

The Weed Roundup

Newsletter of the North Fork Weed Cooperative

Fall 2008

Vol 9, No 2

NFWC President's Report – 2008

By Jean Sutherland

Dear North Fork Landowners and Weed Co-op Members.....

Greetings from the President of your Council and your Council Members: Cliff Hoelscher from Fort Collins Water Utilities, Vice-President; Arlene Yusnukis, Secretary; Kim Obelle of the Land Steward; Dr. Phil Westra, CSU Weed Specialist. We send you best wishes for the Fall Season and news here from our Year 2008 –a good year for us which hopefully means a not-so-good year for North Fork Waters

The year kicked off with a great February 13 Potluck and Annual Meeting in the Livermore Community Hall. The food as always was plentiful and tasty and the meeting that followed chronicled our year 2007. Council elections took place; Tim D'Amato, Larimer County Land Steward, and Phil Westra from a shared Council seat as independent landowners. Yours truly was re-elected as well. The program was full with talks by Tim D'Amato, Phil Westra of CSU and his graduate student Kelly Uhing. High-powered indeed, and show-casing new Council members.

Spring saw our Methods Workshop taking place at the The Nature Conservancy Phantom Canyon Preserve with Tim and Phil giving of their expertise in both mechanical and chemical methods for eliminating the noxious weeds of our area. In June, a weed tour took place for interested Council members to follow-up a tour, and the news for the Abbey was good –their herbicide spraying in the previous Fall was most successful and the difference was noticeable.

We are happy to report that, with a grant awarded to us from The Nature Conservancy in Colorado, we were able to contract with Ellen Nelson to be Weed Coordinator for NFWC for the summer months. In addition to managing the office and correspondence, Ellen worked with the TNC college interns to monitor the NFWC demonstration projects and coordinated with Melissa Bridges, a graduate student at CSU under Dr. Phil Westra, to maximize a research project headed by Dr. Reich of CSU to do a database study of the North Fork watershed area. Much thanks to both TNC and Ellen and our CSU partners. On June 14, Ellen led a very successful weed tour into the Bonner Peak Ranch to look at a cheatgrass control project and the North Fork Watershed as the river flows through the Picnic Rock Fire burn area.

July 19 and September 19 also saw two additional outstap out at the ARDEC conference center of CSU and heading out into weedlands and demonstration projects. Their tours are highlighted in this Newsletter and we say a very big thanks to them as well. Look for the 2009 weed tour opportunities coming up!

Work has begun on a ballot initiative, perhaps for November of 2009, to create a new Larimer County weed district to cover the as-yet uncovered portion of ranchlands of western Larimer County which the NFWC now serves. This would give us in the North Fork watershed a new political base and new energy. This initiative effort unfolds and develops and hope you

We hope very much to see you all at the **NFWC Annual Membership Meeting & Potluck, February 5, 2009, 6 to 8:30 pm at the Livermore Community Hall.** Please bring any and all suggestions to share on the agenda. Meantime, all on the Council wish you a wonderful Holiday Season!

The Annual Membership Meeting & Potluck of the NFWC will be at the Livermore Community Hall, Wednesday, **February 5, 2009**, from 6 to 8:30 pm. Please bring a potluck hot dish or salad to share and your own table service. The NFWC will provide dessert and drinks. Our speaker will be **Dr. Andrew Norton, CSU Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management Department**; his topic will be *Biocontrol of Noxious Weeds*.

Committee Reports

Weed Plan Workshops: Weed plan workshops are offered annually to help NFWC members who are interested create integrated weed management plans for their properties. The workshops are free to members (donations to help cover the cost of materials would be most welcome!). If a homeowners or road association or a group of neighbors would like to host a workshop, please contact one of the council members or call the office to arrange a time. Workshops may be held at the Waterfall Ranch House where the NFWC office is located, at 1235 Cherokee Park Rd in Livermore, or at a location more convenient for your community group. Please make your arrangements by the end of March 2009. Call 416-8620, ext 3#.

