

STILLWATER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN



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This plan was originally drawn up in 1986, revised in 1996, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2018 and most recently revised in December 2020 by the Stillwater County Noxious Weed Management Board and approved by the Stillwater County Board of Commissioners.

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STATE OF MONTANA STILLWATER COUNTY
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I. INTRODUCTION

Stillwater County is making every effort to comply with the recently revised 2017 County Weed Control Act as prescribed by the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA). The Stillwater County Board of Commissioners has maintained compliance by establishing the Stillwater County Weed District (District) and appointing a Stillwater County Weed Management Board (Board). The Board provides supervision to a fully funded County Weed Coordinator (Coordinator) and a part-time Assistant Coordinator or seasonal weed applicator(s). The program is implemented in compliance with federal and state requirements. This Weed Management Plan (Plan) serves to document details of the Stillwater County Weed Program.

As invasive plant species spread rapidly across the United States, noxious weeds have become a major economic and ecological concern for Montana, and Stillwater County is no different. Noxious weeds have become a serious issue with the people of Montana; constituents with both agricultural and non-agricultural interests. The MDA has responded with a requirement for each county to develop a weed management program. Private landowners in Montana have been declared responsible for the control of noxious weeds on their property, while public lands and roads are the responsibility of federal, state, and local authorities. Therefore, leadership, coordination, education and support of private landowners in controlling noxious weeds are as much a concern of this county's program as is attention to the public areas.

The purpose of the Plan in Stillwater County is to serve all the people of Montana by improving the economic, environmental, social and practical concerns by:

- ☐ Complying with Montana statutes
- ☐ Utilizing resources most effectively and efficiently
- ☐ Assisting the economy by reducing the cost weeds impose in order to improve/restore private of public lands
- ☐ Enhancing the environment, aesthetic and land value considerations for the generational, new and seasonal residents, as well as for transient recreational users

Without pursuing effective noxious weed management, present infestations will continue to spread throughout the county and new invasive species will gain a foothold. Native wildlife and vegetation communities will come under increasing strain, vital watersheds will be damaged and the economic and social costs of noxious weed control will become prohibitive.

II. PRESENT SITUATION STATEMENT

Stillwater County is located in south-central Montana, within the Yellowstone River drainage basin, and includes the majority of the Stillwater River's watershed. In addition to the numerous river and stream systems, Interstate 90 and Montana Rail Link (MRL) bisect the county, constantly introducing noxious weed seeds from the east and west. Within the 1795 square miles of Stillwater County, this intra-county distribution system for noxious weeds is broadened by a network of almost 900 miles of internal roads, as well as many additional miles of private roads.

The county seat of Stillwater County is the incorporated Town of Columbus, centrally located with seven (Absarokee, Fishtail, Molt, Nye, Park City, Rapelje, Reed Point) unincorporated communities in outlying areas. According to the recent population estimates, the total population of Stillwater County is just over

9,600, with 20% of these residents inhabiting the town of Columbus. The county has experienced an almost 1% annual population growth over the past two years from commercial activity and residential immigration. Many residents commute to work, both intra-county and inter-county; and the movement of commuters, seasonal recreational users and weekend visitors, is a factor in spreading weeds along highways as well as back county areas.

Total land ownership equals an estimated 1,152,640 acres with government lands accounting for 20% and the remaining being private ownership. As of 2012 data, 32,000 acres of private lands have been subdivided. Numerous new subdivisions have been inspected throughout the county by the Coordinators over the last few years. The trend is expected to continue as land use patterns change, which is true all over the Western United States. With division of the land, there are a host of unique challenges arising from increasing numbers of new residents and absentee landowners.

Soil type also varies considerably throughout the county. In the northern section, heavy clay soils lead to saline seep problems; while in the southern areas, there are both alluvial and mountain-type soils. Because of these variables, no one noxious weed treatment solution fits all situations.

