

PHILLIPS COUNTY WEED AND PEST CONTROL DISTRICT
Noxious Weed Management Plan
2016

I. INTRODUCTION

This management plan is meant to accomplish four major objectives:

- 1) To be in compliance with HB 90-1175 concerning the management of undesirable plants.
- 2) The management of those plants identified by Phillips County as undesirable under the Pest District Law CRS-35-5-105.5.
- 3) To come into compliance and manage those plants identified by A, B or C categories classified by Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture for the State of Colorado under CRS-35-5.5-108.
- 4) To promote public education and support for the program.

The Phillips County Weed and Pest Control District was established under the “Weed and Pest District Law” CRS-35-5-104.

The district covered the entire county. Three weeds were named as noxious weeds. They were, field bindweed, Canada thistle, and Silver-leaf poverty weed. The original district had a five member advisory board.

In 1977 the district was extended from June 30, 1977 to June 30, 1987. In 1987, the district was again extended from June 30, 1987 to June 30, 2012. Grasshoppers were added as a controllable pest during these extensions. A sixth advisory committee member was added. The district is extended from June 20, 2012 to June 20, 2022.

With the adoption of Colorado HB 90-1175, four noxious weeds were added to the Phillips County Plan. They are Leafy spurge, Diffuse knapweed, Russian knapweed, and Spotted knapweed.

The county has since added three additional undesirable plants to our control list. In 1992 the Board of County Commissioners added Musk thistle; in March of 1999 they added jointed goat grass; and in July of 2004 they added hoary cress.

The noxious weed problem in Phillips County is of extreme concern. An estimated 1600 acres within Phillips County are infested with undesirable plants and this is a growing figure which constitutes a present threat.

The county road right-of-ways and private properties sprayed have been mapped. The mapping includes an identification of the undesirable species found.

The control of undesirable plants is the duty of all persons and is of importance to county residents, federal and state governmental agencies and the business community.

I. SITUATION STATEMENT

A. COUNTY DESCRIPTION

1. Phillips County is economy dependent on the agriculture industry.
2. Phillips County is traversed by two major transportation routes, US Highway 6 running east-west and US Highway 385 running north-south. There are a total of 67 miles of state maintained highways. Colorado Highway 23 and Colorado Highway 59 also carry traffic. Phillips County has 1022 miles of county maintained roads. The NKC Railnet travels through the county approximately 33 in an east-west direction.
3. Major natural features of the county vary from rolling sand hills with grass in the southeast, shifting to level hard lands with both irrigation and dry land farming in the east. The western portion of the county is primarily dry-land, with some pivot sprinklers interspersed. Elevation range from 3591 feet in the southeastern part of the county to 4079 feet in the northwestern corner of the county.
4. Two major and two minor soil types have been identified in the county. Most fall into productive and fertile classification. The greater majority of these are a variation of sand, sandy loam or loams.
5. Cities and towns include four communities of consequence within the county. They are: Haxtun, Paoli, Holyoke, and the unincorporated community of Amherst.
6. There are 464,640 total acres within Phillips County. Of this, approximately 446,160 acres is privately owned, 16,560 state owned, 0 acres federally owned and 2,020 acres owned by county and city municipalities.

B. STATEMENT OF NOXIOUS WEED PROBLEMS

1. The general assembly hereby finds and declares that the noxious weeds designated by rule are a present threat to the economic and environmental value of the lands of the state of Colorado and declare it to be a matter of statewide importance that the governing bodies of counties and municipalities include plans to manage such weeds as part of their duties pursuant to article CRS-35-5.5-108. State law identifies three lists of noxious weeds. They are:
 - a) "List A", which means rare noxious weeds species that are subject to eradication wherever detected statewide in order to protect neighboring lands and the state as a whole.
 - b) "List B", which means noxious weed species with discrete statewide distributions that are subject to eradication, containment, or suppression in portions of the state designated by the Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture, in order to stop the continued spread of these species.

- c) "List C", which means widespread and well-established noxious weed species for which control is recommended but not required by the state, although local governing bodies may require management.

2. Phillips County's undesirable weeds listed under CRS-35-5.5-108 are:

<u>Pest control District</u>	<u>HB-1175</u>
field bindweed - convolvulus arvensis - C	Leafy spurge – euphorbia esula - B
Canada thistle - cirsium arvense - B	Diffuse knapweed – centaurea diffusa - B
Silver-leaf poverty weed - franseria discolor	Spotted knapweed – centaurea maculosa - B
	Russian knapweed – centaurea repens - B
<u>1992 Addition</u>	<u>2016 Addition</u>
Musk thistle - carduus nutans – B	Common mullein
jointed goat grass - aegilops cylindrical – C	Bull thistle
hoary crest – brassicaceae – B	Scotch thistle
	Wormwood
	Chinese Clematis
	Yellow toadflax
	Palmer amaranth

- 3. Weed trends show that Canada Thistle presents the largest infestation and Challenge, as well as having the largest economic impact on landowners in the county. Bindweed would be the second most significant noxious weed. Because of its proclivity in riparian areas it is a most difficult weed to control. Poverty Weed would be the third most significant noxious weed in Phillips County, growing mainly in wheat fields and along the county road right-of-ways. The infestations get larger every year. Hoary Cress is currently minimal in Phillips County, although it does pose a potentially devastating problem if ever allowed to be established. Common mullein is a growing problem.
- 4. The attitudes of landowners vary from those who will not or do not cooperate in controlling noxious weeds to those who take a very aggressive approach. The fact that Phillips County is agriculturally driven and oriented is a plus. Most residents see the need for noxious weed control.

