

**YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT
MEETING**

**Wednesday August 14, 2019 10:00am
at the CDOT Rest Area West Hayden
(If rain is predicted, the Carpenter Ranch)**

Proposed Agenda

1. Introductions: Welcome (5 minutes)
2. Review Agenda (5 minutes)
3. Update on 2019 Show Me Float (Tamara) 5 minutes
4. Report on Biocontrol Subgroup as Part of CWCB Grant (Tamara) 20 minutes
 - a. Youth Education
 - b. Mapping/number of existing sites
 - c. Beetle monitoring at existing sites
 - d. New beetle releases
 - e. Netting of beetles and identification
 - f. Biocontrol preliminary conclusions
 - g. Next Steps
5. Report of CWCB Grant (Tamara) 15 minutes
 - a. Plot Research: Sheep grazing, chemical treatments
 - b. Report U WY
 - c. Next Steps
6. Update on progress of Leafy Spurge mapping (Pete) 15 minutes.
 - a. Report on landowner permissions
 - b. Leafy spurge infestation mapping
 - c. Results of LS mapping
 - d. Use of information/Information for CWCB Grant
 - e. Next steps
7. FOTY Donation Account Balance (Ben) 10 minutes
 - a. Payment for John Husband's landowner/permission letter

8. Follow up with the YRLSP Landowners (John) 10 minutes
 - a. Update on the mapping of leafy spurge/CWCB Grant
 - b. How is this helping
 - b. Next steps for the YRLSP

9. Informational Meeting with Maybell Ditch Users (Tamara) 5 minutes
 - a. Date in fall

10. Website Update (Ben, Pete) 5 minutes

11. Other Reports (Group) 15 minutes
 - a. Tepee Draw and West of Hayden 3rd protocol treatments (Jesse, Greg)
 - b. Dinosaur National Monument leafy spurge mechanical removals (Emily)
 - c. New logo (Tamara)
 - d. Friends of the Yampa State of the Yampa Event (Ben)
 - e. 2020 grant applications/CDA Weed Fund Grant by December 2019
 - f. Reports to supporting organizations

- 12: Discussion of holding the September YRLSP in Craig (Group) 5 minutes

10. Other: 5 minutes

Next Scheduled Meetings:

YRLSP Regular Meeting: Wednesday Sept 11th at 10:00am at the Carpenter Ranch

Proposed Adjournment (12:00pm)

Meeting Packet:

Proposed Agenda

FOTY/YRLSP Donations Account Balance

Biocontrol/Beetle Identification Sheet

Craig Daily Press Article on the YRLSP Biocontrol Efforts

2019 YRLSP Goals

YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT

August 14, 2019

CDOT Rest Area West of Hayden

Meeting Notes

ATTENDEES:

Working Group Members Present

Ray Beck, Moffat County Commissioner
Tim Corrigan, Routt County Commissioner
Greg Brown, Routt County Weed Program
Jesse Schroeder, Moffat County Weed and Pest Management
Tyler Jacox, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Ben Beall, Routt County Citizen
Tamara Neumann, Moffat County Citizen
John Husband, Moffat County Citizen
Pete Williams, Moffat County Citizen
Emily Spencer, Dinosaur National Monument
Kendall Smith, NRCS Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties

Guests and Interested Parties:

Barry Castaganasso, Routt County Landowner
John Sundberg, Routt County Citizen
Sam McIntyre, Moffat County Landowner
Ian Duzik, Moffat County Landowner

Ben Beall opened the meeting at 10:05. The Group introduced themselves.

Ben asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

First Discussion: Update on 2019 Show Me Float

Tamara Naumann explained to everyone that the Show Me Float scheduled for June 21st was cancelled due to the weather. John Husband had started the planning for the float which was to include an overnight from South Beach to Duffy Mountain. Tamara ended up inviting 51 potential participants.

The final group of 17 participants and 6 rafts showed up at South Beach in the rain and cold. The group decided that it would not be a productive educational trip with the weather.

Second Discussion: Report on Biocontrol Subgroup as Part of the CWCB Grant

Tamara and Pete Williams passed around two jars with two types of leafy spurge beetles (*Oberea* and *Aphthona*) that they had netted just before the meeting for everyone to see. These were netted on the spurge at the rest area, and were probably present as a result of new releases in the vicinity made in July, from beetles collected in the Front Range with the help of John Kaltenbach of CDA.

They also handed out a color Photo Identification Key for leafy spurge biological control insects, cooperatively put together by the CDA (John Kaltenbach) and YRLSP (Peter Williams) for use during YRLSP biocontrol monitoring.

Tamara reported that legacy release site research had identified 44 sites where beetles had been released from 1991 to 2017. None of these sites had ever been monitored.