The history of noxious weeds dates to the 1940's with the introduction of leafy spurge in southern areas of the county. Increased transportation of livestock feed, the expansion of mining activities and an influx of recreationalists led to the introduction of spotted knapweed in the 1960's. Dalmatian toadflax began to appear in the late 1970's and is largely localized in northern areas of the county, although it and yellow toadflax have been found scattered throughout other areas as well. Extreme weather conditions over the years (i.e. drought and flood events), lack of personal responsibility and knowledge by landowners, among other factors, have enhanced the noxious weed environment.

Weed management is a moving target throughout Stillwater County; an area with a diverse landowner population; from public to private, and both large and small land tracts. This unique mix of landowners include the US Forest Service (USFS), the Department of Natural Resources Conservation (DNRC), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), large tract ranches and small tract landowners, combined with varying environmental conditions, has proven to be a challenge when it comes to weed management. Many of the landowners want to, and do, actively manage weeds on their land; however, new out of area residents oftentimes bring with them a lack of knowledge about land management. Because of this, management is not consistent between land holdings and weed beds that are being re-seeded every year from those areas that haven't been managed.

Although the general public is becoming more aware of potential problem weeds through educational efforts such as brochures, news releases, the South-Central Area's education trailer, social media and efforts of local citizen groups, including Weed Management Areas (WMA) and watershed councils, the noxious weed issue is still ongoing. Stillwater County and the state have recently made a more concerted effort to promote awareness, outreach and cooperation among seasonal residents and government agencies. This has provided longtime county residents with a more positive attitude toward noxious weed control. Among new landowners, both year-round and seasonal, the degree of understanding and follow-up efforts varies. This in itself presents additional challenges which must be addressed.

The wide diversity of Stillwater County's population and variety of landscapes within its borders contribute to potential areas for noxious weed invasion:

- ☐ The recreational opportunities in the area contribute to the spread of noxious weed seeds by sportsmen, wildlife, and livestock along the public right-of-ways, rivers and rangelands.
- ☐ Gravel and sand sources for construction and winter road maintenance are a continuing supply of seed being spread along roads throughout the county.
- ☐ Movement of farm and timber commodities on county and private roads increases the distribution of seed from rural land.
- ☐ The increasing population and resulting utility installations amplify the amount of disturbed land, a prime nursery for noxious weed generation.
- ☐ Fires have created large areas of open space that fill in quickly with weeds, creating a huge threat to surrounding lands.
- ☐ Mining and gas/oil exploration activities disturb the soil, oftentimes uncovering an established noxious weed seed bank and creating an environment ideal for future weed invasions.

Overall, erosion of soil from disturbed areas and from noxious weed infestations increase the potential of damaging both the ecology and aesthetic appeal of the county's acreages.

The current Stillwater County Noxious Weed list consists of the state-mandated inventory of species in the Priority 1A, Priority 1B, Priority 2A, Priority 2B, and Priority 3 categories (see Attachment C). In addition to those species on the state list, Stillwater County has four additional species on county its prescribed list:

- ☐ Common burdock (*Arctium minus*)
- ☐ Common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*)
- ☐ Black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger* L.)
- ☐ Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum* L.)

Specific noxious weed problems in Stillwater County are as follows:

1. Leafy spurge, moving downstream via the Stillwater and Yellowstone River drainages, has infested islands and adjacent land throughout the county. Infestations in these environmentally sensitive areas are especially difficult to control. However, in the past ten years, seven WMA's have been established in and around the towns of Nye, Dean, Fishtail Absarokee, and Reed Point with a large focus on controlling leafy spurge, among other noxious invaders.
2. Spotted knapweed is present throughout the county as well. Continued aggressive control, especially in the southern portion of the county, has substantially decreased infestation levels and subsequent seed spread. Few infestations have been detected in northern areas.
3. Dalmatian and yellow toadflax are moving in from the western areas of Montana along interstate 90 and the railroad. The largest infestations of Dalmatian toadflax were discovered on the north boarder of the county in 2008. A WMA was established in 2010 in order to make a consorted attempt by landowners to reduce infestations to a manageable level. Scattered yellow toadflax plants have been found on islands and riverbanks along the Yellowstone River and in southern areas of the county. Because of the relatively small, isolated infestations, these areas are treated as high priority.
4. Yellow starthistle (YST), discovered in 2010 on a construction lot east of Columbus, has been a major concern for the District, county residents and statewide specialists. The lot where YST was discovered was used for many projects in and around the area, therefore potential seed distribution could be widespread. To date, annual inspections have deemed the infestation site eradicated and no reports have been made throughout the rest of the county. Monitoring will continue for the foreseeable future on the initial discovery site.