C. COUNTY PROBLEM AREAS

Transportation right-of-ways and creekbeds in drainage areas seem to offer great difficulty in control.

III. PLAN OF ACTION

A. STATEMENT OF GOALS

1. Short term goals: (1-5 years)

- a) Continue education of the residents of Phillips County regarding the problems caused by undesirable plants and the benefits of controlling those plants
- b) Continue to control undesirable plants along roadsides and railroad right-of-ways as well as other county, state and federal lands
- c) Continue mapping noxious weeds in Phillips County.
- d) Continue cost-share management plan for private lands
- e) Inform municipalities of their responsibility to develop a management plan for control of undesirable plants within municipal areas or participate in the county plan

2. Long term goals: (5-10 years)

- a) Continue the process of educating Phillips County residents regarding the problems caused by undesirable plants and the benefits of controlling these plants
- b) Manage undesirable plants so as to reduce or eliminate pesticide use
- c) Continue control of undesirable plants along roadsides
- d) Complete and update undesirable plants mapping of Phillips County
- e) Continue cost-share management plan for private lands

B. WEED MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

1. Education must play a major role in implementing any weed management plan. Most noxious weeds, when detected early, can be easily managed. The Phillips County Weed and Pest Control District will work with any group requesting assistance in the education process concerning noxious weeds.
2. Phillips County will develop and send noxious weed information periodically in the form of advertisements via the county website, newspaper articles, radio spots and public appearances at various functions that will assist with the informative process.
3. The Phillips County Weed and Pest Control District will provide computer mapping to any landowner wishing to map noxious weeds on their property.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Public Education

1. Provide information concerning the Weed Law.
2. Provide information on biology and management of targeted undesirable plants.

B. Undesirable Plant Control Methods: Integrated methods, or multiple approach techniques to manage undesirable plants should be used by all land managers to prevent spread to neighboring properties. If targeted undesirable plants are being managed effectively by the landowner or operator, they will be allowed to continue without further stipulation from the county.

1. Noxious weed plant management methods (see attachments) to be used:
 - a. Prevention – through education and sound management practices
 - b. Cultural – through education and plant competition
 - c. Mechanical – mowing, pulling, etc.
 - d. Biological – Selected insects, pathogens and livestock
 - e. Chemical – label instructions to be followed
2. Develop a criteria for re-vegetation of county roadside right-of-ways.
3. Implement undesirable plant mapping program in Phillips county.
4. Cooperative agreements:
 - a. Roadside and railroad right-of-ways
 - b. Municipal areas
 - c. Other county, state and federal lands
 - d. Private property
5. Non-compliance
 - a. Private lands: Section 35-5.5-109
 - b. Public lands: Section 35-5.5-110
 - c. Federal and State lands: Section 35-5.5-111
 - d. Public rights of way: Section 35-5.5-112

C. Short and long term needs:

1. Generate educational and supportive materials for the public.
2. Provide a salaried Weed Inspector and summer assistants as deemed necessary.
3. Provide for necessary vehicle and spraying equipment.
4. Provide necessary office and equipment space.
5. Continue to appoint and seek recommendations from a six-member advisory board on controlling undesirable plants in Phillips County.

D. Biological controls such as insects or cattle grazing programs will be utilized and encouraged where practical. Additionally, as previously mentioned, biological test plots have been established and will continue to be a part of the districts noxious weed program.

- E. Enforcement will be done under the provisions of the Pest District Law CRS-35-5-105 and the Colorado Weed Management Act Title 35 Article 5.5 and will be enforced on the basis of the following priorities:
1. By complaint: If a noxious weed complaint is received and verified by Pest District personnel then enforcement proceedings will be carried out.
 2. Negligent landowners: Those properties with a historical problem of noxious weeds being neglected so as to pose a threat to neighboring land.

V. BUDGET

This department, formed under CRS-35-5-105 for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of that law, is funded by monies appropriated from the County General Fund. There are no additional funding mechanisms in place for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Colorado Weed Management Act Title 35 Article 5.5.

VI. SUMMARY

Many exotic species of weeds which have become established in Phillips County are deep rooted, vigorous, perennial plants which are difficult to control. Total eradication is not a realistic goal, however good management practices allow these weeds to be controlled and to prevent their further spread, lessening the economic impact they may create. More restrictive label instructions are making herbicide use prohibitive or impossible in some situations and alternative methods of control may be required. This plan will be reviewed by the Advisory Board of Phillips County Weed and Pest Control District each year and amended if necessary.

This plan was considered at a public hearing on and subsequently adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. A motion was made by Commissioner Joe Kinnie, seconded by Commissioner Harlan Stern, to approve and adopt the plan as presented. The motion also included re-appointment of the existing six-person advisory board. Those board members will continue to be appointed for three year terms. The terms of two board members will expire each year. Motion carried.

The current advisory board members and terms are:

Dustin Schneller	December 31, 2018	Martin Olofson	December 31, 2018
Kyle McConnell	December 31, 2016	Vern Rafert	December 31, 2016
Gary Koch	December 31, 2017	Jim Tomky	December 31, 2017

5-19-16
Date

Donald Lark
Chairman

Beth Zells
Attest: Phillips County Clerk