

# Northwest Weed Management Partnership: Background and Accomplishments

## Background

*“Invasive species, including both noxious weeds and non-native forest and rangeland pests, spread quickly and largely unchecked through new environments, displacing native species through competition, predation and parasitism. The ecological effects of various invasives are devastating, and include native tree and plant mortality, loss of native animal habitat and decline of native species.”*

Dale Bosworth, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service (retired)

For many years invasive weeds were dealt with in a piecemeal fashion as staff and resources permitted, and time and time again it was found that the isolated projects had very little long term impact in protecting ag/timber lands and wildlife habitat. Further, managing weeds without restoring the sites with desirable species made it extremely easy for a new wave of weeds to invade. Thus, crops, forests, fish and wildlife continued to suffer.

The Northwest Weed Management Partnership (NWMP) was created to take a fresh, low-cost, and workable approach to habitat protection and restoration. NWMP was modeled after successful Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) programs used in Montana, Idaho and California. They demonstrated that by pooling of limited resources and working on a landscape-wide level all types of entities could work together at local and regional levels to control invasive weeds, restore wildlife habitat, and increase crop and timber production.

## Overview of the Northwest Weed Management Partnership

The Northwest Weed Management Partnership (NWMP) is an informal multi-agency network of individuals and organizations concerned with rural and urban invasive weed issues in Northwestern Oregon and Southwestern Washington. NWMP is a non-regulatory, non-governmental partnership that is supported solely on grants and contributions; there is no cost and no obligation to join.

In order to foster local decision making and partnered on the ground efforts, six Cooperative Weed Management Areas (usually multi-county) have been formed, and they coordinate voluntary actions of members regarding weed inventory, control, prevention, and education. Each CWMA has Management and Operating Plans and Early Detection Rapid Response lists that are updated annually.

Partners represent a wide spectrum of local, regional, state, and federal organizations, including: soil and water conservation districts; watershed councils; Native American tribes; state/local parks and recreation departments; county departments of public works; state (Departments of Agriculture/Fish/Wildlife/Forestry/Transportation) and federal (BLM, USFS, US Army Corps of Engineers) natural resource management agencies; universities, public school districts; and, city/county governments.

As of December, 2009, there were 100+ signed Memorandums of Agreement between partnering organizations and the Northwest Weed Management Partnership. Most organizations have a number of staff involved with the NWMP, so the actual numbers of people directly participating is considerably higher. This impact is further broadened as these individuals share information and expertise with their peers and the communities they serve.

## Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs)

The CWMAs and counties represented are:

- Four County: Clackamas, Clark (WA), Multnomah, Washington
- Mid-Willamette: Marion, Yamhill, Polk
- Upper Willamette: Eastern Lane, Linn, Benton
- Mid-Coast: Western Lane, Lincoln
- North Coast: Tillamook, Pacific (WA), Clatsop, Columbia
- Columbia Gorge: Multnomah, Hood River, Wasco, Klickitat (WA), Skamania (WA)

### NWMP promotes the following:

- Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) programs that will assist land managers in identifying and controlling new invasive weeds
- Sharing of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will help land managers safely and effectively control weeds and restore habitat
- Encourage weed related education and outreach activities amongst partners and the public
- Strengthening the organizational and technical skills of local Cooperative Weed Management Areas
- Training sessions, workshops, and field trips for partnering organizations and the public
- Assist partnering organizations in fund raising activities (grant writing research and training)
- Long term monitoring and management plans that include habitat restoration as an integral component

### Steering Committee

Direction for the Northwest Weed Management Partnership is provided by individuals from USFS, BLM, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, Oregon Invasives Species Council, the Marion County Weed Control District, and Cascade Pacific RC&D (also the fiscal agent).

The Program Manager of Oregon Noxious Weed Control Program (Tim Butler) and the Executive Secretary of the Washington Noxious Weed Control Board (Alison Halpern) sit in an advisory capacity to the Steering Committee.

### Partnership Coordinator

The Partnership Coordinator is the sole staff person, and is charged with for coordinating the activities of the Northwest Weed Management Partnership, including, but not limited to: building the organizational and technical capacity of CWMA's; planning and setting up training workshops and field trips; sharing technical and legislative information through the Willamette Weed list-serve and Western Invasives Network web site; recruitment of partners; grant research/writing; fiscal planning and management; developing/updating and sharing a Partnership Directory; project management; participation in working groups; and, providing presentations at conferences and workshops.