The protocol for the two-year CWCB Grant is to visit each of these legacy sites and collect environmental data including: soil type, aspect, vegetation, and presence of water. This summer 23 sites had been revisited and 14 sites still had beetles present.

Some of the sites had been sprayed with herbicides. Some sites that had been sprayed still had beetles. The oldest release site with beetles was 28 years old. Other sites with beetles were 25, 23, 11, and 3 years old respectively.

The “good news”:

1. There are leafy spurge biocontrol beetles persisting at many of the legacy release sites. This overturns the conventional impression that beetles don't survive in our climate and in the Yampa River riparian areas.
2. There seems to be a pattern that is noticeable when walking in a release area with beetles. The 20-year and older sites are typically composed of small patches of relatively short plants. There are still a lot of individual leafy spurge plants but flowering appeared reduced overall. On a site that was 3-years old on the YRSWA there were smaller dense patches with leafy spurge skeletons.

Barry Castagnasso asked if the same types of beetles were visible everywhere?

Tamara said that the beetles seem to be found in small numbers everywhere, especially the *Oberea*. *Oberea* beetles were even found in the lower Little Yampa Canyon, miles from any legacy release site. She did observe at the Front Range collection sites that the *Oberea* seem to prefer shaded areas, while the *Aphthona* beetles seem to prefer the more open, sunny areas.

Greg Brown wondered if there were any other attributes that made it possible for the beetles to survive. Tamara explained that this is part of the information the grant is funding YRLSP to learn. The YRLSP volunteers and the RC Extension Master Gardeners are collecting environmental site data, which will be processed by the grad students from the Univ of WY.

Tamara explained that she thought that the leafy spurge beetle populations were way too small. There is a study from Oregon showing that continuous releasing of beetles was successful in managing leafy spurge. We will need to acquire more beetles: 1. With CDA's assistance in collection; 2. Purchase from CDA's Palisade Insectary for \$30/1000; or Purchase from Montana for \$120/1000.

Greg asked if it was known what leafy spurge infestations look like in its native range in Europe. No one in the Group could answer this question.

This brought up Tamara's request to the Group that we need to communicate with the landowners to find out if management of leafy spurge, as opposed to eradication, is a tolerable outcome. Biocontrol will be a management technique. If landowners are intent on the chemical eradication of leafy spurge there will be no leafy spurge for the beetles. The coordination with landowners will be important. The upside for the landowners will be that biocontrol will cost less. However, they will need to help to collect and acquire the beetles.

Greg said that existing data states that with a 40% leafy spurge infestation that there is a loss of 90% production of forage for cattle. Tamara said that she has not seen anything over a 25% coverage of leafy spurge along the Yampa.

Tim Corrigan thought it important that the YRLSP find a way to pass on this knowledge.

Tamara pointed out that Maybell may be a good example where beetles could be used. If beetles are released and they prevent the seed set of leafy spurge in ditch areas, leafy spurge increases would be managed.

Emily Spencer thought that it may be difficult to acquire the beetles needed due to the limited capacity of local beetle production.

Ray Beck asked what time of year is the best for release of beetles. If it is June/July then beetles, considering the response time, will need to be ordered by January.

Barry said that 4,000 beetles were released on Frentress/Quarter Circle Ranch and that this release site might be a good nursery.

Kendall Smith and Greg thought that a good upland site could be established as a nursery.

Greg asked what was the accepted threshold level for releases. He thought that maybe 1,000 at a time was not productive. Tamara pointed out that that 1,000 was the accepted level established by the CDA protocols.

Tim commended Tamara for her positive report.

Tamara thought that the YRLSP needs to establish 12 to 20 permanent monitoring beetle sites with 50 to 60 additional sites that are monitored in a rotation schedule.

Kendall offered the help of the NRCS to help with landowners in choosing sites.

Tyler Jacox said that CPW is looking at the purchase of beetles for next year.

Tasks:

- 1. Tamara will submit the environmental data from the 11 studied release sites to the Univ of WY for processing.**
- 2. Kendall, Greg, and the Group will identify new nursery sites which can be used as our own collection sites. These areas need to be open and grassy but surrounded by trees.**
- 3. Group needs to figure out how to communicate and follow up with landowners.**
- 4. Tamara will have a more informational biocontrol update in November after the submittal of the CWCB Grant report.**

Third Discussion: Report on the CWCB Grant

Tamara reported that sheep were grazed in May under the supervision of Hannah Kuhns (Univ WY) on the four sites chosen: Peroulis on Four Mile Creek, Wagner and Shaffer (Wand) properties, and a site on county land west of Loudy Simpson. It was reported that the sheep did eat leafy spurge. On the same sites 4 chemicals were used in July. One was a new chemical developed by Corteva. There were some challenges. The Shaffer plot got hayed due to lack of communication. Wagner sprayed his hayfield along with parts of the plots and the plots were driven through, but some of the research was salvageable.

