

**UPPER SNAKE RIVER
COOPERATIVE WEED**

MANAGEMENT AREA

ANNUAL REPORT YEAR 2002

I - INTRODUCTION

Who we are

The Upper Snake River Cooperative Weed Management Area (USRCWMA) was established by the Bonneville, Teton, Madison, Jefferson and Bingham County Commissioners and the state and federal agencies that manage lands within those counties. The USRCWMA provides a forum to coordinate area wide activities to prevent, contain, and control non-native invasive plants and noxious weeds on public and private lands. Weed control programs, administered by local counties and land managing agencies, often end up under funded and under staffed. In the USRCWMA, we believe that sharing funds, equipment, staff, and ideas across jurisdictional boundaries in a coordinated and cooperative weed fighting strategy will result in more effective "on-the-ground" weed control. The USRCWMA focus is to support an area wide integrated noxious weed control program that uses all available tools and techniques to combat noxious weeds. A Cooperative Agreement describes the operations of the partnership and a steering committee provides the local leadership. The steering committee is detailed in Appendix 1. The committee met nine times during 2003.

Our Goals and Mission

The USRCWMA strategic plan, developed in 2000, places a high priority on:

- 1) Developing a coordinated area-wide information and education program.
- 2) Initiating a noxious weed-mapping program using GPS and GIS technology.
- 3) Targeting and funding large scale weed treatment initiatives and smaller projects.
- 4) Implementing a research and monitoring program to locally evaluate the effectiveness of weed fighting techniques.

The USRCWMA Steering Committee has identified and prioritized several noxious weed infestations that pose the highest threat to the entire USRCWMA. Additionally, they have developed priority initiatives that target resources to address those concerns.

Who is involved?

Partners in the USRCWMA include the Bonneville, Teton, Madison, Jefferson and Bingham County Commissions, private land owners, County Weed Departments, High Country RC&D Council, five Soil and Water Conservation Districts, private landowners, USDA-Forest Service; USDI-Bureau of Land Management, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA-Cooperative Extension Service, USDI-Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Idaho Department of Highways, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Bonneville Power Administration, and Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory.

Area involved

The USRCWMA covers Teton County, Madison County, Bonneville County, a portion of Jefferson County, and a portion of Bingham County.

Table 1: Acres - USRCWMA

COUNTY	Bonneville	Bingham	Jefferson	Madison	Teton	TOTAL
ACRES	1,211,405	113,000	363,761	306,000	294,012	2,288,178

Major concerns Leafy Spurge, Spotted Knapweed, Diffuse Knapweed, Russian Knapweed, Canada Thistle, Musk Thistle, Hoary Cress, Dalmation and Yellow Toadflax, Houndstounge, and Purple Loosestrife are the major concerns in the USRCWMA. The rapid spread of these noxious weeds is a serious threat to the ecology and economy of eastern Idaho.

Leafy spurge has gained a strong foothold in a wide range of habitats across the USRCWMA including arid rangelands, dry canyons, riparian zones, and wetland habitats along the Teton and Snake River. Leafy Spurge has displaced native vegetation and severely degraded the wildlife and grazing values of these lands. Purple Loosestrife threatens the diverse habitats along the Henry's Fork of the Snake River in Madison and Jefferson County. In recent years, Spotted Knapweed, Diffuse Knapweed, and Russian Knapweed have been spreading, especially along the regions road systems, and pose a huge threat to the regions rangelands.



Leafy Spurge in the Moody Creek Canyon.

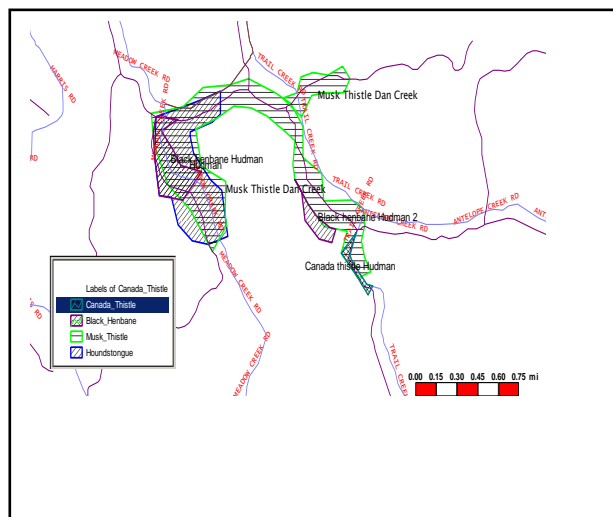
II- WHAT'S BEING DONE



Collecting GPS location data

Inventory / Mapping- During the summer of 2002 the USRCWMA contracted with the Bingham County Solutions Program to inventory and map noxious weeds. Teams of highly motivated high school students armed with GPS units and GIS skills provided accelerated mapping services in Jefferson, Madison, and Teton counties. In Jefferson County the teams inventoried and mapped more than 12,000 acres of land heavily infested with Russian Knapweed at the Mud Lake Wildlife Management

