



YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT

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

YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT Mon, April 22, 2024 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Carpenter Ranch and by Zoom

Meeting Agenda

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Updates to the agenda
- 3) Review finalized 2024 goals
- 4) IBSC updates
 - a. From 1/22 work session in Craig
 - b. From Emily S
 - c. Vol hours will be tracked for grant
- 5) Report-out from CO 1st annual meeting (John H)
- 6) Youth engagement (Laurel)
 - a. Dates for 2024
 - b. New title for event
- 7) Idaho Trip (Emily S)
 - a. Potential dates
 - b. List of attendees
- 8) Review release locations for 2024
- 9) Monitoring updates (Tamara)
- 10) Show Me Float (John H and Ben)
 - a. Dates, locations, attendees

- 11) Website updates (Pete)
- 12) Presentations to Boards of Commissioners
- 13) Plans for monitoring/managing leafy spurge on SMV Stetson Ranch
near Stagecoach (Tiffany)
- 14) Tepee Draw update? (Chris)
- 15) Weed enforcement legislation celebration (Tiffany)
- 16) Partner updates
- 17) Set next meeting

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Mon, April 22, 2024 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Carpenter Ranch and by Zoom

Meeting Notes

Attendees in Person:

Ben Beall Sr., Routt County Citizen
Roddy Beall, Zenobia Consultants
Tiffany Carlson, Routt County Weed Program
Jonathan Murray, Routt County Weed Program
John Husband, Moffat County Citizen
Shane Talvacchio, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
Emily Burke, Friends of the Yampa (FOTY)

Attendees via Zoom:

Chris Rhyne, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Tamara Naumann, Moffat County Citizen
Pete Williams, Moffat County Citizen
Emily Spencer, Dinosaur National Monument (DNM)
John Kaltenbach, Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA)
Laurel Deitch, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- 1) Introductions
 - a. Everyone introduced themselves and their affiliation
- 2) Updates to the agenda
 - a. No updates were added
- 3) Review finalized 2024 goals
 - a. Emily B reviewed the 2024 finalized goals with the group. Tamara brought up one change to be made: remove her name from goal #6 (to create a modified biocontrol monitoring protocol) and to have Emily S, Pete, and NPS staff listed under that goal. **TASK: Pete to make this change on the website**

4) Inundative Biocontrol Strategy Grant updates from Emily S

- a. Emily B reminded everyone that the goals of this grant are to get as many biocontrol agents out for leafy spurge and Russian knapweed as possible and to establish our own natural insectary/nursery here in the Yampa Valley where landowners/land managers can come to collect for their own release.
- b. Copies of all permits that are needed for releases in Colorado have been sent out to parties in this group that wanted them. **TASK: Everyone should let Emily S know if you need these permits again.**
- c. Financial assistance agreement to move a lot of this funding for this project to Friends of the Yampa (includes chunk that goes to CDA Insectary) was submitted last week. The turnaround should be relatively quickly – within next 2 weeks. Emily S is hoping the money will be accessible for FOTY in mid-May, if not sooner.
- d. Tamara, Pete, and Emily S have been working on getting supplies ordered.
- e. Vol hours will be tracked for the grant
 - i. Emily let everyone know that hours will be tracked so FOTY can use in-kind labor as match for the grant.
 - ii. The group discussed how reporting of volunteer hours should be done. Tamara suggested that we modify a form that she used in a past project for better tracking. **TASK: Tamara to send Emily B the form so she can modify it.**
 - iii. Ben asked what volunteer hours can count as match. Emily S clarified that it's anything related to leafy spurge: meetings, Show-Me Float, etc.
 - iv. Emily S clarified that even if you're being paid by your job for tasks, it can count as match (anything that's in-kind). So these forms need to be filled out by everyone except NPS employees. **TASK: Emily B will send everyone the modified form with a call to complete it and send it back each month**

- v. There's something like 325 hours of match every year in the grant that we have to fulfill, but everyone agreed that we will likely exceed this by a lot.

