



## **YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT**

“... working together to establish an effective program of integrated management for leafy spurge...”

### **YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT Wednesday 10:00am, September 13, 2023 Carpenter Ranch and by Zoom**

#### **Proposed Agenda**

1. Welcome: Ben
2. Introductions: (5 minutes)
3. Review Agenda: (5 minutes)
4. Update on 2023 Budget and Friends of the Yampa/YRLSP Donations Account (Tamara, Lindsey) (10 minutes)
5. Report on Youth Outreach Event: (Laurel) (10 minutes)
6. Update on 2023 Show Me Float: (Ben) (5 minutes)
  - a. Participants
  - b. Beetle Releases: 5,000 Aphthona and 170 Oberea
  - c. Letter to Darrell Camilletti
7. Update on Idaho Collection/Releases and Total 2023 Releases (Tamara, Pete) (15 Minutes)
  - a. Things learned
  - b. SWA releases
  - c. Show Me Float Releases
  - d. CDA Releases at Youth Outreach Event
  - e. Routt County Weed Program Releases
  - f. Next Steps (Nursery)
  - g. Goals for 2024
8. Update on new Beetle Release Site and Monitoring Protocols: (Tamara) (5 minutes)

9. Update on Inundative Biological Control Grant Application: (Emily, Tamara, Lindsey)  
(15 minutes)
10. Report on Proposal for Targeted Sheep Grazing in Tepee Draw (Chris) (5 minutes)
11. Next Steps Succession Planning 9<sup>th</sup> Edition: (Ben) (5 minutes)
12. Update on Draft Text of Integrated Management of Leafy Spurge with Herbicides: (Tamara, Jesse) (5 minutes)
13. Website Update: (Pete) (5 minutes)
14. Partner Plans and Updates: (Group) (15 minutes)
  - a. Friends of the Yampa
  - b. Routt County Weed Program
  - c. Moffat County Weed and Pest Management
  - d. Colorado Parks and Wildlife
  - e. Yampa River State Park
  - f. BLM
  - g. CO State Land Board
  - h. NRCS: Steamboat
  - i. NRCS: Craig
  - j. Dinosaur National Monument  
Report on the briefing of Kate Greenberg regarding the YRLSP during the Yampa Awareness Float (Emily)
  - k. Moffat County CSU Extension
  - l. Routt County CSU Extension
  - m. Colorado Department of Agriculture
- 14: YRLSP Outreach: (Group) (5 minutes)
- 15: Discussion of YRLSP 2023-2024 Meeting Schedule: (Group) (5 minutes)
16. Other (5 minutes)
  - a. Photos of leafy spurge infestations showing suppressed plants and dense patches  
(Laurel)
  - b. Outreach
  - c. 2023 Accomplishments and 2024 Goals

**Next Scheduled YRLSP Regular Meeting:** To Be Determined

**Proposed Adjournment (12:00pm)**

**YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT**  
**Wednesday, September 13, 2023**  
**Carpenter Ranch, Hayden Colorado**  
**and by Zoom**  
**Draft Meeting Notes**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Working Group Members Present**

Tim Corrigan, Routt County Commissioner  
Ben Beall, Routt County Citizen  
Tamara Naumann, Moffat County Citizen  
Pete Williams, Moffat County Citizen  
Terry Audesirk, Routt County Citizen  
Emily Burke, Friends of the Yampa

**Working Group Members by ZOOM**

Tim Redmond, Routt County Commissioner  
Laurel Deitch, NRCS Craig  
Chris Rhyne, BLM  
Kristina Wood, USFS

Ben Beall opened the meeting at 10:07am

Ben asked everyone to introduce themselves starting with the Working Group members present in person, and then those on Zoom.

Ben reviewed the proposed agenda with the Group. There were no additions or changes to the Proposed Agenda.

**First Discussion: Update on 2023 Budget and Friends of the Yampa/YRLSP Donations Account.**

Ben put the 2023 Projected Budget Sheet on the Zoom monitor (the budget sheet shown at the meeting was created by Tamara, and was current as of 9/8/2023).

Note that the table shown below is an updated version of the Projected Budget Sheet presented at the meeting, and is now current through 11/1/2023. It contains projected and actual expenditures for the year, along with income figures, but does not yet include any donations received in 2023.

Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project (YRLSP)—2023 Budget & Expenditures—Updated 1 November 2023					
Description	Vendor (if applicable)	Projected Expenses	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Comments
Carry-over from 2022 balance with FOTY			3,277.77		available to spend
Moffat County contribution			1,500.00		received
Routt County contribution			2,000.00		received
5% of \$1,500 (from Moffat County)to FOTY		75.00		75.00	
5% of \$2,000 (from Routt County)to FOTY		100.00		100.00	
YRLSP Website Annual Fee	WIX	264.00		264.00	
YRLSP Domain Name Fee	WIX	47.70		47.70	
MapItFast Software Fee	AgTerra	500.00		500.00	
MapItFast User (Tablet) Fees	AgTerra	140.00		35.00	
Biocontrol Insects from <del>Montana</del> Colorado	CDA	1,300.00		540.00	ShowMe, Youth, +
Travel		500.00			covered by IMNHA
Show-Me-Float Expenses	City Market/J.Husband	250.00		104.75	lunch,beverages,etc
Other Outreach Event Expenses (youth event)	Twin Enviro	500.00		250.00	porta-potty
	Good Vibes			195.91	mesh mats
	WalMart/L. Deitch			100.92	youth event supplies
Postage, Mailing, PO Box Fee	USPS	200.00		78.00	PO Box Fee
	TOTAL	3,876.70	6,777.77	2,291.28	
Remaining budgeted funds for 2023 as of 1 November 2023 (Projected Expenses - Actual Expenses):					1,585.42

Tamara explained that she will further update 2023 figures at the end of the year to reflect any donations received in 2023, and that she will be preparing a similar budget spreadsheet for 2024.

Tamara said that the YRLSP had accomplished a lot with limited funding. She also advised the Group that she had received notice from Moffat County that if the YRLSP wanted funds for next year, the request must be made by the end of August. After consulting with Jesse Schroeder, Moffat County Weed and Pest, it was decided to request only \$1,000 for 2024, due to the carry-over from 2023. Moffat County advised that they would keep \$1,500 in their budget for future years.

Tamara will be in touch with Tiffany Carlson, Routt Count Weed Program, concerning a request to Routt County for 2024.

Tamara thanked FOTY for being the YRLSP fiscal agent. Ben put the FOTY/YRLSP Account information on the monitor for Emily Burke to see, since this was her first YRLSP meeting. Tamara explained to Emily that a similar budget can be expected for 2024, unless the application for a federal grant is accepted.

Tim Corrigan asked when the YRLSP expects to know if the federal application has been accepted. Tamara explained that the federal grant is significant and involves a number of partners, but that everything is on hold until the next federal budget is passed.

**Task 1: Group to review the 2024 Budget at the January meeting.**

**Task 2: Tamara to be in touch with Tiffany Carlson for a Routt County budget request.**

**Second Discussion: Report on Youth Outreach Event**

Laurel Deitch told the Group that the two-day event was held a little late this year. She thought it went well even though it was hot with a lot of mosquitoes. The Craig Boys and Girls Club cancelled for July 18, but Laurel was able to enlist participation from the Totally Kids Camp in Hayden for that date, with 8 kids from 9 to 11 years old and 2 counselors. On July 19<sup>th</sup> we had 12 kids (of the same age range) with 2 counselors from the Yampatika Environmental Camp. It was the second year of participation for one of the Yampatika kids—because he had so much fun last year!

Laurel thanked the presenters for their help, including Tiffany Carlson (Routt County Weed Program), Chris Rhyne (BLM). Mackey Mason and Shane Talvacchio (CPW) presented—and also cut the grass, brought tents, and dealt with the trash. John Kaltenbach (CDA) brought 4,000 *Aphthona* beetles and 100 *Oberea* beetles to release over the two days with the kids, and an additional 5,000 *Aphthona* to release elsewhere on the YRSWA.

Chris gave kudos to Laurel for all her work putting together a great event.

Since the Youth Outreach is a premier outreach activity for the YRLSP, Ben asked Laurel what she saw as the future for the event. Laurel answered that it should carry on, and gave as an example the Yampatika kid who wanted to return for a second year.