Area and surrounding region. Over 1400 acres of Leafy Spurge infestations were also mapped from the Menan area to the Moody Creek Drainage in Madison County. While in Madison County the team inventoried more than 1,200 acres of wetlands at Cartier Slough mapping leafy spurge and purple loosestrife. Finally, the team inventoried over 22, 000 acres in Teton County mapping leafy spurge and spotted knapweed. The Bonneville County weed department arranged a mapping field day at the Henry Creek Project site. Bonneville High School students participated in the inventory of 150 acres of leafy spurge.



Map produced by the Bonneville County Weed Department.



2003 USRCWMA Pocket Calendar

Information/Education- During 2002, the USRCWMA provided several public educational opportunities by hosting workshops, conducting tours, and developing printed materials. During March local residents attended the Jefferson County Weed Awareness Workshop in Rigby. The USRCWMA photo display was used at the county fair in Jefferson County. Over 1,300 copies of our all weather "Wanted Posters" were printed for indoor use at area offices, businesses, and other locations. Sixty two hundred copies of our very popular pocket calendar were produced. The 2003 version features high quality weed

photographs and county weed supervisor contact information. The Bonneville County Weed Supervisor participated monthly in a popular radio talk show discussing noxious weed issues.

Professional Development: During August the USRCWA hosted an Invasive Weed Tour for 30+ attendees. The tour featured stops where participants evaluated the impact of cattle grazing on Canada thistle, biological agents for Canada thistle, Spotted Knapweed, and Dalmation toadflax, management of insectaries, and proper herbicide treatment.



2002 Tour in Teton Valley



Back country weed control

Eradication- Eight major multi-year weed-fighting initiatives are underway in the USRCWMA. They include the Snake River

Purple Loosestrife Initiative, Highway 33 Corridor Spotted Knapweed Initiative, Rexburg Bench Leafy Spurge Initiative, Menan Area Spurge/Knapweed Initiative, Palisades/Swan Valley Noxious Weed Initiative, Teton Area Leafy Spurge/Knapweed Initiative and the Palisades Mitigation Project. Additionally, there are several special projects underway which target specific local noxious weed concerns. For example, in Bonneville County the weed department has implemented a Whitetop eradication project along irrigation canals. A cooperative spray project along a railroad right of way is underway in Bonneville, Jefferson, and Madison County. To aid in private land weed treatment across the USRCWMA two sprayers are now available in Bonneville County to rent.

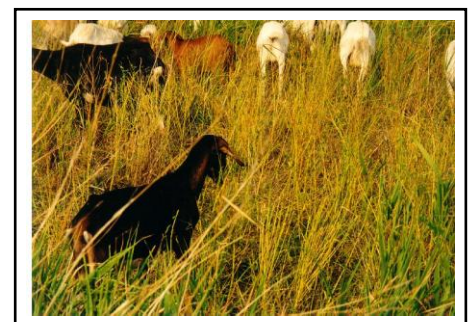


Purple Loosestrife Spray Day

Three cooperative spray days were planned and implemented by the USRCWMA partners during 2002. They included the Highway 33 Corridor Spotted Knapweed Spray Day, Pine Creek Leafy Spurge Spray Day, Purple Loosestrife Spray Day along the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. During spray

days, the staff and equipment from cooperating agencies and counties are pooled to cooperatively attack specific weeds. Two-way radios were purchased to aid communications during spray days.

Containment- 2002 was the second full season of prescriptive goat grazing to control leafy spurge at Cartier Slough Wildlife Management Area in Madison County. About 500 goats were herded daily during June through August on the 800 acres of leafy spurge infested riparian and wetland habitat. Most spurge plants were grazed once before they went to seed. Goats were pulled off at the end of August as nearly all leafy growth on spurge plants had been grazed and the goats were beginning to graze non-target plants such as grass and willows. No regrowth was noted in the fall. The project appears to be effectively controlling the spread of leafy spurge and reducing plant vigor.



