

*Cooperative Weed  
Management  
in the  
Upper Arkansas  
River Basin*



*The Upper Arkansas  
Cooperative Weed Management Area*

# *What is a Cooperative Weed Management Area?*

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- A Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) is a partnership of federal, state, and local government agencies; tribes; individuals; and various interested groups that manage noxious weeds or invasive plants in a defined area

# *What is a Cooperative Weed Management Area?*

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- CWMAAs occupy a defined geographic area with a common geography, weed problem, community, climate, political boundary, or land use
- The majority of landowners and natural resource managers in the area are involved or represented in the CWMA



# *What is a Cooperative Weed Management Area?*

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- CWMAAs are headed by a steering committee
- CWMAAs are committed to cooperation
- CWMAAs operate under a comprehensive plan that addresses the management or prevention of one or more noxious weeds or invasive plants



# The Upper Arkansas CWMA: *Cooperative Weed Management*

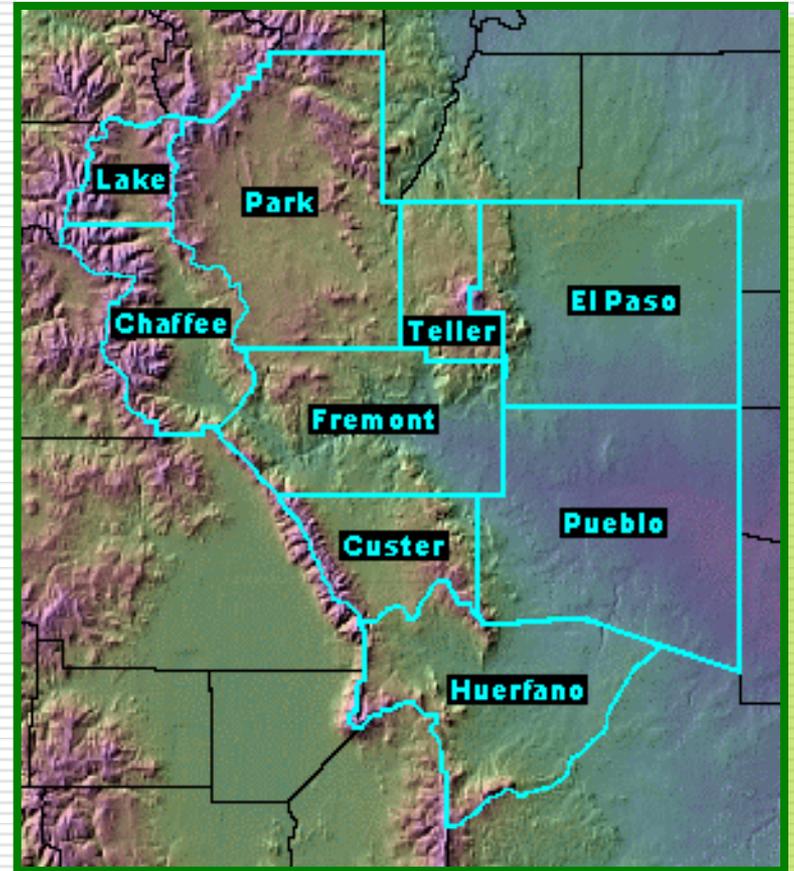
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- Since 1998, partners in the Upper Arkansas CWMA have worked together in weed management on a watershed basis for:
  - strategic planning
  - targeting non-native invasive weeds
  - weed mapping
  - weed management
  - education
  - fund raising



# The Upper Arkansas CWMA: *Our Partners*

- The Upper Arkansas CWMA formed to combat noxious weeds that threaten the upper Arkansas River region of Colorado
- Representatives of interested governments and agencies in the region's counties make up the CWMA



# The Upper Arkansas CWMA:

## *Our Partners*

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- CO Dept. of Agriculture
  - CO Dept. of Corrections
  - CO Dept. of Transportation
  - CO Div. of Wildlife
  - CO State Board of Land Commissioners
  - CO State Parks
  - CO State University Extension
  - Conservation Districts
  - County Governments
  - County Weed Managers
  - Military Facilities
  - Municipal Governments
  - Private Landowners
  - Sangre de Cristo RC&D Council
  - US Bureau of Land Management
  - US Bureau of Prisons
  - US Bureau of Reclamation
  - US Fish & Wildlife Service
  - US Forest Service
  - US Park Service
  - US Natural Resources Conservation Service
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# The Upper Arkansas CWMA: *Our Mission*

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- ... To develop and implement a coordinated strategic weed management plan
  - ... involving a partnership between the counties and associated municipalities, state and federal agencies, private citizens and organizations
  - ... to implement an integrated weed management effort using all available methods
  - ... to coordinate, prioritize, and direct the efficient use of resources
  - ... to protect, manage, and enhance plant and animal communities
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# The Beginning: *Developing a Plan*

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- In the West, the patchwork of land ownership between federal, state, municipal and private land requires cooperation if noxious weed management is to be carried out on a watershed basis
- The Sangre de Cristo Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) sponsored a planning meeting to initiate coordinated noxious weed management in the upper Arkansas River basin