Tamara asked Laurel if she was willing to organize the event next year and Laurel answered yes. Tamara thought that one thing that should be done for next year was a new order of long-sleeved t-shirts with the YRLSP logo for the kids. These shirts would help protect the kids from the sun and mosquitos.

Tim Redmond asked Laurel how many kids the event could handle. Laurel replied that with a few more presenters there would be some room for growth. However, Laurel also thought that there is an advantage to the one-on-one hands-on experience of the current number of participants. Tim recommended that the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps could be a good choice for additional participants. He said that since he is on the board of Youth Corps, he would be willing to help with organizing more participation if the event is expanded.

Emily Burke asked Laurel where the event was held. Tamara explained that the area on the State Wildlife Area west of Hayden, across from the CDOT Rest Area with its own parking lot and proximity to leafy spurge infestations, has been an ideal location.

**Task 3: Laurel and Group Members will plan for a Youth Outreach Event for 2024.**

**Task 4: Tamara will put in an order for YRLSP long-sleeved t-shirts for the 2024 kids.**

**Task 5: Tim Redmond volunteered to help with the Rocky Mt. Youth Corps if needed.**

### **Third Discussion: Update on the 2023 Show Me Float**

Ben explained that he and John Husband have been the organizers of the Show Me Floats. Ben reported that this year there were 17 participants, 12 of whom were not YRLSP Working Group Members. One of these was a reporter from the Steamboat Pilot, who wrote an article on the event for the Pilot and the Craig Daily Press.

This year the float was from Dorsey Beach to Loudy Simpson, and included the release of a total of 5000 *Aphthona* beetles and 170 *Oberea* beetles, in four locations on the Camilletti property just east of Pebble Beach and the Yampa Valley Golf Course. This was a great opportunity for the participants to discuss leafy spurge and biocontrol. Ben put a map on the monitor showing the four release sites. Ben also informed the Group that he had also sent an email with the map to Darrell Camilletti (who had given the YRLSP permission to release beetles on his property). The email detailed the releases and requested that Darrell not treat the release sites with herbicides.

Pete said that he would put the Show Me Float beetle release map on the YRLSP website. He also would like to have a few more photos of this year's Show Me Float for the website. Ben thought the Suzie Romig, the Pilot reporter, had taken photos. He volunteered to ask her if these might be available.

Tim Corrigan asked how the YRLSP chooses who will be the participants on the annual Show Me Floats. Ben responded that there are various sources: folks who have express interest, sign-in sheets at outreach events, and personal invitations.

**Task 6: Pete to put the Show Me Float beetle release map on the YRLSP website.**

**Task 7: Ben to ask Suzie Romig if she has any photos of the Show Me Float.**

### **Fourth Discussion: Update on Idaho Biocontrol Collection and 2023 Biocontrol Releases**

Tamara explained to the Group that a goal for 2023 had been to go to Idaho to participate in one of Idaho's BLM biocontrol beetle collections. We had heard that they were collecting an eye-popping number of beetles, and the YRLSP wanted to learn about how they were doing it. In the second week of July Tamara, Pete, and Emily Spencer traveled to Ashton, Idaho, in a DNM truck using accommodation funds secured by Emily. In Ashton they met Kim Ragotzkie, a contractor with the BLM, who took the YRLSP folks to a local collection area and showed them the ropes.

Tamara explained that actually there was no magic in the Idaho beetle collection methods. They collected beetles with sweep nets just as the YRLSP had been on the Lowry Range (a Colorado State Land Board property, part of the former Lowry Bombing and Gunnery Range). And, while the accounts of huge numbers of collected beetles had been true in the past, beetle numbers had since crashed (and are now recovering) in the principle Idaho collection locations. On this trip Kim and the YRLSP crew collected about 17,000 *Aphthona* and 1,000

*Oberea* in 3 to 4 hours, and then spent another day and a half sorting the beetles from the by-catch (non-target insects and vegetation debris). This was roughly comparable to the YRLSP's experiences with biocontrol collecting with the Colorado Department of Agriculture at Lowry.

Kim Ragotzkie, who had managed an Idaho state wildlife area during the time when Idaho's *Aphthona* populations had reached their peak numbers, described to the YRLSP team how those eye-popping collection numbers had actually been achieved—the collections were made by lots of volunteers from areas with exceptionally high beetle numbers, and then no effort was made to eliminate the by-catch. Local landowners and managers simply filled sacks with the mix of vegetation debris and the full assortment of collected insects, to take home to their local properties for release.