5) Report-out from Colorado 1st Conservation District annual meeting (John H)

- a. The event was on Feb 20th. Emily B and John H attended.
- b. We had quite a bit of traffic at our table because they had door prize raffle ticket buckets at all tables. About 75 people there.
- c. We put information at all tables where folks sat regarding YRLSP activities
- d. Laurel gave a presentation that included good coverage of the Inundative Biocontrol Strategy grant
- e. Jesse Schroeder gave an update on the Moffat County Weed and Pest program that mentioned the leafy spurge project
- f. No one signed up for the Show-Me Float, but one person did sign up to receive information from YRLSP
- g. Tiffany asked if we were approached to attend the Routt County Conservation District annual meeting.
 - i. Emily B clarified that we weren't approached, but that she went for FOTY reasons. It was not nearly as well attended as the event in Moffat County; there were probably only 8-10 landowners present.

6) Youth engagement (Laurel)

- a. Dates for 2024
 - i. Laurel reported that the event was held on 6/28-6/29 in 2022 and 7/18-7/19 in 2023 for reference.
 - ii. Tamara says we've had a pretty mild winter with an average snowpack, though with some late season storms, so anywhere from last week of June through 7/12 should work. The trip to Idaho may happen the week of 7/4, as the bugs will likely come out earlier than they did last year.
 - iii. Emily B asked if anyone is involved in youth outreach event that would go to Idaho. John Kaltenbach may be the only

overlap person, but he could potentially send someone else from the insectary to the Youth Event if he'll be in Idaho.

iv. Tamara says it's nice to be able to put bugs out for the Youth Event, but it's also possible to have John ship some bugs from Front Range for Youth Event.

v. **TASK: Laurel will send out an email to the Youth Event planning group to schedule a planning meeting in the next 4 weeks.**

1. Tiffany or John would like to have a presence at the event

vi. Chris says Megan Stetson will be out on maternity leave, at least come August.

vii. Laurel will be out for a family event the first week of July and potentially 6/28.

viii. Tamara says it may also work if we pushed the event to 7/15 – 7/17.

b. New title for event

i. Laurel has been calling it the Youth Education and Outreach Event and wonders if anyone has input.

ii. Emily B suggests that an official name be nailed down at the planning meeting

7) Idaho Trip (Emily S)

a. Potential dates

i. Emily S reports that the dates are still TBD. She has been in contact with Kim Ragotzkie, who will keep an eye on the first emergence of leafy spurge bugs. Once she first sees them, the peak emergence is about 2 weeks later. John Kaltenbach confirmed that that's correct.

ii. The first two weeks of July is what Emily S is leaving open for going to Idaho and for releasing them once we return. We could leave a few days earlier too. Emily S and her staff won't be able to leave before July 1 because they will be returning from another trip, but they could meet us in Idaho.

iii. Emily S confirmed that hopefully by the 2nd or 3rd week of June, we'll have a good idea of when we're going. **TASK: Emily S to coordinate with Kim Ragotzkie and let the group know when the Idaho trip is scheduled.**

b. List of attendees

i. Emily S has these folks interested: Tamara, Pete, Emily S, Ryan and Jenny (DNM seasonals), DNM intern, Juan-Pablo, Emily B, Dale and Jamie Skidmore (Sunbeam landowners), Tim Corrigan, Roddy, Ben Sr., and Allison Villard. Emily S added John Kaltenbach to the list, but otherwise it hasn't changed.

