

**CUSTER COUNTY NOXIOUS
WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN
2015**

Prepared by:
Custer County Weed Advisory Board
Custer County, Colorado

INTRODUCTION

Noxious weeds are becoming an ever-increasing threat to the natural diversity and balance of ecosystems in Colorado and Custer County. Invasive species have both an economic impact on property values and agricultural production as well as an environmental impact on native plant and wildlife species, including songbirds and pollinators. These compelling facts justify the need for preparing a detailed county management plan for weed control.

I. Enactment Authority

The Colorado Noxious Weed Act (Colorado Revised Statutes 35-5.5-101, et seq.) was originally signed into law in 1991 and amended in 1996 and 2003 and 2013. Also referred to in this document as the 'ACT', it directs the boards of County Commissioners of each county in the State to adopt a Noxious Weed Management Plan for all unincorporated land within each county (CRS 35-5.5-105). The ACT further directs each Board of County Commissioners to appoint a local Weed Advisory Board whose power and duties are as follows (CRS 35-5.5-107(4)):

Local advisory boards shall have the power and duty to:

- (a) Develop a recommended management plan for the integrated management of designated noxious weeds and recommended management criteria for noxious weeds within the area governed by the local government or governments appointing the local advisory board. The management plan shall be reviewed at regular intervals but not less often than once every three years by the local advisory board. The management plan and any amendments made thereto shall be transmitted to the local governing body for approval, modification, or rejection.*
- (b) Declare noxious weeds and any state noxious weeds designated by rule to be subject to integrated pest management.*
- (c) Recommend to the local governing body that identified landowners be required to submit an individual integrated pest management plan to manage noxious weeds on their property.*

The ACT recognizes that certain noxious weeds pose a threat to the natural resources of Colorado. It also states that it is the duty of all persons to use integrated pest management methods to manage noxious weeds if the same are likely to be materially damaging to the land of neighboring landowners (CRS 35-5.5-104).

II. Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this Custer County Noxious Weed Management Plan is to provide guidelines for effectively managing designated noxious weeds, which constitute a present or future threat to the natural resources of lands in Custer County. This plan recognizes and implements the mandates of the ACT by detailing integrated pest management options for certain noxious weeds. Integrated pest management biological, cultural, mechanical, and chemical methods. This plan also includes goals for public education, preventative measures, good stewardship, and control techniques. It is the intent of this plan to incorporate those specific options and guidelines that will control, eradicate and prevent the spread of present and future noxious weeds in Custer County.

Custer County shall fulfill its commitment to weed control on county property and rights-of-way, and assist landowners with their weed management efforts. This commitment shall apply to all subject lands within the County, including the Towns of Westcliffe, Silver Cliff and unincorporated Custer County.

III. Noxious Weed Definition

According to CRS 35-5.5-103(16), Rev. 2010, the act states that a noxious weed is a plant that is not native/indigenous to Colorado.

III. Definitions

1. *“Alien plant” means a plant species that is not indigenous to the State of Colorado.*
2. *“Biological management” means the use of an organism to disrupt the growth of noxious weeds.*
3. *“Chemical management” means the use of herbicides or plant growth regulators to disrupt the growth of noxious weeds.*
4. *“Cultural management” means methodologies or management practices that favor the growth of desirable plants over noxious weeds, including maintaining an optimum fertility and plant moisture status in an area, planting at optimum density an spatial arrangement in an area, and planting species most suited to an area*
5. *“Mechanical management” means methodologies or management practices that physically disrupt plant growth, including tilling, mowing, burning, flooding, mulching, hand-pulling, hoeing, and grazing.*
6. *“Landowner” means any owner of record of federal, tribal, state, county, municipal, or private land.*
7. *“Local noxious weed” means any plant of local importance that has been declared a noxious weed by the Board of County Commissioners.*
8. *“Eradication” means reducing the reproductive success of a noxious weed species or specified noxious weed population of a noxious weed population in largely uninfested regions to zero and permanently eliminating the species or population within a specified period of time. Once all specified weed populations are eliminated or prevented from reproducing, intensive efforts continue until the existing seed bank is exhausted.*

9. *“Containment” means maintaining an intensively managed buffer zone that separates infested regions, where suppression activities prevail, from largely uninfested regions where eradication activities prevail.*
10. *“Suppression” means reducing the vigor of noxious weed populations within an infested region, decreasing the propensity of noxious weed species to spread to surrounding lands, and mitigating the negative effects of noxious weed populations on infested lands. Suppression efforts may employ a wide variety of integrated management techniques.*
11. *“Native plant” means a plant species that is indigenous to the State of Colorado.*
12. *“Noxious weed” means an alien plant or parts of an alien plant that have been designated by rule as being noxious or has been declared a noxious weed by a local advisory board, and meets one or more of the following criteria:*
 - a. *Aggressively invades or is detrimental to economic crops or native plant communities;*
 - b. *Is poisonous to livestock;*
 - c. *Is a carrier of detrimental insects, diseases, or parasites;*
 - d. *The direct or indirect effect of the presence of this plant is detrimental to the environmentally sound management of natural or agricultural ecosystems.*
13. *“Weed” means any undesirable plant.*