John Husband asked if the sites and research will be the same next year. This research will be repeated by Hannah in 2020 and completed for a final report for the CWCB Grant.

Tamara thought that in order to continue with our monitoring and research it will be necessary for the YRLSP to apply for another grant when the CWCB Grant is completed.

Tasks:

- 5. Group to coordinate with the Univ of WY and owners of the test sites to ensure that the research can be completed correctly in Spring/Summer of 2020.**

Fourth Discussion: Update on Progress of Leafy Spurge Mapping

Pete reported that the long high water season and knee injuries to the primary mapping volunteers had raised concerns for accomplishing the 2019 mapping goals, but that in the end a very productive July laid these concerns to rest. Sixty miles of the upper Yampa River, from the most upstream infestations at Hayden downstream through Duffy Mountain (the Little Yampa Canyon) were successfully mapped, as originally planned.

Ben made it plain to the Group that without all Pete's work in creating the river reach maps with parcels, landowners, and permission information the mapping would never have been accomplished. Also, Ben stated that this mapping couldn't have been accomplished without all the willing landowners who gave the YRLSP permission to enter their property to do the mapping. We need to thank them.

Pete explained that using the mapping app MapItFast, which was purchased with funds from the grant, and three tablets purchased by Pete, Ben, and the YRLSP, 173 polygons of infestation were mapped (for a total of 185 acres), typically by walking their circumference on shore. In addition, infestations limited to the river banks were recorded using lines (for a total of 8 miles) and individual points (a total of 111 points).

Now that the mapping for this season is complete, Pete said that he will disable the additional user accounts for the winter, to save funds.

Pete told that Group that the goal for next year will be to map from Duffy Mt. to Cross Mountain. Next year's protocol will be modeled after this year. This will complete the baseline mapping for leafy spurge infestation along the Yampa River.

Pete outlined what he sees as the next stage for the leafy spurge map. He will use ARCMAP software to create infestation maps modeled after the leafy spurge maps already posted on the YRLSP website for Dinosaur National Monument.

Tamara reminded the Group that one of the main reasons for the maps was for groundtruthing the work to be done by graduate student Chloe Mattilio (Univ WY), who will be developing algorithms for using satellite data to identify leafy spurge infestations. This work is also being funded by the CWCB Grant.

Kendall, John, and Ben stated that there is a need to hold a landowner meeting to present a mapping update, especially to the landowners who gave us permission.

Tasks:

6. Pete and Ben to plan for the leafy spurge mapping for the summer of 2020.

7. Group needs to figure how and when to hold a community/landowner meeting. See Task 3 above.

Fifth Discussion: Update on the Stetson Leafy Spurge Infestation

Tim wanted everyone to be aware that the Routt County Board of County Commissioners had just asked their county attorney to look into bringing a legal action against Iron Springs Ranch (Frank Stetson) near Stagecoach Reservoir. This is sensitive due to the fact that the YRLSP has been working with willing landowners who gave permissions to map/monitor leafy spurge. He doesn't want other landowners to feel threatened if something comes out in the press.

On the Stetson Ranch there was discovered a 35ac leafy spurge infestation on lands where the County paid \$750,000 for a conservation easement. Part of the agreement was that the infestation would be treated. Stetson has refused to treat the infestation and the County is concerned that leafy spurge will get into the Yampa River.

Greg said that he thinks everything has been resolved and it may not be as problematic as Tim states. The daughter has agreed to treat the infestation this fall. Greg talked to the press and thinks that if an article comes out it will not be a cause for alarm to other landowners.

Tamara stated that this was the reason the YRLSP made sure had landowner permissions. We did not want the landowners to think that we are government agency, even though we have governments agencies as partners.

Tim wanted everyone to know that it is not the way Routt County works to drop court orders on Routt County landowners. He hopes that landowners will not feel threatened and understand that this is a special case.

Sixth Discussion: Friends of the Yampa/YRLSP Donations Account

Ben passed out the latest accounting sheet with all donations and accounting changes. He has worked with Greg Henion, of the Friends of the Yampa, and after the changes the account balance is \$100.95.

Ben has been aware that John has not been paid in full for the expenses for the Landowner Letter and Landowner Meeting held in April. Ben wanted John to know that these funds could be available to cover his expenses.

Greg said that there had been a request-for-payment issue regarding the RC Taylor Grazing Act funds that the RC Weed Board and RC Commissioners approved for payment. Greg thought that payment in full would be completed soon.