8) Review release locations for 2024

a. Emily S's list of release locations: Mike Duzic and Nick Charchalis (Jesse Schroder is POC for these two), State Wildlife Area, Little Yampa Canyon, Mike Camblin, Tepee Draw (BLM is POC for this), Wilton/Harold Earle (Tiffany is POC), SMV Stetson (Tiffany is POC), Jay Quarter Circle (Tamara is POC), Skidmore property in Sunbeam, East Cross Mtn (Roddy is POC), Dinosaur National Monument

i. There could be a few others in Maybell and Sunbeam. Skid and Jamie were going to work to see if there was interest.

ii. Emily S asked if there were additions/changes to this list

1. Tamara said she doesn't think we'll be adding to Mike Camblin's bugs unless they acquired new property. And if we are going to release on Duzic, Charchalis, and the private landowners Tiffany was interested in, we should look at getting landowner permissions as soon as possible. Tiffany has a good contact for Stetson. She needs to do some more digging to get contact info for Earle. Tiffany asked if it was just using the YRLSP landowner permission form. Pete says there's a copy of the form on the bottom of the Resources page on the website. **TASK: Pete to update this form so it says 2024.**
TASK: Tiffany to get permission from Earles for

monitoring on the YRLSP permission form, and we'll go from there. **TASK: Tiffany to get permission from SMV Stetson for releases.**

2. **TASK: Emily S to work on getting Skidmores to sign form for releases permission and will reach out to Jesse to get Duzic and Charchalis to sign a form as well.**
3. Tamara says neither Skidmore nor East Cross Mtn show up as places with spurge on our website. **TASK: Roddy or Emily S will send mapping data from East Cross Mtn to Tamara and Pete, and Emily S will get mapping from Skidmores and send to Pete/Tamara.**

b. USFS Yampa Ranger District site

- i. Emily B asked about geographic scope of where we release beetles, as she was approached by Jason at Yampa Ranger District on USFS to try to get beetles for a few leafy spurge infestations. At least one of them isn't in a riparian area.
 1. Tamara says it's good, but it's not the focus of this project. It only costs \$30 to get a load of bugs from CDA. Tiffany may be able to coordinate with him. Emily S can lend some help with mapping of upland infestations (like she's doing with Baili's spot on USFS) and if they can't spare \$30, Tamara thinks we should assist with our grant. Emily B reports that it's a very difficult area to access for herbicide application, so it may be a candidate for bugs, but we need to go see it to tell for sure and to map it. **TASK: Emily B will coordinate with Emily S and Jason for a mapping effort and site visit.**
 2. Tiffany reports that upland sites in western Routt County have exploded with spurge, and that Routt County Weed Program is thinking of doing some outreach. Tiffany wondering if we can eventually pull bugs from the local insectary that we develop for these upland sites. Tamara

says she thinks we should open the local insectary to landowners in both counties regardless of upland/riparian concerns.

9) Monitoring updates (Tamara)

- a. Tamara reported that we will continue to monitor beetle populations this year
 - i. Tamara explained that she looked through the interactive map on the website and identified all previous release sites and then culled out ones that might not be important enough to be future monitoring sites. (Some of them don't matter for various reasons). Tamara took everything else and put it in a table. All sites are on the mainstem of the Yampa except Fortification Creek and Tepee Draw. She ended up with 55 sites and then went through and clustered certain sites based on geographic and habitat similarities, which yielded 33 clusters of sites. We'd only need to monitor one site in each cluster. Tamara is comfortable monitoring each cluster once every 5 years, which means we'd need to get to 7 sites each year
 - ii. Tamara further explained that she went through and recorded when each site was last monitored and did a first stab of which sites should be monitored in 2024. This includes all the Little Yampa Canyon sites because we're going to be there anywhere to do releases after Idaho. She also included Darrell Steele's property because we definitely want to get back there, and then she picked a site on the State Wildlife Area. If we have extra time and capacity, we could monitor the two Haskins sites. Tamara also put question marks on Tepee Draw and Fortification Creek because Chris may have her own monitoring plans. Chris says she will definitely monitor Tepee this year and will probably not make it to Fortification Creek because she got there last year.

