



## Weed Times



*Summer 2010*

Urgent information on a draft NPDES permit that will adversely affect ALL weed managers in Montana found on page 3.

# The Montana Weed Control Association

*The mission of the Montana Weed Control Association is working together to strengthen and support noxious weed management efforts in Montana.*

The Montana Weed Control Association is a member supported non-profit organization, whose office is based out of Twin Bridges, Montana at the office of the executive director. This association has been around since the early 1960's and currently has approximately 800 members. The MWCA is striving to create and maintain its image as Montana's central location for information on integrated noxious weed management. The MWCA goal is to facilitate and foster long-term, ecologically based, integrated noxious weed management programs throughout Montana. Our strategy to facilitate this goal will be achieved through education, research and networking.

## **For Subscription or Advertising**

**Information:** please call, write or email Becky Kington. The MWCA Weed Times is printed quarterly.

**Advertising Rates:** \$50 1/8 page, \$125 for 1/4 page, \$200 for 1/2 page, and \$350 for a whole page.

## **Please mark your calendars now!!**

The *MWCA Weed Times* is published on a quarterly basis with issues produced in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. The opinions reflected in the *MWCA Weed Times* are not necessarily those of the MWCA. Please don't associate anything written, implied, or advertised in this paper with the opinion of MWCA and/or its board. Signed guest editorials are welcome. Submissions may be edited for space consideration. **The deadline for submitting articles for the next newsletter will be September 17, 2010.** If you have an article for the newspaper, please contact Becky Kington at (406) 684 - 5590 or e-mail to [becky.kington@mtweed.org](mailto:becky.kington@mtweed.org)

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# from

becky kington

## twin bridges

Hi Weed Warriors! Have you gained webbed toes yet?! Wow what a spring. The weather guru from the National Weather Service told me at spring training that we would have a wet, cool period in late spring and early summer and then it was projected to get hot and dry, making for a tremendous fire season. He didn't say we would have rain and cold for the entire months of May and June clear through the 4<sup>th</sup>! I have fielded many emails and phone calls with frustrated weed coordinators who were chomping at the bit to get out into the field to treat invaders, but cool and wet weather made that difficult this spring/summer. Now however, the forecast is looking to bring some hot and dry weather. It has been interesting watching the cold affect the hay fields, gardens and native plants, but some of those noxious invaders kept on growing like there was no tomorrow. Typical opportunistic plants that they are, and the reason we have so much trouble with them.

Lots going on at the home office while weed managers are out in the field. We obtained our new, updated MSU Weed ID books and they are for sale at \$1.50 for members. All calendar photos for the 2011 MWCA scenic calendar have been chosen and passed the muster at the printers, layout will be completed this month and those will be delivered around the end of August. We have led the charge with the Montana Nonprofit Association to request a legislative audit of the specialty license plate revenues with the Department of Justice. Several other nonprofits, besides us, have noted decreased revenues and no accountability for plates that have been purchased. According to historical figures, we are down between 8 – 10,000 on sales of these plates since the implementation of a new accounting program with the state called MERLIN. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Coalition for Open Lands, and many other prominent organizations with specialty license plates have joined us in asking MNA to represent us with the legislature. A formal letter of request to the Legislative oversight committee has been sent and we are optimistic that an audit will be completed. Now if we can just receive funds due to us from 2009. Another big development is the NPDES pesticide permit being submitted for public comment as I write this. In discussions with Montana Department of Agriculture's Amy Bamber, this proposed federal legislation will have dire effects on all weed managers if implemented. Please read the article on page 3 for more information on this proposed permit process. We have identified moderators and subjects for the MWCA Annual Conference and a tentative agenda will be posted on the website soon. Planning for fall coordinator training in Havre is taking place and Terry "Tordon" Turner is working hard to create a great agenda for that event to be held October 12 & 13.

As usual, many weed managers have big events taking place this summer, please check out our calendar of events to see what all is happening in your area at [mtweed.org](http://mtweed.org). The Weed Whacker Rodeo, Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee and Madison Valley Ranchlands annual fundraisers are all coming up.

I wish for you all a happy, fun and safe summer and if an NRA rodeo comes to your town, you may see me chasing the cans or perhaps trying out one of the local golf courses. One has to take advantage of warm weather when it strikes in this state.



# from

# buxton

It has been a busy quarter for me. Hopefully you have been visiting our website and noticed the changes and new material.

Our website traffic continues to grow when compared to the same time last year. It means folks out there are looking for answers. We need to continue to be vigilant in updating our website, and invite our visitors to become members. The MWCA website continues to become a larger repository of resources. Since the last newsletter MWCA has added significantly to our library. Researchers have contacted us to make contributions of weed and research articles. Ravalli County has contributed their "Weed of the Week" articles that we are featuring weekly. They will become part of our permanent library collection. We have nearly finished testing our first video for the library. It is on calibration and we anticipate it will be ready for release in July. We also developed a prototype page for possible use to aid in the distribution of biological control agents with the biological control workgroup, local, state and federal agencies.

Another addition to the website was new pages for the newly listed noxious weeds. Weed ID pages are one of the most visited pages. We have added new pages for all the newly weeds listed with the basic identification information and pictures. We continue to seek new photos of weeds in all phases of development and as well as commonly confused weeds. The comments we hear from the public is that they want more pictures. We hope you will consider sharing yours with us.

Our membership continues to hold steady in the low 800's. This is an increase of nearly 300 in two years. Members who have businesses in the industry are joining at one of the two business levels at an increased rate. We have business members across the spectrum of weed control: applicators, biological control providers, grazing providers, retailers, consultants and everything in between. The page on Invasive Weed Management Services continues to see increased traffic. The page helps to connect businesses and consumers and is only available to our business members.

I am in the Midwest visiting friends and family and can tell you that I have had enough of hot humid weather. I am ready to return to the wide open spaces of home, where the air is dry and it cools off after the sun goes down.



*Diana in front of a saltcedar plant at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.*

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# Draft NPDES Permit is bad news for weed managers

By Becky Kington

Due to a sixth circuit court ruling, the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] has drafted a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Permit [NPDES] for pesticide discharges to water. Montana will also have to have a permit in place by April 2011. Few things irritate me more than laws that are either unnecessary and/or unable to be enforced. This law qualifies for both criteria. FIFRA is already a federal act that charges the EPA with regulation of the pesticide industry; it is in place and it is working. This permit is redundant and is yet another unfunded mandate, which has historically led to enforcement issues.. DEQ in Montana will have to charge fees for this permit in order to sustain staff to manage the permits; EPA is providing no additional funding to the states to enforce this permit.



