



NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Noxious Weed Advisory Commission Endorsement
April 5, 2022

Board of County Commissioners' Approval
September 27, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I	INTRODUCTION
	1.01 Overview
	1.02 Purpose of the Plan
	1.03 Enactment Authority
	1.04 Noxious Weed List
SECTION II	PLAN OF WORK
	2.01 Objectives
	2.02 Prevention
	2.03 Control
	2.04 Restoration
	2.05 Education and Awareness
SECTION III	PLAN EVALUATION
SECTION IV	Integrated Weed Management Plan Template

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

1.01 Overview

Several species of non-native invasive plants, categorized as “noxious weeds”, are known to exist in El Paso County. Without the natural controls that keep them in check, these weeds quickly dominate existing native and economic plant communities. Wildlife habitat deteriorates, water quality diminishes, erosion increases, fire regimes are altered, and recreation values are degraded. Native plant species play an integral role in all healthy ecosystems. They provide genetic material that strengthen our major food crops, provide food and shelter to animals, and enhance the landscape. To protect these ecosystems, invasive plant species must be controlled.

In the continuing effort to protect and restore the value of the land in the State of Colorado, the Colorado Noxious Weed Act¹ (Title 35, Article 5.5, of the Colorado Revised Statute, hereinafter “Act”) was developed. The objective of the Act is to curb the threat posed by noxious weeds to the natural resources of the State. In accordance with the Act, on or about February 7, 1991, the El Paso County Board of Commissioners established a local Noxious Weed Advisory Commission whose primary function is the development of an integrated management plan for noxious weeds within the area governed by the County.

1.02 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this El Paso County Noxious Weed Management Plan (“Plan”) is to provide guidelines for managing the noxious weeds that represent a threat to the natural and agricultural ecosystems of El Paso County. The Plan implements the mandates of the Act and strives to strengthen, support, and coordinate noxious weed management efforts between private, municipal, county, state, and federal entities. It is ultimately the responsibility of all landowners to employ methods and strategies to manage noxious weeds found on their property.

1.03 Enactment Authority

The Colorado Weed Management Act, (now known as the Colorado Noxious Weed Act), § 35-5.5-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S., was signed into state law in 1990. This article declares that there is a need to ensure that all lands of the state of Colorado, whether in private or public ownership, are protected by and subject to the jurisdiction of a local government empowered to manage undesirable plants (noxious weeds), as designated by the State of Colorado and the local governing body (El Paso County).

1.04 Noxious Weed List

The Act designates undesirable plant species as determined by 8 CCR 1206-2, Rules Pertaining to the Administration and Enforcement of the Act, as noxious weeds within the State of Colorado. "Noxious weed" means an alien plant or parts of an alien plant that have been designated by rule as being noxious or has been declared a noxious weed by a local advisory board, and meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Aggressively invades or is detrimental to economic crops or native plant communities.
- Is poisonous to livestock.
- Is a carrier of detrimental insects, diseases, or parasites.
- The direct or indirect effect of the presence of this plant is detrimental to the environmentally sound management of natural or agricultural ecosystems.

The Act further categorizes noxious weeds into three lists:

- "List A", which means rare noxious weed species that are subject to eradication wherever detected statewide in order to protect neighboring lands and the state as a whole.
- "List B", which means noxious weed species with discrete statewide distributions that are subject to eradication, containment, or suppression in portions of the state designated by the commissioner in order to stop the continued spread of these species.
- "List C", which means widespread and well-established noxious weed species for which control is recommended but not required by the state, although local governing bodies may require management.

This noxious weed list is updated annually and is available through El Paso County or the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

SECTION II

PLAN OF WORK

2.01 Objectives

The objectives of this plan are to prevent the establishment of noxious weeds in the County in concurrence with the management of existing populations. Countywide noxious weed management efforts will include:

- Prevention
- Control
- Restoration
- Education and Awareness

2.02 Prevention

Prevention is the highest priority weed management technique. Prevention ensures that noxious weed species are not introduced into un-infested areas. Noxious weed proliferation is most likely to occur where soil has been disturbed either by man-made means, (such as road and trail cuts, construction sites, and overgrazing), or naturally in the case of wildfire, avalanche, mudslide, or flood. Strategies to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds include:

- Identifying and eradicating small infestations.
- Monitoring and evaluating to prevent recurrence.
- Promoting the Colorado Weed-Free Hay and Forage Program.
- Revegetating and reclaiming disturbed sites with appropriate native plant species.
- Restricting the unlawful sale of invasive ornamental plants and seed packets.