- iii. Emily B asked if monitoring sites once every 5 years is okay, given how much the bug populations boom and bust. Tamara says they do quantify bugs and the goal of monitoring is to see if they're still there and in what kind of numbers. It doesn't make sense to visit sites each year because it would take too much time and because there's too much variation year to year. Tamara says it's not rocket science, because environmental factors make a big difference, and so do even things like time of day. There's a little bit of vegetation response data collected in this protocol, like taking photos in each cardinal direction.
 - iv. The group is in agreement about the monitoring plan for this year.
 - v. Ben brought up who will help with the monitoring. Tamara responded that she's hosting a monitoring class on 6/6, tentatively at the Frog Pond at noon. **TASK: Tamara will investigate around 6/1 to see if the site will work, and if not, will pick a different site/date.** 6/13 is the alternate date in case of weather or if it's too early for bug emergence. Dorsey could be an alternative site.
- b. Tamara confirmed that we will table developing a monitoring protocol for vegetation response until next year
- 10) Show Me Float (John H and Ben)
- a. Date: 6/14
 - b. List of potential invitees is started, but **TASK: John and Ben will get on it seriously this week.** John asked Emily S about DOI officials attending. Emily S says that by the April 3rd deadline, the Show Me Float was the only event identified in the intermountain region of parks for a visit. John speculated that DOI presence may help draw local officials. **TASK: Emily S will keep John and Ben up to date re: if DOI officials want to attend.**

- c. John reported that the stretch of river from Pebble Beach to Loudy Simpson is currently closed because of Whitewater Park construction. For now, the Show-Me Float will be a little shorter in mileage than usual with launching at Dorsey, but we can stop more. There's the possibility that the closed section will open up again. **TASK: Everyone should let Ben and John know if there are folks in your office that might want to go.** About 20 folks normally go, but it depends on the number of boats we can get. Emily S, Bob Schelly, Jenny Paulson, and Ryan Daly from Dino NM would like to go on the Show-Me Float and can row/bring their own boats. The other person to add as a question mark is Kim Ragotzkie. **TASK: Emily S will send this list of interested DNM folks with their contact info to Ben and John.**
- 11) Website updates (Pete)
- a. Pete reports that there have been no updates since the last meeting except for posting the meeting notes. But there are some changes that need to be made (like fixing the goals document), he will put the hours tracking form on the bottom of the Resources page, and he will put the spreadsheet of monitoring sites that Tamara created somewhere, likely on Biocontrol page. Pete will also likely add a paragraph on the Biocontrol page about what our future monitoring goals are. **TASK: Pete to make these updates.**
- 12) Presentations to Boards of Commissioners
- a. Ben says it will be good to update them on the grant
 - b. Tiffany says she's happy to facilitate, though her crew starts on 5/6 and it's pretty busy after that. Ben says he's happy to do the presentation or be part of the presentation.
 - c. John says the last time we updated Moffat Co was March 2023, and the Routt Co update was very soon after. **TASK: Tiffany to ask Routt County Board of Commissioners when they'd like a presentation, and John to ask Moffat County.**
 - d. Emily B can assist with the presentation

- 13) Plans for monitoring/managing leafy spurge on SMV Stetson Ranch near Stagecoach (Tiffany)
- a. Tiffany has GPS coordinates of spurge and is happy to do monitoring following the YRLSP protocol. Tamara asked if Tiffany has put insects out there. To Tiffany's knowledge, there's only been chemical control. Tamara says we can't monitor it according to our protocols because we don't have a protocol for vegetation response. **TASK: Tiffany to send Pete the shapefiles of the infestation and a narrative of what's been done.** Tiffany asked about photo points – **TASK: Tiffany will do photo points this year and will coordinate with Pete re: how to depict that on the website.** Pete advises that it can just go into the monitoring and mapping database. Once we develop a vegetation monitoring protocol, we could revisit the question of how to monitor this site. Tiffany wonders if this site is too much of an outlier. Pete doesn't think so, and Tamara says let's start with Tiffany and Pete coordinating.
- 14) Tepee Draw update (Chris)
- a. Chris says this update is a holdover from last meeting and refers to using sheep to do targeted grazing of leafy spurge. It's not a grazing lease because it's a specific weed treatment. She still doesn't have a budget for this year for that type of project, so Chris is still waiting to see if that will make it in this year.
- 15) Weed enforcement legislation celebration (Tiffany)
- a. Tiffany reported that there are a lot of absentee landowners that just don't take action to manage their weeds. This new legislation allows the County to fine for not managing noxious weeds as an intermediary enforcement step. The proposed regulation lost by 1 vote at CCI, so they took it to Rep. Lukens and Sen. Roberts and got a bill passed. John at Routt County will be spearheading the education and enforcement program. It doesn't go in effect until August, so they'll start doing this in 2025 field season. Tiffany also advised that it