Anyone applying pesticides near or over any sort of waterway that feeds what is considered U.S. waterways will have to comply with this permit. The proposed Draft NPDES permit summary is as follows:

*“All ten EPA Regions today are proposing a draft NPDES general permit for point source discharges from the application of certain pesticides to waters of the United States. Once finalized, this permit will be available to operators in those areas where EPA is the NPDES permitting authority. This action is in response to the Sixth Circuit Court’s ruling that vacated an EPA regulation that excluded discharges from the application of pesticides to or over, including near waters of the United States from the need to obtain an NPDES permit if the application was done in accordance with other laws. EPA requested and was granted a two-year stay of the Court’s mandate to provide time to draft and implement the permit noticed today. The stay of the mandate*

*expires on April 9, 2011; where after, NPDES permits will be required for all point source discharges to waters of the United States of biological pesticides, and chemical pesticides that leave a residue.” (Authority: Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)*

I have asked Amy Bamber, Ground Water & Special Registration Program Manager with Montana Department of Agriculture, to help me provide a brief summary of this draft permit for weed managers. Her comments were as follows:

*“I understand that this isn’t a good time for weed and mosquito districts to have to review and comment on the proposed NPDES permits. Unfortunately this is the only time that they will have an opportunity to comment on the federal permit that our DEQ plans to copy verbatim. I’d like to point out some of the reasons this is so important:*

*Weed and mosquito districts make up the majority of those covered by the permit and my understanding is that these two groups will be the most impacted by the permit requirements.*

*The permit will require that the districts do things pretty differently than they do now or at least in a different way-and it is up to the districts to know that. For instance, the districts will be required to:*

- 1. Submit a Notice of Intent to spray in/over/near water. This means that before you begin spraying next spring, you will have to write up and submit (with a fee) your Pest Management Plan--where you plan to spray, with what, how much, when, who, etc...*
- 2. Describe your work related to the Integrated Pest Management components of the permit--monitoring of the pest population before you spray, alternative methods of control that you tried before you sprayed, use of the least toxic pesticide available, use of the lowest effective rate, post-application monitoring for adverse effects, etc.*
- 3. You must be able to provide documentation of your compliance with the permit at any time and it must be up-to-date. Any changes to the plan must be submitted to DEQ as soon as you are aware of them.*
- 4. Cooperative projects--you have to know who is responsible for each portion of the permit.*

*Those are just a few of the requirements. Also, please be aware that Clean Water Act violations are way more expensive than any of our applicators are used to (or able to pay)--around \$37,000 per day--the NPDES permits are Clean Water Act permits. Also, the Clean Water Act allows for citizen suits, therefore, anyone can sue you. If you aren’t meeting all the*

NPDES Permit. . .

requirements of the permit, then you are in violation of the CWA.

This permit was written by people who are very unfamiliar with pesticides. None of the people involved in writing the permit have any on-the-ground experience. Although they have done their best in a short amount of time (this is all following a court-ordered time line), there are many areas of the permit that could most likely be improved. The only way that is going to happen is if you comment. Do not make any assumptions. Make sure as you read through the permit and fact sheet that you understand completely what is being said and required. If you have any uncertainties, say so. If something doesn't make sense in the context of your work, say so. Offer suggestions to make it more workable for you (applicable for the Montana public comment period, which will be coming out soon).

This permit is set to be in effect April 9, 2011. It is recommended that weed and mosquito districts keep operational records this year so that they can complete the Notice of Intent and Pest Management Plan properly before next April. This will not go away before next April.

Here is the Federal Register Notice, with instructions on how to submit comments and specific questions EPA is looking for participants to help answer: [http://www.epa.gov/npdes/regulations/pgp\\_frn.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/regulations/pgp_frn.pdf)

Here is the EPA web page on the permits: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/>

[home.cfm?program\\_id=410](http://home.cfm?program_id=410)

In Montana, Jenny Chambers at DEQ- [jchambers@mt.gov](mailto:jchambers@mt.gov), 444-3080 is the Water Protection Bureau Chief, where the permits will be issued. David Rise at Montana EPA is the regional EPA lead for the permits and he can be reached at [Rise.David@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:Rise.David@epamail.epa.gov)

On Monday, July 12, 2010, a listening session was provided for with the EPA regarding this permit. The lead presenter was Montana's own David Rise who is the regional liaison for this permit. Several weed coordinators, EPA and MDA personnel, MT Grain Growers and mosquito district personnel were present for this listening session which was held in Denver, Colorado. In a two hour session, it quickly became apparent that this permit will adversely change the face of weed management in Montana. It was felt by many in attendance that this process will hinder commercial and private applicators to the point that they may not pursue weed management at all. It is very difficult for those entities to obtain insurance now, imagine if they have to add the additional liability that comes with the potential for citizens to file suit under the Clean Water Act? There are currently approximately 1,155 commercial applicators, 774 governmental applicators, and over 7,000 private applicators in Montana, and those private applicators are only those individuals who apply restricted herbicide. Montana's Department of Environmental Quality [DEQ], who will be handling these permits, is not even close to being prepared for this entire process, again to be implemented in nine months. This is

due in part to the fact that the draft permit is in its ninth revision and until the feds commit to a final draft, states are left hanging in limbo. In Montana, capability for permits to be submitted online will not be available, making the process much slower. In the FAQ sheet produced by EPA, it states, "An operator who has submitted an NOI after determining they will exceed the annual treatment area threshold will be authorized to discharge no later than 10 days after EPA has posted its confirmation of receipt of the NOI on the Internet." Given our short season and our weather conditions, ten days is not a realistic amount of time. There will be fees assigned to these permits, which have not yet been determined. Currently permits from DEQ range from \$250 - \$1,000. Permit areas have not been determined either, so at this time, permits could be required for each body of water, or they could be based on an area. MDA and MWCA would like to see a state permit established, although that will be unlikely. DEQ and Jenny Chambers will be working to implement a work group of interested and affected parties to help DEQ clarify how Montana will address this permitting process. Please visit our website [mtweed.org](http://mtweed.org) for more information for ongoing updates regarding this permit. We will publish information as we receive it. Unfortunately by the time you read this article, the federal public comment period will have passed (July 19, 2010), so please take time to review the fact sheet and frequently asked questions on this permit (available on our website) so you can be prepared when the public comment period opens for Montana.



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# 2010 Montana Weed Control Association Raffle!



*Relax in the Caribbean!*



Take the grandkids  
to Disneyland!

**PURCHASE A \$10 RAFFLE TICKET AND SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TO EDUCATE MONTANANS ABOUT NOXIOUS WEEDS IMPACTING EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR LIVES!**

**1st Prize - \$4,000 travel voucher towards the trip of your dreams**

**2nd Prize - Honda CRF150F Dirt Bike**

**3rd Prize - \$500 Gift Card**



**Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased from:**



Drawing will be held on Wednesday,  
January 12, 2011 at the MWCA Annual  
Conference. Need not be present to win.

**or online at [www.mtweed.org](http://www.mtweed.org)**

Dirt bike generously donated in part by  
Riverside Marine and Cycle of Miles City

## MWCA Raffle has launched!

Imagine standing wader-deep in the Kenai River in Alaska and you've hooked the biggest King salmon of all time; or imagine laying in a hot beach lounge in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and as the sun tans your white hide, you sip those potent south-of-the-border drinks; or imagine sitting in a trendy restaurant in Maine and as you are eating that fresh-from-the-ocean lobster, you are watching the beautiful trees shed their foliage in the fall. Any one of these scenarios can be yours for the taking – all you have to do is purchase a ten dollar ticket (or more) for a chance to go on your dream vacation. This year's MWCA raffle has three great prizes up for grabs: a \$4,000 travel voucher to be used towards the dream vacation of your choice, a Honda CRF150 F dirt bike or a \$500 Visa gift card. Tickets can be purchased online at [mtweed.org](http://mtweed.org) or from your local weed coordinator. The MWCA needs your support! We have printed 3,000 tickets and we need to sell them all by January 13, 2011, which is the drawing date. If you are interested in helping us sell some tickets, we would greatly appreciate that as well. Please contact Becky if you are interested in helping us meet our fundraising goals in these tough economic times.