Tim Corrigan asked about what was the most time-consuming part of the collection process. Pete explained that it is easily the cleaning and sorting of the biocontrol insects from the bycatch and plant debris. The actual collection in Idaho was only a few hours, while the sorting took an additional day and a half.

Tamara pointed out that good biocontrol collection practices for the YRLSP should continue to include the by-catch sorting, when collecting from outside of the Yampa Valley. We don't want to inadvertently import some other unrecognized problem insect species. However, once we achieve the biocontrol numbers that will support the kind of local-collect-and-take-home activities Kim described in Idaho, sorting the local by-catch will not be necessary.

Tamara also stressed that the Idaho experiment with leafy spurge biocontrol is about two decades older than here in the Yampa Valley, and it is quite possible that we just haven't yet reached the stage of peak biocontrol numbers. The SWA that Kim Ragotzkie had managed has a similar environment to the Yampa River State Wildlife Area, and the crash in beetle numbers was partly due to a season of exceptional inundation. Yet the beetle population survived those environmental events, and their numbers are increasing again. Periodic seasonal flooding in the YRLSP, if the Idaho experience is any guide, may influence annual *Aphthona* numbers, but it should not eliminate them as an effective biological control species in the long run.

The record of leafy spurge biocontrol populations across the state of Idaho also reflects the classic cycle of predator-prey relationships—as the beetle numbers increased, the leafy spurge infestations were increasingly suppressed. Then the reduced presence of leafy spurge contributed to reduced numbers of biocontrol insects, followed by a rejuvenation of the leafy spurge populations—and then an increasing numbers of biocontrol insects once again. We should expect to have similar experiences in the Yampa Valley in the future.

Tamara offered some other observations regarding leafy spurge biocontrol, both locally here in the Yampa Valley and corroborated by Kim's observations in Idaho:

- 1) *Aphthona* seems to be happiest in a dry habitat while *Oberea* seems to like cool moist habitat. Not much is known about *Oberea* but it seems that the YRLSP should augment *Oberea* in the riparian areas. Interestingly, *Oberea* collection was never a specific goal in Kim's experience (*Aphthona* was always the species of interest), but they have typically always been

present in the biocontrol catch. In 2023, the YRLSP collected much higher numbers of *Oberea* in Idaho than during past trips to the Lowry Range.

2) The modified collection towers that Tamara had made also seem to facilitate the collection of *Oberea*. Kim appreciated seeing these collection towers in action. Her own version of a collection tower seemed well-suited for *Aphthona* collection, and offered the YRLSP volunteers some great ideas for reducing the initial quantity of vegetation debris during the collections.

3) Early season monitoring numbers of *Aphthona* are clearly influenced by cold spring weather (delaying emergence), and cool mornings after emergence (especially with heavy dew) will also reduce observed numbers. Thus the low numbers of *Aphthona* observed on the recent Show Me Floats may simply be the result of cool spring weather—follow up monitoring at these same sites later in the season likely would have produced very different results. For example, monitoring during release activities in the YRSWA on July 13 demonstrated a wide range of numbers—cool morning temperatures and a heavy dew resulted in very few *Aphthona* collected in sweeps where *Aphthona* numbers were expected to be high, while sweeps later in the day under hot and dry conditions produced large numbers of *Aphthona* in comparable habitats. Chris Rhyme also reported that the Fortification Creek BLM parcel was full of *Aphthona* during a hot July 27 afternoon.

Tamara said that she was encouraged by the Idaho trip and is excited to go back next year. Next year's trip should be planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in June through the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in July. It would be a 5-day trip, followed by an overnight in the Little Yampa Canyon for the releases.

Tamara and Pete explained that upon the return from Idaho, they needed to release the beetles as soon as possible. After a few hours of sleep, they met Shane at the YRSWA early the next day. CPW had also purchased 6000 *Aphthona* and 300 *Oberea* from Montana, which coincidentally had also arrived the day before, so by the end of the afternoon they had released over 23,000 beetles on four sites in the YRSWA. Time constraints meant they did only sample sweeping at each release location, rather than following the full monitoring protocol.

