

Distribution of the 1998 Colorado Noxious Weed Management Fund

In 1996, the Colorado Legislature created a statewide noxious weed management fund to provide financial assistance to communities throughout the state to stimulate and support their weed management efforts. The following year, the Legislature placed \$225,000 in the Fund. Consequently, the Colorado Department of Agriculture developed a process for soliciting and evaluating applications for these weed management funds.

This year, the Colorado Department of Agriculture received 40 applications requesting a total of \$614,749 in assistance and providing a total match of \$2,624,513 (4.27:1 overall matching ratio). However, the amount available to distribute in FY98 is only \$225,000.

Each application was evaluated by a committee of seven individuals that represent the perspectives and experiences of professionals and elected officials of Colorado government, weed science, agriculture, the environment, public natural resource management, and state and local weed management.

After a careful review of each application for funds, evaluation committee members scored the applications based on a number of factors including the nature of partnerships formed, the urgency of the problem, the projected impact of the project, and the use of sensible strategies and integrated pest management. For each application, an average score was calculated and ranked against the other applications in descending order. This ranked list provided a basis for the committee's discussions. After careful deliberation, the evaluation committee recommended a number of projects for funding to the Agriculture Commission and the Commissioner of Agriculture. The following projects have been selected to receive financial support, at the indicated funding levels, from the 1998 Colorado Noxious Weed Management Fund.

1. The Upper North Platte Weed Management Area Plan (Jackson County) is an exemplary working model of public/private partnerships that prioritizes target weed populations and then provides management regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. This unique program is one of the only projects in the nation to collaborate across a state line (Wyoming) to manage noxious weeds in a contiguous watershed. Funds will be used to match a federal grant from Washington, D.C. to purchase equipment and add additional management capacity.

\$25,000 requested **\$5,000 allocated**

2. The Mediterranean Sage Eradication Task Force (Boulder County) is a three year project to contain and eradicate the only known Colorado population of a recent noxious weed invasion that has the potential to rapidly spread along the Front Range and into New Mexico and Wyoming. Mediterranean sage is an aggressive species, found throughout the Pacific Northwest, that poses an enormous threat to Colorado rangelands. Funds will provide cost-share opportunities to private landowners to contain and eradicate this species.

\$25,000 requested **\$22,000 allocated**

3. Pulling Together: A Public/Private Initiative to Manage Noxious Weeds in the Upper Watershed of the South Platte River (Larimer and Boulder Counties) is another model program chosen by the Colorado Noxious Weed Management Team in 1996. The Weed Management Area encompasses 314 square miles and includes a significant portion of the upper watershed of the South Platte River. This exceptional example of public/private partnerships shares the technical and physical resources of Rocky Mountain National Park with the communities of the Estes Valley. Funds will be used to match a federal grant from Washington, D.C. to hire a seasonal weed management team to assist private and public landowners throughout the Valley.

\$25,000 requested

\$15,750 allocated

4. The Southwestern Colorado Coordinated Noxious Weed Program covers over nine million acres of the southwest (Alamosa, Archuleta, Conejos, Costilla, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Ouray, Rio Grande, Saguache, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties). Funds will be used to match a federal grant from Washington, D.C. to launch a coordinated management effort among two dozen local, state, and federal partners. Funding emphasis is on active management to eradicate, contain, or otherwise manage noxious weeds.

\$75,000 requested

\$37,000 allocated

5. This five-county project will Control Leafy Spurge and Canada Thistle along the Waterways and Borders of Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Morgan, and Weld Counties. This regional initiative has the support of the commissioners from all five counties, as demonstrated through a unique five-way intergovernmental agreement. Funds will be used according to the varied needs of each county's weed management program (equipment, cost-share, etc.).

\$45,000 requested

\$43,000 allocated

6. The Oak Creek leafy spurge eradication project (Rio Blanco County) will provide additional funds to eradicate the only known leafy spurge population within the boundaries of the Yampa Ranger District in the Routt National Forest. This population threatens to spread into the Yampa River and lower Yampa Valley. Funds will be used to hire a crew to implement management.

\$1,325 requested

\$1,325 allocated

7. The Rocky Flats Area Knapweed Control project (Jefferson and Boulder Counties) will create a Weed Management Area to stop the degradation of a rare Colorado ecosystem and improve the health of local grazing lands. Public entities including the State Land Board, U.S. Department of Energy, and Colorado Department of Transportation will work with private landowners to manage 4,500 acres of diffuse knapweed cooperatively. Funds will be used to provide cost-share opportunities for private landowners within the Weed Management Area.