MWCA Scenic Weed Calendars will be available August 31, 2010, at \$1 each for members and \$3 each for non-members

**TIPS BOOKLETS HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO \$.50 EACH FOR MEMBERS AND \$1 EACH FOR NON-MEMBERS**

**SALE!**

**Newly revised MSU Weed ID books are available now! They are \$1.50 each for members and \$3 each for non-members. They come in boxes of 100.**

*Shipping and handling charges will be applied if hand delivery can not be set up.*

# Letters to the Editor

Please join me in welcoming (**Jeremy**) John Seidlitz to our Agricultural Sciences Division, with the Pest Management Bureau. Jeremy accepted the Agricultural Specialist/Grant Coordinator position and began employment on Monday, June 28, 2010.

## **Diana Piccono**

HR Officer  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
Central Services Division  
(406) 444-9474, dpiccono@mt.gov

*(Please update your directories with the above information. Jeremy replaces Stacey Barta as the Eastern Grants Coordinator.)*

Thank you so much for your support to the Montana Range Days.

– **Chase Anderson**

Thank you for supporting Montana Range Days and donating the prize money.

– **Loni Blackman**

Weed Control Assoc., I want to thank you so much for the money you gave for Montana Range Days. This was my first time EVER competing at something like this. It has truly been a learning experience. I was amazed at how much I didn't know about agriculture. I realize now how important it is. This project was time consuming and I loved every minute of it. I never fathomed that a weed display would do so well for me. Again, I want to thank you for what you've donated. It means more to me than I would have thought. Thanks a million.

– **Alexandria Nelson** (pictured below)



Thank you for the money I received for my range plant collection with 8 noxious weeds. Your continued support of Montana Range Days is greatly appreciated. Thank you! – **Sunny Gaughen**

## Powder River weed coordinator passes away

Rollie Martinson, age 57, of Broadus, Montana passed away on Saturday, June 12, 2010 in Broadus. Rollie was born July 12, 1952 in Minot, North Dakota, the fifth child of George and Doris (Jacobson) Martinson. He graduated from Williston High School in Williston, ND in 1970. In 1974 he married Nancy Johnson and they had two sons, Rudie and Tony. Rollie was a man of many talents, which were reflected in the work he did throughout his life. He was proud of the work he did in the oil fields of the western part of the US, his work in the charitable gaming industry in North Dakota, and most recently his work as Weed Control Coordinator for Powder River County, Montana. He spent the last five years in Broadus, Montana with Vicki LaRue, the woman for whom he "forsook all others." He became known in the Broadus community, as he was known throughout his life, for his big smile and hearty laugh. He was always willing to lend a hand and never met a stranger who remained one for long. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, telling stories, spending time at the Montana bar, and most of all spending time with Vicki. He took great pride in his children's accomplishments and was proud to attend his son Rudie's wedding and his son Tony's college graduation this spring. He is survived by his son Rudie and his wife Juli, his son Tony, his siblings Jim (Joyce) Martinson, Jerry (Vicki) Martinson, Harold (Carrie) Martinson, Wendy (Harlan) Johnson, and his aunts Melba Jacobson and Avis Frantzick. He is also survived by a host of friends and family who will dearly miss him. Should friends desire, memorials may be made to the charity of one's choice.

**Monthly Gun Raffle Winners:**

**January** - Savage93R17FSS  
.17HMR 228.50 –  
Frank Goddard

**February** - Ruger 77 204Ruger  
449.00 – Marty Mendenhall

**March** - Savage MKII .22LR  
328.57 – Suzanne Beauchaine

**April** - Remington 870 28 ga  
659.00 – Doug Bruha

**May** - Savage 16FXP3 .223  
500.10 – Doug Schwend

**June** - Browning 325WSM X-  
Bolt 655.00- Mike Stevenson

**July** - Savage 7mm08 482.50 –  
Mark Honken

**August** - Savage 243 Win  
455.88 -

**September** - Browning  
300WSM X-Bolt 655.00 -

**October** - Remington 870 12 ga  
570.75 -

**November** - Savage 22-250  
455.88 -

**December** - Browning 270WSM  
X-Bolt 655.00 -



# MWCA Legacy Members



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## Upcoming Events

### August

5 Wetland Plant ID workshop - Billings  
16 MWCA Board of Directors Meeting - webinar

### September

27 - 30 NAWMA Conference - Pueblo, Colorado

### October

4 MWCA Board Fundraising Workshop - Bozeman  
12 - 13 MWCA Fall Coordinator Training- Havre  
14 MWCA Board of Directors Meeting - Havre  
19 - 20 Invasives Summit, MDA - Helena  
25 - 29 Invasive Species in Natural Areas Conference -  
Coeur d'Alene, ID

Check out [mtweed.org](http://mtweed.org) for an extended events calendar list  
and for more details

## Northeast area update

By Dick Zoanni

The 2010 spray season is off to a rough start because of (believe it or not) too much rain in this part of the State. From the first of May until today (June 21) Sidney has had 14 inches, with rain still in the forecast. Private off-road spraying is impossible right now, and we're getting way behind.

The NE Area held crew training in Glendive on June 3. We had 56 people present and Greg did a great job hosting the event. The ATV training course he set up was excellent.

## Fifth Annual Weed Whacker Ball is coming your way!

By Emily Calvert

Let me set the scene: when the pickup rolls up at the big get-together in the little town of Wise River, Montana there are three wall tents set up from which the smell of roasting pork emanates. A local group of ladies have worked all day preparing several table's worth of salads and desserts, which have earned reputations of being utterly delicious. This feast feeds 325 people, and all of them are here for one thing: The Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee's Weed Whacker Ball.

When bellies are full, the crowd moves inside the buildings where there are drinks, dancing, and ample socializing. Special awards are given out, vicious bidding occurs on the numerous silent auction items, and when that ends the real entertainment begins with auctioneer Mark Anderson and Rick Later. These two know the crowd, which makes for the most entertaining live auction a person can attend.

This event is one of the most family-oriented affairs around and is a casual dress occasion, so bring your appetite, some shoes suitable for dancing, and oh yeah—your sense of humor.

So what exactly IS the Weed Whacker Ball? Well, it's a fundraiser held every year to earn much-needed dollars which help educate about, prevent, and manage noxious weeds in the Big Hole watershed. What makes this event so unique is the fact that it's the local landowners who are the driving force behind it. They are the ones who started the fundraiser, now in its fifth year of running—a very successful running I might add. Since its inception, the event has raised over \$90,000. The tradition of holding the fundraiser in Wise River has also attributed to the Ball's success, because it has become an event to schedule the calendar around for those rural residents and has also become tradition for those who travel from as far as Ravalli County to attend.

The Weed Whacker Ball has had much success when it comes to raising money for their cause, but some may ask 'why should we as Montanans care?' As Jeanne Caddy—the chairperson and chief organizer of the Weed Whacker Ball—said herself, "Everybody is a contributor and everybody is affected by noxious weeds." It may seem like some of us are exempt from the consequences

of weeds, but these nasty little plants leave their mark on truly *everyone*, whether you happen to be a recreationalist, a wildlife enthusiast, hunter, fisherman, outfitter, farmer or rancher, or even simply a small-time landowner.

