

Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 14th, 2026 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

In Person: Carpenter Ranch

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88362586575?pwd=yk5Oy4T6Kob3Wvx6Q2nanQ0rcQvsV9.1>

Present: Emily Spencer, John Kaltenbach, Roddy Beall, John Husband, Tamara Naumann, Pete Williams, Ben Beall, Emily Burke, Jonathan Murray, Kolby Sumskis

1. Review 2025 goals (all)
 - a. The group reviewed goals from 2025 and determined we met or exceeded all of them except:
 - i. Youth Outreach educational workshops (due to frozen funding)
 - ii. Tepee Draw targeted sheep grazing management (due to drought and no water for sheep)
2. Set 2026 goals (all)
 - a. To be efficient with the meeting time, the group decided to let Emily B draft 2026 goals based on 2025 goals and to approve them over email
3. Begin to prep for 2026 season
 - a. Bug collecting trip (Emily S)
 - i. Location
 1. We discussed that the biocontrol insect population in Idaho is predicted to crash (which is normal due to their boom-and-bust population cycles following leafy spurge availability), so we need to collect elsewhere in 2026
 2. The plan is to collect at two locations on the Front Range that John K is familiar with – Lowry Ranch and Cherry Creek State Park – and to sort at Maybell (see below)
 1. Ben brought up concerns regarding whether we'd be able to get similar numbers on the Front Range as we have in Idaho.
 2. John K says that he's learned a lot over the last few years since they all last collected on the Front Range in 2023. He's figured out the timing more now (it's earlier than he originally thought) and has figured out good locations. He had good collection days at Cherry Creek that were comparable to what we got in Idaho. Both Tamara and John are confident we can get good numbers.
 - ii. Dates/attendees
 1. Heading over to the Front Range on Mon, June 8th with about 10 folks. Stay in a hotel, collect on the 9th
 2. There's not a great place to sit and sort like there was at the Rankin, so Tamara suggested bringing the bugs back to Maybell relatively unsorted and having the sorting operation occur at

Maybell campground, especially since it's right where bugs will be distributed. So drive to Maybell after collecting on the 9th and spend a full day processing on the 10th. Start distributing bugs on 11th.

1. A good thing about bringing sorting operation back to the Yampa Valley means we will be able to hopefully get fresh people to help sort. Maybe we can ask Moffat County Weed & Pest and Colorado First Conservation District to publicize for it
 2. Pete made the point that time is really of the essence when sorting and distributing bugs after collecting. We can mitigate potential suffocation (since they'll be in the bags with litter for longer) with more bags, which means that we'll need more coolers. Tamara says the bugs ate a bunch of holes in the bags, but we have so much money, so we can pay someone to make more bags (though it could be hard to find someone to do this). What may help the bugs survive better too would be more spurge in the containers, as they may have been desiccated, and more coolers so they're not so crammed in there.
 3. Tamara will work on reserving Maybell campground
 4. A smaller subgroup (Emily S, Emily B, Tamara, and John K) will work on logistics
3. Folks hoping to go: Emily B, Emily S, Ryan, other Dino seasonal, John K, Roddy, Ben, FOTY RiverCorps member, Pete, Tamara
1. Emily S can stay back and prep in Maybell, gather leafy spurge, etc.
 2. John K is more worried about the number of vehicles than the number of people coming. There's just not great parking at the collecting sites. We'll definitely be carpooling, planning on 12ish people in 3-4 vehicles.
- iii. Supplies needed
1. We will still use the towers and the sorters on the Front Range so we can do as much passive sorting as possible before moving the bugs. There will be some bycatch, but we'll try to bag it, contain it, and dispatch anything that's in there.
 2. We'll need more coolers, more bags,
- b. Potential release sites (all)
- i. Tamara proposes the target reach be the Maybell and Axial Basin area: K Diamond down to Juniper. Flat water, so it's a full day's float.
 - ii. Mike and Danna Camblin will be a release site, and they have property right there in Maybell along the Maybell Ditch. It's a big hayfield that's just north of the highway across from the church. It's about a mile south

of the river but the ditch is a major vector. The site is very visible and easily accessible.

