

**D 002 03**

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER**

### **Directing State Agencies To Coordinate Efforts for the Eradication of Tamarisk on State Lands**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Colorado, I, Bill Owens, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order directing the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, in consultation and cooperation with other appropriate state and federal agencies, to coordinate efforts to eradicate the tamarisk plant on public lands.

#### **1. Background and Purpose**

The State of Colorado, like the rest of the Western United States, faces the immense challenge of dealing with noxious weeds that cause harm to the ecosystem. The most destructive non-native invasive species in Colorado is the tamarisk plant, also known as saltcedar.

Tamarisk is rapidly spreading throughout Colorado and the surrounding region. Efforts to control this aggressive plant species have been unsuccessful. It is now estimated that the plant has overcome native species on 1.5 million acres throughout the region and it has become apparent that the plant is causing serious ecological and environmental problems within the State of Colorado.

The tamarisk plant consumes an enormous amount of water. A single tamarisk tree can transpire up to 300 gallons of water per day. As a comparison, an average acre of native cottonwood trees uses 845,000 gallons of water per year, while an acre of tamarisk uses 1.3 million gallons of water per year. An accumulation of tamarisk plants close to a watershed can effectively limit or dry up an entire water source. The disproportionate consumption of water by a non-native invasive species is cause for serious concern for Colorado as it continues to endure one of the worst droughts in state history.

In addition, tamarisk species are inedible to most animals. As a result, wildlife over browse the surviving native plant species, further speeding the tamarisk invasion

process. Finally, tamarisk trees produce extremely flammable leaf litter which promotes the incidence of wildfire.

Given the devastating effect of this non-native species, I am directing state agencies to take appropriate measures to eradicate tamarisk on public lands.

## **2. Mission**

I hereby direct the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture and any other state agency that may prove helpful with this project, to take measures necessary to eradicate tamarisk on public lands within ten years of this Executive Order.

State agencies participating in this project shall designate a point of contact to coordinate tamarisk assessment and removal efforts, and to identify necessary funding sources.

The Department of Natural Resources shall coordinate these efforts and, within one year of the effective date of this order, shall submit a report to the Governor's Office outlining a viable plan to achieve the eradication of tamarisk in Colorado within ten years.

## **3. Duration**

This Executive Order shall remain in effect until modified or rescinded by Executive Order.

GIVEN under my hand and the  
Executive Seal of the State of  
Colorado, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of  
January, 2003.

Bill Owens  
Governor