\$25,000 requested

\$20,000 allocated

8. The Leafy Spurge Management Project (Rio Blanco County) will provide additional funds to suppress one of the worst leafy spurge infestations of the state. Additional funds will enable the landowners (public and private) to increase their capabilities to eradicate small satellite populations while applying additional control pressure to high priority control sites. Only partial funding is recommended at this time for management of the population farthest upstream.

\$25,000 requested

\$6,386 allocated

9. The Washington County Commission District 3 Weed Management program is a new program to develop a coordinated weed management effort between areas of Washington County within and outside weed districts and to strengthen the county's agricultural economic development. Washington County has experienced severe declining assessed valuation over the past 15 years. The emphasis of this program will be to identify noxious weed problems, acquire weeds management tools, and provide them at low cost to private landowners in a systematic and coordinated fashion. Funds will provide mapping and control equipment to the county.

\$21,930 requested **\$14,930 allocated**

10. The Coal Basin Mine Noxious Weed Management Project (Pitkin County) will assist a coalition in managing several populations of noxious weeds at a reclamation site located in the upper reaches of the Coal Creek drainage. In addition to preventing the spread of noxious weeds into surrounding lands and the Crystal River, there are a number of opportunities to educate the recreating public as well as local school children about weed identification, impacts, and management. Funds will be used to leverage additional support from partners and award a weed management contract to a private contractor.

\$4,500 requested **\$4,500 allocated**

11. The Las Animas County Weed Control program is a county-wide effort led by a coalition of partners including the Colorado Farm Bureau and Southern Colorado Livestock Association to implement the county's weed management plan. Funds will be used to fund management on county rights-of-way, further public educational efforts and provide assistance to landowners.

\$20,350 requested **\$15,175 allocated**

12. The Plateau Valley Toadflax Project (Mesa County) will continue and expand a Weed Management Area developed to manage the only known infestation of Dalmation toadflax in Mesa County. The goal is to stop the spread of this noxious weed and reduce weed populations to a level that no longer threatens agricultural production and wildlife habitat. Funds will be used to provide a cost-share opportunity to private landowners throughout the 500,000 acre watershed.

\$8,000 requested **\$8,000 allocated**

13. The Atchee Hoary Cress Control Project (Garfield County) will manage a pioneer population of whitetop that has replaced native rangeland species, reducing forage quantity and value for livestock and wildlife. This population, located near the headwaters of the West Salt Creek watershed, threatens to spread downstream and infest a large portion of western Garfield and Mesa Counties. Funds will be used to provide cost-share opportunities to private landowners within the Lazy 3x Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) planning area.

\$6,400 requested **\$6,400 allocated**

14. The Wallace Creek Leafy Spurge Project (Garfield County) will advance the management of one of two leafy spurge infested sites within the county. This infestation is situated very close to the Colorado River and threatens to spread into this important watershed, jeopardizing a broad variety of natural and agricultural resources. Detecting and eradicating every plant is a high priority. Funds will be used to provide cost-share opportunities to private landowners.

\$1,334 requested **\$1,334 allocated**

15. The Native Plants Reader and Weeds Reader project (Statewide) will develop and provide educational materials to 85,000 fourth-to-seventh grade students and teachers this year throughout Colorado. This project, managed by the Colorado Foundation for Agriculture, will focus on educating school children about the importance of native plants and communities as well as the threats posed by noxious weeds. The funding partnerships of this project are extensive. Funds will be used to match a federal grant from Washington, D.C. for printing and distribution.

\$3,000 requested

\$3,000 allocated

16. The Blanco Weed Coordination Effort (Rio Blanco) is a county/federal partnership aimed at improving management efficiency through coordination and resource-sharing. The project will initiate an aggressive effort to eradicate new invasions in the upper White River drainage including rights-of-way and backcountry trails. The focus on efficiency is a borrowed concept from successful management strategies utilized in Montana. Funds will be used to purchase state-of-the-art herbicide treatment and monitoring equipment.

\$11,200 requested

\$11,200 allocated

17. The Weed Warrior Program @ Dinosaur National Monument (Moffat County) is a unique effort that emphasizes education, mechanical control and native plant restoration through highly visible service projects involving volunteers from the Sierra Club, Colorado Outward Bound School, and the National Outdoor Leadership School. The effort will target invasive weeds that threaten downstream agricultural resources and biodiversity. Funds will be used to match a federal grant from Washington, D.C.

\$5,000 requested

\$5,000 allocated

18. In response to the number of applications received from communities in the Upper Arkansas River Valley, the Colorado Department of Agriculture would like to support an effort to promote coordinated weed management planning. It is clear that communities in this river drainage recognize the need for noxious weed management. The development and implementation of coordinated management actions could significantly benefit all communities in this watershed and reduce overall management costs. As an incentive to create watershed-wide partnerships, the Department is presently seeking to identify a regional forum that can facilitate such an effort.

\$5,000 allocated