# The Beginning: *Developing a Plan*

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- A steering committee was formed whose purpose was to devise and carry out a plan to develop a strategic noxious weed management plan for the upper Arkansas River basin
- The steering committee brought together people with an interest in or responsibility for weed management in the region to develop a strategic noxious weed management plan



# The Beginning: *Developing a Plan*

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- During a one-day workshop, a facilitator helped the group develop a draft strategic noxious weed management plan and discuss what type of organization would implement the plan
- At the end of the planning day, those in attendance were invited to join the steering committee who would now meet to determine a plan of action to reach the goals and objectives in the strategic plan



# The Beginning: *Developing a Plan*

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- The 57 participants attending the inaugural strategic planning session represented:
  - CO Dept. of Corrections
  - CO Division of Wildlife
  - CO State Land Board
  - CO State Parks
  - County Governments
  - CSU Cooperative Extension
  - Federal Bureau of Prisons
  - Military Reservations
  - Municipal Governments
  - National Park Service
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - Soil Conservation Districts
  - US Forest Service
  - Weed Advisory Boards



# The Upper Arkansas CWMA: *Strategic Issues*

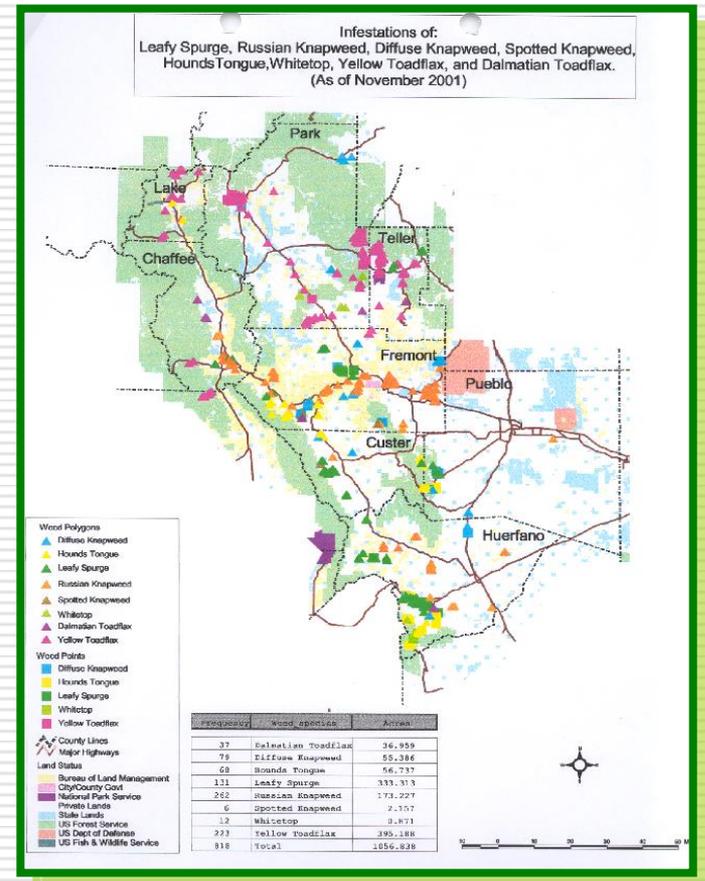
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- Secure the commitment of policy makers to integrated noxious weed management on a collaborative basis
- Design and complete a comprehensive noxious weed map
- Plan and implement management, monitoring, and evaluation strategies that cross jurisdictional boundaries
- Design and implement a noxious weed management and prevention education program
- Identify and secure sources of funding



# The Beginning: *Weed Inventory Assessment*

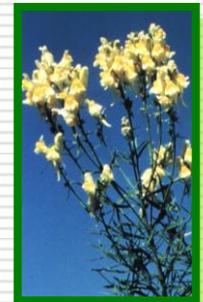
- Based on the Strategic Weed Management Plan, the steering committee focused the first year on developing a regional noxious weed inventory
- The inventory mapping alerted weed management officials of noxious weed infestations in specific areas causing action to be taken



# The Beginning: *Integrated Weed Management*

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- The steering committee initially identified six species of noxious weeds to target for management within the watershed
- The Upper Arkansas CWMA encourages integrated weed management to include biological, chemical, mechanical, or cultural control depending on the species and weed management goals



# Capacity Building: *The County Weed Manager*

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- In Colorado, county governments are charged with the responsibility for invasive species management
- Through the efforts of the Upper Arkansas CWMA, county commissioners were educated about the importance of noxious weed management and the consequences of doing nothing



# Capacity Building: *The County Weed Manager*

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- Without employing at least one part-time county weed manager, a successful noxious weed management program is difficult to establish and maintain
- The county weed manager:
  - Maintains the noxious weed inventory
  - Has working knowledge of the location of noxious weed infestations and land ownership
  - Provides a central point of contact for noxious weed management issues within the county