Some ornamental plant species, available for purchase in the past, have now been designated as noxious weeds. These plants are capable of escaping yards and gardens. Other known methods of weed introduction include:

- Contaminated seed, feed grain, hay, straw, and mulch.
- Contaminated agricultural, construction, and recreation equipment.
- Animal fur, fleece, human clothing.
- Dried flower arrangements.

2.03 Control

The most effective way to control established noxious weeds is through Integrated Weed Management (IWM). IWM incorporates weed biology, environmental information, and available management techniques, to create a Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP) that prevents unacceptable damage from weeds and poses the least risk to people and the environment. An IWMP outline has been provided in Appendix A and may be used as a guideline when developing site specific plans. IWM is a combination of treatment options that, when used

together, provide optimum control for noxious weeds; however, IWM does not necessarily imply that multiple control techniques must be used or that chemical control options should be avoided. According to the Act, “it is the duty of all persons to use integrated methods to manage noxious weeds if the same are likely to be materially damaging to the land of neighboring landowners.” IWM methods include:

- **Cultural:** Establishing healthy native or other desirable vegetation. Methods include proper grazing management (prevention of overgrazing), re-vegetating or re-seeding, fertilizing, and irrigation.
- **Biological:** The use of an organism such as insects, diseases, and grazing animals to control noxious weeds; useful for large, heavily infested areas. Not an effective method when eradication is the objective but can be used to reduce the impact and dominance of noxious weeds.
- **Mechanical:** Manual or mechanical means to remove, kill, injure, or alter growing conditions of unwanted plants. Methods include mowing, hand-pulling, tilling, mulching, cutting, and clipping seed heads.
- **Chemical:** The use of herbicides to suppress or kill noxious weeds by disrupting biochemical processes unique to plants.

2.04 Restoration

Following the implementation of noxious weed control methods, native and beneficial plant species should be re-introduced.

Establishing desirable plant communities, after noxious weeds have been removed, requires timely cultivation and reseeded. Seeds from noxious weeds may lay dormant for several years. Revegetation with native and beneficial species deters the germination of weed seeds. Re-introducing native plants or seeds to reclaim disturbed land minimizes degradation of native ecosystems, reduces the need for herbicides, and conserves water resources. When selecting native plant seed, consider the following.

- Water availability and the vegetative requirements.
- Plant species that adapt to climate, soil, and topographical conditions of the designated area.
- Vegetative cover that is diverse and capable of self-regeneration. Native plants that provide cover and forage for wildlife.
- Seed packets containing non-native plant species should not be used.

2.05 Education and Awareness

Education plays an important role in the implementation of this Plan and is accomplished through the development of informational handouts and brochures, formal presentations, and the County website. The County welcomes opportunities to provide outreach and technical assistance regarding noxious weeds to community groups, homeowners, agencies, volunteers, students, and others.

SECTION III

PLAN EVALUATION

The scope of work in the El Paso County Noxious Weed Management Plan will be reviewed, evaluated, and endorsed by the El Paso County Noxious Weed Advisory Commission and approved, by resolution, by the Board of County Commissioners of El Paso County, Colorado, before becoming final. The plan must be reviewed at least every three (3) years per § 35-5.5-107(4)(a), *et seq.*, C.R.S., and the management plan and any recommended amendments to the plan shall be transmitted to the Board of County Commissioners of El Paso County, Colorado, for approval, modification, or rejection.

Section IV

Integrated Weed Management Plan Template

INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Parcel / Schedule Number(s):

See: [El Paso County Assessor](#)

Property Owner(s):

Last Name:	First Name:
Last Name:	First Name:
Last Name:	First Name:
Last Name:	First Name:
Business:	
Trustee:	

Property Address:

Street:	
City:	State, Zip code:

Prepared by:

Date:

--

Introduction: Describe the area and the purpose of the management plan.

Example

Property is 150 acres in northern El Paso County near Black Forest. The property sits at an elevation of 7,200 ft. Parcel consists of grassy areas with a few pockets of ponderosa pine. Lower part of property near road has as intermittent stream bordered by willows and other shrubs. Property will be subdivided into 10-acre parcels to sell.

Survey/Inventory: Describe how the property was surveyed and list the noxious weeds found. Estimate the size of infestation. Include a map if possible. Colorado state noxious weed list and control recommendations:

[Colorado Department of Agriculture \(CDA\) Noxious Weeds](#)

Example

Property was inventoried by XYZ & Associates. One area (20' x 20') of orange hawkweed was found in meadow near road. Two pockets of diffuse knapweed were also found. The first area is approximately 100' x 1000' and found near the NW property boundary and the second is approximately 30' x 100' and found just below the meadow (see accompanying map).