Methods Workshop: The 8th annual Methods Workshop was held on May 3, 2008 at Phantom Canyon Preserve. Tim D'Amato and Phil Westra gave a slide presentation covering biocontrol and herbicide use. Discussion centered on several important weeds found in the North Fork Watershed. Tim D'Amato demonstrated calibr



Weed Tours: Ellen Nelson led the June 14 weed tour to Bonner Peak, where we were able to observe positive results of a cheatgrass control project undertaken by one of the landowners. We also spent time along Obenchain Road and walked down to the North Fork through the Picnic Rock Fire area. The fire increased the infestation of noxious weeds, particularly leafy spurge and Dalmatian toadflax, in that area. Tim D'Amato and Phil Westra led weed tours and a discussion of noxious weed research and then spent time at several research and demonstration plots.

Dates for the 2009 weed tours are yet to be determined. Watch for the Spring Newsletter for that information. Discussions during these tours center on effective weed management. A great way for landowners and managers to share weed management ideas and techniques.

Treasurer's Report—December 2008

Current balances of all accounts at Public Service Credit Union total \$12,262.16 and are allocated as follows: Savings Account--\$2135.92 and Checking Account--\$4734.51 and 12-month CD (maturity date 07/19/2009)—\$5,391.73. The NFWC 2008 membership includes home owner/ road associations, agency/organizations and individual members.

and trade show held November 2009 in Lakewood, CO. Professional weed managers from around the state gathered to learn about state law updates, recent research findings, and other invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels. Presentations included topics on biocontrol, native species, and orange hawkweed in Mt. Evans. The 2008 Special Recognition Award went to Jim Shaklee of Poudre Wilderness Volunteers in appreciation of outstanding volunteer efforts in the weed management.

Larimer County Weed List

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|----------------------|--------------------|
| Leafy Spurge | Spotted knapweed |
| Canada Thistle | Russian knapweed |
| Musk Thistle | Dalmatian toadflax |
| Diffuse knapweed | Yellow toadflax |
| Tamarisk (Saltcedar) | |

Coop Resources for Loan

The NFWC has available the following equipment and resources for loan to its members: 2 gas powered weed eaters, 1 3-gallon backpack sprayer, portable electric fence, 8 Garmin GPS units and a library of over 14 reference books. To borrow these resources, call the NFWC office, 970-416-8620 #3.

Weed Management Demonstration Sites/Plot Tours

Colorado State University, Larimer County Weed District, and the North Fork Weed Coop have teamed up to establish weed management research and demonstration sites in northern Larimer County. Sites have been established to investigate chemical control treatments for cheatgrass, volunteer rye, leafy spurge, Canada thistle, Russian knapweed, tamarisk, and Russian olive. Additionally, an insect bio-control study on dalmatian toadflax has been recently established. Collaboration among the groups has been productive, with Larimer County and the North Fork Weed Coop finding cooperators and suitable sites, while CSU provides expertise on new and existing herbicides.

Tours of the demonstration sites were conducted in August and September of 2008. Attendees had the opportunity to see weed management results from standard herbicide treatments as well as soon-to-be-labeled products. Study sites are located on range and pasture locations, so impact on grasses and other desirable species can be assessed as well as weed control. Information derived from the trials can be obtained through the Larimer County Weed District. Such information is used to help establish recommendations for best management practices.

In addition, a CSU graduate student mapping project on invasive plant issues in the North Fork area was initiated in the summer of 2008. This research will evaluate weed issues in relationship to land uses in the North Fork area. This project will provide a good snapshot of the current status of invasive plants in the study area.

The CSU Weed Science group consists of Dr. Phil Westra, Dr. George Beck, Dr. Scott Nissen, Jim Sebastian, and Dr. Andrew Norton. These Weed Science experts have helped Tim D'Amato and Bobby Goeman of Larimer County establish demonstration sites and determine best management strategies. Signs will be placed at the demonstration sites in 2009, further evaluations of test results will be conducted, and more tours are planned. For more information, contact the Larimer County Weed District 970-498-5768.