5. Saltcedar is another invasive plant that has drawn much attention over the past ten years. The Yellowstone River, with many problematic areas can be easily kept under control with a concerted effort. Neighboring counties already have initiated a solid weed management program targeting this invasive ornamental. In 2013, a WMA was established with the first comprehensive treatment effort taking place with subsequent retreatments in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.
6. Sulfur cinquefoil, discovered in large infestations, has caused extensive loss of rangeland throughout the south-central portion of the county. Residents owning large ranches surrounding Absarokee have come together and formed a WMA in order to try to control the problem before it further invades.
7. Knotweed complex was discovered at a FWP fishing access site just north of Absarokee in 2012. With combined cooperation from the District, FWP and local landowners, the infestation was mechanically controlled, followed by multiple rounds of chemical treatment during the summer of 2012. Herbicide retreatment has taken place again in 2013 and 2014 in order to gain control of new shoots. Japanese Knotweed has been recently identified on the Montana Rail Link right-of-way and have been receiving treatments for the last two spray seasons
8. Yellowflag iris was reported in a subdivision along the lower Stillwater River in 2013. The infestation was treated by a local commercial applicator and notification of the new invader was mailed to all landowners along the targeted side-stream tributary.
9. Dyers Woad was identified the summer of 2018 by Montana State University Specialist, Monica Pokorny. It was found on Interstate I-90 at exit 400. Dyers Woad is classified as a Priority 1A weed and required immediate eradication and constant monitoring during the summer of 2018 with not signs of new plants. Three plants were found identified on Highway 10 East Frontage Road at mile markers 1, 4, and 5 in the spring of 2019. They were pulled and the area was sprayed to eliminate the chances of germinating rosettes. In 2020, one plant was identified in the right-of-way directly across from mile marker 4. At this time, the Stillwater County Weed District allows a few days out of the season to go search for Dyers Woad on the interstate and highway right-of-ways.
10. The newly listed noxious weed, Ventenata has been identified in small patches in the south eastern part of Stillwater County that borders Carbon County. Both counties are working together to move forward with treatment options of this invasive grass. Right now, education plays a key role in these early stages.

Currently, there are ten large WMAs in operation at a multiple agency and local landowner level. These include:

1. The Upper Stillwater River Weed Management Area (SRWMA), initiated in 2007 to target spotted knapweed along the headwaters of the Stillwater River includes the District, Stillwater Mining Company (SMC), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), USFS, FWP, and over 100 private landowners. Since completion in 2008, the SRWMA has developed into the Stillwater Valley Watershed Council (SVWC). The SVWC's focus area encompasses the hydrologic boundary of the Stillwater River; from the headwaters of the Stillwater River in the Beartooth Mountains, including its tributaries, to the confluence with the Yellowstone River at Columbus, Montana. Noxious weed control within the watershed is still a major goal of the SVWC which is evident by the successful cost-share programs offered to both small and large tract landowners within the watershed's boundaries.-ACTIVE
2. The Midnight Canyon/Trout Creek Weed Management Area is a project initiated in 2009 as a two-year weed control effort involving eight large landowners; 31,500 acres and six focused noxious weeds. The most prevalent infestations were leafy spurge and spotted knapweed

which began invading the area shortly after the 2006 Derby Fire. In 2012 this WMA received a second Noxious Weed Trust Fund (NWTF) grant to extend the mostly aerial treated project until 2013. At the conclusion of the grant, 2,762 acres have been treated over the four-year grant period.-COMPLETED