Tamara acknowledged that CDA also supplied more beetles this year than in any past year: Emily Spencer, DNM, received 12,000 *Aphthona* and 100 *Oberea* for release in the monument's Yampa Canyon. Other entities and events receiving beetles from CDA were: Routt County, YRLSP's Show Me Float and Youth Events, and the YRSWA. The total beetles received from CDA in 2023 for the Yampa River drainage was 29,000 *Aphthona* and 370 *Oberea*.

With the 17,000 *Aphthona* and 1,000 *Oberea* brought back from Idaho, and the 6,000 *Aphthona* and 300 *Oberea* purchased from Montana by the CPW, the overall total number of biocontrol insects released by the YRLSP and its partners in 2023 came to 53,670 (see table below).



2023 YRLSP Biocontrol Releases Summary							
Date	<i>Aphthona</i>	<i>Oberea</i>	Source	Approx Location	Lead	Event	County
29 June	3,000	0	CDA	several Routt County locations	Routt County		Routt
30 June	5,000	170	CDA	Camilletti	YRLSP	ShowMe Float	Moffat
early July	12,000	100	CDA	Yampa Canyon	NPS		Moffat
13 July	1,000	100	Idaho	Deerlodge	NPS		Moffat
13 July	16,000	900	Idaho	YRSAWA	YRLSP		Routt
13 July	6,000	300	Montana	YRSAWA	CPW		Routt
18-19 July	4,000	100	CDA	YRSAWA	YRLSP	Youth	Routt
19 July	5,000	0	CDA	YRSAWA	CDA		Routt
TOTAL	52,000	1,670					
	53,670						

Tamara also reported to the Group that she had tried to contact Bruce Johnson of the J Quarter Circle Ranch to coordinate for beetle releases on his property. Bruce finally called back too late for this year's releases, but he said if you can't get in touch next year, just go ahead and release beetles.

Tim Corrigan asked how these releases compared to other years. Ben put a sheet up on the monitor that Tamara had created, showing a 5-Year Biocontrol Summary for the period 2019–2023. This showed the total for those 5 years to be 124,240 biocontrol beetles. After the beetle releases in 2023, the next highest yearly total was in 2022, at 30,700 (see table below).

YRLSP 5-YEAR Biocontrol Summary 2019-2023										
YRLSP Releases:	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
Species:	<i>Aphthona</i>	<i>Oberea</i>	<i>Aphthona</i>	<i>Oberea</i>	<i>Aphthona</i>	<i>Oberea</i>	<i>Aphthona</i>	<i>Oberea</i>	<i>Aphthona</i>	<i>Oberea</i>
<b>Yampa River State Wildlife Area</b>										
YRSAWA	4,000	several	10,000	0	4,400	350	12,000	300	31,000	1,300
5-year YRSAWA Total:	<b>63,350</b>									
<b>Other Public Lands</b>										
Hwy 40 Rest Area	3,300	several								
BLM			1,000				12,000	200		
NPS-Dinosaur									13,000	200
SLB/Haskins							2,400	100		
Loudy Simpson					1,200					
South Beach					1,200					
Subtotal:	3,300	several	1,000	0	2,400	0	14,400	300	13,000	200
5-year other public lands:	<b>34,600</b>									
<b>Private Lands</b>										
Various Private Lands			12,000	120	2,200	100	3,600	100	8,000	170
5-year Private Total:	<b>26,290</b>									
Annual Grand totals:	7,300		23,120		9,450		30,700		53,670	
5-YEAR GRAND TOTAL:	<b>124,240</b>									

Tim Redmond asked if it would make sense to use herbicides during the years following a biocontrol population crash during the prey/predator cycle, to maintain the reduced leafy spurge numbers.

Tamara responded that, while the beetles will again increase over time and continue to impact the leafy spurge, the ag producers could use herbicides on their production fields. However, herbicides are generally neither appropriate nor cost effective in riparian areas, and even herbicides will not keep the leafy spurge from returning in the same places in the years after treatment.

