



YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT

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

YAMPA RIVER LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Biological Control in Moffat and Routt Counties

1. In late June, YRLSP volunteers assisted the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) with the collection of 14,000 *Aphthona* and 200 *Oberea* beetles from the Lowry State Land Board property east of Denver, for redistribution in the Yampa Valley.
2. The YRLSP purchased 6,000 *Aphthona* and 200 *Oberea* from Montana. Colorado Parks and Wildlife purchased 6,000 *Aphthona* and 300 *Oberea* from Montana. The Routt County Weed Program purchased an additional 1,000 *Aphthona* from the CDA.
3. Deirdre Macnab of the White River Alliance donated 4,000 *Aphthona* to the YRLSP.
4. All of the above biological control beetles were subsequently released by in the Yampa Valley by YRLSP volunteers, and/or Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Moffat County Weed and Pest, or Routt County Weed Program personnel:
 - a. Little Yampa Canyon (multiple sites)—10,000 *Aphthona* and 200 *Oberea* (June 23–24)
 - b. Tepee Draw—2,000 *Aphthona* (June 23)
 - c. Private property (south of the Yampa River SWA)—1,000 *Aphthona* (June 26)
 - d. Yampa River SWA (Youth Outreach event)—2,000 *Aphthona* (June 28–29)
 - e. Yampa River SWA (multiple sites)—10,000 *Aphthona* and 300 *Oberea* (July 1)
 - f. Private property (multiple sites)—6,000 *Aphthona* and 200 *Oberea* in the Maybell and Craig areas (July 2)

Total Leafy Spurge Beetles Released by YRLSP and Partners: 31,700

5. In addition to protocol biological control monitoring conducted at most of the above 2022 biocontrol release sites, YRLSP volunteers and partners also conducted follow-up monitoring at six sites where insects had previously been released (in 2020 and 2021).

6. Note that this year Dinosaur National Monument also released biocontrol beetles along the Green River, in the Utah portion of the monument (downstream of the confluence with the Yampa River). These were the first releases of leafy spurge biocontrol conducted by the monument. A total of 6,800 *Aphthona* and 210 *Oberea* were released in Island Park on July 15, and an additional 2,400 *Aphthona* in the Green River Campground on July 16.

Leafy Spurge Mapping

7. Leafy spurge infestations were mapped from a raft on the Yampa River from the West Cross Mountain river access, downstream to the Deerlodge Park boat ramp. This completes the leafy spurge mapping project as originally proposed (mapping the entire Yampa River from Hayden to Dinosaur National Monument).

Outreach and Education

8. The 2022 Show Me Float toured the Yampa River from Dorsey Boat Ramp (Yampa River State Wildlife Area) to Loudy Simpson Park on June 16, with 13 participants.

9. YRLSP presentations of information were made to the Friends of the Yampa Board of Directors, Colorado First Conservation District (2/15), White River Alliance (2/17), Moffat County Board of County Commissioners (2/22), Routt County Conservation District Annual Land Owners Meeting (3/3), State of the River Craig (3/24), State of the River Steamboat Springs (3/25), Routt County Noxious Weed Days (5/28), FOTY River Fest (6/4), FOTY State of the Yampa (6/5), Yampa Basin Rendezvous (9/22,9/23), and Colorado Weed Management Association Annual Meeting (12/7).

10. The 2022 Youth Outreach event was conducted over two days at the Yampa River SWA. YRLSP volunteers and agency partners met with five kids from Yampatika (June 28) and seven kids from Boys and Girls Club of Craig (June 29), plus adult supervisors with each group. The kids received a series of presentations on noxious weeds and their impacts on soil health, wildlife and agriculture. Integrated management strategies were covered, followed by hands-on leafy spurge biological control monitoring and the release of 1000 beetles each afternoon.

11. The YRLSP website (yampariverleafyspurgeproject.com) has been kept current with the 2022 YRLSP activities, and new links to important recent scientific publications. The site has also received some substantial upgrades. All of the YRLSP data (for which permission to publish has been received) can now be viewed on a user-interactive, zoomable map equipped with data pop-up windows. The same data can now be downloaded directly from the website in GIS-format (SHP and KMZ). Finally, the discussion of Chloe Mattilio's remote sensing and invasion risk data has been expanded and moved to its own page, found in the Projects menu. This discussion also includes a new PDF map series illustrating the remote sensing results.

Additional Partner Activities

12. Routt County Weed Program met with the new owners of the Iron Springs Ranch (formerly Stetson Ranch) to map and discuss the importance of this most easterly known infestation of leafy spurge in the Yampa River Valley, near Stagecoach Reservoir. The significance of this invasion for the potential infestation of the upper reaches of the Yampa River, and the need for future long-term management, were emphasized.

13. Moffat County Weed and Pest has continued to work with private landowners and agencies in Moffat County to treat leafy spurge infestations. Four of the partnerships made possible by HPP grant funds were primarily focused on leafy spurge treatments in 2022.

14. In addition to the Green River biocontrol releases, Dinosaur National Monument also held 2 Yampa River leafy spurge pulling trips (late May and again in late June), resulting in the removal of 30 large bags of flowering leafy spurge from the Yampa Canyon. Participants included 20 volunteers and 3 staff over the course of the two trips.

15. The Bureau of Land Management contracted for horseback herbicide treatment of leafy spurge in Tepee Draw in 2022, in addition to the 2022 biocontrol release.

YRLSP Administration

16. Discussions regarding a future succession plan for the YRLSP leadership began in earnest during 2022.