Seventh Discussion: Follow-up with the YRLSP Partner Landowners

John thought it necessary to touch base with the landowners who had given the YRLSP permissions to map leafy spurge and monitor for leafy spurge beetles. The YRLSP needs to do this in a timely manner.

John said that the YRLSP needs to be looking forward. We need to put out more information. Let everyone know what has been done and how we will help.

Kendall suggested that a letter needs to be sent to everyone who has worked with the YRLSP.

As an example, Tamara said that she had talked to Mike Camblin, Maybell Ditch President. He would like the YRLSP to attend a meeting of the Maybell Ditch owners to explain the YRLSP leafy spurge efforts. Mike suggested a meeting in October or November. Tamara thought that a meeting would work after the CWCB update report in November.

The Group discussed where a meeting could be held in Maybell and the timing for a larger landowner meeting. A suggested time for the landowner meeting was the February/April timeframe.

Jesse informed the Group that he had sprayed the Maybell Ditch from the diversion to the flume this summer.

Pete agreed that follow-up with the landowners was necessary.

Tasks:

8. Kendall will call Mike Camblin to discuss a time and location for a meeting with the Maybell Ditch owners.

9. Tamara to communicate with Kendall to organize this meeting.

10. Ben to put the item of a Landowner Meeting on the next YRLSP meeting agenda.

Eighth Discussion: Website Update

Ben explained that Cody Perry had put together and worked on the YRLSP website since its inception. Cody had been paid for his work. Recently Pete has been updating the website.

Pete said that he had rearranged/revised some of the information on the website for clarity, and had made sure that it would be readable by both cell phones and tablets. He

has also been adding information to keep the site up-to-date. Now that the summer research work is near completion, he will also be adding text to the “Research” pages of the site.

Ben thought that Cody may be moving.

Pete explained that Cody is the nominal owner of the website, with the final administrative authority. The ownership probably should reside with the YRLSP.

Tasks:

11. Ben will communicate with Cody to see if the ownership could be changed.

Ninth Discussion: Reports

Ben passed out copies of the YRLSP 2019 Goals. He said that most of the reports are an effort to follow-up on those Goals.

1. Jesse reported that Troy Osborn had completed the third protocol spraying of Tepee Draw. Also, that MC Weed and Pest had worked on the BLM parcel with leafy spurge.

2. Greg said that Don Stinton had completed the third protocol spraying of the (+/-) 115acs West of Hayden.

Ben asked if Osborn and Stinton had mapped where they had sprayed. Greg said that he had sent the mapping data to YRLSP. Jesse confirmed that Troy had mapped the leafy spurge that he had sprayed. Pete said that he has never received any spraying map data.

3. Emily reported that there had been two mechanical leafy spurge pulling trips in DNM this summer. They removed 50 seed bags full of leafy spurge flowering plants.

4. Tamara reported that it has been difficult to communicate with Chaos Inc., who is working on the new logo. She received assurances that a draft will be completed in the near future.

5. Ben explained that one of the Goals was to follow up with partnering groups. He said that he had attended the Friends of the Yampa State of the Yampa event in June and the recent Yampa River Cleanup where he had available to pass out the YRLSP brochure and a handout explaining the CWCB Grant.

6. Ben brought up the idea of putting in a 2020 CDA Weed Fund application. Tamara said that it was discussed earlier that the YRLSP would leave it to the counties to apply for CDA Weed Fund Grants. Greg said that RC Weed Program was not going to apply to CDA. Tamara told the Group that there is a need for outreach funds, e.g. for printing

or food costs. She wondered if there was a part in the language of the 10-Year Plan created for CDA that we could use to request these funds. Ben volunteered to check.

Tasks:

12. Jesse to get Osborn to send his mapping of the treatments in Tepee Draw to Pete.

13. Greg to send the mapping of the treatments of the West of Hayden Area to Pete.

14. Tamara to have a copy of the new logo to present at the next meeting.

15. Ben to check to see if the YRLSP could apply for CDA Weed Funds in 2020 for outreach.

Tenth Discussion: Holding the next Meeting in Craig and Next YRLSP Meeting Dates

Ben explained that there has been a suggestion on the table to hold a YRLSP meeting in Craig. The Group agreed that this would be a good idea.

Kendall suggested that the college has free meeting spaces.

Jesse said that there were meeting rooms available at the Moffat County/CSU Extension.

The Group agreed that the next meeting be moved to October 9th in order to return to a bimonthly schedule. The following meeting will be on December 11th.

Tasks:

16. Jesse will check with the Extension to see if a conference room is available for October 9th.

17. Ben to schedule the next meeting for October 9th.