For instance: in the Big Hole, the battle with the oxeye daisy is just as much a battle with weed education as it is with the weed itself. This devious little weed looks like any daisy you would commonly find in your garden, thereby using its appearance to trick people into thinking it's a pretty flower instead of the weed it really is; it can easily be said that *education is key* when it comes to weed control. Given simple situations like this one, it's easy to see that weeds can be detrimental to our lifestyle no matter WHO we are, which makes the weed control and weed education efforts funded by the Weed Whacker Ball so important. Speaking of education, Jeanne worked on a grant through funding the Wise River/Big Hole River Oxeye Daisy Project which she will manage throughout the season. When the Wise River School students are back in class this fall, they will work with her to measure the effectiveness of different control methods on the oxeye daisy. Aside from this, a commercial applicator was hired with funds from the stimulus program and Jeanne's committee is continuing to build on the Anglers Education Project from 2009, which was funded by a DEQ mini-grant and will be conducting an educational float trip with Trout Unlimited this summer. Thanks to another grant the Divide Elementary School students have become well-educated on noxious weeds and attended local spray days as well. However, grants aren't always easy to come by so this is where the annual Weed Whacker Ball comes into play.

Why has this fundraiser been so successful? As Joan Stanchfield puts it, "Because it's been fun and people realize it's necessary." The ripples of the Weed Whacker Ball have reached great lengths in the fight against noxious weeds; this event has led to the creation of community weed days in Melrose, Glen, and Divide as well as



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...serving as a model to develop several weed management groups throughout the Big Hole.

It really says something about a fundraiser when a community of less than 125 people comes together to produce such a successful event for which the tickets are sold out early every year and they still sell tickets at the door.

This year the Weed Whacker Ball will be held in Wise River on Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, and if history is any indicator, it should be a great time as always. By asking around about it, I've been told by many that the Weed Whacker Ball is "THE THING to go to," and as all of the coordinators of this event would agree, "It's about more than just weeds."

If you are interested in attending, please contact Jeanne Caddy at 406-267-3354 or [bhwwc@smtel.com](mailto:bhwwc@smtel.com), and if you are interested in helping the noxious weed cause in what happens to be one of Montana's more beautiful watersheds, you may also donate to the event, again by contacting Jeanne.

The Weed Whacker Ball is many things to many people who attend: a great time to visit with old friends, enjoy some lively dancing, and to celebrate all those who have made such a difference during the season, not to mention enjoying the best food in the valley (or so the rumors go). Come find out for yourself and join in the fun of the 2010 Weed Whacker Ball in Wise River, Montana. See you there!



*Alta Miller & Pat Gillespie are just two of many great cooks at the Weed Whacker Ball!*

## Update of the Montana ANS management plan

The state of Montana has decided to revise and update the 2002 Montana Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan. As an implementing agency under the original plan, the Department of Agriculture is conducting some initial scoping discussions to review what changes are needed for the plan in regards to aquatic weeds, pests and agricultural interests. As a potentially affected party, we would like to include you and your organization in the development of recommendations for the revised plan.

A draft plan is expected to be produced by October 2010. These initial scoping discussions will be primarily conducted by email. We ask you to review the 2002 Montana ANS Plan, develop some suggestions and submit them to Erik Hanson [ehanson2@mt.gov](mailto:ehanson2@mt.gov) by July 26<sup>th</sup>. Erik will compile and summarize these suggestions and then email them to the group for discussion and revision by July 29, with the hope of producing a final set of recommendations by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

The final product of these scoping discussion will then be submitted by the Department of Agriculture for inclusion in the revision of the ANS Plan.

Here are links to the current ANS plan as well as guidance documents from the federal ANS task force on the development and revision of state plan

Montana ANS Plan

[http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Montana-FINAL\\_PLAN.pdf](http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Montana-FINAL_PLAN.pdf)

Guidance for state plan revision

<http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Documents/ANS%20Plan%20Development%20&%20Revision%20Process%202012-2005.pdf>

ANS Task force Guidance for state plans

<http://www.anstaskforce.gov/State%20Plans/State%20Plan%20Guidelines.pdf>

If you know of anyone who would be interested in providing input into this process, please feel free to forward this message. I look forward to receiving your input. I am working out of the office for most of the summer but am available by email or by cell phone at 406 431 3209.

Thanks, Erik Hanson

Invasive Species Coordinator  
Montana Department of Agriculture  
303 North Roberts PO Box 200201  
Helena, MT 59620  
406-444-9451



## Survey: More money needed to fight noxious weeds

Associated Press | Posted:  
Wednesday, July 7, 2010

HELENA — Land managers along the Rocky Mountain Front spent an estimated \$1.1 million last year to fight noxious weeds, and most believe that more is needed to control the spread, according to a survey released Wednesday.

The survey questioned 10 different federal, state, local and non-governmental agencies that manage land on or near some 2 million acres where the Rocky Mountains meet the Great Plains.

It was commissioned by The Wilderness Society on behalf of the Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front, a group promoting a plan to protect more than 300,000 acres in the region.

The agencies that responded said they spent about \$840,000 combined last

year to manage spotted knapweed, leafy spurge and other noxious weeds. The survey's author, economist Joe Kerkvliet of The Wilderness Society, estimated \$230,000 was spent on top of that.

"We wanted to quantify, get a better estimate on just how much money they do spend," Kerkvliet told reporters Wednesday.

Nine of the 10 agencies said their budgets fell short of allowing them to do all they could to control the spread of the weeds. Most said they'd need a budget increase of about 50 percent to accomplish their goals, according to the survey.

Among the areas where more work is needed, the agencies said the top priorities were mapping existing weed infestations and locating new ones, documenting the effectiveness of treatments and sharing information with each other.

The survey estimated that 32,000 acres are infested with weeds along the 2-million-acre Rocky Mountain Front from the Canadian border to Roger's Pass from north to south, and the Continental Divide to Montana Highways 89 and 287 from west to east.

Noxious weeds compete with native plants and grasses for water or soil nutrients and eventually overwhelm them. Their spread can damage water quality, agricultural productivity and even wildlife habitat.

"They just eliminate the grasses elk are dependent on, particularly in elk winter ranges," said Tom Toman, director of conservation for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. "If you think about the long term ramifications, it can really change a place for the critters, the soil chemistry and everything else."

Paul Wick, coordinator for the Teton County Weed District, said he didn't believe eradication of the invasive weeds was possible, but the control programs are necessary to keep them in check and prevent widespread

economical and ecological damage.

Montana Department of Agriculture weed specialist Tonda Moon agreed that the well-established noxious weeds are here to stay. "But that's no reason to stop trying," she said. "Containment and control are very effective."

## Coordinator Support Committee Update

*By Amy Adler*

The Coordinator Support Committee has been working on the 2011 Spring Coordinators' Trainings. One will be held in Helena on March 22 & 23, the other will be in Miles City on April 6 & 7. The area reps have worked very hard at putting a great training together, so I hope you all can make it.