Phil Westra spraying cheatgrass

Ornamental Weeds by Tim D'Amato

For those who enjoy learning about ornamental weeds. These weeds species that originated as garden plants then jumped fences to invade forests, river systems, wetlands, pastures, rangeland, and roadsides. Many of the weed problems confronting Colorado land managers originated from backyard flower gardens. How did this come about? Over the course of decades, the plant nursery industry has selected ornamental plants from all over the world for various characteristics. A showy, attractive flower obviously tops the list, but other characteristics desirable in the western U.S. were also selected for: drought tolerance, soil stabilization, and food and cover for wildlife. In most cases this has not been a problem. Landowners are encouraged to plant xeric species to reduce water needs, and to provide food and cover for wildlife.

Unfortunately many of the ornamental plants introduced to the U.S. from other parts of the world have adapted too well. Without environmental checks from native lands such as predatory insects, soil nematodes, disease and other factors, some plant species have become invasive and detrimental to our natural areas. A few examples are:

- ◆ Yellow toadflax, better known as butter-and-eggs. This perennial of the snap dragon family has invaded many natural areas near mountain communities. It is found along streams in the northern part of the North Fork Watershed.
- ◆ Purple loosestrife, a perennial plant that thrives in riparian areas displacing native plants and wildlife. Purple loosestrife dominates millions of acres of marshland in eastern and Midwestern states, but in Colorado, is uncommon enough that diligent management efforts could eventually result in eradication.
- ◆ Russian olive, a thorny tree that readily spreads by seed. Russian olives were at one time promoted for wind breaks by government agencies and were widely planted as ornamental trees. Many river bottoms and other moist sites are now dominated by dense thickets of Russian olives.

These plants and others determined to be invasive are now on the prohibited sales list for plant nurseries in Colorado. Many ornamental plants are on the State Noxious Weed list categorized as List A species that require eradication: myrtle spurge, cypress spurge, dyer's woad, purple loosestrife. Others categorized as List B species may require management depending on local weed ordinances: absinth wormwood, bouncingbet, chamomile, Chinese clematis, dalmatian toadflax, dames rocket, oxeye daisy, Russian olive, saltcedar, and yellow toadflax.

Be a responsible gardener and remove any of these species if you have them on your property. For further information contact the NFWC at 970-416-8620 ext#3, Larimer County Weed District office at 970-498-5768 or Colorado State University Extension office at 970-498-6003.

North Fork Weed Cooperative
1235 Cherokee Park Road
Livermore, Colorado 80536

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

...there is a need to ensure that all lands of the state of Colorado...are protected...that certain undesirable plants constitute a
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Colorado Noxious Weed Act (C.R.S. 35-5.5)

“Wacky Weeder” Work Day, August 11, 2008



Wacky Weeders and Pulling for Colorado 2008
by Linda Bell and Kim Obele

In 2008, the NFWC was able to obtain a grant from the Pulling for Colorado initiative (<http://www.cwma.org/p4c.htm>), a state-wide effort to educate Colorado about the impacts noxious weeds. The funding paid for two events: the Colorado Weed Awareness Day on July 12, 2008, and the Wacky Weeder Work Day on August 11, 2008. The funding enabled a targeted educational effort to accompany the traditional work day of the Wacky Weeder volunteers.

At the Weed Awareness Day on July 12, 2008, Judd Adams, former president of the North Fork Weed Coop, headed up an informational and experiential weed awareness open house at the North Fork County Department of Natural Resources, was on hand to meet with residents and gave a short workshop on noxious weeds. USFS, TNC and other volunteers manned an open house and educational exhibit near the USFS Work Center on Dowdy Road, canvassing the campgrounds to educate campers, and handing out educational material.

