



## YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT

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

### YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT

Wednesday 10:00 AM, January 10, 2024

Carpenter Ranch and by Zoom

#### Draft Proposed Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions: (Ben) (5 minutes)
2. Review Agenda: (5 minutes)
3. Update on Successful Application for Inundative Biological Control Strategy Grant (IBCS) (Emily Spencer) (30 minutes)
  - a. Area Covered
  - b. Noxious Weeds Addressed
  - c. YRLSP Responsibilities
  - d. Grant Staffing, responsibilities
  - e. Timeline
  - f. Funds/Budget
    - FOTY: Administration (YRLSP and Grant)
  - g. Other
    - IBCS Kickoff and Grant Steering Committee Meeting, Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>, Craig BLM
4. Discussion of YRLSP IBCS Responsibilities (Group) (20 minutes)
  - a. Grant responsibilities
  - b. Continuation of YRLSP Projects
    1. Youth and Education Event
    2. Show Me Float
    3. Outreach (Moffat and Routt Boards of County Commissioners)
    4. Website

- c. Budget Responsibilities: FOTY/YRLSP
  - 1. Proposed Budget for 2024
  - 2. MC and RC Budget Requests
- d. Volunteer Needs
  - 1. Biocontrol Collection/Release/Monitoring
  - 2. Collection/Release/Monitoring Protocols

5. YRLSP 2024 Goals (Group) (15 minutes)

6. YRLSP 2023 Accomplishments (Group) (15 minutes)

7. Partner Plans and Updates: (Group) (10 minutes)

- a. Friends of the Yampa
  - FOTY/YRLSP Donations Account
- 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
- k. MC CSU Extension
- l. RC CSU Extension
- m. Colorado Department of Agriculture

8: Discussion of YRLSP 2024 Meeting Schedule: (Group) (5 minutes)

16. Other (5 minutes)

**Next Scheduled YRLSP Regular Meeting:** Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at the  
Carpenter Ranch and/or By Zoom

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

**YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT**  
**Wednesday 10:00 AM, January 10, 2024**  
**Carpenter Ranch and by Zoom**

Final Meeting Notes

**ATTENDEES:**

**Working Group Members Present**

Ben Beall, Routt County Citizen  
Tamara Naumann, Moffat County Citizen  
Pete Williams, Moffat County Citizen  
Jesse Schroeder, Moffat County Weed and Pest  
John Husband, Moffat County Citizen  
Chris Rhyne, BLM  
Emily Burke, Friends of the Yampa  
Shane Talvacchio, CPW

**Working Group Members by ZOOM**

Tim Redmond, Routt County Commissioner  
Emily Spencer, DNM  
John Kaltenbach, CDA  
Todd Hagenbuch, CSU Extension RC  
Tiffany Carlson, RC Weed Program  
Baili Foster, USFS  
Laurel Deitch, NRCS

**Guests:**

Roddy Beall, Zenobia Consultants  
David Rehak Suma, CPW  
Jo Stanko, CDA, Regional Assistant Commissioners  
Allison Miller, USFS

Ben Beall opened the meeting at 10:010am

Ben asked everyone to introduce themselves starting with the Working Group Members present and then those on Zoom.

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

**Announcement:** Ben announced to the Group that this would be his last meeting where he was the organizer of meetings and creator of the meeting notes. Emily Burke, FOTY, will be assuming these responsibilities. We will see as we discuss the Inundative Biological Control Strategy Grant that there are funds for Emily and this transition is part of the grant.

### **First Discussion: Update on the Inundative Biological Control Strategy Grant for the Yampa and Green Watersheds**

Emily Spencer presented a PowerPoint explaining this National Park Service project, funded through the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. To see the PowerPoint, go to <https://www.yampariverleafyspurgeproject.com/grants>.

Emily explained that Dinosaur National Monument's Inundative Biological Control Strategy project is a component of a larger National Park Service Colorado River Invasive Species grant package (along with Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Grand Canyon National Park) addressing two of NPS's top priorities: Fresh water Systems and Invasive Species. Dinosaur's part of the project, the Inundative Biological Control Strategy grant, specifically addresses invasive species throughout the entire Yampa Basin and portions of the Green River watershed.