- iii. Tamara went to K Diamond Ranch (Cody Deakins) last year where we put some bugs out a few years ago (both on BLM land across from Duffy Mtn takeout and on hayfield). We put a bunch of brown Aphthona here before we knew they don't do well with ants (there are areas with lots of ants), but this could be a good spot for black Aphthona and Oberea. There's also spurge just upstream of the river access at Juniper Canyon on State Trust Land and across the river at Ray Barnes' property. A float from Duffy Mtn takeout to Juniper Canyon river access would therefore allow us to get a lot of bugs out in a single day. John H will help Tamara get in touch with Ray Barnes.
- iv. In the Dorsey to Loudy-Simpson stretch, we didn't get to a few areas of infestation last year for releases and there's a new one we identified: a little spot on the golf course, an oxbow on Camiletti's, and a spot on Ashbaugh (bugs released here last year suffered high rates of mortality). There are some areas in here that wouldn't require a float, but these places could be good for a Show Me Float as well.
- v. East Cross Mountain, Dinosaur NM, Yampa River State Park, SMV Stetson are also good potential release sites for 2026
 1. Bonnie Weber property (across the river and downstream from Hwy 13 bridge, where there are acres of leafy spurge) is an important target, but it may only work if there's enough water to float from Loudy-Simpson to South Beach. Previously, we couldn't get ahold of her, but Bill Mack can get us in touch with the ranch manager, Dallas Cook, though it may not work logistically this year and may be a better target for 2027.
 2. Pete and Tamara are going to be gone for 2 weeks: first half of July
- vi. Locations for Montana bugs
 1. We have about \$3,400 again this year to purchase these
 2. Tamara says it usually works to put them on the State Wildlife Area
 3. Last year, we gave all the bugs we purchased from Montana to Stetson (mostly black), but CPW bought their own for the SWA.
 4. Pete mentioned that it would be good to eventually put brown Aphthona at Stetson for diversity.
 5. Tamara says it's really 3 years until you can tell if the bugs have taken well.
 6. The group decided we see what we get in June on the Front Range and if there are places still in need, that's where we put the Montana bugs. Tamara and Pete will be out of commission on vacation when Montana bugs become available in early July.
 7. Cherry Creek has a really good spot for black ones, per John K

- c. Show Me Float (Ben and John H)
 - i. The issue is that the best time for the Show Me Float is right when we'll be coming back from the Front Range and sorting and trying to get those bugs out, making it difficult with limited personnel, boats, and time to get the bugs out
 - ii. The group decided that our outreach event this year will be on June 10th at the sorting process and a release at the Camblins, since it's right there (just a few minute drive)
- d. Youth outreach event (all)
 - i. In the past Laurel from NRCS has led this with Yampatika. Last year we didn't do the event because of funding woes. Laurel is no longer at NRCS, and Reese at Yampatika says Yampatika is still interested in doing a Youth Outreach event in late June-mid July as part of their summer camp programming. Routt County Weed Program and Chris Rhyne (BLM) have also always been partners.
 - ii. In the past it's been at Frog Pond but now there's less spurge at Frog Pond. Took a little bit of coordination because CPW would mow areas. It was also at Loudy-Simpson the very first year, which may be doable – there's spurge a short hike away.
 - iii. There's interest in doing it but we need a coordinator who can handle the logistics. Emily Burke will ask Reese if he's interested and let the group know. If Reese is not interested, Emily could ask the 2026 RiverCorps member to coordinate.
 - iv. John K usually brings bugs for this event, or if it's in mid-July, Montana bugs will be an option.
- e. Monitoring plan (Tamara)
 - i. Tamara can monitor throughout the month of June and would pick it up again when she returns from her trip in late July. Emily B offered to help monitor in the first half of July – Tamara and she will find a time to meet up so Tamara can show Emily B a few sites to hit.
 - ii. Rather than do full monitoring plots, since we have so many sites, it makes more sense to do a consistent number of sweeps to just get a sense for how many bugs there are during what week of the season in different places. It's unpredictable and she doesn't ever think we'll have a site like Idaho has been the past few years. It'll be more of an ad hoc system where we find a site has lots of bugs a certain week and there's a list of folks where we can move them to. Tamara would like a list of folks who would be willing to help collect.
- f. Management on SMV Stetson Ranch (Jonathan)
 - i. Jonathan went out and did two different chemical applications, leaving certain areas alone and releasing Aphthona and Oberea on these sites. He mostly hit drainage areas with the bugs.
 - ii. His goal now is to observe what they see in the spring (keeping in mind it may be too early to tell). Emily B and Jonathan (and potentially the next

Routt County Weed Program supervisor) will go out. He'll let the group know when he plans to go out in case anyone else wants to come.

