

Purgatoire Watershed Weed Management Collaborative (PWWMC) Major Accomplishments 2016 – 2018



Since the inception of PWWMC in 2016, partners have seen major improvements in noxious weed control efforts in Las Animas County. Having a dedicated PWWMC coordinator has been the driver behind these improvements. PWWMC is has developed a comprehensive program for land restoration through noxious weed control, strengthening ongoing efforts to maintain, protect and improve local economies and the ecological integrity of the Purgatoire Watershed across all landownership jurisdictions.

The Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River Conservation District (SPPRCD) has invested heavily in PWWMC and the noxious weed program. SPPRCD hired a Noxious Weed Technician in June of 2018, supervised by the PWWMC coordinator. This addition was a huge step for increasing the capacity of PWWMC to accomplish on-the-ground noxious weed treatments and mapping. The Noxious Weed Technician's focus is County ROW noxious weed treatments and mapping, African rue treatments and mapping, assisting with the District's Noxious Weed Programs, and landowner outreach and education.

Additionally, SPPRCD has invested in PWWMC by purchasing a UTV fully equipped with a spray rig and spray logger (to track and map noxious weed treatments). This will be utilized by the Noxious Weed Technician to more effectively and efficiently complete noxious weed treatments. In essence, this investment in capital is a testament to SPPRCD's commitment to PWWMC and increasing the capacity of the program.

In 2018 and 2019 PWWMC, Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River Conservation District and Las Animas County entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). This agreement, made possible by additional funding from the Colorado Department of Agriculture, is allowing for the organizations' to cooperatively utilize equipment and time from the Noxious Weed Technician. Under this IGA, the Noxious Weed Technician assists the County with spraying County Right-of-Ways and African rue (a designated 'List A' species under the Colorado Noxious Weed Act).

African Rue is the only 'List A' species found in Las Animas County and is designated for eradication per CO State Law



*African Rue in the Model area. All Photos:
SL Simmons ©*

Total Acres Treated 2016 - 2018 = 1,183.5

- 235.5 acres – Riparian Restoration Cost Incentive program (tamarisk and Russian-olive)
 - 40 acres active revegetation within the 235 acre treatment
- 601 acres – Herbaceous Noxious Weed Cost Share program; 20 private land holdings (various percent cover over total acreage)
- 117 acres – CO Department of Agriculture 'List A' African rue treatments
- 230 acres – Russian knapweed treatments under the Russian Knapweed Initiative Program
- Miles of County Roadway treated in 2018 = ~923.4
 - 13.4 miles – County Right-of-Way African rue treatments
 - 910 miles – Noxious Weed County Right-of-Way treatments

Other Noxious Weed Efforts

- Canada thistle biocontrol releases to three Canada thistle infestations in the Upper Watershed
 - Colorado Department of Agriculture led the releases in fall of 2017, providing the inoculant and release instructions
 - CDA will monitor these sites and document plant response

PWWMC Education and Outreach Efforts

- Over 400 people reached directly with the message of noxious weeds and land restoration since the inception of PWWMC
 - Programs include K-12 youth, general public, landowners
- Las Animas County Noxious Weed Guide Completed
 - Through grant funding, PWWMC and SPPRCD commissioned the creation of a County Noxious Weed Guide geared for landowners by a CSU graduate student, Shannon Clark.

Before and After Photos of River Restoration Site – Tamarisk and Russian-olive choke out native vegetation, degrading wildlife habitat and agricultural production



*Before and After: Tamarisk and Russian-olive site – Hoehne Area.
Photo Credits: Robin Bay, Habitat Management Inc.*