I was at Range Days again this past month and sold raffle tickets and promoted the MWCA. It was great to see Gary Olsen, Wheatland County Weed Coordinator and Montana Range Days board member as well as Karen Laitala, Powell County Weed Coordinator and member of the Montana Range Days host committee for 2010 and 2011 Range Days (to be held in Deer Lodge). It was the first time I was able to attend the workshops and I learned a lot. My 10 & 12 year old also attended this year; I decided I should have been in one of their classes [easier?] because I definitely left with brain overload. I know it is a bad time of year for weed folks to try to attend Range Days, but it is well worth the time spent to attend. The MWCA once again sponsored gift certificates for the youth range plant mounts with 5 noxious weeds and 8 noxious weeds. This year's winners were Loni Blackman from Wolf Creek MT and Sunny Goughen from Alzada, MT.

On a sad note I was sorry to hear of the passing of Rollie Martinson, Powder River County Weed Coordinator.

*Continued on next page. . .*



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Coordinator support. . .

Well I hope the summer goes well for everyone, it finally has stopped raining here in eastern Montana for awhile, although I won't complain! It is absolutely beautiful - green and the wild flowers are gorgeous. Although this week proves to be a more typical as it is to be 96 today. Montana sure has seen some bizarre weather, with tornados, snow, rain and wind and all in the month of June. So until fall coordinator training (September 12 & 13 in Havre), happy spraying.



## 12th Annual Noxious Weed Fundraiser!

The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group's Weed Committee is looking forward to this year's noxious weed fundraiser to be held on August 7, 2010 just outside of Ennis. This annual event will be hosted by Steve and Gretchen Burke, owners of the Valley Garden Ranch. In addition to the dinner and auction, a tour of the ranch will be held early in the afternoon and will highlight some of the work that has been done in recent years to fight noxious weeds, enhance riparian habitat, reduce soil erosion and enhance rangeland productivity. Proceeds from the fundraiser support weed committee projects in the Madison Valley, facilitating noxious weed treatment and providing outreach and educational opportunities

throughout the year.

In addition to the fundraiser, the weed committee is hard at work coordinating a number of weed control and weed education projects this summer. On July 28, 2010 we will work with the USFS and Madison County Weed Board to host a weed pull and spray day up North Meadow Creek, just out of McAllister. This will be the kick-off event to future cooperative projects in the area. It will be a great opportunity for folks to come out and learn about noxious weeds and what tools are available to help private landowners address this important environmental issue.

For more information about ongoing projects or for an invitation to this year's fundraiser please call the MVRG Weed Committee office at 682-3731.

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## Out of the mouths of Babes

While I sat in the reception area of my doctor's office, a woman rolled an elderly man in a wheelchair into the room. As she went to the receptionist's desk, the man sat there, alone and silent. Just as I was thinking I should make small talk with him, a little boy slipped off his mother's lap and walked over to the wheelchair. Placing his hand on the man's, he said, "I know how you feel. My mom makes me ride in the stroller too."

As I was nursing my baby, my cousin's six-year-old daughter, Krissy, came into the room. Never having seen anyone breast feed before, she was intrigued and full of all kinds of questions about what I was doing. After mulling over my answers, she remarked, "My mom has some of those, but I don't think she knows how to use them."



Out bicycling one day with my eight-year-old granddaughter, Carolyn, I got a

little wistful. "In ten years," I said, "you'll want to be with your friends and you won't go walking, biking, and swimming with me like you do now. Carolyn shrugged. "In ten years you'll be too old to do all those things anyway."

Working as a pediatric nurse, I had the difficult assignment of giving immunization shots to children. One day, I entered the examining room to give four-year-old Lizzie her needle. "No, no, no!" she screamed. "Lizzie," scolded her mother, "that's not polite behavior." With that, the girl yelled even louder, "No, thank you! No, thank you!"

On the way back from a Cub Scout meeting, my grandson innocently said to my son, "Dad, I know babies come from mommies' tummies, but how do they get there in the first place?" After my son hemmed and hawed awhile, my grandson finally spoke up in disgust, "You don't have to make up something, Dad. It's okay if you don't know the answer."

Just before I was deployed to Iraq, I sat my eight-year-old son down and broke the news to him. "I'm going to be away for a long time," I told him, "I'm going to Iraq." "Why?" he asked, "Don't you know there's a war going on?"



Paul Newman founded the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for children stricken with cancer, AIDS, and blood diseases. One afternoon, he and his wife, Joanne Woodward, stopped by to have lunch with the kids. A counselor at a nearby table, suspecting the young patients wouldn't know Newman was a famous movie star, explained, "That's the man who made this camp possible. Maybe you've seen his picture on his salad dressing bottle?" Blank stares. "Well, you've probably seen his face on his lemonade carton." An eight-year-old girl perked up. "How long was he missing?"





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## Former Powder River County weed coordinator passes away

Delbert C. Riter, age 54, of Broadus passed away on Tuesday, April 27, 2010, at the family ranch near Broadus, MT as a result of an ATV accident. Delbert was born on June 21, 1955 in Broadus, Montana, the son of Everett and Bessie (Kercheval) Riter. Delbert grew up and attended school in Broadus, and graduated from Powder River County High School in 1973. Delbert went on to graduate from Montana State University with his Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science in 1977. Upon graduating from college, Del moved to Colorado for 6 ½ years. While there, he worked and spent much time playing Cowboy Polo with his brother, Red and family on the Greeley Saddle Club team. While in Colorado, Del met Liz and then they came back to help at the family ranch that Del's grandfather homesteaded in 1907. Del and Liz were married horseback at Riter Ranch on May 24, 1986. Due to Everett's failing health, Del and Liz took over the family ranch in 1991. Upon moving to Broadus, Del worked at Farmers Union Coop for 8 years, and then was the Powder River County Weed Supervisor for 16 years. Del recently began a new job with the NRCS that involved much travel and training, which he enjoyed immensely. Delbert enjoyed the time he spent working with his family on their ranch. His hard work and intense dedication to everything he did was known to, and appreciated by all. Del was always willing to help his neighbors whenever they needed anything he could do. Although he was considered to be a man of few words, what he did say was worth every word and was often delivered in a humorous manner. Del was always present at all of his daughters' activities and events to support them. He and Liz recently joined the FFA alumni group to continue supporting an organization that he and his children were once members of; supporting learning and leadership in agriculture. Delbert is survived by his wife, Liz, and two daughters, Valerie and Amanda Riter of Broadus, MT; and one brother, Red (Suzie) Riter of Shoshoni, WY, niece Cathy (Pat) Erhart and children Nick and Storm, and nephew Bill (Lilly) Riter, and his horse, Eclipse. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bessie and Everett Riter, and two sisters, Patty Brady and Marilyn Baucom. Condolences may be sent to the family by visiting: [www.stevensonandsons.com](http://www.stevensonandsons.com). In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to his children's education fund.

## Attention Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations: Ravalli County Collection Days

Do you have large, difficult to get to infestations of spotted knapweed? Do you know of private landowner's who are looking for alternative control methods to herbicide for spotted knapweed? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, biological control agents might be a good option for you.

The Bitterroot Bio-Control crews and Ravalli County Weed District will be hosting *Cyphocleonus achates* collection days for agencies and organizations to attend. At these collection days the students will assist participants in the collection of these insects for no charge but any and all donations will be accepted. Donations help to keep this program going. All insects collected will be taken home to help start insectories and control weeds in your part of the state. Lunch will be provided but please bring your own cooler, ice blocks, and containers for the insects. For more information on what time and where to meet please call the contact person corresponding with the date of the collection day that you are interested in attending.