3. The Painted Robe Weed Management Area, initiated in 2010, had a primary focus of control/eradication of Dalmatian toadflax. This WMA, with an estimated 1330 infested acres, includes 13 landowners that represent 63,809 acres nestled in an 110,000-acre project area. In 2013, at the conclusion of the three-year NWTF grant cycle, approximately 813 acres of noxious weeds were treated.-COMPLETED
4. The Fishtail Basin Weed Management Area received funding for noxious weed control through a NWTF grant in 2012 and again in 2013 with a primary focus on controlling large infestations of leafy spurge and spotted knapweed that have gained a strong foothold over the years. Sixteen landowners were involved in this WMA which represented 35,600 acres (3,900 estimated infested acres). At the conclusion of this project in 2014, nearly 3,000 acres were treated utilizing grant cost-share funds.-COMPLETED
5. The Beaver Creek Weed Management Area also received NWTF grant funding for noxious weed control in 2012 and again in 2013. The goal was to control large infestations of sulfur cinquefoil that has choked out native rangeland to such a large extent that landowners could no longer handle infestations on their own. Leafy spurge and spotted knapweed are also problematic in the area. This WMA included 20 landowners representing 30,000 acres, of which 2,500 was estimated to be infested. At the conclusion of this project in 2014, over 2,000 acres have been treated utilizing grant funds.-COMPLETED
6. The new Beaver Creek Weed Management Area was created in 2018 and was just completed in 2020. The establishment of this grant was the first grant completed by the new weed coordinator. This grant encompassed 12,000 acres and 6 participating landowners. The main culprit was sulfur cinquefoil. The final treated acres for the project near 2600 acres. This project wouldn't have been successful without the motivated landowners that were involvement throughout the project.-COMPLETED
7. The Two Rivers Cooperative Weed Management Area was established in 2013 in an attempt to comprehensively treat spotted knapweed and other prevalent noxious weeds along the riverbanks and islands of the Stillwater River. In addition, eliminating scattered saltcedar infestations along the Yellowstone River was a goal. More funding was received to continue the project in 2014 in order to retreat areas initially treated in 2013. Funding was received again in 2015 to provide retreatment in 2015 and 2016.-COMPLETED
8. The Fishtail Cooperative Weed Management Area, established in 2014, covers nearly 6,800 acres with approximately 1,000 treatable acres. The area includes 15 landowners as well as DNRC and FWP lands. The project is aimed at controlling many state listed noxious weeds with leafy spurge making up the largest percentage.-COMPLETED
9. The Shane Creek Weed Management Area was created in 2019. The purpose of this grant was to border the Beaver Creek Weed Management Area and continue the attack on sulfur cinquefoil. After wrapping up phase 1 of the grant, the treated acreages equated to 1200 acres. The plan is to apply for another round of funding due on January 6, 2021.-ACTIVE
10. The Bridge Coulee Weed Management Area was established in 2020 as a first time grant in the Reed Point Area. We rounded out the first year of the grant with 100% landowner participation. This grant area is focusing on combatting six noxious weed species while keeping the spread at bay due to the level of traffic from Interstate I-90 and the high waters of the Yellowstone River. This grant will extend into 2021.- ACTIVE

The location and extent of noxious weed species is being identified by mapping and photo-monitoring. Working relationships have been successfully established with the: USFS, BLM, FWP, DNRC, SMC, Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Montana Rail Link (MRL). Special projects with each have strengthened and expanded mapping and monitoring efforts.

III. GOALS AND PRIORITIES

A. SHORT-TERM GOALS

1. Contain the spread of noxious weeds to areas currently infested while preventing the introduction or further spread of Priority 1A, Priority 1B, Priority 2A, Priority 2B, and Priority 3, species (see Attachment C).
2. Increase public awareness and participation in the weed management program, with particular attention to citizen's historically uninformed in weed management.
3. Integrate Stillwater County's Weed Management Plan with other agency weed management plans.
4. Continue weed inspections as part of the subdivision review procedure and include filing short and long term weed plans.
5. Continue existing weed control efforts on public right-of-ways, including a cooperative relationship with county and state agencies such as the FWP, MDOT, and MRL.
6. Continue to inspect and certify noxious weed seed free forage.
7. Continue with gravel pit inspections.
8. Build an education/outreach program within general public and subdivision homeowner associations, stressing the importance of noxious weed identification, prevention and control through proper land management practices.