**Task 8: The Group needs to augment *Oberea* beetles in the Yampa River riparian areas.**

**Task 9: Tamara and Pete need to organize additional (later season) 2024 monitoring of release sites in the YRSWA.**

**Task 10: Tamara with help from the Group needs to organize an Idaho beetle collection trip for 2024, with releases in Little Yampa Canyon.**

**Task 11: The YRLSP needs to fulfill its goal to release beetles on the designated release site on Bruce Johnson's J Quarter Circle Ranch in 2024.**

#### **Fifth Discussion: Update on New Beetle Release Sites and Monitoring Protocols**

Tamara reported that she has not had time to work on the new monitoring protocols.

Pete had these comments for future monitoring:

1. The monitoring protocols that we have been using are not practical when releasing 15,000 or 20,000 beetles in a day or two, especially when releasing in multiple locations.
2. In the YRSWA, where we have already made many releases and the new releases are adjacent to previous release locations, it's not really necessary to do full monitoring plots on the day releases are being made.
3. The current monitoring protocols DO still make sense for all release sites when time is available, and should continue to be used for the long-term monitoring of sites.
4. The monitoring protocols are valuable for long-term monitoring because they continue the comparability of future data with the data collected in previous years.

**Task 12: Tamara will work on the monitoring protocols to make them practical in going forward with biocontrol releases.**

#### **Sixth Discussion: Update on Inundative Biological Control Grant Application**

Tamara said that she had spoken with Emily Spencer and there was nothing to report. Tamara said that her best guess for hearing something would be not before a federal budget is passed.

Ben asked Emily Burke if she had had an opportunity to look into the grant or talk to Lindsey Marlow. Emily said that she had.

Tamara explained that the grant was for support for biocontrol in the Yampa and Green River watershed, in DNM and upstream. There would be enough funds going to FOTY to fund some organizational capacity in Routt and Moffat Counties and the involvement of FOTY for the nine years of the grant.

Ben clarified for Emily Burke that the “Inundative” in the grant meant the releasing of more bugs. He said that he would include Emily as the representative of FOTY in future grant discussions and future YRLSP meetings.

**Task 13: Ben to include Emily Burke in all future discussions that pertain to FOTY.**

### **Seventh Discussion: Report on Proposal of Targeted Sheep Grazing in Tepee Draw**

Chris informed the Group that she is in preliminary conversations with someone that runs sheep to manage the leafy spurge in Tepee Draw. In her original research she saw that sheep do control leafy spurge by a reduction in the leafy spurge biomass but when the grazing is stopped the leafy spurge returns, such as has been observed on the Peroulis properties on Four Mile Creek.

Ben asked Chris what would be the difference in Tepee Draw than what Hannah Kunz found in her research. Hannah’s research was sponsored by YRLSP and used targeted sheep grazing in small riparian plots. She concluded that targeted sheep grazing in these locations is too expensive, given the amount of time and effort to manage the sheep.

Chris admitted that there will be a need to manage sheep on the Tepee Draw allotment because this permit will be for biocontrol. However, as far as cost, this will be a free grazing permit. She also noted that BLM has transect lines in Tepee Draw which can be monitored to see the changes.

Tamara said that she was excited about the project and to see what happens. She also asked Chris if she had gotten up to Tepee Draw this summer. Chris responded that she had not.

Ben asked Chris if target grazing in Tepee Draw was similar to the sheep grazing on the leafy spurge infestations in Montana. Tepee Draw is much bigger than the plots that Hannah used for her research.

Chris responded that sheep grazing is used in lots of areas. It is similar to biocontrol in that it does not remove the leafy spurge, but rather just makes it less vigorous. There will still be a need to keep the sheep targeted on the leafy spurge.

**Task 14: Chris to report back to the Group with the results of Targeted Sheep Grazing in Tepee Draw.**

## **Eighth Discussion: Next Steps Succession Planning**

Ben opened the discussion by asking where the YRLSP is going now that the Inundative Grant is on hold. He had hoped that the YRLSP would transition with this grant.

Tamara thought that the first thing is that the YRLSP doesn't need to have meetings every other month. Three meetings a year would work.

1. In January to approve a budget and do initial planning for the year.
2. In April to do detailed planning for summer events and projects.
3. A meeting in either September or October to discuss what was accomplished and what the YRLSP should budget for the coming year. This is important because FOTY will need our budget before the end of the year.

Tamara suggested there be no meetings during the summer months, when everyone will be expected to participate in the planned events and projects.

