



**COLORADO**  
Department of Agriculture

# Colorado Department of Agriculture, Conservation Division Noxious Weed Advisory Committee September 12th, 2024, Meeting Minutes

---

**In-person/Virtual Hybrid Meeting**

**EOC Conference Room (in the basement)**

**Broadway Street, Eagle, CO, 81631**

## **Attendees**

Committee members (in-person):

Bill Pawleshyn - Resource Specialist

Brian Core - Ag Producer

Jim Alexander - Conservation Organization

Kallie Rand - County Official

Mary Fabisiak - Private Landowner

Travis Harris - Green Industry

Committee members (online):

Dan Tekiela - Federal Weed Manager

Rachel Seedorf - Weed Scientist

Wilbur Strickert - DNR (Non-Voting)

CDA Staff: Patty York, Emily McGrath, Emily Gilbert, Les Owen (online)

Public (Online):

Casey Cisnero - Larimer County

Sarah McCullar - Goat Mowers

Christina Alba - Denver Botanic Gardens

Cassie Cerise - Bookcliff Mount Sopris Conservation District

**8:30 Welcome, housekeeping, and Agenda review (Patty)**

**8:35 Review and accept minutes from November's minutes (Bill)**

Approved with no edits.

**8:40 Public Comments**

- Casey Cisnero (Larimer County): Casey discussed how he believes the current noxious weed list needs to be reviewed and possibly revised. Casey suggests a broader overhaul of the list within the next few years and that it would align with Larimer County's management plan with the state's definition of noxious weeds, helping local enforcement efforts. Casey also believes, at a local level, meadow hawkweed is just as invasive as orange hawkweed, which is a list A species and would like to see meadow hawkweed moved to List A at a state level. Patty's response: Later in today's meeting we will be discussing the Plant Assessment Form where all of the listed species will be run through, and soon we will be asking stakeholders to help with the process.
- Sara McCuller (Goat Mowers): Sarah told a brief description of the company, then asked the committee if they had any recommendations for advertising. Goat Mowers currently have 75 goats and mostly work on residential properties but would like to expand to commercial and government properties. Emily M. suggested becoming a vendor at CWMA.

**8:45 CDA Staff Updates (CDA Staff)**

- Les said goodbye to the group, as he is taking a position as Deputy Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.
- Patty:
  - The November meeting will feature a presentation from a Washington State Roadside Vegetation Manager.
  - The group is planning a float trip on the Yampa River in Routt/Moffat County in June 2025 to learn about their leafy spurge program.

- We are also working on updating a horse brochure that will be listing species that are toxic to horses. The Weed Free Program will be featured in this brochure.
- Emily M: Since our last meeting, I've been primarily focused on working with the field crew. It's been a hectic time, with five one-week trips around the state. This year, we've expanded our travel and have also been collaborating with the Forest Service to manage orange hawkweed on their lands. Previously, we were limited to private property. Our final trip is next week, and the crew will be finishing up on September 27th. After that, I'll be transitioning to working on the List B management plan.
- Emily G: I have been doing a lot of grant management, creating Boot Brush signs, visiting NWF Grantees, and continuing with the newsletter.

## **9:00 Debrief from Wednesday's Field Tour for those who missed it (Kallie)**

Yesterday, the group visited sites funded by various grants.

- The first site the group toured is part of the Town of Eagle Open Space. Brian Lieberman, Town of Eagle Open Space Manager, showed the group the Restoration after Mastication project, funded by the America the Beautiful Challenge (AtBC) grant. We saw a fire break that was previously installed using a mastication process.
- Next, we visited the Brush Creek Valley Ranch & Open Space Stream Restoration Project. Peter Suneson talked to the group about the Low-Tech, Process-Based Restoration (LTPBR) technique his team is using in Brush Creek to redefine historic meanders and recharge the water table. These restoration efforts, which includes an initial assessment using LIDAR imagery, consists of installing downed logs in the stream, along with posts around the logs to keep them in place.
- The third and final stop on the tour was to the Three Sisters Trail, also part of the Brush Creek Valley Ranch and Open Space. Kallie Rand & Phil Kirkman, Eagle County Senior Open Space Specialist & Ranger, talked to the group about restoration of a previously over-utilized pasture and range area that had been completely infested with whitetop.

After only a few years of working on this area (CDA USFS Disaster Supplemental Funding), there is very little whitetop! At an adjacent part of this property, the group is utilizing Biochar to

help amend the soil that was lacking nutrients. This project is partially funded by the AtBC grant and was only recently completed.

#### **9:15 WWCC Dashboard Presentation (Dan & Emily McGrath)**

Dan, Overview: The Federal Dashboard was created to centralize the management of grants projects related to invasive species management. It was developed in response to the influx of funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and a similar initiative in Utah. The dashboard aims to provide public access to information about ongoing activities related to noxious weed control in both federal and non-federal settings.