During 2002 the Palisades Mitigation Project (PMP) assisted our partners to implement the biological component of their integrated noxious weed control programs. A long-term goal of the PMP is to establish

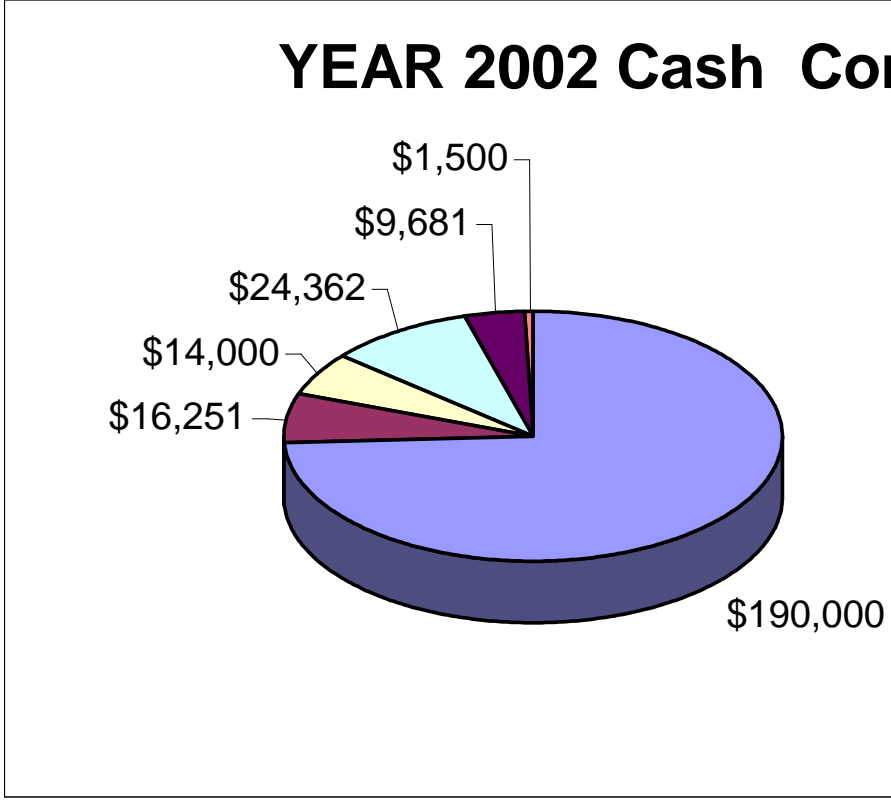
insectaries throughout the watershed on several species of noxious weeds. The PMP has established and administers a cost share program, developed its own project evaluation process, and continues to monitor release sites. During 2002 sixteen species of biological agents, (290 colonies) were released. Since 1994, the PMP has assisted partners within the USRCWMA to place over 3,100 colonies of plant specific biological control agents on Leafy Spurge, Spotted Knapweed, Canada Thistle, Musk Thistle, Purple Loosestrife, and Yellow Toadflax. The project cost-shares directly with landowners and agencies.

III- CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CWMA

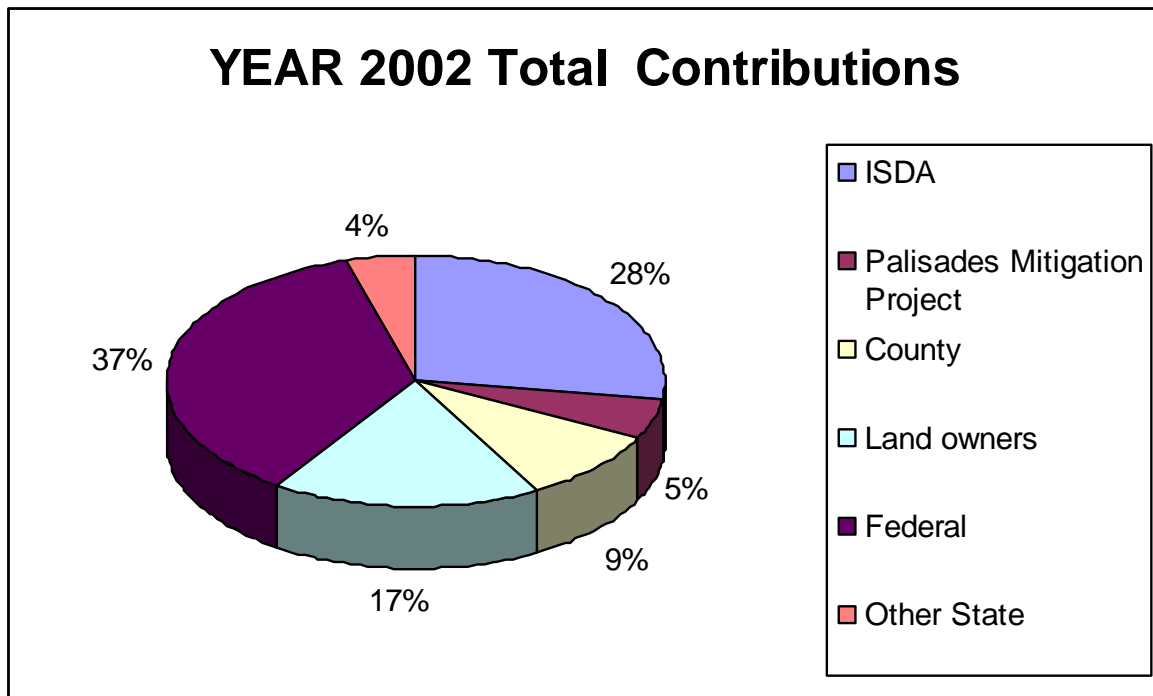
Each county as well as state and federal land managing agency within the USRCWMA annually set budgets for integrated noxious weed control programs. Other USRCWMA partners provide technical assistance, equipment, services, and dollars in support of integrated noxious weed programs.