Tuesday, August 3 - Katie 381-3874

Tuesday, August 10 - Melissa 777-5842 or 369-2055

Tuesday, August 17 - Melissa 777-5842 or 369-2055

Tuesday, August 24 - Melissa 777-5842 or 369-2055

*\*\*Private landowners interested in collection need to call the Ravalli County Weed Office at (406)777-5842 for more information. The above collection events are for agency and nonprofit organizations only.*



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# Big Hole Watershed Weed Group Update

By Jeanne Caddy BHWWC  
Coordinator and MWCA Conservation Representative

With a tremendous amount of help from the four counties throughout the Big Hole River watershed, our community spray days were an amazing success in June. Through noxious weed awareness and education, landowner participation has exponentially increased for spray days. The BLM, MT Fish Wildlife Parks, and the US Forest Service continue to partner with all of us to make a difference in this beautiful corner of Montana.

Landowners and agency employees are not the only folks engaged in the battle against noxious weeds. Anglers, hunters, and back country horsemen continue to be a force to be reckoned with. Last season, with grant funding from MT DEQ, the BHWWC put together an angler education program which involved visiting with anglers at fishing access sites, publication of an aquatic noxious weed brochure, and new signage at several of the fishing access sites along the Big Hole River.

Matt Wilhem with the Center for Aquatic Nuisance Species based out of Livingston is helping the BHWWC take that partnership to the next level. On July 24<sup>th</sup> the BHWWC will team up with the George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited to map noxious weeds on the Big Hole River. To date, we have enough volunteers registered to map at least four sections of the

river. Kudos to Matt for coordinating these types of projects on many rivers throughout the state!

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, Lacy Decker from the Butte BLM Field Office teamed up with Dick Talley and other volunteers from the local chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and conducted an extensive mapping effort in the Quartz Hill area which proved to be extremely beneficial for the June 25<sup>th</sup> Quartz Hill spray day (in Beaverhead County.)

In 2009, and again this year, the Mile High Back Country Horsemen (Butte) took an entire day to spray in the Selway Springs and Humbug Spires area just east of Divide. Please see photo from last year's spray day. As you can see, it takes several folks

from diverse groups to work together to keep native and desirable ground cover intact. After all, aren't we all stakeholders?

Speaking of 'stakeholders'.....Please join us on Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup> (yes Patriot Day) in Wise River for the Sixth Annual Weed Whackers Ball. We will have our usual barbecue, live and silent auctions, and live music. There will be a whole lot of food and fun so bring the entire family and be sure to wear something patriotic! The doors open at 4:00pm.

For more information about the Big Hole Watershed Weed Committee or the Weed Whackers Ball, please contact me at (406)267-3354 or [bhwWC@smtel.com](mailto:bhwWC@smtel.com)



Photo sent to Jeanne Caddy by Charlie O'Leary from the Mile High Back Country Horsemen's group out of Butte. The photo is from a 2009 spray day event. Pictured Left to right: Jake Troyer, Pat Maloney, Lacy Decker (BLM), Charlie O'Leary, John Trudnowski, Darrell McDaniel, and Ray Thoen.

*\*Certified Weed Seed Free Forage Inspector and \*Licensed Commercial Chemical Control Applicator \*Weed Mapping*

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*The Western Governors' Association Policy Resolution 10-4 (Combating Invasive Species) passed Monday at the Western Governors' Conference in Whitefish, MT. The Core Team work from Montana and Colorado Ag Departments, Colorado DNR, DuPont and Governor Otter as the core sponsor resulted in "progress".... Additionally, many other people in various states contributed to bringing this forward successfully for the right reasons. The list is long. All of the concerning issue and solution concepts for an all taxa approach were satisfactorily accepted! Working with WGA and other advocates will guide how funding asks are appropriately conveyed and who should do the asking. Funding in the 2011 appropriations is the goal.*

Regards, John D. Cantlon  
Government Resource Manager  
E.I. duPont de Nemours and Company

Western Governors' Association  
Policy Resolution 10-4  
**Combating Invasive Species**



A. BACKGROUND

1. The National Invasive Species Council (Executive Order 13112) defines an invasive species as “an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” The rapid spread of invasive species remains one of our country’s biggest environmental problems, a situation complicated by the sheer number of invasive species, lack of a coordinated and comprehensive effort to prevent introductions, monitor and survey for new introductions, and the remarkable ability of invasive species to adapt, reproduce and ultimately overtake entire ecosystems.
2. Invasive species are a global problem. The annual cost of impacts and control efforts equals five percent of the world’s economy. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates the country spends at least \$138 billion per year to fight and control invasive plant and animal species, such as the emerald ash borer beetles that have destroyed millions of trees in the East and Midwest. Invasive species influence the productivity, value, and management of a broad range of land and water resources in the West, ultimately limiting the direct and indirect goods and services these ecosystems are capable of producing. Over 100 million acres (an area roughly the size of California) in the United States are suffering from invasive plant infestations.
3. On a scale of biodiversity destruction, the EPA reports that invasive species rank second only to urban development. In addition, invasive species have been identified by the Chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service as one of the four significant threats to our nation’s forest and rangeland ecosystems.
4. The Western Governors recognize that the spread of invasive species results from a combination of human behavior, susceptibility of invaded environments, and biology of the invading species. These characteristics are not dictated by geopolitical boundaries, but rather by ecosystem-level factors, including climate change, which often cross state borders. Scientists and land managers across the West have expressed the need to develop a strategy for more aggressive invasive species prevention, early detection, and management.
5. Invasive species have significant negative economic, social, and ecological impacts which include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Reduction of the value of streams, lakes, reservoirs, oceans, and estuaries for native fish and wildlife habitat;
  - b. Degradation of water resources for human uses including drinking water, energy production, irrigation systems and other water uses;
  - c. Decreased real estate property value and increased costs of property development;
  - d. Detraction from the aesthetics and recreational value of wildlands, parklands, and other areas;
  - e. Degradation of ecosystem functions and values, including populations of desirable species;
  - f. Reduction of the yield and quality of desirable crop and forage plants that are important in production of our food supply;
  - g. Reduction of native biodiversity, resulting in a growing number of threatened, endangered and extinct

species (Note: invasive species have contributed directly to the decline of 42 percent of the threatened and endangered species in the United States);

- h. High cost of control; and
- i. Reduction of preferred native vegetation important to native fish and wildlife as well as livestock.

6. Aquatic invasive species such as the zebra mussel, quagga mussel, and Eurasian water milfoil are spreading into more western water bodies each year. The most common sources for the introduction of these species in the West are recreational watercraft and materials sold by aquatic plant and animal suppliers. This is a regional, interstate issue and no western state can independently implement programs to adequately prevent or reduce the spread of invasive species. The economic and environmental damage from aquatic invasive species will continue to rise in western states without a well-organized and adequately funded effort to survey and monitor for invasive species as well as implement prevention, control, and eradication programs in each state to complement coordinated multi-state efforts.

7. Many of these invasive species were introduced, or their distribution was expanded, due to inadequate implementation of federal regulations dealing with international trade and/or interstate commerce.