As described in the PowerPoint presentation, the grant is intended to provide solid financial support/seed money to the monument and its upstream partners, to effectively and efficiently deploy as many biocontrol agents as feasible in the Yampa and Green watersheds, regardless of land ownership, for long-term management of highly invasive riparian plants, with a focus on leafy spurge and Russian knapweed.

Emily stressed the partnership and regional nature of this project. The intention is to build on the research, relationships, expertise, capacity, and foundation that

the Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project and its partners have accomplished over the last 10 years.

The goals of the project include the annual release of 50-100K biological control insects, and the establishment of local biocontrol insectaries in northwest Colorado and northeast Utah for future collections and distributions of biocontrol.

The total project budget is projected to be \$539,174, to be dispersed over seven years (2024–2030). The most of the funding will be distributed in 2024–2026, with the remaining funds “banked” with non-federal partners (Friends of the Yampa and the Colorado Department of Agriculture) for final disbursement during 2027–2030.

Ben asked Emily if he was understanding the funding of the project correctly, that FOTY and the Insectary will receive the funds starting this year and that the project expenses will be paid out over the 7-year timeline.

Emily responded, yes and that these financial arrangements should become clearer at the scheduled January 22<sup>nd</sup> work session in Craig, where a work plan will be developed with the input of all of the partners. That meeting will formally initiate the project. (The minutes of the January 22 planning session will be posted to <https://www.yampariverleafyspurgeproject.com/grants.>)

Emily went on to list the deliverables for the grant:

- Annual reporting (by September 1)
- Number of acres treated with biocontrols
- Youth Engagement (training/mentorship/volunteerism)
- Communications
  - Public communications packages produced
  - Social media postings
  - News releases
  - News media contacts
  - Website pages that mention project
  - Coordination meetings with other agencies conducting work
  - Public meetings/partner coordination for communication
  - Briefings/reports/memos

Tamara Naumann questioned Emily Spencer in regards to the requirement to report acres treated with biocontrol agents. Tamara expressed concern that this has always been a problem with the reporting of biocontrol activities. Emily thought that this could be resolved by using the NPS-DNM reporting protocols.

Emily further explained that the grant builds on the work of the YRLSP but also includes a larger working area, including the Green River Watershed. She explained that BLM in the Vernal Office is interested and she will be meeting with USFS representatives in the Green River area.

The grant will also fund a Dinosaur National Monument seasonal, who will be available for projects in the Yampa/Green River basins—such as assisting the YRLSP and its partners with mapping, biocontrol collections and releases, monitoring, and education/outreach events.

Baili Foster wanted to know if assistance would be available for an inventory of infestations in Routt National Forest. Baili is not sure if small infestations would support biocontrol for eradication. If biocontrol is not an option, then the Forest Service would use herbicides.

Emily Spencer stated that she would be happy to help with mapping but wanted everyone to know that eradication of leafy spurge and Russian knapweed is not possible. The goal is management.

Tamara wanted Emily to know that the YRLSP has adjusted our position on herbicide use. Herbicides are not incompatible with biocontrol if used as a late-season application. Also contrary to some sources almost no infestation is too small for biocontrol.

John Kaltenbach asked Emily if the grant was only related to leafy spurge and Russian knapweed. He suggested that the CDA also has good biocontrol agents for Dalmatian and yellow toadflax.

Emily assured the Group that the grant isn't just limited to leafy spurge and Russian knapweed. We should be looking for other invasives and mapping the infestations.

John Husband thought that outreach efforts such as the Show Me Float were extremely important. The YRLSP stills needs to continue to outreach to private landowners.

Emily Burke informed the Group that she has access to landowner lists through FOTY's Scorecard Project and working with the Community Agricultural Alliance. She will coordinate these with the YRLSP's landowner database.

Tamara stated that the YRLSP's landowner database limited to from Hayden downstream.

John Kaltenbach thought that it would be important to schedule a Field Day for reluctant landowners, to show them the results of biocontrol, which can be effective and is not costly.

Tamara responded that she thought that we were not quite ready to show success but we are getting closer. We need to establish a higher threshold of bugs on the YRSWA to entice landowner interest in biocontrol.

Ben advised that we keep a Field Day as a goal of the YRLSP, especially since one of the goals of the grant is to establish local nurseries.