only applies to List A and List B designated for eradication, and that counties do not have to do this – it's permissive.

16)

Partner updates

a. Friends of the Yampa

- i. FOTY will be collecting data for the Scorecard project in the Upper Yampa in the 2024 field season (everything above Stagecoach)
- ii. FOTY received a CWCB grant for almost \$600,000 that will fund the Scorecard and Stewardship program for next 3 years.
 1. The Stewardship program is an initiative of the Yampa River Collaborative that seeks to provide resources, support, and information to landowners, land managers, and practitioners on how to best steward lands adjacent to the Yampa River.
- iii. Yampa River Festival is happening Sat, June 1, but there will be events starting Thurs 5/30 and extending into Sun 6/2.

1. **TASK: Emily B will coordinate with Ben re: YRLSP having a table or presence at River Fest.**

b. Zenobia

- i. In the Upper Yampa, Zenobia is working with FOTY and Virridy on a land management program and exploring an application to develop an RCCP
- ii. Zenobia is also working on the East Cross Mtn parcel with the BLM on restoration and management
- iii. Zenobia is capacity building in the form of learning to build 3-D models of vegetation maps with drones

c. John Husband

- i. John reports that the stretch of river between Pebble Beach and Loudy Simpson is closed until further notice, and that there's a new boat ramp at Loudy.
- ii. The Juniper Diversion project (aka Maybell Ditch project) is done. It's a little pushier than people expected – the river

pushes you toward the headgate. Hazards to boaters have been reduced, but people will need to figure out how to run it. It looks completely different than it did before.

d. Shane (CPW)

- i. Reports that he has no seasonals for this year due to funding

e. Tiffany

- i. Reports that she finished up the Winter Weed Class recently
- ii. She led the Interagency Roundtable of weed managers meeting recently
- iii. She is trying to figure out some education/outreach effort for leafy spurge landowners in West Routt to help them out
- iv. Reports that Noxious Weed Days are coming up. There will be info about the leafy spurge project and the CDA insectary. It's open to the public to get things identified and have sprayers calibrated and filled. It's set for Thurs 5/23 and Tiffany also had Sun 6/2 as a second day but she recently learned that that's the same day as the marathon, so she may change this date.

f. Tamara

- i. Gearing up to go into full-on fabrication mode for gear for Idaho

g. Laurel

- i. Reports on a staffing update for Routt County; there are 2 new folks: Erin Gelling (rangeland mgmt. specialist) and Ian Widden (atural resource specialist). Laurel reports that NRCS still doesn't have a permanent lead in that office. Laurel will look to rope either both or one of them (Erin and/or Ian) into our September YRLSP meeting.
- ii. Tamara chimed in that if anyone in the group doesn't have a YRLSP t-shirt, Laurel has them, so you can email or call her at 970-329-3161 or just stop by the Craig NRCS office at 145 Commerce St.

- h. Emily S
 - i. Russian knapweed gall wasp deliveries are happening from the Insectary. The first delivery is coming on 5/13, and the next delivery will be on 5/27 or 5/28. Those will be distributed to Roddy at East Cross Mtn, to Chris at BLM (CR 10 and Slater Creek/CR 2), and will be released in Dino NM.
- 17) The group set our next meeting
 - a. The group decided to do a field season wrap-up meeting on September 11th from 10:00 – 12:00 at Carpenter Ranch and via Zoom.
TASK: Pete to post this on the website.