

HWCWMA Holiday Newsletter



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Collaboration and partnership are at the heart of everything the Humboldt Watershed Cooperative Weed Management Area does. Managing invasive species is part of a larger effort to conserve native ecosystems, and the HWCWMA is unique in its diverse network of partners who provide insight and support across many environmental disciplines.

CWMA's allow partners to work across traditional boundaries, recognizing that invasive plant management follows ecological—not political—lines. Through the HWCWMA, partners are able to share and leverage limited resources—such as volunteers, tools, herbicides, mailing and printing capacity, and media outreach—to benefit the entire watershed.

As we approach our twenty-fifth anniversary, I am grateful to have been involved with the HWCWMA for most of those years, and especially over the last decade as Chairman of the Board of Directors. The biggest thanks, however, goes to our coordinator, Andi Porreca, and to all our project partners who have supported local landowners—federal, state, county, and private alike—in developing noxious weed management plans for their areas of concern. Together, we have made significant strides in preventing invasive plant spread and protecting native plant biodiversity on a scale no single organization could achieve alone.

Thank you to all who have supported the HWCWMA's mission to address invasive weed problems and the resulting water quality issues within our nearly 17,000-square-mile watershed, which encompasses much of Northern Nevada.



Season's Greetings from the Humboldt Watershed CWMA!

As we wrap up another busy year of protecting our landscapes from invasive weeds, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners, volunteers, landowners, and community supporters. Your collaboration is what makes this work possible, and we're proud of what we accomplished together in 2025.

Highlights from This Year

- **Successful Treatment Campaigns:** Our crews and partners treated over 350 acres of priority invasive species, specifically Scotch thistle, throughout the Humboldt River Watershed, with focused work in the Santa Rosas.
- **On-going Partnerships:** Through continued partnerships, the CWMA has strengthened collaboration with county, state, and federal agencies, as well as private organizations. A huge thank you to NDOW, Nevada Gold Mines, and the Spring Creek Association — we wouldn't be able to educate the public about noxious weeds or continue treatment efforts without your support.
- **Community Events:** Thank you to everyone who showed up for weed pulls, our annual Weed Extravaganza, and outreach events. Your engagement helps reduce spread and increases awareness.
- **Expanded Mapping & Monitoring:** With improved reporting tools and field coordination, we were able to map EDRR weed infestations and update Nevada Department of Agriculture's management priorities for next season.

Looking Ahead to 2026

The coming year will bring new challenges — but also exciting opportunities to build on what we've learned. In 2026, we aim to:

- Expand treatment in riparian areas and wetlands, disturbed sites, recreational areas as well as urban/interface zones.
- Increase coordination between landowners and partnering agencies.
- Continue early detection efforts for black henbane, houndstongue, yellow starthistle and rush skeletonweed...just to name a few.
- Offer additional training and outreach events for the public.

We'll share more updates early in the new year.

A Special Thank You

The CWMA is successful because of **you** — your time, your resources, and your commitment to keeping our landscapes healthy. Thank you for being part of this community.

Warm wishes for a safe, restful, and joyful holiday season. We look forward to working with you in the new year!

Weeds to Watch: Rush Skeletonweed

Rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*) continues to be one of the most challenging invasive plants across the western United States — and it's becoming an increasing concern within our CWMA. Highly competitive, drought-tolerant, and easily spread, this species threatens rangelands, roadsides, recreation areas, and sensitive habitats. Understanding its impacts and management strategies helps all of us slow its spread.

What Is Rush Skeletonweed?

Rush skeletonweed is a deep-rooted perennial that gets its name from its wiry, leafless stems that resemble a "skeleton." It can grow 1–4 feet tall and produces bright yellow dandelion-like flowers throughout the summer. Early in the season, it forms a rosette with sharply lobed leaves that can resemble dandelion or lettuce, making early identification tricky.

One plant can produce thousands of wind-dispersed seeds, allowing it to quickly colonize disturbed areas, gravel pits, roadsides, and open rangelands.

Where We're Seeing It

Small patches have been sighted in northern Nevada, specifically in Winnemucca where it is currently being monitored by the Department of Agriculture. The good news: infestations are still manageable — but only if we catch new plants early.

What to Look For

- Early spring rosettes that look similar to dandelion leaves
- Tall, thin, mostly leafless stems
- Yellow flowers in summer
- Milky sap when stems are broken



Management & Treatment Strategies

Effective control requires a multi-year, integrated approach:

Chemical Control

- Herbicides such as picloram, clopyralid, and aminopyralid are effective when applied at the rosette or bolting stage. It is always important to follow all label requirements and coordinate with your CWMA to ensure correct timing for treatments.

Mechanical Control

- Hand pulling small plants is possible only if the entire taproot can be removed — usually not practical for larger infestations. Mechanical disturbance without follow-up treatment can actually worsen the problem.

Early detection saves time, money, and rangeland health. If you think you've found rush skeletonweed on your property, reach out — we're here to help!

Humboldt Watershed CWMA's Mission

The Humboldt Watershed Cooperative Weed Management Area was created to address the growing invasive weed problem and the resulting impacts on water quality across the 16,843-square-mile watershed that covers much of Northern Nevada. Our primary role is to support landowners, land managers, and weed control groups by offering funding assistance, coordination among agencies, and cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries.

By acting quickly, we have a real opportunity to prevent potentially invasive species from spreading. Our staff can work directly with private property owners to recommend site-specific treatment options for problem plant species. We also map and monitor heavily infested areas throughout the watershed. This tracking allows us to provide both educational resources and financial support to landowners and partners, ultimately improving the health of the land and water across the entire watershed.

The HWCWMA website serves as a central hub for information on invasive weeds known—or likely—to occur within the Humboldt Watershed. At humboldtweedfree.org, you'll find fact sheets for Nevada-listed noxious weeds, Board of Directors information, links to funding partners, and many additional resources, including a detailed project proposal packet that you can print, complete, and mail back to us at your convenience.

We are also looking to expand our project area beyond the Humboldt River corridor and always welcome new partnerships and funding opportunities.

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