IV. Designated Weeds

A. State List: According to CRS 35-5.5-108, the state list of plant species that are designated as noxious weeds shall be designated by rule and shall be managed under the provisions of this article. Noxious weeds shall be classified into one of a minimum of three categories, including:

1. “List A”, contains rare noxious weed species that are subject to eradication wherever detected statewide in order to protect neighboring lands and the state as a whole.
2. “List B”, contains noxious weed species with discrete statewide distributions that are subject to eradication, containment, or suppression in portions of the state designated by the commissioner [Colorado Department of Agriculture] in order to stop the continued spread of these species.
3. “List C”, contains widespread and well-established noxious weed species for which control is recommended but not required by the state, although local governing bodies may require management.
4. Watch List

The current Colorado Noxious Weed List is attached as ADDENDUM I.

B. Custer County List: The weeds listed below have been identified as problematic in Custer County. However, this Weed Management Plan is not limited by the County List, and the Custer County Weed Manager along with the Weed Advisory Board reserve the right to delete or add weeds to the County List, with the approval of the Board of County Commissioners, as the need arises.

Myrtle Spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*)
Cypress Spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias* L.)
Perrenial Pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium* L.)
Bouncing Bet (*Saponaria officinalis*) DESIGNATED FOR ERADICATION
Bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
Common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*)
Dalmation toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*)
Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*)
Hoary cress (*Cardaria draba*)
Houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*)
Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) DESIGNATED FOR ERADICATION
Musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*)
Oxeye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*)
Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*)
Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*)
Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*)

Watch List –
Spreading Dogbane
Field Bindweed
Yellow Starthistle
Elongated Mustard
Swainsonpea
Tamarisk (Salt Cedar)

V. Priorities of Custer County

- Educate the Public. Awareness is of the utmost importance in implementing a county-wide management plan. Educational programs targeting every level shall be offered to bring attention to the impact of noxious weeds on both private property and public lands. Landowners are often unaware of weed infestations on their property or fail to realize the extent of the impact until there has been obvious and significant degradation that is much more difficult to remedy.

- Seek Partnerships with any and all agencies or entities that are willing to work cooperatively within Custer County.
- Support landowners in controlling and eliminating noxious weeds that are present and identified on their property. This may be accomplished through consultation, cost sharing, and the identification and sharing of specialized resources.
- Establish a county-wide position of County Weed Manager to oversee, coordinate, and manage this plan, as well as any and all weed management activities within Custer County, with direct access and accountability to the Board of County Commissioners.
- Continue to seek a variety of funding sources that may be available to assist the county and its residents in the implementation of their weed management plan.
- Promote healthy land stewardship practices whenever possible to discourage overgrazing of livestock, especially on small acreage properties.
- Prioritize soil disturbances on county roads, surface mine sites, and highway rights-of-way, while also prioritizing waterways, such as creeks and irrigation ditches. Reclamation plans for disturbed sites shall be required of developers and utility companies.
- Minimize the transportation and spread of weed seeds shall be given appropriate attention to prevent further infestation.
- Expand of the current weed mapping program shall continue to be a valuable asset in the identification of significant infestations, measuring progress and determining the need for follow up. Designated high priority areas are mapped according to the presence and density of weed infestations.

VI. Cooperative Partnerships

The Custer County Weed Manager and the Weed Advisory Board shall coordinate all noxious weed efforts with landowners, including private, municipal, county, as well as State and Federal lands. In order to ensure successful results, partnerships with many agencies are essential. Communications and coordinated efforts shall be requested from the following agencies and deemed important for successful weed management efforts in Custer County.

Bureau of Land Management
 Colorado Department of Transportation
 Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 Colorado State Forest Service

Colorado State Land Board
Colorado Weed Management Association
CSU Extension, Custer County Office
Custer County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
Custer County Road and Bridge
Custer County Subdivision Homeowners Associations
Custer County Conservation District
DeWeese Dye Ditch and Reservoir Company
Fremont County Weed Management
Private landowners
Town of Westcliffe
Town of Silver Cliff
Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area
USDA Forest Service
USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service

**** Custer County Noxious Weed Management Plan was adopted by the Custer County Commissioners on May 13th, 2015**

(CCWMP Final-May 13th, 2015