The Federal Dashboard aims to provide summary statistics on invasive species management projects, including the number of projects, funding sources, activities, and acreage. The goal is to expand this tool to a federal level to showcase information from multiple states. The WWCC website currently serves as a hub for reporting this information, with Colorado being the main state involved. The focus is on developing the system to meet federal reporting criteria, while acknowledging that the summary statistics are still in their early stages.

It is intended to streamline reporting processes and meet the needs of various agencies, including the BLM. Funding is available to support states interested in developing their own state-level dashboards, with Colorado having priority due to its involvement in the project.

Emily M. then shows the committee the back-end of the program and the process of inputting information into the dashboard.

#### **10:00 Plant Assessment Form Update (Patty, Jim)**

Patty: The subcommittee has been working to create a new form for invasive species management. They have reviewed existing forms from Wyoming and Colorado and have conducted a pilot test with 10 species to give them a base level of what it'll look like. They decided to use only high and low confidence levels instead of including medium. The final form has 35 questions.

Jim: Jim experimented with using ChatGPT to assess invasive species. He found that ChatGPT could successfully answer individual questions but struggled with calculations. The tool's reliance on public information and YouTube videos limits its access to scientific

literature, leading to inaccurate answers in some cases. Despite its limitations, Jim found that using ChatGPT helped him clarify the form's complexity.

Patty: Due to limitations imposed by OIT, she primarily used the free version of ChatGPT to analyze 96 species. ChatGPT generated the results in a chart format, which was then copied into Excel.

Once humans review the species, the results can be compared to those generated by AI. This comparison will help identify potential inconsistencies and determine appropriate listing statuses for the species. Some species might be found to have negative ratings, suggesting that they may not need to be listed or that more information is needed.

Patty believes that the committee has a solid foundation of data and proposes that the plant assessment form be approved for stakeholder input. She suggests sending the form to County Weed Managers, other committee members, and anyone interested in providing feedback. The species have been organized into groups of six for easier review.

Motion to send Plant Assessment Form to stakeholders, all in favor.

#### **10:45 Newsletter Survey Feedback (Emily G.)**

The Noxious Weed Newsletter survey received mostly positive feedback from majority of respondents. The results showed that they appreciated the content, format, and frequency of the newsletter. Many respondents found the information helpful and informative for managing noxious weeds on their properties. Additionally, the survey indicated that the newsletter is effectively reaching its target audience and doesn't require significant changes to its promotion strategy.

#### **11:00 Accessibility Fact Sheet & Herbicide List Update & Discussion (Patty)**

The primary goal of the discussion is to simplify herbicide fact sheets for the general public while maintaining essential information.

Key Points:

- **Brand Name Removal:** To avoid bias, it was recommended through our legal counsel to remove chemical brand names from both the Fact Sheets and any other chemical recommendation documents we provide.

- Other Recommendations: All herbicide specifics, for example active ingredients and rates, will be removed for the Fact Sheets.
- Label Emphasis: The importance of following label instructions will be highlighted.
- Application Timing: The inclusion of application timing is under discussion.
- Mode of Action: Adding group number or mode of action could be beneficial for those in management roles.

Questions to consider:

- Look-a-like Species: Should we include information about plant species that may be mistaken for noxious weeds? While the committee suggested mentioning them, it was discussed that we should avoid listing them directly on the Fact Sheets to prevent confusion.
- Herbicide Basics: Should we provide a brief overview of herbicide function, such as an "Herbicide 101" section, either on the Fact Sheets or the website? This could help the general public understand how herbicides work.

Fact Sheet Depth: We need to decide how detailed the Fact Sheets should be. Overall, we need to decide how in-depth we want the Fact Sheets to be.

## **11:30 Lunch**

## **12:15: Committee Member Roundtable**

- Jim: There has been a lot of rain, meaning there has also been a lot of weeds. The annual Weed Pull went well, and Silverthorn has a new Business Relations Manager who is very interested in managing weeds. They may also be a candidate for the NWAC.
- Bill:
  - The Loveland Natural Areas Program is having growing pains as they continue to purchase land and we're helping where we can. The City of Loveland has lost a long-time tech, so they will be looking to fill that position soon.
  - Larimer County has purchased Heaven's Door Open Space, which is now renamed to Canyon's Edge Open Space. We will be doing an 838-acre aerial treatment of Rejuvra in October.
- Kallie:

- o We will soon have a full-time position open, would be great if CDA could feature it in the Noxious Weed Newsletter.
- o Last year Garfield County reported seeing Ventenata on the Utah boarder, but they are not 100% sure it's Ventenata. There was medusahead sighting in the CPW parking lot, but they treated it right away.
- o In the area there are concerns about desert madwort (*alysseum desertorum*), it's growing on Forest Service land but since it isn't listed they aren't treating it. But they are managing the area for overwintering big horn sheep, which go hand in hand. There are 5 acres of infestation. Patty: You can fill out our Plants of Concern Form.
- Brian: We are having difficulties with the state of New Mexico with Japanese Beetle Control. They are not working with us, and everything that is being shipped into New Mexico must be treated.

**1:00 Adjourn**