# Capacity Building: *Weed Advisory Boards*

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- Colorado law requires counties to have a local weed advisory board
  - Comprised of local land owners and interested persons from within their county
  - Appointed by their county commissioners
- Weed boards are advisors to their county's weed department and commissioners
- The Upper Arkansas CWMA helps county weed programs cooperate on noxious weed problems that cross county boundaries



# Capacity Building: *Partnerships*

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- Local, state, and federal partnerships enable the Upper Arkansas CWMA to leverage resources and be more effective in their noxious weed management efforts
- A coordinated approach has helped this group of like-minded individuals to set common goals, acquire funding, and carry out tested and proven weed management on a watershed basis



# Capacity Building: *Partnerships*

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- Each of the Upper Arkansas CWMA partners contributes funding, technical assistance, and equipment, per their particular budget, to implement a comprehensive noxious weed management program in their jurisdiction
- Partners work together to obtain funding for both education and targeted noxious weed management
- Partners collaborate on training and workshops, share and coordinate resources, and work toward common goals



# The Upper Arkansas CWMA: *Cooperative Strengths*

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- Dedicated individuals forming aggressive teams
- A shared technological database
- Joint management of infestations
- Group purchasing power
- Nationally recognized history of effectiveness



# Capacity Building: *Formal Agreements*

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- The Upper Arkansas CWMA created a “Standard Operating Procedures and Agreement for Managing Noxious Weeds”
  - A number of weed management agreements from cooperative weed management groups in other states were researched and used as models for the document
- The document serves as an educational tool regarding the purpose and operating procedures of the Upper Arkansas CWMA and also provides a basis for entities to participate



# Capacity Building: *Education*

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- Each year, the Upper Arkansas CWMA sponsors a regional educational meeting to focus attention on regional noxious weed management issues and provide a progress report on the strategic weed management plan
- Participants represent local, state, federal, and private land managers; meeting attendance has now grown to over 70 participants



# Capacity Building: *Education*



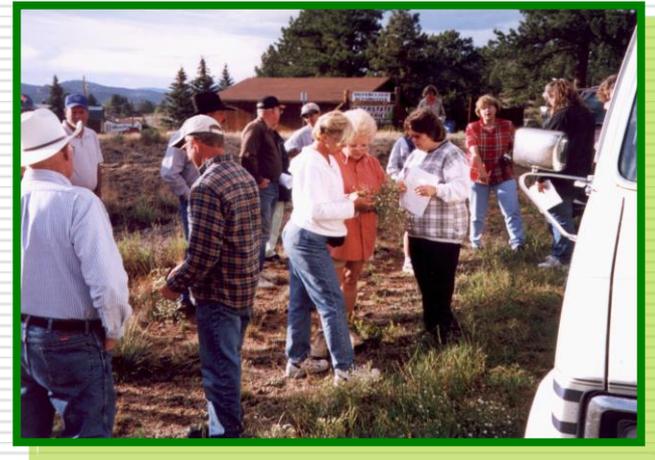
- The annual workshop also provides information on:
  - state & federal noxious weed management issues and legislation
  - results of weed research
  - practical information on managing noxious weeds
  - continuing education credits for Certified Pesticide Applicators



# Capacity Building: *Education*

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- The Upper Arkansas CWMA distributes a variety of educational materials including pamphlets, booklets, and calendars on various aspects of noxious weed management
- Weed management tours or workshops are generally held every year in each county or between two counties
  - Upper Arkansas CWMA partners are invited to participate and often provide technical expertise



# Capacity Building: *Leadership*

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- The Upper Arkansas CWMA partners have demonstrated a commitment to carry out their strategic plan through their leadership and a commitment to getting things done
- The partners each contribute their strengths and talents to accomplish group goals
- The Upper Arkansas CWMA is fortunate to have steering committee members who hold leadership positions in weed management at the local, state, and national level



# *Steps to a Successful Cooperative Invasive Species Management Program*

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- ❖ Pull together a steering committee, from a cross section of entities, who want to take action
- ❖ Develop a strategic invasive species management plan with a broad range of input; review and update it at least once each year
- ❖ Develop and maintain a centralized invasive species inventory in a GIS format
- ❖ Target specific species for management
- ❖ Educate officials at all levels who are responsible for invasive species management



# *Steps to a Successful Cooperative Invasive Species Management Program*

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- ❖ Develop partnerships both within a county and on a regional and statewide basis
- ❖ Establish, at minimum, a part-time noxious weed manager in each county
- ❖ Contribute funding and technical assistance from each jurisdiction
- ❖ Support by partners of specific regional activities or projects
- ❖ Develop an educational program to include an annual event that brings all the partners together



# *Keys to a Successful Cooperative Invasive Species Management Program*

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- Involvement of people with mutual goals who want to get something done
- Willingness to take individual action and responsibility to implement group effort
- Leadership
- Technical expertise
- Open participation



# *Keys to a Successful Cooperative Invasive Species Management Program*

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- Central communication and coordination
- Each partner's strengths and talents are utilized
- A neutral organization manages regional funding
- Meetings have an agenda, a clear purpose, and are facilitated
- Successes are recognized and celebrated
- Laugh a lot and have fun!