### Highlights of Activities and Accomplishments, 2009 FY

#### Public Outreach

- In order to obtain the newest and most cost effective information concerning invasive weed management and habitat restoration the Partnership Coordinator regularly communicates and/or works with agencies such as the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, Oregon Invasive Species Council, Institute for Applied Ecology, Washington Noxious Weed Control Board, Center for Invasive Plant Management, and others
- Partners were provided with display materials, posters, brochures, and Power Points that were used at state/county fairs, restoration projects, farm/garden shows, workshops, public events, and tours
- Over 20 weed related articles to use in newspapers, newsletters, signs, brochures and web sites were given to partnering agencies to use in their local areas
- Partnership Coordinator gave presentations to SWCD boards, garden clubs, county commissioners, Oregon Small Woodland Owner's Association, K-12 students, and various conferences
- A wide variety of weed identification/control and site restoration field trips have been held or supported; it is estimated that over 300 land managers/members of the public participated in these events
- Use of Willamette Weed list-serve and/or CWMA mailing lists to share information regarding grants, weed alerts, employment, legislation, treatment, meetings, etc.
- Partnership Information Exchange meetings were held to provide a forum for information sharing between all Partners. Topics have included weed identification, inventory/mapping, early detection, technical updates, and assessment of project successes/issues

- NWMP was heavily involved as a key contributor to a year-long series on invasives that ran in the Statesman Journal newspaper
- NWMP contributed to Oregon Public Broadcasting's "Silent Invasion" program and is active in staffing the Oregon Invasives Hotline, designed to provide citizens with opportunities to report Early Detection Rapid Response and Class "A" and "T" invasive weeds
- NWMP contributed technical and editing services to the GardenSmart booklet designed to encourage gardeners to buy or replace invasive plants with natives or non-invasives. 50,000 copies have been distributed and a second printing is being done at this time

### Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Coordination and Weed Control

- All six CWMA's have a long-term Management Plan and an annual Operating Plan that is updated annually. In order to help prioritize projects, each CWMA has a list of "Weeds of Concern" that is updated annually
- The Columbia Gorge CWMA was formed to address threats invasive weeds pose to National Forests and the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area in Washington and Oregon. The CWMA has quickly matured and is using Early Detection Rapid Response training and use as a weed management tool
- Spanning the NWMP there are now five "Working Groups" devoted to the sharing of the latest technical management information regarding several of the most difficult species to control: garlic mustard, false brome, knotweed, reed canary grass and meadow knapweed
- An Early Detection, Rapid Response web site has been developed that provides all CWMA's with information needed to identify and control potentially invasive weeds
- Four large multi-agency garlic mustard inventory and control projects designed to protect the integrity of the Mt. Hood National Forest and Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area were funded
- False brome inventory and control projects are taking place throughout the Willamette Valley
- Partnered projects have become the norm in all six CWMA's as more and more organizations gain the technical and organizational skills to work together.
  - Invasive weed species being worked on include, but are not limited to: garlic mustard, false brome, clematis vitalba, knotweed complex, meadow knapweed, hawkweeds, hog weed, parrot feather, Paterson's curse, blackberry, Scotch broom, gorse, purple loosestrife, hawkweeds, all families of thistles, English ivy, yellow floating heart, yellow flag iris, puncturevine, tansy ragwort and others.
  - More specifically, partners in the Mid Coast CWMA are receiving funding for projects in the multiple watersheds and are working on knotweed, gorse, clematis, and other targeted invasive weed inventory and control. The North Coast CWMA partners work primarily with knotweed, purple loosestrife and other A or B listed weeds. The Upper and Mid Willamette CWMA's have a host of projects, ranging from meadow knapweed to false brome and knotweed. The Four County and Columbia Gorge CWMA's are on the forefront of the garlic mustard invasion of Oregon, and also are dealing with a huge variety of weeds in the metro area and the Columbia Gorge.
- The NWMP coordinator has assisted a wide variety of agencies in grant research, writing, and editing; this has resulted in multiple on the ground, partnered, invasive weed control/habitat restoration projects. Oregon State Weed Board, OWEB, RAC, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and National Forest Foundation all awarded monies to projects due, in part, to assistance and support from NWMP.

### For more Information

For more information, please call Vern Holm, Coordinator, Northwest Weed Management Partnership, at (971) 241-2173 or e-mail [vgholm1@verizon.net](mailto:vgholm1@verizon.net).