B. LONG-TERM GOALS

1. Reduce the amount of acreage infested with noxious weeds.
2. Eradicate aforementioned weeds in specific areas.
3. Expand the weed control program to include additional acreage and the cooperation of more private landowners.
4. Continue to implement public awareness, education, and outreach efforts with the general public, youth and homeowners' associations.
5. Continue development of an Integrated Weed Management (IWM) approach, including biological control with insects as well as controlled grazing, combined with the use of herbicides and education.
6. Strengthen relationships with public and private weed-concerned agencies/citizens.
7. Build a biological control collection program within the county on areas where control agents have been continually released in the past while focusing on establishing new collection sites and "biocontrol collection days" in order to increase the public's involvement and awareness about IWM.

C. WEED MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

1. Expand and strengthen educational programs with county citizen groups, schools and landowner associations. Explain the value of IWM techniques which use the most effective, tailored combination of herbicides, insects, pathogens, and managed grazing with livestock.
2. Utilize statewide campaigns, commercial news and social media for project promotion and public awareness.
3. Provide weed identification and control suggestions and current information about weed technology through the Stillwater County news, multi-media and other venues.
4. Provide tools for educational purposes to train staff and concerned landowners.

5. Promote projects that result in: a) awareness, and b) useful action-oriented results (such as sheep and goat grazing on environmentally fragile areas in cooperation with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and others).
6. Support community action programs such as the SVWC and the aerial spray project; using these programs as community awareness and educational models for similar localized problems.

D. SPECIFIC NOXIOUS WEED PRIORITIES

Each situation is studied according to the intensity of the infestation. Participation and opinions from the landowner are taken into high regard. Primary consideration is for a long-range IWM control program that meets the preferences and pocketbook of the landowner. Bio-control methods have been introduced and applied on all susceptible species. Various areas of Stillwater County require special approaches relevant to older, well established noxious weed infestations (low-level management to prevent the spread of plants or seeds) or environmentally fragile areas.

1. In the spotted knapweed infestations surrounding the Nye area, eradication is still a goal using mechanical, biological and chemical means of control.
2. In the Fishtail area, leafy spurge and spotted knapweed containment and control are the goals. Managed grazing, chemical control, and bio-control using insects will continue to be used in order to reduce the negative impacts noxious weeds bring to the area and adjoining lands.
3. Along the Yellowstone River's islands and floodways, containment is the goal for leafy spurge and spotted knapweed by encouraging managed grazing by sheep and goats as well as the use of insects to develop an environmentally safe and acceptable means of control. Along this tributary, saltcedar eradication can be obtained as long as financial assistance from outside sources is maintained.
4. On the interstate highway and railroad right-of-ways, the main effort is a prevention program to avoid infestations of leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, Dalmatian toadflax and any new invader species. If noxious weeds are found, every effort for immediate treatment will take place.

E. SPECIFIC NOXIOUS WEED SPECIES ALSO REQUIRE SPECIALIZED ATTENTION

1. Leafy spurge infestations are addressed by an IWM plan utilizing managed sheep grazing and bio-control on major infestations and the use of herbicide on all new infestations. Alternative herbicides are used for short-term control, or where it is not practical to use long-term residual chemicals.
2. Spotted knapweed control calls for eradication wherever possible, with herbicides being the main control method. Due to the spread of spotted knapweed, however, insects have been introduced as a bio-control measure to supplement spraying in order to bring an IWM approach.
3. Canada thistle is widespread and primarily a cropland problem with specialized methods of control including integrated mechanical and herbicide efforts.
4. Field bindweed is widespread in cropland and along roadsides and is being treated chemically using label guidelines. A lot of headway has been made in the past couple years and field bindweed infestations along right-of-ways are diminishing.
5. Whitetop in rangeland and along roadsides is being treated with herbicides to promote weed control and grass growth.

