

**NOXIOUS WEEDS PRESENTATION TO
ELKO COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION**

December 12, 2016



WHAT IS A NOXIOUS WEED?

The Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) defines a noxious weed as "any species of plant which is, or likely to be, detrimental or destructive and difficult to control or eradicate." Per NRS 555.130, all noxious weeds are regulated by the Nevada Department of Agriculture.



NEVADA REVISED STATUTES (NRS)

- **Nevada Revised Statute 555.130 states, “Every person owning, controlling or occupying lands in this state shall cut, destroy or eradicate all weeds declared and designated as noxious before such weeds propagate and spread and whenever required by the State Quarantine Officer.”**
- **For information on the NRS, please contact NDA, Robert Little or Sean Gephart.**



Noxious Weeds Damage Us All

Watershed

Environment

Wildlife

Agriculture

Business

Public

- Increase fire danger and severity
- Degrade water quality by damaging watersheds and systems
- Displace native grasses, willows, and other stabilizing plant species
- Increase soil erosion by wind and water
- Increase the costs, water and nutrients required for crop production
- Increase equipment wear and tear, and fuel costs for crop production
- Reduce crop and rangeland quality and quantity
- Decrease wildlife habitat, displacing native and endangered species
- Act as alternate hosts for insects and diseases
- Affect human and animal health, through allergies and poisonings
- Increase public and private transportation and infrastructure costs
- Decrease human habitat and recreational opportunities
- Decrease land values, appearance and uses
- Increase taxes due to rising maintenance costs of public properties



Impacts On RANGELANDS, MEADOWS, AND RIPARIAN AREAS

- **Estimated acres of riparian areas that are currently infested in Elko County (data requested).**
- The invasive and noxious weeds that are causing problems in Elko County include cheatgrass, medusahead, perennial pepperweed, hoary cress, leafy spurge, various thistles, and knapweeds.
- **Invasive plant species and wildfire patterns have been identified as two of the greatest threats to Sage Grouse. (USFWS)**
- The annual cost to the United States economy is estimated at \$120 billion a year, with over 100 million acres (an area roughly the size of California) suffering from invasive plant infestations.
<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/habitats/forests/explore/invasives-101.xml>
- Once rangelands are overtaken by weeds, they are difficult and expensive to rehabilitate.



CONSERVE OUR WESTERN ROOTS



Sagebrush - Bottlebrush squirreltail- Sandburg bluegrass-Lupine-Buckwheat-Bluebunch wheatgrass-Thickspike- CHEATGRASS

Photo credit: NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI)



Weed Management Challenges

Dominate

Invasive plants dominate natural plant communities.

**Oppressive and
Adaptable**

Expand quickly, mature early and crowd out native plants.

Competitive

Monopolize water and nutrients and seeds remain viable for years.



Overcoming Human Management Obstacles

Awareness

We must educate ourselves and our neighbors.

Accountability

Work collaboratively with all stakeholders across land ownership boundaries.

Funding

Maximize and leverage funding opportunities with all stakeholders.



WHAT OTHER STATES HAVE DONE

- In Montana, the Noxious Weed Advisory Board, in conjunction with the Board of County Commissioners and the county Noxious Weed Control Department, coordinate noxious weed management for the state.
- County weed boards can be responsible for education and finding new ways to control noxious weeds and enforce the state weed laws.
- County commissioners can appoint a county weed control advisory committee who are knowledgeable of county noxious weeds and the damage done by weeds.
- Provide funding to local Conservation Districts to manage, contract, and track weed control efforts within their districts.



WHAT OTHER COUNTIES IN NEVADA ARE DOING

- In 2003, it was estimated that for 50 acres, it would cost **\$7,000** to treat invasive weeds and plant restoration vegetation in Nevada. Today, if that 50 acre patch was left untreated, it would now cost more than **\$27,000** due to the rate of the spread of the infestation.
- 46% of Nevada's counties have a dedicated weed program.
 - The Douglas County Weed Control Division is primarily charged with treating noxious weeds within the county. They also provide weed-control services for residential and commercial properties, rent spray equipment, sell herbicides at a less than retail rate, and provide educational outreach on weeds and their control. Much of this work is done through their Conservation District.
 - The Tri-County Weed Control Program started through a collaboration of White Pine, Lincoln and Nye Counties. They provide education and treatment services to private and public landowners.
 - Eureka County has a weed district managed and operated by the Conservation District which hires a licensed contractor every year.
 - Elko County provides the CDs funds to treat the County right-of-ways.
 - Humboldt County provides \$75,000 to treat noxious weeds.