- iii. Plan is to spray twice a year for the foreseeable future: once in the spring and once in the fall.
- iv. It was grazed by cattle this year, and there were some spots where cattle had eaten some of the leafy spurge
- v. Jonathan says he hasn't seen it spread a lot in the past few years that he's been going out to that property. It's in the draw, but it doesn't seem like it's moved.
- vi. Discovery Land Company has been adamant about wanting their weeds managed and is being really proactive about getting long-term plans in place. Kolby echoed these sentiments and said that eradication of leafy spurge on the property is the ultimate goal. Kolby also volunteered to help sort bugs at Maybell.
- vii. Jonathan has been working on developing weed plans for other parcels owned by DLC

4. Outreach/communication updates

a. Website updates (Pete)

- i. Pete has updated the interactive map which now includes most of 2025 data. Still missing the Utah sites for where Idaho bugs went in Dinosaur. Emily S clarified that they went to Utah, and Pete says he'd love to get them on the map. Emily S will send them to him. The Interactive Map information is all downloadable.
- ii. Jonathan asked if he needed to do anything different for mapping in the future. Pete asked for leafy spurge polygons with density going forward – Jonathan says this is doable. He will coordinate with the group going forward, and Pete offered to go out with Jonathan to show him our mapping protocol. Jonathan will take him up on that – early/mid June will be a good time to go out.

b. Report-out on County Commissioner presentations

- i. Tiffany was not present – she is moving on from her position. If the group has anyone they think would be good for the position, send the posting their way.
 - 1. Pete says he will update the website with contact info once the new person is hired.
- ii. Jonathan says they have a new Education and Enforcement person. Andrew Dean is the name.
- iii. When we get the new peoples' emails, Emily B will add them to the YRLSP email list.
- iv. The presentation Tiffany gave to the Routt County Commissioners last fall as part of her regular Weed Program presentation went well – she used a few of our slides to highlight the project.

5. Budget check-in for 2025 (Emily B)

a. Grant administration reminders

get. (Pete said he found some galling on the knapweed last year at East Cross – Roddy confirmed and says it’s pretty widespread within 50 ft of 2024 releases). A few releases might go in DNM if Emily gets some extra money from a different fund. Between May 4-22 is when insectary will have releases ready for our area.

1. Tamara will ask Camblins if they have any folks they know of who want RK bugs
4. Last year they put out 70,000 Russian knapweed insects – most were in lower part of Yampa basin and in Green basin: Ouray NWF, Browns Park, East Cross.
5. FOTY has money for Dino as part of the IBCS to hire a second seasonal for 2026. Ryan intends to return, so Emily S is hoping that works out. Would be back in early April, which is also when the other seasonal would start.
6. Emily S talked about new agents that are available for release at the insectary yesterday. Hoary cress mites are ready and the insectary is looking for sites! It’s everywhere people have had soil delivered – it’s in Upper Yampa but also a ton downriver, like at East Cross. The time for releases is early to mid-May, so same time as Russian knapweed releases. Minimum patch size is about 150 square feet. IBCS has money to help support getting some of these mites out in riparian areas. The other thing that’s available in small numbers is Canada thistle rust, but it’s still under a research permit. This used to be a fall release but it seems like now it can go out in the spring at the same time as Russian knapweed gall wasps and hoary cress mites. On the horizon is a Russian thistle biocontrol, maybe for 2027. It’s another mite and the insectary is looking for some sites that they could release at and do some post-release monitoring at. Emily S notes that even in undisturbed sites in the river corridor in DNM, there’s starting to be Russian thistle.
7. There are potentially 3 positions at the insectary and 1 full-time position on the Front Range (mountain pine beetle project) that will be open.
3. Tamara says Jesse Schroeder has been up in the Little Snake doing a lot of aerial spraying on some of the properties up there that we’ve been worried about with the spurge, though it’s too early to know how effective it’s been.
8. Next meeting was set for Wed, April 8th from 10:00-12:00 at Carpenter/virtual.
 1. The folks who will be meeting to discuss logistics for Denver will meet immediately afterwards from 12:00-1:30.