6. Dalmatian and yellow toadflax is still an eradication priority due to localized infestations isolated to the northern portion of Stillwater County. Scattered plants found elsewhere are encouraged to be reported and treated immediately
7. Houndstongue is a growing problem and responds to herbicide treatment during the first year's growth; fall spraying is particularly effective. Biological control using insects is still being pursued if and when approved insects become available.
8. Common burdock and poison hemlock are a problem to livestock producers and recreational users. However, it is easily controlled by herbicides.
9. Sulfur cinquefoil, due to the large area of its infestations, is most efficiently controlled via aerial herbicide application where appropriate.
10. Puncturevine, although not a county or state-listed noxious weed, is being treated as such in Stillwater County in order to keep infestations at localized/manageable levels.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS AND PROJECT

A. PUBLIC EDUCATION

1. Expand and strengthen weed awareness campaigns by continuing to cooperate with the various aforementioned local, state, and federal agencies, agribusinesses and other groups by promoting weed management programs and exchanging information about weed issues in Stillwater County.
2. Provide comprehensive instructional materials to teachers designed to help educate school-aged children learn about the complex problems associated with weeds and land management in Montana.
3. Promote conservation and preservation of healthy landscapes and an understanding of the negative impacts noxious weeds have on them.
4. Explain methods of managing widespread invasive weeds, making new species known, and to building awareness of native species.
5. Continue building a broad coalition of new resident landowners in order to educate and advise them now and in the future on their weed issues.
6. Expand Stillwater County youth programs and increase adult involvement in educating youth on weed and land management issues.

B. OPERATIONS/PROJECTS

Several programs have been in operation for numerous years and will continue. These District programs include:

1. Provide sprayers for the sprayer loan program for Stillwater County residents to utilize, for those desiring to apply herbicides themselves. There is a \$25.00 deposit on all rental units with a \$10.00 charge per day on the portable unit/ATV sprayers. There is a free 7-day usage period for the backpack sprayers. After the 7-day period, a \$10.00 fee will be implemented for each day it is not returned.
2. Maintain right-of-ways noxious weed control by hiring and overseeing competent and reputable licensed commercial applicators (see attached Cooperative Agreements).
3. Seek out landowners interested in forming WMAs and offer assistance and support where necessary.
4. Assist in the coordination of commercial helicopter and ground applicators and exploring sources of grant monies to help defray costs to those landowners involved in such projects.

5. Continue long-range noxious weed management planning for county constituents, including subdivision and home owner associations.
6. Pursue training and research programs for a) the county's technical staff and b) its Board members so that members will be more qualified to assist the Coordinator.
7. Continue the biological control programs and public collection days for established leafy spurge and spotted knapweed insectaries.
8. Enforce re-vegetation of disturbed sites, including gravel pits and road sides (Attachment B).

V. NON-COMPLIANCE

Section 7-22-2131 of the Montana Weed Management Act will be implemented if deemed necessary. If Section 7-22-2132 is not followed, Sections 7-22-2133 and 7-22-2134 will be executed as a last resort. Cooperative agreements are relied upon for noncompliance problems.

VI. EVALUATION

1. Utilize both photo-monitoring and GPS mapping to monitor infestations of noxious weeds. Initiate and utilize the information from low level helicopter flights with GPS and GIS mapping capabilities.
2. Evaluate programs in an organized way in cooperation with the Board along with the county, state and/or private landowners involved.
3. Assess the level of accomplishment by evaluating the complaints, Commissioner contacts and public opinion. By establishing a GPS mapping and records system the Coordinator will be better able to document the success of the past programs in order to improve on the efficiency of future projects. This will also enable the Board to identify target areas deserving priority status in the District.

VII. EQUIPMENT & PERSONNEL NEEDS

1. The equipment used by the Weed District itself includes: two one-ton trucks with GPS mapping and flow rate capabilities; a Honda ATV equipped with a Jackrabbit 24-gallon sprayer; a Kubota X900 UTV equipped with a 75-gallon sprayer with a 12-volt pump and 100-foot hose and reel; a Tracker 800 UTV equipped with a 75-gallon sprayer with a 12-volt pump and 100-foot hose and reel; and two four-gallon backpack sprayers. This equipment is used on county owned property and contracted projects.
2. Equipment for loan is available for community projects and private land weed control and must be maintained and replaced as necessary. The equipment available are:
 - a. Three and four-gallon backpack sprayers for small jobs and rough country
 - b. 16 and 24-gallon ATV spray units
 - c. 110-gallon pickup slide-in sprayers for larger jobs on more accessible land (includes Honda motor, pump and necessary spraying accessories).
3. The equipment is in good condition as there is an excellent maintenance program and conscientious interest on the part of the users.
4. With the increasing activity from the District's programs such as education (public), outreach and grant administration, Stillwater County needs a full-time Coordinator and seasonal weed sprayers to help administer educational/outreach programs and continue to build the noxious weed prevention/awareness programs to its full potential.