Ben asked if everyone agreed with Tamara. Everyone gave a thumbs up. With that approval our meeting schedule is set. January will be our next meeting.

**Task 15: Ben will create an agenda for a January meeting to be held on the second Wednesday of the month, January 10<sup>th</sup>. He will publicize the change in the meeting schedule in the emails sent out with these September Meeting Notes. At the January meeting the Group will approve the 2023 Accomplishments and the 2024 Goals.**

## **Ninth Discussion: Update on Draft Text of Integrated Management with Biocontrol and Herbicides**

Ben opened this discussion by stating that it has been a goal of the YRLSP to show how biocontrol and herbicides can be used together for the control of leafy spurge.

Tamara reported that she has completed a one-page document and it is posted on the YRLSP website. Go to the Resource Tab and in the dropdown menu click on Integrated Management. She would appreciate your comments.

Tamara asked Chris if she should add Targeted Sheep Grazing. Chris thought that this could wait until we see what happens with Tepee Draw.

**Task 16: Group members to review Tamara's document and get back to her with comments.**

**Task 17: Tamara to potentially add Targeted Sheep Grazing as part of Integrated Management, at a later date.**

## **Tenth Discussion: Website Update**

Pete began his update by explaining that there still needs to be a major seasonal update of the website, to include the outreach events, beetle release information, and new data collected in 2023. These updates will include revisions of the Biological Control, Show Me Floats, Youth Outreach, Interactive Map, and GIS Data pages.

Pete anticipated that these updates will be made during the next month, and explained that the group members can quickly keep tabs on what has been updated so far by visiting the What's New page, located in the About dropdown menu.

Pete also explained that the Biological Control pages currently include conventional maps and a spreadsheet detailing specific information for each individual YRLSP monitoring and biocontrol release site—but as the number of releases increases with each year, this is quickly becoming a cumbersome method for communicating the data. The same data is quickly available through the new Interactive Map, making the spreadsheet redundant. Pete thought that in the future the Interactive Map, in concert with the downloadable files available on the GIS Data page, should become the standard method for communicating this data to the public.

Pete asked for feedback from the Group, including suggestions for what else they would like to see included on the website. He also asked for any additional photographs that might be available for display on the website, especially of the 2023 Show Me Float and Youth Outreach events.

Ben said that he would contact Suzie Romig to see if she could send her photos of the Show Me Float.

Laurel said that she had put together a shared file of Tiffany's, Reece's (Yampatika) and her photos of the Education and Youth Event.

Tim Corrigan questioned whether photos of kids could be uploaded without release permission. This led Pete to wonder about the past Education and Youth Event kid photos already posted to the website. Laurel said that she would contact the various organizations to see what their release policies were.

Tamara thanked Pete for all his work on this important part of the history and success of the YRLSP.

**Task 18: Pete to update the YRLSP website.**

**Task 19: Laurel to check with the organizations to get their permissions to use their kids photos.**

## Eleventh Discussion: Partner Plans and Updates

Ben opened this discussion by saying that this is a traditional item where Partners can discuss their projects with the Group.

**1. Friends of the Yampa:** Emily Burke reported that Jenny Frithsen has only one more site to monitor for macroinvertebrates to finish data collection for the Steamboat segment (tailwaters of Stagecoach to the Hayden pump station) of the Yampa River Scorecard Project. While the Steamboat segment is being monitored this year, last year, the Middle Yampa segment (Hayden pump station to South Beach) was monitored. Weighting the cumulative scores for each riverscape monitored, the Middle Yampa received an overall score of a B. The full report can be accessed at:

[https://yamapcorecard.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/YRSP\\_Middle-Yampa\\_scoring-Report\\_2022.pdf](https://yamapcorecard.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/YRSP_Middle-Yampa_scoring-Report_2022.pdf)

Results for the Steamboat segment are pending, but are expected to be released this winter. Each of the river's segments (Upper Yampa, Steamboat, Elk River, Middle Yampa, Lower Yampa) will be monitored once every five years. The monitoring includes ecological health and function, river uses and management, and people and community benefits.

The Scorecard Project will establish a baseline for the health of the river in order to evaluate current conditions, to get a sense of trends over time, and to prioritize areas for future restoration, improvement, and protection projects.