**B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT**

1. Western Governors support coordinated, multistate management and eradication actions to limit or eliminate intentional and unintentional introductions and improve control of invasive species. The principal objectives should be to maintain properly functioning natural systems and their associated native fish and wildlife populations, ensure agricultural productivity, enhance resource and environmental protection, and protect human health. Control programs should be economically practical in relationship to the long-term impacts an invasive species will cause.

2. Programs for the control and/or eradication of invasive species must incorporate education, prevention, and early detection and rapid response techniques.

3. Western Governors strongly encourage all natural resource management agencies, local governments, universities, nonprofit organizations and the private sector to collaborate and form partnerships with states to prevent the spread of invasive species, avert new unauthorized introductions, and work together to find creative new approaches for protecting and restoring natural, agriculture, and recreational resources.

4. Western Governors urge full funding support for invasive species management programs on federal lands as well as financial assistance for state invasive species management, including the National Invasive Species Act and programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal, Plant, and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and funding support for state invasive species councils. These programs provide valuable services in the detection and elimination of invasive species as well as coordination and communication, and their participation is essential for states relying on these services to maintain strong trade and export functions.

5. Western Governors encourage the federal government to:

- a. Assume responsibility and a direct partnership role with states in interstate interdiction of invasive species;
- b. Substantially increase grant funding to the states for monitoring, intrastate interdiction and containment;

*Continued on next page . . .*



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Governors meeting. . .

and

- c. Implement aggressive invasive species control programs within the federal agencies (e.g., Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, US Forest Service, Army Corps of Engineers) who have jurisdictional responsibility for land and water resources.
- d. Establish rapid response spending authorization for states responding to early detection of invasive species.

6. Western Governors support a coordinated regional approach to invasive species management. Of particular importance will be:

- a. Developing scientifically based and coordinated species lists between the states;
- b. Developing efficient coordination and communication mechanisms to share information promptly with each other and the federal government to allow for the most effective cooperative and rapid response;
- c. Establishing consistent and effective policies and procedures to prevent transport, sale and dispersal of undesirable species, particularly those under eradication in specific states; and
- d. Increasing awareness and support for effective public outreach and education throughout the western states.

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

- 1. This resolution shall be posted on the Western Governors' Association website and shall be referenced and used as appropriate by Governors and staff.
- 2. Western Governors' Association staff shall coordinate within existing WGA committees, such as the Climate Adaptation Workgroup and the Forest Health Advisory Committee, to promote coordination and cooperation of invasive species management across agencies.
- 3. The Western Governors' Association shall seek financial and human resources to work with appropriate partners to facilitate the development and coordination of strategies to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial species.
- 4. WGA shall support increased pass-through funding for invasive species management to states including funding for the Federal Highway Administration to support of state Department of Transportation invasive species management efforts.



*The two photos pictured to the left are just a sampling of the scenic photos submitted by MWCA members for the 2011 calendar. This year's weed information will profile commonly confused weeds and natives. Calendars will be available September 1 and will be \$1 each for members. They'll make great Christmas presents!*



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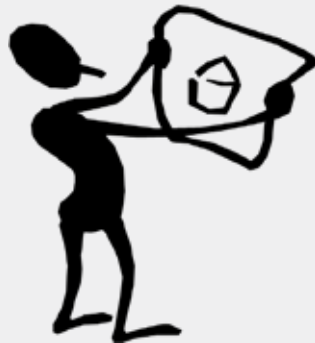
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# Make your plan

By Diana Ericson

Driving across the state of Montana and seeing the diversity of landscapes reminded me of how different we all are. Not only does Montana have many different ecosystems but we also have many different land uses. These differences are why a one-size-fits-all weed plan does not work in Montana. The weed plan that works for your friend or neighbor may not be right for you. One of the most important things you can do in the management of weeds is to make your own weed plan. Your weed plan will answer the questions, what are you planning for and what kind of results are you hoping to get? The answers are critical because they will drive everything you do in weed management. Are you managing your property to grow crops or run cattle? Do you want to increase the amount of wildlife that visits your property? When you are done do you want to put a horse or two on it? Was your property recently burned over and you would like to see a few new trees on that southeast corner? Are the spring flowers on your property the reason you bought it? One issue in all weed management plans is your land. The lands in Montana vary in soil type, the amount of wind, annual moisture and finally the temperatures. Those elements not only affect what weeds you are likely to have, but also the reality of what outcome you can expect on your property. Some things are just not possible on some lands.

Land health is another issue. Is your property in "good shape?" The condition of your land is affected by many elements. How much of your property is infested with weeds, do you have just a few weeds in a limited area or are weeds about the only plant on your property? Are your weeds on a west facing slope or right next to the spring runoff gulch? What weeds are on your property? What desirable plants are on your property? Are the natural plants and grasses in good shape or have they been grazed to within a nub of their life? If your weed plan is one of the following sentences: "I am trying to get rid of the weeds" or "I have to comply with the law," I encourage you to develop a weed plan. No matter how big or small your property, a weed plan will help you pick the best combination of weed control methods based on desired outcome. Weed plans for landowners don't have to be big or complicated, but having a plan helps to ensure you get the results you want. Your local weed coordinator can provide some direction and there are also businesses that can help you develop your personal weed plan.



*An innocent-looking load of round bales, but inside, a surprise cache of illegal drugs is found. Judging by the looks of the officials, this load was found in Mexico. Isn't it amazing how crafty those trafficking in illegal drugs can be?!*



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# Montana Range Days

By Gary Olsen

The 34<sup>th</sup> annual Montana Range Days took place this year June 14<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>. There were about 300 people in attendance this year, seven of whom were from Wheatland County. Malori Dietrich (Harlowton), Clay Olson (Harlowton), Ashley Holmes (Harlowton), Tyler Lloyd (Harlowton), Alexandria Nelson (Harlowton), Casey Hereim (Judith Gap), Jordy Hereim (Judith Gap), and Taylor Brook (Judith Gap). Malori and Alexandria both participated in "Illustrated Talk" on the first day of Range Days. Malori placed 5<sup>th</sup> and Alexandria placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. The second day of Range Days was full of workshops for the youth and adults. They spent approximately an hour at each different workshop. These workshops were a mixture of: plant identification, plant anatomy, stocking rates, plant utilization, range planning, soil testing, and similarity index. The younger children and other adults went on different tours occurring throughout the day. That night there was an annual banquet and a dance. The next day everyone participated in



Left to right: Casey Hereim, Ashley Holmes, Clay Olson, Malori Dietrich, Tyler Lloyd, Jordy Hereim

a competition that was related to the workshops they learned from the previous day. Clay placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the Youth Open category. Casey was Top Open Youth. For the Open Youth Team category, Malori, Casey, Clay, and Ashley were all on a team, and they placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. Alexandria was on a team with Brandon Gould, Andrew Gould, and Sunny Gaughen. Their team placed 1<sup>st</sup> and will have the opportunity to go to the regional competition in North Dakota and the national competition in Oklahoma. All in all, it

was a great learning experience for everyone. Thank you to all the sponsors at Range Days for all the great prizes and your support. Congratulations to everyone who participated in the competition. Keep up the great work everyone! Montana Range Days would like to thank the Montana Weed Control Association for its monetary contribution for noxious weed collections and looks forward to the next two years in the Deer Lodge Valley.