Management Goals: State the goal to eradicate, contain or suppress, noxious weed infestations on the property. Promote desirable self-sustaining native plant communities in areas where construction or other ground-disturbing activities will take place. All List A and High Priority List B species must be eradicated prior to any disturbance and notations to prevent the spread of all noxious weeds during the development must be addressed.

Example

Eradicate the Orange hawkweed, a List A species, and reseed with native plants adapted to this area.

Control the spread of diffuse knapweed near property boundary and reduce the density to 50% or less within two years. Within five years, lower population to a low level manageable by beneficial insects. Reduce density of smaller patch near the meadow to less than 50% within two years. Eliminate this patch completely within four years.

Example Ground Disturbing Activities

*Eradicate the Orange Hawkweed before **any** ground disturbing activity begins. (NOTE: eradication is required for all List A and high priority List B species prior to any ground movement.)*

Control the spread of diffuse knapweed in all areas of the property. Make every attempt to keep any noxious weeds from leaving the sites by employing proper contain and control procedures.

Ensure that all equipment leaving the parcel is free of weed seeds or other plant parts. Clean seeds from tires, tracks and all other parts of machinery.

Prevent seed spread prior to any activity on the site, along with continued treatment during the construction. Clip, bag, and securely dispose of all noxious weed seeds and plant parts.

Control Methods: Detail the Integrated Weed Management (IWM) plan. Provide information on control methods for specific noxious weeds. Fact sheets for most species are found at:

Colorado Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Species Identification

List which IWM measures will be applied to each species of noxious weed found in the management area using the following format:

- a. Cultural/Mechanical – Mowing, hand-pulling, irrigation, etc. Whenever possible, follow any control measure with an over-seeding using native plants adapted to the area. It is important whenever there is a disturbance to an area that has noxious weeds, to prevent the spread of seeds to other areas of land by equipment, vehicles, clothing and shoes.
- b. Biological – For recommended control available of each specific plant species, contact the CDA Biocontrol division at:
[Colorado Department of Agriculture Biocontrol](#)
- c. Chemical – List chemical controls by active ingredient and product name. (Please note the “Label is the Law” not all herbicides work equally well on all weeds, nor can every herbicide be used in every situation. Read the label and consult weed manuals and experts for the most effective chemical to use and how to use it safely.)

Example

Orange hawkweed: List A species

- a. Mechanical: Not recommended for orange hawkweed.
- b. Biological: Not available. Eradication is the only option for List A species
- c. Chemical: There are several herbicides that control orange hawkweed effectively; Aminopyralid, Clopyralid, Picloram or 2,4-D.

Diffuse knapweed: List B species.

- a. Mechanical: Sever roots with a shovel well below the soil line.
- b. Biological: The CDA has several beneficial insects available for diffuse knapweed control including a weevil that feeds on the seed head and another weevil that feeds on the roots.
- c. Chemical: Several herbicides are available that control diffuse knapweed effectively; Aminopyralid, Clopyralid or 2,4-D.

Timeline of Activities: Provide a specific timeline for each noxious weed management activity. Noxious weed management activities should be planned for the most susceptible time in the plants life cycle in order to achieve the most effective control. The CDA fact sheets referenced above will assist in determining the most appropriate timing. All List A and high priority List B will be eradicated before ground disturbance takes place.

Example

Orange Hawkweed will be sprayed in the rosette growth stage (spring to early summer).

Diffuse knapweed will be dug during spring and fall rosette stage.

Spraying should be during bolting stage and fall rosette stage if present.

Biological control organisms release as recommended by CDA.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Explain how and when monitoring will be conducted, how the effectiveness of applied management treatments will be evaluated, and how the records of activities and evaluations will be kept.

Example

Photos of all noxious weed areas will be taken from specific locations marked with a metal stake before treatment begins. Determine area (size) of all noxious weed patches. Short-term

evaluations will be made by photo and visual counts after each treatment and long-term success will be measured and recorded each year and compared to management goals.

Additional Resources

El Paso County Environmental Division

<https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/environmental-division/noxious-weeds/>

Colorado Department of Agriculture – Noxious Weeds

<https://ag.colorado.gov/conservation/noxious-weeds>

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Noxious Weed Management

<https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/RS-NoxiousWeedsSpeciesProfiles.aspx>

Colorado State University Small Acreage Management

<https://sam.extension.colostate.edu/topics/weeds/>