Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project
2025 Accomplishments

Inundative Biological Control Strategy (IBCS) Grant

1) Friends of the Yampa (FOTY) continued to manage expense accounting, budget tracking, and communications for the YRLSP.
2) After our IBCS funds were frozen sometime in February 2025, the YRLSP successfully advocated for support from the Moffat and Routt Boards of County Commissioners, who responded by sending a letter to the Colorado congressional delegation (Senators Hickenlooper and Bennet and Congressmen Neguse and Hurd). The letter outlined the importance of the YRLSP's contributions to state-mandated weed control and summed up with:

    > "This popular public-private partnership program relies on the use of voluntary participation from willing landowners and deploys volunteers to maximize financial efficiencies. It is precisely the type of program that must continue if we are to meet our obligations under Colorado law to manage leafy spurge. We ask that you help us in our efforts by advocating for continued federal funding through The Green/Yampa River Inundative Biological Control Strategy Project. We stand ready to support you in those advocacy efforts."
3) Fortunately, sometime in late May 2025, limited portions of the Inflation Reduction Act funding were at least temporarily unfrozen for grant recipients across the nation. Although it remains unclear what the status of our IBCS grant will be in future years, funds did remain available during the rest of the 2025 field season.

Biological Control in Moffat and Routt Counties

1) In total, partners released 126,875 leafy spurge biocontrol insects (more than any other year thus far) throughout the Yampa Valley on private land, on BLM land, in Dinosaur National Monument, on county lands, in the Yampa River State Wildlife Area, and on other state lands. These insects were obtained from the following sources:
    a. 38,700 beetles were collected by 14 volunteers and partners in Ashton, Idaho in July.
    b. 8,200 beetles were collected by volunteer Tamara Naumann at Cherry Creek State Park (while accompanying a Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) collection crew)
    c. 41,175 beetles were purchased from Montana
    d. 38,800 beetles were purchased from the CDA's insectary

2) Fourteen YRLSP volunteers and partners collected an additional 21,600 beetles in Ashton, Idaho to help control other regional leafy spurge infestations. These beetles were released in the Utah portion of Dinosaur National Monument.

Monitoring

1) Seven monitoring visits occurred throughout the summer to sites where biocontrol insects had previously been released.
2) These results informed a new monitoring strategy for 2026 in which YRLSP volunteers and partners will attempt to conduct informal monitoring once a week at 2-3 sites throughout the summer to better identify when adult beetles are present in the Yampa Valley. This data will give the YRLSP a better idea of when to plan local collection events.

Outreach and Education

1) YRLSP volunteers and partners organized the 2025 Show Me Float, held on June 12th from Dorsey Beach to Loudy Simpson. There were 28 participants, mostly members of CDA's Noxious Weed Advisory Board. Activities included releasing 8,200 beetles on private properties along the Yampa River, and conducting monitoring plots.
2) YRLSP members attended and/or updated the following organizations and events:
    a. Presentations to Routt County Board of Commissioners on 4/7 and 12/22.
    b. Presentations to Moffat County Board of Commissioners on 4/8.
    c. Presentation to Routt County Noxious Weed Advisory Board on 12/4.

Website Administration

1) The YRLSP website continues to be regularly updated with information about YRLSP sponsored events and activities, and the 2025 biocontrol release and monitoring data has been added to the Interactive Map and GIS Data pages (for public download).