

## **Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project**

### **Meeting Agenda**

Wednesday, September 9, 2026 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at Carpenter Ranch or via Zoom

1. Introductions (if there are new folks)
2. Updates for the agenda
3. Denver collection trip report-out (John K)
4. Review biocontrol release numbers/sources/sites for 2026 (Pete, Tamara, Emily S, others?)
5. Discuss potential sources of bugs for next year (Emily S, John K, others)
6. Review Maybell outreach event during sorting (Tamara)
7. Review Youth Outreach event (Reece)
8. Results of 2026 beetle monitoring (Tamara)
  1. Local translocations
  2. Potential future nursery sites
  3. Monitoring plan going forward
9. Treatments on National Forest (Roddy)
10. Alex's final project update
11. Website updates and interactive map demo (Pete)
12. Coordinating YRLSP info in Reed and Jesse's presentations to Boards of County Commissioners (Emily B)
13. Budget and grant admin updates/reminders (Emily B)
14. Partner updates (all)
15. Set next meeting (all)

## **Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project**

### **Meeting Notes**

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#### Denver collection trip report:

- John K reported that original dates of June 9-10 would have been better, maybe next year? Did not get as many bugs as we hoped due to weather. Target for Cherry Creek State Park for next year, might be better as a site.
- Sorting in Maybell a bit challenging, ended up with 10,150 insects. Went to private and CDOT property in the area. Filled a gap in release area.
- About 25,000 collected with combined Front Range efforts. Just over 50,000 imported bugs in total were released in the Yampa this year.
- Idaho population has crashed as predicted. Collecting and sorting at Cherry Creek next year is a good idea.

#### Review of biocontrol releases summary for 2026

- We imported 51,341 bugs from outside the Yampa Valley into the valley. This puts us at 405,876 bugs released in the Yampa since 2019.
- Additionally, about 6,200 bugs were moved opportunistically from the Yampa River State Wildlife Area frog pond to the Yampa River State Park headquarters, marking our first ever translocation of bugs within the Yampa Valley.
- No releases in Dino before 2023, though some Oberea were found and mechanical work was done to remove leafy spurge in the monument. Hand- pulling was helpful when numbers of leafy spurge were low before 2011.

#### Potential sources of bugs for next year

- Cherry Creek!

#### Maybell outreach event during sorting

- No one showed up, understandable. Other kinds of marketing works.

#### Youth outreach event

- 21 kids from Yampatika and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps attended. Presentations to kids in the morning and got to release bugs in the afternoon. Looked for bugs and released some new ones. Valuable for enthusiastic kids! Should happen again, maybe at a different location, potentially the new Craig River Park.

## Monitoring

- First local translocation of bugs! No bugs have been put in Yampa River State Park before this year, they did not have a lot of interest in biocontrol. New field tech this year, Eric Young, had interest in participating in biocontrol. Tamara brought them to frog pond on June 23 where there were thousands of Aphthona and few leafy spurge. Brought bugs from there to the State Park. On June 28, found a lot of bugs and damaged spurge in the State Wildlife Area. The bugs are visibly making a change in the spurge population. On July 1, 5,000 bugs were collected from the frog pond and brought to the State Wildlife Area. Bugs have also moved east of the State Wildlife Area.
- Early on, lots of bugs were put on Harold Earle's property, but we have not gotten permission to go back in since 2020. This year, they called to ask for more bugs. Tamara met with Harold in late July and got permission to go into the property whenever needed to check on how they bugs are doing. On July 28, Tamara went to three places where bugs were previously left and saw little to no spurge. Bugs are at other sites causing visible damage.
- Heat and drought may have negatively impacted ant populations and spurge bugs are taking advantage of that.
- If more than 50 bugs are found in a sweep, this is a good place for collection in the future.
- Bug activity is very tied to weather, temp, etc. non detection does not equal absence. This year peak bug season in the Yampa Valley was in July.
- If we import bugs for two more years and continue to find what we've been finding, we may have a self-sustaining population!

## Roddy and Baili grant update

- This is a grant from the US Forest Service through the Infrastructure and Jobs Act- early detection and rapid response for leafy spurge. Partnership with FOTY. USFS gave Roddy polygons in the forest where leafy spurge had previously been reported. In places that had previously been sprayed, Roddy found that leafy spurge was not present. He connected with private land owners (Perulis family) where significant infestations were found which led into onto USFS land. 80 acres treated, mostly private land but 13 acres on USFS land. Released 4,000 Aphthona. There are probably more infestations to be found. Release and sweep date was July 16<sup>th</sup>. Successful partnership that will be beneficial to continue.
- About two years of spraying treatments are needed for a small patch. Roddy and Andy coordination needed about new patches.

#### Alex final project update

- Paper(s) from a few years ago says biocontrol is not viable in riparian areas, working to debunk that using this work and anecdotal evidence. Sources say *Aphthona* is not successful where roots of plants are getting wet.
- Our mapped release areas and Tamara's "quick monitoring" results can be used to show the success of bug establishment.

#### Website updates and interactive map

- Website is updated with 2026 field season data.
- GIS data page has all the data in a downloadable form. Can be loaded into Google Earth.
- Interactive map is easy to navigate. Descriptions of layers can be found on the website below the map as well as descriptions of fields.
- Find where you want to go via open street map, switch to topography or other maps to look closer. NAIP Imagery Hybrid map is helpful.

Next meeting Jan 13 from 10:00 – 12:00 at Carpenter Ranch and via Zoom