At the Wacky Weeder Work Day on August 11, 2008, 18 volunteers participated in weed seed containment and removal from around Dowdy Lake. This is the third annual weed clean up-day the Wacky Weeders have conducted in the area in the past four years (one year the area was closed due to new construction). Volunteers work from 9 am to noon, followed by a brown bag picnic lunch with sweets, drinks and snacks provided in the past by the sponsoring agencies; North Fork Weed Coop, The Nature Conservancy, and the USDA Forest Service.

Each year the target annual weeds diminish and the Wacky Weeders begin to see the positive results of their efforts. For the first time they finished before noon and covered a much larger area, working around the entire lake. They filled 11 large plastic bags with seed heads, approximately half the harvest gleaned in 2007.

Weed Awareness Day—July 12, 2008



North Fork Weed Cooperative – a watershed initiative in northern Larimer County
A Short History By Linda Bell

Weeds –they come on the wind, they drift on the water, and travel overland with help from livestock and humans. Before a rancher, land steward, ditch company, or public land manager has grabbed a chunk of their best land for occupancy.

In the late 1990s the problem came to a head in northern Larimer County where minimal steps were being taken by individuals and public land stewards, but not through any official channels, to limit the spread of noxious weeds. In the southern part of the county a tax-supported weed district assured landowners some form of weed control –but the northern half of the county was not included.

In 1998 representatives of several public agencies and private ranchers in the area acknowledged invasive weeds were becoming a greater problem in the North Fork of the Poudre River watershed. Later that spring they sponsored a public meeting to determine ways of improving control over invasive weeds on private and public lands in the watershed. The Nature Conservancy, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the North Poudre Irrigation Company, the U.S. Forest Service, the Landowners Association for Phantom Canyon Ranches, and private landowners spearheaded the initiative.

In October 1998, Heather Knight, land steward for The Nature Conservancy, and Dave Clarkson, area wildlife manager for CDOW, hosted a meeting in Fort Collins to gauge interest among state and local agencies, private organizations and individuals for creating an organization to address the invasive weed problem in the North Fork watershed. There was enough broader interest to forge ahead.

In 1999 twenty people attended a mid-summer public meeting held at the Livermore Community Hall to hear about a proposal to create a Cooperative Integrated Weed Management Area in Livermore. By September the cooperative included 13,700 acres represented by The Nature Conservancy, Phantom Canyon Landowners Association, CDOW State Wildlife Areas, the Abbey of St. Walburga, and private ranch land. Later that same year the weed management area grew to over 40,000 acres.

That fall the nascent Cooperative developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a relationship between organizations that would allow for weed control across boundaries within the watershed and to share resources. Initial funding came from a CDOW \$15,000 grant for weed control on its Livermore properties to begin July 2000 if matched in kind by the rest of the Cooperative.

By 2000 the ball really started to roll across invasive weeds in northern Larimer County. The Cooperative established short and long-term goals, a budget which included a weed coordinator at 60% time, mapping protocols and priorities, best use of herbicide along roadsides and ditches, and weed laws were set down and adopted, and the organization officially became the North Fork Weed Cooperative.

In 2003 the Coop met requirements to become a non-profit charitable tax-exempt organization. The methods and management workshops, weed tours, native seed cost share program, various demonstration projects like the riparian restoration project at Rabbit Creek Ranch which resulted in the return of native mouse listed as threatened in Colorado by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a 2002 color brochure about the Coop mailed to 1000 homeowners in the watershed, brought in

Currently there are 10 agency and organization partners and 30 individual Coop members, representing approximately 200,000 acres in integrated weed management. The Coop has 8 community demonstration projects that all show signs of success and there is a heightened general attentiveness in the community toward promoting and maintaining good land stewardship.

The North Fork Weed Coop's mission states that it works; to steward native plant and animal communities throughout the North Fork of the Poudre watershed; to integrate weed management efforts by coordinating management across public and private lands, prioritizing resources and strategies, and promoting best management practices; to disseminate information and knowledge about integrated weed management and ecological restoration that supports successful land stewardship; and to create a community-led model of cooperative stewardship that can be exported to other sites.