

2004 Lincoln Ranger District Cooperative Weed Projects

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The Lincoln Ranger District is enthusiastically involved in and supports cooperative weed management on forest and adjacent lands. Without the cooperative efforts between the private landowners, local organizations, and agencies we would not have a successful program.

During the Fall of 2003, the Lincoln District submitted a project proposal to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation [RMEF] to assist in funding the treatment of 200 acres of knapweed infested elk winter range in the Moose Creek drainage southwest of Lincoln. The project was approved by the RMEF, and herbicide treatment by district personnel was initiated in July. Photo points for monitoring have been established and treatment will be completed in 2005.

In June of 2004, the district weed management crew started the season on the Dearborn Weed Management Area in Lewis and Clark County. The district provided personnel and equipment to team up with the many landowners and the state to treat 312 acres of noxious weeds on Forest Service, State, BLM, and private ground over a two day period. A cost-share for chemical purchase was provided with grant dollars from the county to the participating landowners. Along with the treatment, the weed infested areas are mapped and monitored each year. The successful cooperative effort has led to other adjacent landowners in the area requesting to participate in the management of noxious weeds.

In late June district personnel worked with the Patterson Prairie Weed Management Area in Powell County. The district provided personnel and equipment to treat 36 acres within the management area, in cooperation with four private

landowners and The Nature Conservancy. The landowners, with some assistance from county cost-share funding, purchased the chemicals. The Patterson Prairie Weed Management Area was established by the homeowners and the Powell County weed coordinator in 2003, while the Forest Service provided assistance in planning and implementation. The establishment of the Weed Management Area has not only been an integral component to the management of noxious weeds in the area, but has also provided a great educational avenue to the land owners understanding how significant an impact noxious weeds pose in trying to maintain a healthy diverse ecosystem.

The Ponderosa Snow Warriors, a local snowmobile club, and the Lincoln Ranger District have a cooperative agreement whereby the club treats designated snowmobile routes and road right-of-ways. The Ponderosa Snow Warriors are made up entirely of volunteers, and purchase the majority of their herbicide and equipment with grant dollars from various agencies and organizations. The group works closely with district personnel in the planning and implementation of treatment each year. They treated 1897 acres of Forest road right-of-ways and snowmobile routes, with the Lincoln Ranger District providing \$4,250 of in-kind dollars. The Ponderosa Snow Warriors also work with the Nature Conservancy, State, County, and private landowners in treating weeds along area snowmobile routes, treating 1233 acres of ground.

In early August, the district rangeland management specialist, the forest ecologist, and the regional entomologist looked at the feasibility of establishing an insectary to help control spotted

knapweed. A site was identified, and in late August 100 *Cyphocleonus* weevils were released into a constructed corral. Once these biological control agents are established at the insectary, they can be collected and redistributed to help control weeds in the areas burned in the 2003 wildfires. The district provided the materials for the insectary, and the Forest Health Protection Department provided the biological control agents.

In September, the district submitted a proposal to the Powell County Resource Advisory Committee to request funding to implement herbicide treatment on 20 acres of yellow toadflax infestations in the Dry Creek drainage northwest of Lincoln. Funding was approved and treatment was initiated this fall to prevent the infestation from progressing into the riparian areas and the Dry Creek trailhead.

During the 2004 field season, the Lincoln District weed management crew treated 914 acres of Forest Service noxious weed infested ground. The treatment was completed primarily with the use of a skid sprayer mounted in a truck, an ATV sprayer, and a specialized eight wheeled Land Tamer equipped with a 100 gallon spray tank. The treatment areas encompassed road right-of-way, rangeland, and forested areas.

The partnerships which have been established on the Lincoln Ranger District are an integral component in maintaining the highest degree of noxious weed management possible. These cooperative agreements allow the district to be more adaptive in the treatment of new infestations and to utilize an integrated weed management approach to control the variety of noxious weeds that are present in the area.