Leveraging Funding Opportunities

Leveraging funds allows us the opportunity to match dollar for dollar by another entity

Partners currently providing funding/technical support/time for weed control include:

- Bureau of Land Management
- US Forest Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Natural Resource Conservation Service and their partners (SGI and Pheasants Forever)
- Nevada Department of Agriculture
- University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
- Nevada Division of Forestry
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Nevada Department of Environmental Protection
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Home Owner Associations
- State of Nevada Conservation Districts Program
- Local Governments
- Private foundations and charitable organizations
- Tribes



HUMBOLDT WATERSHED COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA



- Covers 5 counties – Elko, Eureka, Lander, Humboldt and Pershing which covers approximately 17,000 square miles in Northern Nevada.
- 501(c)3, nine member Board of Directors
- www.humboldtweedfree.org
- Currently funded through partnerships with NDA, NDOW, NDEP, BLM, USFWS, UPRR, NFWF, IWJV and through local foundations and charitable organizations.
- Inventoried Union Pacific right-of-way, worked with various landowners, provided public education and distributed 40 noxious weeds articles of concern to our area as well as on-site technical assistance.
- HWCWMA assumed Elko County and Spring Creek CWMA duties when they disbanded.
- In FY 2016, the HWCWMA worked with 7 entities and landowners to treat 1,960 acres for \$48,498.
- Provided matching funds to CDs for noxious weeds treatments and technical assistance.
 - Lamoille, Owyhee, Duck Valley, Jiggs, NE Elko
- Co-sponsor the yearly Weeds Extravaganza with the Elko Association of Conservation Districts.



SPRING CREEK ASSOCIATION ACTIONS

- Land holdings include over 5,000 lots and parcels including residential and commercial properties, greenbelts, and roadside right-of-ways as well as large recreational properties including sports fields, marina, equestrian complex, and a campground bordering the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.
- In keeping with the requirements of NRS Chapter 555, it is the plan of the Spring Creek Association (SCA) to map, control, and monitor all noxious weeds found in the area and to work cooperatively with state/federal agencies/educational entities to protect the natural resources in and surrounding our rural community.
- Jessie Bahr, SCA President



ELKO COUNTY CD FUNDING BACKGROUND

- A line item budget provides the state conservation commission funding for the CDs statewide.
- In 2001, a requirement was made that each CD have a cash match for the state grant.
- In 2001, through public hearings, Elko County CDs requested funding to spray county roads within their CD's boundaries.
- In 2002, Elko County budgeted \$5,000 per CD and the Elko County CWMA for on-going efforts for weed control and public education.
- Currently the match is no longer required. In 2009, the funds from the state were reduced to a low of \$2,500, but have gradually increased to \$4,000 per CD this fiscal year.
- For the last 15 years, the CDs have not received any increase in funding from the County or the State, yet inflation has increased by 3.3%.



CD FUNDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THIS YEAR

There are eight CDs in Elko County that are comprised of 17,203 square miles of private lands

- For FY 2016 that ended on June 30, Elko County CDs spent an average of \$6,826 per District on noxious weeds control.
- Some examples over the last two years:
 - NE Elko CD treated 103 miles of county roads
 - Lamoille CD treated 90 miles
 - Jiggs CD treated 60 miles
 - Average cost for treatment: \$134.00/mile
 - Biocontrol release for Lamoille CD last three years
 - Re-seeding project for Owyhee and NE Elko CDs
 - Purchase of a rangeland drill for Lamoille and Jiggs CDs
 - Clover Valley treatment of perennial pepper weed
 - Duck Valley noxious weeds public education event
- Conservation Districts also spend their funding on various Best Management Practices for their Districts.



ELKO COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' REQUEST:

An increase in County funding from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for each Conservation District.

The justification for this request is that in **2003** it would cost **\$7,000** to treat 50 acres. In **2016**, it would cost more than **\$27,000** to treat that same 50 acre patch of weeds.