VIII. ADMINISTRATION: THE BUDGET

Funding sources: The 2.42 county mill (\$55,612.18/mill) fund for weed management provides approximately \$134,581.48 from local tax revenues. There is not an additional special levy for weed programs at the present time.

Other funds come from grants (NWTF, MDA), cost-share arrangements from chemical companies for tours or other special efforts, special research projects held within the county, herbicide sales and other sources (BLM, FWP, DNRC). These are accounted for in the revolving fund or by other established budget provisions. The total budget authorization for actual expenditures is based on actual income received. The District's budget is therefore enhanced far beyond the county tax revenue.

Accounting system: The budget is on the BARS system of accounting with line items set up for personnel services, capital outlays and replacement, supplies, and other categories. The budget is based on the previous year's program and adjusted up or down according to need. Consideration is given to new projects, needs and innovative ideas.

STILLWATER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Approval Page



STILLWATER COUNTY WEED DISTRICT


Prepared by Dana Weatherford, Coordinator

12-15-20
Date


Allen C. Nordahl, Chairman

12-15-2020
Date

STILLWATER BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Mark Crago, Chairman

12-22-20
Date


Tyrel Hamilton, Member

12-22-20
Date

Absent for signature
Dennis Shupak, Member

Date


Heidi Stadel, Clerk & Recorder

12-22-20
Date

STILLWATER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN



Attachment A: Stillwater County's Target Audiences

- ☐ Traditional private agriculturalist (farmers, ranchers, timber harvesters, etc.)
- ☐ Subdivision and homeowners associations and individual small tract owners (resident and absentee)
- ☐ Large-scale private/corporate non-agriculture commercial interest (mining, railroad)
- ☐ Transportation agencies (Montana Department of Transportation, Stillwater County Road & Bridge Department, Montana Rail Link)
- ☐ Construction and trucking contractors working locally (roads, gravel, mining, logging)
- ☐ Recreational users (resident and non-resident hunters, fisherman, rafters, campers, ATV's enthusiasts etc.)
- ☐ Outfitters, guides and packers (hunting, fishing, back country, camping, packing, etc.)
- ☐ Local, state and federal government agencies (Town of Columbus, MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources Conservation, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture)
- ☐ Stillwater County youth extracurricular activities (awareness programs with 4-H and FFA programs and girls and boy scouts) emphasizing hands on programming throughout.
- ☐ Commercial and social media outlets (brochures, newspaper, newsletters, public displays, local event booths, website, social media)
- ☐ Local, state and federal noxious weed management agencies and groups (Montana Weed Control Association, Montana State University Extension Services, Stillwater Valley Watershed Council, countywide Cooperative Weed Management Areas)

STILLWATER COUNTY

NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN



Attachment B: Specific Guidance on Restoration of Disturbed Sites

Disturbed sites are those areas where vegetation has been destroyed by construction of pipelines, utility lines, public right-of-way, stream access or other activity on public or private land. Each such site is reviewed to determine who has responsibility for the re-establishment of vegetation and the type of plants to be used. The company or individual creating the disturbed site must file an approved Noxious Weed Management Plan with the Weed Coordinator. The Weed District will cooperate with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the County Road & Bridge Department, private contractors and other involved agencies, including relevant private landowners.