Summer at Glacier! Photo by Diana Ericson

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General Manager

Harnessing Technology and Preserving the Environment

# USDA stops using beetles vs. invasive saltcedar

By Mead Gruver

Associated Press

Published: Monday, June 21, 2010

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Concern about an endangered bird has caused the U.S. Department of Agriculture to declare a cease-fire in its biological war against saltcedar, an invasive tree that has taken over riparian areas across the West. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service last week formally ended its program of releasing saltcedar leaf beetles to eat saltcedar, also known as tamarisk, in 13 states: Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, **Montana**, Washington and Wyoming.

The reason for the program's demise is the southwestern willow flycatcher, an endangered species found in scattered pockets around the Southwest. The bird nests in saltcedar, as well as in native willows and cottonwoods. Concern that beetles could destroy much of the bird's nesting habitat was why the USDA excluded New Mexico, Arizona and California from the beetle-release program, which began in 2005.

Now, scientists think the beetles are likely to spread from the states where they were introduced. They say it could be just a matter of time before the insects chew through saltcedar all the way down the Colorado River drainage in Arizona and eastern California. "The beetles move around. They don't stay where you put them,"

Alan Dowdy, director of invertebrate and biological control programs for APHIS in Riverdale, Md., said Monday. USDA moved to end the beetle program last year, he said. A June 15 memo from Dowdy told APHIS state directors that APHIS no longer endorsed releasing saltcedar leaf beetles and stated that doing so could be prosecuted and punished by a fine up to \$250,000 per violation.

The change has environmentalists who opposed the use of saltcedar leaf beetles from the beginning saying, "I told you so." They also said it might be too little, too late to prevent one artificially introduced species from destroying another and wiping out an endangered native species in the process.

"It's very serious," said Robin Silver, with the Center for Biological Diversity. The group, based in Tucson, Ariz., and the Maricopa Audubon Society sued APHIS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last year over the release of saltcedar leaf beetles in southern Utah in 2006. The released beetles proliferated, the groups said, destroying several saltcedar trees containing southwestern willow flycatcher nests. The release also opened a door for the beetles to spread southward, the groups said. One of the problems with the tree is it concentrates salt in its leaves. When those leaves fall, salt can concentrate around the trees and prevent anything else from growing.

Saltcedar has been successful in part because of the dams built in the West during the 20th century, said Matthew

Chew, an assistant research professor at Arizona State University.

The dams altered the natural flow of Western rivers like the Colorado, giving saltcedar trees an advantage over native willows and

cottonwoods.

"They are adapted to this new regime — this new, artificially managed regime," Chew said. "We created a habitat. We created the perfect conditions."

The federal government's view that saltcedar leaf beetles could do no harm was an "illusion," said Jeff Ruch, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. "Perhaps the best hope for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher is for it to develop a taste for leaf beetles," Ruch said.

## Montana's Response

Becky Kington, MWCA Executive Director, asked John Gaskin with Sidney ARS to comment on this new federal mandate:

*"At this point, USDA ARS in Sidney no longer holds any permits for release of Diorhabda. This includes any research activities involving Diorhabda outside of our quarantine facility, including caged and greenhouse studies. We will continue our monitoring studies at existing release sites in Montana and Wyoming. As for establishment, Diorhabda has done well in northern Wyoming, though the last few years saw a population crash. This was most likely due to a prolonged warm period that allowed the beetles to try and push for one extra generation that summer. The insect needs to overwinter as an adult in the duff and soil beneath the plant, so perhaps the cold snap came when many were still in a larval stage, causing mortality. There are still populations in Wyoming, and we expect the numbers to build back up in favorable conditions. In Montana, we have so far failed to have any significant establishment at any sites, and figuring out why that is so would be the current focus of our research if we had possession of a permit to do studies outside of quarantine. Reasons for non-establishment in Montana might*



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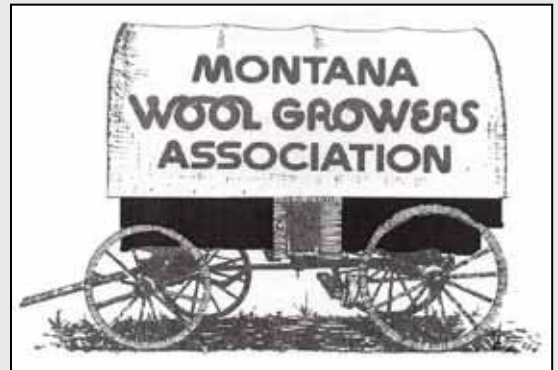
*invasives & saltcedar. ...*

*include high predation rates or perhaps enhanced plant defenses due to increased water access. The insects should be well-adapted to our climate as they come from Kazakhstan and western China, places with similar latitude and winter temperatures. ”*

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# Curlyleaf Pondweed found near Bozeman, Montana

*Melissa Graves, Plant ID  
Diagnostician, Schutter Diagnostic  
Lab and Jane Mangold, MSU  
Extension Invasive Plant Specialist*

In late June, curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*), one of Montana's Priority 1 noxious weeds, was found near Bozeman in several ponds along the East Gallatin River drainage system. Curly-leaf pondweed is an aquatic plant that typically occurs in ponds, lakes, and slower moving streams or rivers. It prefers shallow water depths with a silty, high nutrient bottom. Curly-leaf pondweed is distinguished from native pondweed species by its growth habit and very distinctive leaf edges. Unlike native pondweeds, it actively grows throughout the winter, with new plants emerging in the spring. The leaves of this species have wavy edges resembling lasagna noodles. They are typically about 1 to 3 inches long, narrow, reddish in color, and translucent, with the flattened stems visible through the leaves. Curly-leaf pondweed can spread by seed (rarely), by winter buds called turions, and vegetatively as small fragments of plant material attached to boats and other equipment.

Curly-leaf pondweed is native to Africa, Australia, and Eurasia. This invasive aquatic species was introduced to the United States in the late 1800's as an aquarium plant. It spreads easily and can quickly take over bodies of water. Current distribution records for Montana are very limited, with populations reported in Flathead, Lake, Lewis & Clark, Sanders, and Valley Counties. You can help us improve the distribution records for this plant. If your property has a pond, lake, or other water system on it (e.g. small stream, drainage or irrigation ditch) please check for the presence of this



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invasive plant. If you think you've found curly-leaf pondweed, please take plant samples to your local county Extension Agent or Weed Coordinator. Samples can also be sent directly to Melissa Graves, Plant Identification Diagnostician, Montana State University Schutter Diagnostic Lab, 119 Plant BioScience Building, Bozeman, Montana 59717, for confirmation of identity. Here are some simple steps to follow to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive plants like curly-leaf pondweed.

- Thoroughly rinse any mud and debris from all equipment and wading gear and drain the water from your boat before leaving access areas.
- Remove all plant fragments from the boat, propeller, and boat trailer.
- Allow boats or equipment to dry at least five days before transporting them to new bodies of water.
- Do not dispose of aquarium or water garden plants in other bodies of water. Seal plants in a plastic bag and place in the trash for disposal.



*Photograph by Jane Mangold, MSU  
Extension Invasive Plant Specialist*

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