



## MDA Awards Funding for Invasive Woody Tree Management

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*Yellowstone and Musselshell Counties receive \$250,000 for weed control activities.*

July 14, 2023 Billings, Mont. – The Yellowstone River Conservation District Council (YR CDC) and the Yellowstone Conservation District (YCD) wish to recognize the efforts of the House and Senate Agriculture and Appropriations Committees along with the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA), for allocating \$250,000 in grants to help address the impacts of three invasive trees damaging the Yellowstone and other rivers across the West.

Thanks to the passing of HB821, MDA received one-time only funding from the general fund for invasive woody tree management in Yellowstone, Musselshell, and Stillwater Counties. Local organizations, such as weed districts, conservation districts, extension offices, non-profits, and tribal weed districts were eligible to apply for the *AGR HB821 Invasive Woody Tree Management 2023 Grant*. Applications were due July 2, 2023.

Grants were awarded by MDA in the amounts of \$100,000 to Musselshell County, \$100,000 to Yellowstone County, and \$50,000 to the City of Billings for projects managing and controlling existing infestations of saltcedar, Russian olive, and common buckthorn. These three species aggressively threaten river ecosystems including impacts to irrigation water, river recreation, wildlife habitat, water quality, and soil health.

House Representative Marty Malone HD59 championed strong legislative support of HB821 during the 68th Legislative Session. Rep. Malone, who resides and ranches in Paradise Valley, has a long history of supporting noxious weed management efforts along the river and beyond. These woody invasive trees are unfortunately an issue in many counties, and this garnished more support for HB821 in both the House and Senate.

Dan Rostad of YR CDC, and Ray Beck of YCD join MDA, Montana Invasive Species Council, Montana Weed Control Association, Invasive Species Action Network and many other collaborators as part of a statewide working group that is dedicated to creating a comprehensive management plan to control woody invasive trees along our waterways. Passing HB821, and getting this money working on the ground, is a huge win for weed managers. More public education and long-term funding is necessary to protect all of our rivers from suffering the negative impacts from these invasive species.

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