Ben asked how leafy spurge and noxious weeds fit into the Scorecard Project. Tamara said that leafy spurge is mentioned but the Scorecard Project is about monitoring not managing noxious weeds.

Tamara informed Emily that she had been contacted by Steve Hinkemeyer of the Yampa White Green Basin Roundtable. The YWGBRT wants a report from the YRLSP. FOTY was the recipient of the Grant Funds in 2020 from the YWGBRT for YRLSP grant-funded activities, which included research, mapping, data from remote sensing. This report will keep the YRLSP on the radar in the YWGBRT's Basin Implementation and Integrated Water Management Plan.

The report will describe YRLSP's work with the 2020 grant and ongoing projects. The report needs to be completed by September 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Task 20: Tamara to complete the YWGBRT project update forms by September 28<sup>th</sup> in order to keep the YRLSP as an important participant of the YWGBRT.**

**2. Routt County Weed Program:** Ben said that Tiffany Carlson could not be here today but had sent a report. Her update showed that RCWP had released 3,000 leafy spurge beetles on three sites. She included the coordinates of these releases. Pete said that he had looked at the coordinates and they were all in the Hayden area, which he would put on our release maps.

Tiffany also reported that the Stetson Ranch had been treated with Venue this summer and will have a follow-up this fall.

Tim Corrigan wanted the Group to know that Routt County and Colorado Counties, Inc., will be sponsoring legislation in the upcoming session giving counties the ability to require landowners to treat noxious weeds and the ability to fine them without having to use the cumbersome court system.

Also, Tim reported that CPW has already collected \$30 million from the Parks Pass fees collected during vehicle registration. Counties are looking at legislation to obtain part of these fees, which could be used to offset CPW State Parks and State Wildlife program impacts.

Tamara wanted Tim to understand that the CPW YRSWA has stepped-up in dealing with leafy spurge. CPW YRSWA has spent at least \$1,500 per year on leafy spurge beetles and has really assisted with the Education and Youth Events.

**3. Moffat County Weed and Pest:** Tamara said that after she received a notice from the MCBCC regarding a request for 2024 funds, she talked to Jesse. They discussed whether the YRLSP should request \$1500 or \$1000. Jesse agreed that \$1000 would be appropriate and that he is in communication with the MCBCC regarding budget items.

Jesse also gave an update on the large leafy spurge project in the Peroulis area, which includes State Land Board lands and a lot of other partners. Tamara thought that this is good for the YRLSP because the Little Snake has a lot of leafy spurge.

Jesse also said that he is working with Venue and he is excited about the potential, but it will be a couple years before we know more.

**4. BLM:** Chris said that she didn't have anything more specific other than what we talked about earlier.

Tamara said that Kim Ragotzkie, the biocontrol contractor with the Idaho BLM, would like to come down and see what we are doing. Tamara told Chris that she would be in touch in January to see the available dates.

**Task 22: Tamara to coordinate with Chris for a visit by Kim from Idaho in the summer.**

**5. DNM:** Tamara told the Group that Emily Spencer put out 12,000 *Aphthona* and 100 *Oberea* this year and plans to put out more next year.

**6. CDA:** Ben said that he received an email from John Kaltenbach, who said that he had a conflict and couldn't make the meeting.

### **Twelfth Discussion: Photographs of Biocontrol Impacts on Leafy Spurge**

Ben noted that Laurel was going to ask a colleague if she had photos that showed the suppression of leafy spurge by biocontrol. Laurel said that her colleague didn't have any.

Pete mentioned that there is a location on the YRSWA that he thinks would provide a good photo of what happens to leafy spurge when the beetles are present. It will be easiest to reach this location via raft, and last spring he and Shane had talked about doing so, but it never came to pass. Maybe next year.

Ben thought that it would be great if we could put together photos to show people the effect of biocontrol on leafy spurge, and even the population cycle that Tamara talked about earlier.

Tamara related to the Group there is a dense patch of leafy spurge just upstream from Earle's on the YRSWA, where we released beetles but there is no sign of suppression—possibly because the site is full of ants. She reiterated that each year we learn something. Don't put bugs out where there are a lot of ants! Ants may be extremely territorial.

**Meeting Adjourned.**

**Next Scheduled Meeting is January 10<sup>th</sup>, with other 2024 Meetings in April, and September or October.**