Emily Burke thought that many of these questions would be answered as we create a Work Plan for the grant at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> partners She said that she would get together with Emily Spencer to plan for the meeting.

**Task 1: Ben to facilitate the transition of Emily B to become the administrator for the YRLSP.**

**Task 2: Emily S to confirm the existence of current permits necessary to transport biocontrol agents in and out of Colorado.**

**Task 3: FOTY to receive and expense grant funds for \$296,999 for the length of the project (2024-2030).**

**Task 4: Laurel Deitch will be the lead for the Youth Outreach Event and with the assistance of Emily S create a plan that fulfills the grant requirements for Youth Outreach.**

**Task 5: YRLSP volunteers and Emily S will organize the Idaho biocontrol collection trip and the release of beetles upon return.**

**Task 6: YRLSP will continue to monitor leafy spurge infestations in the Yampa Basin.**

**Task 7: The YRLSP and partners will assist Emily S in creating a grant work plan at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Craig at the BLM offices.**

**Task 8: The YRLSP and partners will continue the establishment of a biocontrol nursery on the YRSWA for leafy spurge with the goal of holding a Field Day for landowners to show the success of biocontrol.**

**Task 9: Emily S will assist Baili in an inventory of leafy spurge and Russian knapweed infestations on the Routt National Forest that might be managed with biocontrol insects.**

**Task 10: The YRLSP with the help of CDA Insectary will map and monitor Russian knapweed and other invasive infestations in the Yampa Basin.**

**Task 11: The YRLSP will continue outreach efforts including the Show Me Float.**

## **Second Discussion: Youth Outreach Events**

Tamara thanked Laurel Deitch for volunteering to again be the leader of the Youth Outreach Event.

Tamara informed the Group that she has placed an order with Chaos Ink for long-sleeved t-shirts for the participating youths and youth leaders. The order is for \$1200, made possible with the \$1500 unbudgeted funds in the 2023 budget. She sent an invoice to FOTY and the invoice has not been paid.



Emily B said that she would check with Lindsey Marlow and make sure the invoice was paid.

**Task 12: Emily B to make sure that the invoice for t-shirts for Chaos Ink would be paid.**

### **Third Discussion: YRLSP 2024 Goals**

Ben advised the Group that he had put together a Draft 2024 Goals document with input from partners. He asked that the Group review the Draft and make changes. At the end of the discussion, as the YRLSP has done in the past, the Goals will be approved with the ability to make further word changes as necessary before Pete Williams posts to the YRLSP website.

**Note: The final 2024 Goals document is now posted on the YRLSP website.** During the discussion of the Draft 2024 Goals, the following tasks were assigned:

**Task 13: Tamara and Emily S will coordinate with Idaho BLM for a late May or early June collection trip. They will notify volunteers at least 10 days in advance of the trip.**

**Task 14: John H and Ben will organize a one-day Show Me Float.**

**Task 15: Pete will update the Grants page of the YRLSP website to reflect the retirement of the YWGBRT/CWCB grant and the commencement of the new ICBS grant.**

**Task 16: Tamara to send the 2023 invoice for the RC BCC donation to Tiffany as a donation template for the 2024 RC BCC proposed donation of \$2,000.**

**Task 17: Emily S to participate in the updates to the Moffat and Routt BCC with an overview of the IBCS grant.**

#### **Fourth Discussion: YRLSP 2023 Accomplishments**

Ben advised the Group that he had put together a Draft 2023 Accomplishments document with input from partners. He asked that the Group review the Draft and make changes. At the end of the discussion, as the YRLSP has done in the past, the Accomplishments will be approved with the ability to make further word changes as necessary before Pete Williams posts it to the YRLSP website.

**The final 2023 Accomplishments document is now posted on the YRLSP website.**

#### **Fifth Discussion: Proposed Legislation regarding Routt County's ability to enforce its Weed Management Regulations**

Commissioner Tim Redmond updated the Group regarding the efforts of Routt County to develop legislation this session that would give counties more authority to take action regarding weed violations on private property. RC has asked other counties for information regarding how they address enforcing weed management.

Ben asked if access and monitoring would be included in the proposed legislation.

Tim responded that not only monitoring but also enforcement. Tim also thought that drones have a place in enforcement but there is a question about aerial trespass that needs to be addressed.