Grant dollars received from the Idaho Department of Agriculture have been matched with local cash and services. Collectively, they provide the resources needed to implement the programs of the USRCWMA. During 2002, the USRCWMA received cash financial assistance for project implementation from several sources.

ISDA	\$190,000
Palisades Mitigation Project	\$16,251
BOR	\$14,000
Land owners	\$24,362
Counties	\$9,681
IDF&G	\$1,500



During 2002, a total of \$ 293,135 in cash and services were contributed in direct support of USRCWMA project implementation.



V- PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

The USRCWMA will continue to implement the strategic plan it developed in 2000. A high priority is placed on continuing those programs started in 2001 and 2002 while taking on several new challenges during 2003. Coordinated noxious weed inventory and mapping will be a major activity during 2003. We are arranging for student mapping teams to assist county weed supervisor's to inventory and map noxious weeds and provide GIS mapping of our biological agent release sites. Targeted noxious weed treatment projects within the USRCWMA priority initiative areas will continue during 2003 including:

- Snake River Purple Loosestrife Control Initiative
- Highway 33 Spotted Knapweed Control Initiative
- Menan Area Leafy Spurge/Spotted Knapweed Control Initiative
- Teton Area Leafy Spurge and Spotted Knapweed Control Initiative
- Swan Valley Noxious Weed Control Initiative

Cooperative "spray days" will be continued and expanded. The Palisades Mitigation Project will continue to plan, fund, and implement biological weed control projects in the USRCWMA. Several insectaries will be harvested during 2003 and these insects moved to new sites. Considerable time will be spent cataloging previous bio-release sites using GPS equipment. The Leafy Spurge Control with Goat Grazing project on Henry's Fork of the Snake River will be continued.

Educational outreach will continue to be a high priority in the USRCWMA during 2003. We will utilize workshops, tours, displays at county fairs, radio talk shows, newspapers, and newsletters to continue to provide quality information and educational opportunities to the public. We will produce a 2004 Noxious Weed Pocket Calendar.

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2002 PROJECT SUMMARIES

PROJECT	WEED SPECIES	ACRES TREATED
Rexburg Bench Spurge	ls	48
Forest weed control	m,ct,ls,yt,dt,bh,sk	2480
Willow Creek/Moody Creek	ct	3
Highway 33 Knapweed	sk, ls	450
Swan Valley Project	sk, ls	677
Rail Dogs	ls, ct,mt,pp,hc	60
Henry Creek	ls	127
Leafy Spurge Control with Goat Grazing	ls	1000
Jefferson Co. Canal	mt	28
Teton Area Spurge/ Knapweed	ls,sk	360
Purple Loosestrife	pl	5
Dry/Pine Creek Spurge	ls	15
Sand Creek Progressive Irrigation	hc	35
Dan Creek/Kepps Crossing	ht,mt	85
City of Idaho Falls (Noise Park)	mt	265
Hudman	ct,mt,bh,ht	88
Menan Leafy Spurge	ls	168
TOTAL		5894

ct - Canada thistle
 mt - Musk thistle
 sk - Spotted knapweed
 ls - Leafy Spurge
 ht - Hounds tongue
 pl - Purple Loosestrife
 hc - Hoary cress
 pp - Perennial pepperweed
 bh - Black henbane
 yt - Yellow toadflax
 dt - Dalmation toadflax