Any activity which creates a disturbed site (gravel pits, road construction, logging, pipeline, wind tower, and/or utility line installation, seismographic, coal bed methane and gas/oil exploration) requires a specific Noxious Weed Plan from the company or the person creating the disturbance. The following areas must be included in the plan:

1. Identify where the disturbed site will be located.
2. State whether the disturbed site will be closed or kept open for future use; estimating as accurately as possible the time frame of the activity, including an approximate termination date, if applicable.
3. Specify what is to be done to mitigate the movement of weed seed (such as stockpiling top soil, washing equipment, maintaining access to and from the site).
4. If the site is to be used and closed after a specific activity, note when the site is to be restored to an acceptable condition.
5. Detail the permanent re-vegetation plan (type of approved seeding, seed to be used, slope, rates) and the time period for which the controlling party is responsible. This is usually from three to five years, depending on the type of project.
6. In addition to the points above, include any problems, concerns or conditions which are specific to a particular disturbed site, and should be considered by the Weed District Coordinator.

Attachment C: Montana Noxious Weed List

Effective: February 2019



Priority 1A	<p>These weeds are not present in Montana. Management criteria will require eradication if detected. Education and prevention is paramount.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yellow starthistle (<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>) - Dyer's woad (<i>Isatis tinctoria</i>) - Common reed (<i>Phragmites australis ssp. australis</i>) - Medusahead (<i>Taeniatherum caput-medusae</i>)
Priority 1B	<p>These weeds have limited presence in Montana. Management criteria will require eradication or, at the very least, containment and education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knotweed complex (<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>, <i>P. sachalinense</i>, <i>P. × bohemicum</i>, <i>Fallopia japonica</i>, <i>F. sachalinensis</i>, <i>F. × bohémica</i>, <i>Reynoutria japonica</i>, <i>R. sachalinensis</i>, and <i>R. × bohémica</i>) - Purple loosestrife (<i>Lythrum spp.</i>) - Rush skeletonweed (<i>Chondrilla juncea</i>) - Scotch broom (<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>) - Blueweed (<i>Echium vulgare</i>)
Priority 2A	<p>These weeds are common in isolated areas of Montana. Management criteria will require eradication or containment where less abundant. Management shall be prioritized by local weed districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tansy ragwort (<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>) - Ventenata (<i>Ventenata dubia</i>) - Meadow hawkweed complex (<i>Hieracium caespitosum</i>, <i>H. praealtum</i>, <i>H. floridundum</i>, and <i>Pilosella caespitosa</i>) - Orange hawkweed (<i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i>, <i>Pilosella aurantiaca</i>) - Tall buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>) - Perennial pepperweed (<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>) - Yellowflag iris (<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>) - Eurasian watermilfoil (<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>, <i>Myriophyllum spicatum x Myriophyllum sibiricum</i>) - Flowering rush (<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>)

<p>Priority 2B</p>	<p>These weeds are abundant in Montana and widespread in many counties. Management criteria will require eradication or containment where less abundant. Management shall be prioritized by local weed districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canada thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>) - Field bindweed (<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>) - Leafy spurge (<i>Euphorbia esula</i>) - Whitetop (<i>Cardaria draba</i>, <i>Lepidium draba</i>) - Russian knapweed (<i>Acroptilon repens</i>, <i>Rhaponticum repens</i>) - Spotted knapweed (<i>Centaurea stoebe</i> or <i>C. maculosa</i>) - Diffuse knapweed (<i>Centaurea diffusa</i>) - Dalmatian toadflax (<i>Linaria dalmatica</i>) - St. Johnswort (<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>) - Sulfur cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla recta</i>) - Common tansy (<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>) - Oxeye daisy (<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>) - Houndstongue (<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>) - Yellow toadflax (<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>) - Saltcedar (<i>Tamarix spp.</i>) - Curlyleaf pondweed (<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>) - Hoary alyssum (<i>Berteroa incana</i>)
<p>Priority 3</p>	<p>Regulated Plants: (NOT MONTANA LISTED NOXIOUS WEEDS)</p> <p>These regulated plants have the potential to have significant negative impacts. The plant may not be intentionally spread or sold other than as a contaminant in agricultural products. The state recommends research, education and prevention to minimize the spread of the regulated plant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cheatgrass (<i>Bromus tectorum</i>) - Hydrilla (<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>) - Russian olive (<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>) - Brazilian waterweed (<i>Egeria densa</i>) - Parrot feather watermilfoil (<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i> or <i>M. brasiliense</i>)