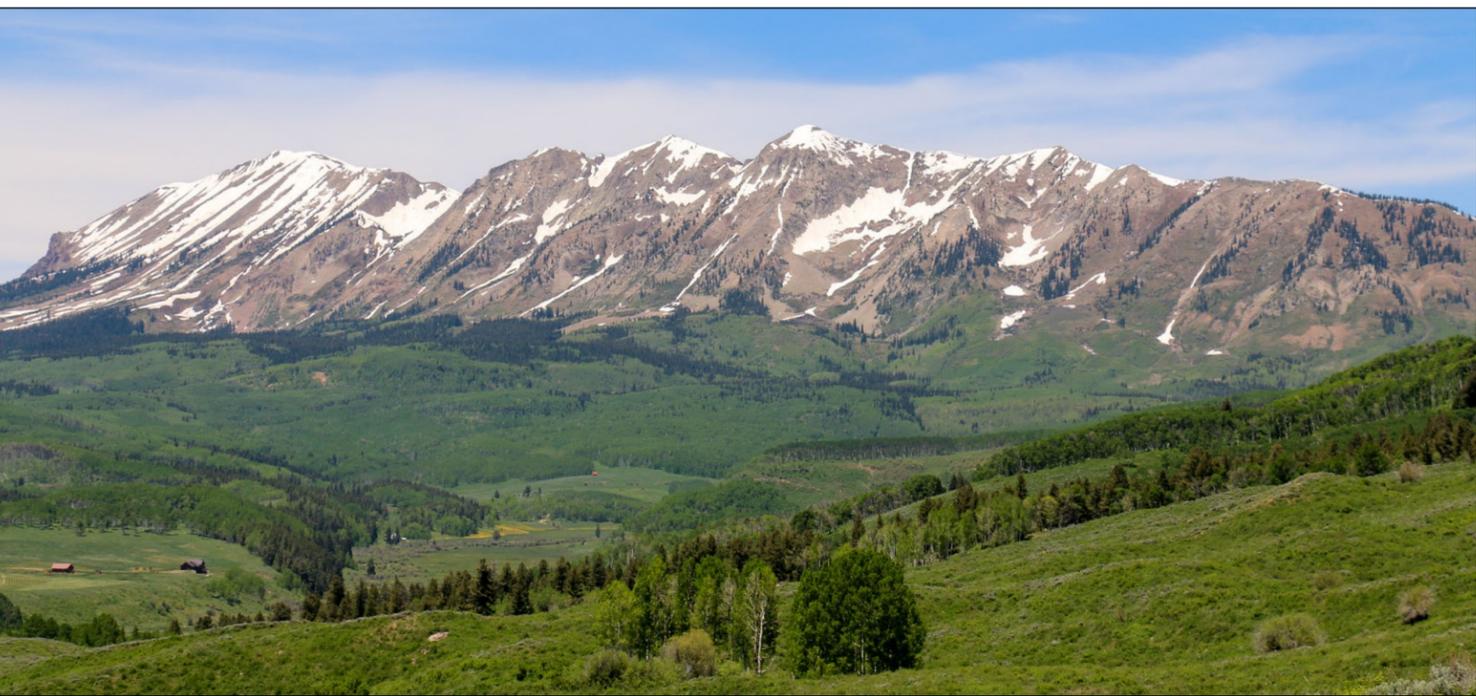
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2016 Highlights

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 2016:

- 510 acres of noxious weeds were treated on federal, state, county, municipal and private lands throughout the Gunnison Basin.
- 28 reclamation permit inspections and reports were completed by WMP Co-Coordiators and Office Manager, Ann Wood.
- Consultations and on-site visits were carried out with over 150 private landowners, agency representatives and businesses.
- Four Certified Weed Free Hay inspections were completed by Co-Coordiators for local hay producers and the Colorado Department of Agriculture, for a total of 290 acres certified.
- An \$8000 grant from the US Forest Service—GMUG National Forest's Resource Advisory Committee funded a cheatgrass management and re-vegetation project in Taylor Canyon.

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A grant-funded weed management project was completed in the Star Mountain Ranch Subdivision in the Ohio Creek Valley in 2016.

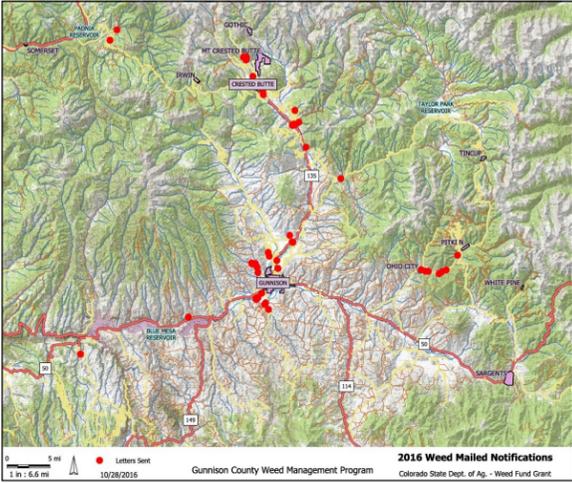
State-Listed Noxious Weed Control

510 acres of state-listed noxious weeds were treated using chemical and mechanical control methods during the 2016 growing season, April 21– November 14. 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 Co-Coordinators.

Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres	Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres	Cooperator	Treatment Site	Acres
NPS (\$5900)	CONE Island	24.12	City of Gunnison (\$1200)	Streets/Alleys	4.26	Gunnison Cty. (continued)	CR 47	0.47
	Dillon Pinnacles	0.01		Total Acres	4.26		CR 48/Castle Mtn	0.53
	Bay of Chickens	0.13		Hours Worked	17.00		CR 50	0.15
	Elk Creek	2.16	Town of CB (\$1800)	Block 79	0.21		CR 54	0.05
	East Elk Creek	0.27		Butte Ave Rec Path	0.26		CR 55	0.01
	Dry Creek	0.06		Ditch Headgate	0.05		CR 56	0.17
	North Willow	0.07		Gravel Pit	3.98		CR 59	0.32
	Cooper Ranch	0.01		Public Works	1.42		CR 62	5.00
	Cooper West	0.03		Total Acres	5.92		CR 72	0.02
	Dry Gulch	0.13		Hours Worked	19.00		CR 75	0.72
	Stevens Creek	0.26	Town of Mt. CB (\$2400)	Rec. Path	1.50		CR 76	7.84
	Wilson's Landing	0.03		Gothic Road	3.38		CR 77	0.37
	Ponderosa	0.18		Winterset Dr.	0.02		CR 265	1.49
	Old Stevens	0.10		Parking Lots	0.45		CR 317	0.93
	Pioneer Point	0.01		Total Acres	5.35		CR 710	0.09
Total Acres	27.57	Hours Worked		28.00	CR 721/Private	3.44		
Hours Worked	50.25	BLM (\$6850)		Woods Gulch	1.23	CR 726	0.17	
USFS (\$4000)	Marshall Pass		4.14	Red Creek	3.75	CR 730	13.55	
	Red Creek		4.06	Lost Canyon	0.52	CR 734	2.22	
	Lost Canyon		2.53	Blue Creek	2.30	CR 737	4.25	
	Los Pinos Area		6.32	Willow Creek	2.88	CR 738	2.81	
	Taylor/Spring Ck.		20.58	Steer's Gulch	1.03	CR 740	2.41	
	Needle Creek		1.28	Rainbow	0.80	CR 742	12.97	
	Alpine Plateau		3.68	Huntsman Mesa	4.26	CR 743	2.18	
	Total Acres		42.59	Centennial	1.87	CR 744	0.25	
	Hours Worked		47.00	Red Bridge	1.69	CR 771	0.43	
	CDP&W (\$1500)	Sapinero SWA	3.95	Total Acres	20.33	CR 811	1.68	
Total Acres		3.95	Hours Worked	68.50	CR 813	1.69		
Hours Worked		15.00	Gunnison Cty. (\$104,048)	Antelope Hills Waterline	3.05	CR 818	0.44	
CDOT (\$27,000)	SH 114	13.77		Basin Industrial Park	1.85	CR 826	0.33	
	SH 133	10.90		Blue Creek	1.00	CR 864	7.16	
	SH 135	24.21		CB Maintenance Facility	1.82	CR 887	2.37	
	SH 92	16.18		Dos Rios Subdivision	1.87	CR 888	4.39	
	US 50	64.55		Fairgrounds/Airprt	0.59	CR 888	4.39	
	SH 149	7.20		GC Landfill	4.57	Antelope Hills Waterline	3.05	
	Total Acres	136.81		Goose Creek Gravel Pit	0.61	Basin Industrial Park	1.85	
	Hours Worked	243.00		Hartman Rocks	0.79	Blue Creek	1.00	
Hinsdale Cty. (\$1600)	CR 30, 33, 20	14.63		Meridian Lake Pk Subdiv.	1.17	CB Maintenance Facility	1.82	
	Total Acres	14.63		Riverbend Subdivision	0.36	Dos Rios Subdivision	1.87	
	Hours Worked	16.00		Somerset/GC Maint.	0.75	Fairgrounds/Airprt	0.59	
Saguache Cty. (\$2500)	CR 14PP	14.72		Whitewater Park	0.32	GC Landfill	4.57	
	Dome Lakes Rds.	12.54		North Valley Sewer Easmt.	1.40	Goose Creek Gravel Pit	0.61	
	Gold Basin Rds.	0.32		Total Acres	194.39	Hartman Rocks	0.79	
	CR 21UU	0.89	Hours Worked	917.40	Meridian Lake Pk Subdiv.	1.17		
	CR NN14	24.59	A Few Key 2015 Summary Totals:	Total Acres Treated: 510.00	Riverbend Subdivision	0.36		
	Total Acres	53.06		Total Cooperator Contributions: \$55,050.00	Total Growing Season Hours Worked for Cooperators: 537.25	Somerset/GC Maint.	0.75	
	Hours Worked	30.50		Total Gunnison County Contribution: \$104,048	Total Growing Season Hours Worked for Gunnison County: 917.40	Whitewater Park	0.32	
	Town of Pitkin (\$300)	Streets/Alleys		1.14	Total Grant Awards Received: \$19,000	CR 2	0.39	
		Total Acres		1.14	CR 4	0.40		
		Hours Worked		3.00	CR 6	2.37		
		CR 40		0.20	CR 7	0.18		
		CR 42		3.72	CR 10/North Valley	5.09		
		CR 43		0.26	CR 12	15.80		
		CR 44		4.83	CR 16 & 19	0.20		
		CR 45		0.63	CR 17	4.98		
CR 46		1.41		CR 18	0.26			
				CR 19	0.31			

