

2018 Land Stewardship Program Executive Summary

Land Stewardship Strategic Goals:

- ❖ Early detection and monitoring populations of invasive species
- ❖ Foster responsible land stewardship through education and outreach that promotes best management practices
- ❖ Assist private and public land managers to minimize invasive species and promote resilient vegetation resources
- ❖ Compel responsible parties to comply with state law for the management of invasive species

Summary:

In 2018 The Land Stewardship Program implemented plans aimed at maximizing efficiencies, increasing financial stability and garnering community support. The progress made is evident in the 2018 highlights listed below.

However, new challenges continue to arise. In 2018 a Budget Service Proposal to proactively address Emerald Ash Borer was denied by County leadership. Without the supplemental funding from the service proposal the forestry program now has an operating deficit that must be recovered by shifting some program focus away from tree insect pests and diseases.

With the acquisition of ~1600 acres of open space, weed management staff have additional lands to manage that have substantial weed issues. This has led to a reduced level of service because the crew must prioritize state listed species over other vegetation management that may enhance recreation and species conservation. We are working on a budget and staffing proposal for 2019/2020 to address.

In an effort to create safe and sustainable biological infrastructure in campgrounds and trailheads, a forest inventory and assessment of hazard and significant trees has been conducted. Staffing and funding are being put in place to implement the plan's recommendations.

Enterprise weed control for-hire continues to grow in revenue. However, enterprise grant and agreement funding has decreased in 2019 leading to a possible drop in services in key areas of high priority weed species management on private lands and noxious weed management of USFS lands.

2018 Highlights:

General

- Larimer County Noxious Weed Management Plan adopted by Board of County Commissioners
- The Weed District was extended for another five years by the Board of County Commissioners
- Weed control rate increases approved by the Board of County Commissioners
- Completed three state funded grant projects and two partnering agreements
- Herbicide sales grossed \$32,898.30

Detection and Monitoring

- Mapped 2,233 acres of noxious weeds with Arc Collector
- Eradicated two high priority noxious weeds: yellow starthistle and Chinese clematis

Education & Outreach

- Conducted 159 forestry site visits and 149 weed management site visits
- Revised and printed Identification and Management of Knapweeds in Colorado 3rd edition
- Utilized 45 volunteers for 227 hours on three weed management projects

Weed Management/Resilient Vegetation

- Removed 680 Russian-olive and 260 Siberian elms along Big Thompson River
- Treated 346 acres of state listed noxious weeds along county road rights-of-way
- Treated 212 acres of state listed noxious weeds on county parks and open lands
- Treated 544 acres of state listed noxious weeds on other public and private lands
- Seeded 15.73 acres of disturbed lands
- Weed control for-hire service grossed \$316,317.31

Compliance

- Conducted 871 noxious weed inspections
- 383 courtesy letters and 69 enforcement letters were sent to landowners
- 1 enforcement action was taken in the Estes Valley