Emily Burke stated that this legislation is something that FOTY would be interested in. She asked to be updated about the legislation so that FOTY could write a letter of support.

**Task 18: Commissioner Redmond to keep the YRLSP updated on the progress of the proposed legislation giving counties more weed enforcement capabilities so that YRLSP partners could support if appropriate.**

#### **Sixth Discussion: Partner Updates**

1. FOTY: Emily B said that she did not have any new updates. Tamara mentioned that the YRLSP has not received a final 2023 account and budget from FOTY.

Tamara asked Emily B if she could send the final accounting so that the YRLSP could see what donations were received in 2023.

2. RC Weed Program: Tiffany reported on the following schedule of events:

a. Drones for Farm and Ranch, a drone workshop sponsored by the RC Extension, will be on Thursday January 25<sup>th</sup>. Tiffany thought that this might be a useful workshop to acquaint members of the YRLSP with the potential use of drones in biocontrol activities, perhaps even for the release of insects.

b. RC Weed Program will be holding their Annual Interagency Meeting at the end of February or the beginning of March, where there are always discussions of leafy spurge.

c. There will also be annual RC weed classes scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Again, leafy spurge is also emphasized at these meetings.

3. MC Weed and Pest: Jesse reported that MCW&P had purchased a drone. Jesse also reported some success with the use of herbicides on leafy spurge, particularly where he has tried combinations of herbicides at the same sites for three years. Jesse also reported that he has used the new herbicide Venue, which he says looks promising. However, it seems to be a burndown herbicide, where the ground is totally burned. He is waiting to see what it looks like this year. One of the advantages of Venue is that it can be used close to water. Jesse is looking for more opportunities to work with the Peroulis family on First Creek.

4. CPW: Shane wanted the Group to know that he is willing to help the YRLSP with their plans on releases on the YRSWA. Tamara wanted Shane to understand that she thought the reason they didn't see bugs on the early season visits was due to weather and climate considerations. This year we need to monitor the sites in the afternoons (after the dew is off the vegetation), and later in the season when the water has receded and it is warmer.

5. Yampa River State Park: Ben was concerned that YRSP never participates in these meetings. Shane said that State Parks is a different organization than the state wildlife areas, with an emphasis on recreation and not wildlife habitat. Tamara wanted everyone to know that YRSP and Jacob Dewhirst in particular are always willing to help when asked.

6. BLM: Chris related that the BLM has received notification that the new herbicide Esplanade has been approved for use. She also stated that she is available to assist with the planned biocontrol releases in Little Yampa Canyon this summer.

7. DNM: Emily Spencer suggested that, if the new superintendent is onboard by this summer, he would be a good candidate for the Show Me Float.

8. NRCS: Laurel relayed that Colorado First Conservation District will be holding their Annual Meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup>, which would be a good occasion for updating the attendees regarding the YRLSP and the IBCS Grant.

9. RC CSU Extension: Todd Hagenbuch invited everyone to register and attend the Farm and Ranch Drone Workshop.

**Task 21: Emily B to send the final 2023 FOTY/YRLSP account to Tamara.**

### **Seventh Discussion: Use of Drones**

Jesse related to the Group that MC Weed and Pest had purchased an agricultural drone last year. It has the capability of treating 50 acres per hour with herbicides and drop herbicide bombs. He saw the possibility of use in hard to get to sites.

Ben asked the Group after the updates from Tiffany and Jesse about the drone workshop and uses of drones for herbicide applications, if there was a place for drone use in managing leafy spurge.

Pete suggested that, while it might be possible to release insects with drones, such releases would not be accompanied by any sweep protocol monitoring. He felt that the potential for drones in biocontrol was more along the lines of photographing the impacts of biocontrol on vegetation canopy health.

John H. added that drones might be used to photograph and monitor hard to visit infestation sites. Drones could be used to show the difference of sites over time.

Pete agreed that with larger ICBS bug releases perhaps drones could play a role in a new monitoring protocol, but clearly they could not provide insect sampling data.

Emily Burke asked Tiffany if she could send out information gained from the Drones for Farm and Ranch Workshop.

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

**Note: This schedule might change after the IBCS Grant Stakeholder Meeting of January 22<sup>nd</sup> in Craig at 12:30 at the BLM Office**