Private Lands Assistance & Cost Share Program

Raising public awareness about noxious weeds and their management is a critical goal for the Gunnison County Weed Management Program. During the 2016 growing season, grant funding from the Colorado Department of Agriculture allowed the Gunnison County Weed Management Program to create and implement a robust private lands education and assistance program. The program focuses on identifying privately owned lands with problematic noxious weed populations and assisting landowners in devising site-specific, research-based and integrated approaches to solving these problems over the long term. Fifty-nine properties with problematic noxious weed issues were identified and notification letters were sent to each landowner. The letters informed landowners about which weed species were present, legal requirements for the management of listed noxious weed species, options for research-based, effective control methods, and the Gunnison County Weed Management Program's offer to help with technical and financial resources.



The Weed Management Program developed its Private Landowner and Financial Assistance initiatives not only to enforce noxious weed laws, but also to offer assistance and solutions that are intended to encourage landowners to become invested in managing noxious weeds on their properties. In 2016, the Wildbird and Chair Mountain Ranch subdivisions were selected for financial assistance, which funded a total of 4.5 acres of noxious weeds treated in these areas. We are requesting funding from the Colorado Department of Agriculture to increase the scope and reach of these initiatives in 2017.

Project Informs Integrated Weed Management Approach

Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is one of the most daunting noxious weed species in the western United States, and it is becoming increasingly prevalent in Gunnison County. Managing this noxious weed throughout the Gunnison Basin, especially in ecologically sensitive areas, is a priority of the Gunnison County Weed Management Program. In 2015 & 2016, an \$8000 grant from the Resource Advisory Committee of the U.S. Forest Service—GMUG National Forest bolstered the Weed Management Program's efforts to manage cheatgrass along CR 742 in Taylor Canyon. The results of our efforts in this highly utilized and ecologically important area were significant: herbicide treatments in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016, coupled with re-seeding in Fall 2016 to help establish desired competitive vegetation, have reduced cheatgrass prevalence by approximately 50% throughout the project area.



The herbicides Plateau and Round-Up Pro were used to treat 25 acres of cheatgrass-infested sites in Taylor Canyon. Following the completion of herbicide applications, the Gunnison County Weed Management Program re-seeded treatment sites in rights of way along CR 742 and in USFS-managed pullouts and parking areas. Looking forward, the implementation of a monitoring plan at these treatment and re-seeding sites will not only inform our continued management of cheatgrass in Taylor Canyon, but will also aid the Weed Management Program in our goal of integrating more re-seeding and re-vegetation efforts into future noxious weed management projects throughout the Gunnison Basin.

2016 Highlights

Continued from front page

- A \$5000 grant from the CO Dept. of Ag allowed the WMP to provide assistance to the Star Mountain Ranch subdivision to increase weed management efforts.
- A \$6000 grant award from the CO Dept. of Ag funded the initiation of the WMP's private lands assistance and cost-share programs. Fifty-nine landowners were contacted and assisted through these programs.
- WMP staff led 25 Western State Colorado University students in a field course on noxious weed management at the ColdHarbour Sustainability Center.
- 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 growing season.
- Staff partnered with BLM on a cheatgrass management project at Hartman Rocks, attended by 5 volunteers and 6 agency staff members.
- Co-Coordinators contributed to the development of Sagebrush Climate Adaptation strategies during workshops led by the Nature Conservancy and attended by local natural resource agency personnel.
- Over 200 acres of cheatgrass and other state-listed noxious weeds were treated in Gunnison Sage-grouse habitat.
- Staff initiated a monitoring protocol for re-seeding of infested areas that will inform future re-vegetation projects.
- All contracts for service with cooperators were completed on time and on budget.
- New populations of List A species myrtle spurge and cypress spurge were discovered, mapped and managed.