

Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 8th, 2025 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

In Person: Carpenter Ranch

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83345294656?pwd=CbeJfZUdgb7OffOTJVb00h6zfw2Ie.1>

1. Updates to the agenda
2. Review [2024 goals](#) (all)
3. Set 2025 goals (all)
4. Begin to prep for 2025 season
 - a. Idaho trip (Emily S)
 - i. Dates/attendees
 - ii. Supplies needed (electric aspirators, splitters, etc.)
 - b. Potential release sites (all)
 - c. Show Me Float: updates on Noxious Weed Advisory Committee and/or CDA Commissioner Greenberg attending (Tamara/Emily S)
 - d. Youth outreach event: dates/other details (Laurel)
 - e. Monitoring plan? (Tamara)
 - f. Management on SMV Stetson/Winding River ranches (Tiffany/Jonathan)
5. Outreach/communication updates
 - a. Article for Western Weed Coordinating Committee (John K)
 - b. Website updates (Pete)
 - c. Report-out on County Commissioner presentations (Ben/John H)
 - d. Update on landowner meeting in West Routt (Tiffany)
6. Budget check-in for 2025 (Emily B)
 - a. Grant administration reminders
7. Partner updates, if time allows
8. Set next meeting

Yampa River Leafy Spurge Project meeting
1-8-25 from 10:00-12:00 at Carpenter Ranch and via Zoom

1. Review of 2024 goals
 - a. Finalize a 2024 work plan for the Inundative Biological Control Strategy grant
 - i. We did this last winter/spring
 - ii. Emily S will get final numbers of insects for the project to Emily B
 - b. Establish new financial relationship with FOTY
 - i. This was a success
 - c. Establish new administrative protocols
 - i. FOTY has taken over these duties
 - d. Collect and purchase a minimum of 50,000 leafy spurge beetles
 - i. Total for Yampa Valley was 110,420 bugs from all sources, so we went well above this goal
 1. Not including 10,100 that John K took back to Front Range and 7,300 that Emily S released in Uintah County
 - e. Release a minimum of 50,000 leafy spurge beetles
 - i. We released well above this number: 110,420
 - ii. Released in State Wildlife Area, Little Yampa Canyon, J Quarter Circle Ranch, and on Duziks, Camillettis, Skidmores, East Cross Mountain BLM, and Dinosaur NM, and several sites by Routt County Weed Program (a few right of way releases)
 - iii. All of these release locations will appear on the interactive map on the website
 - f. Create a modified biocontrol monitoring protocol in order to facilitate efficient monitoring
 - i. Tamara reports that they didn't modify the protocol but rather grouped the sites to be more efficient
 - g. Develop a systematic monitoring strategy
 - i. Tamara did this by grouping the sites together and planning out which sites should be monitored in which years
 - h. Continue to monitor and evaluate process of biocontrol insect establishment and determine when
 - i. The goal was to hit at least 5 sites in a year, and in 2024, we got to 13 sites
 - ii. Tamara thinks there are enough bugs on the downstream end of the State Wildlife Area to hold a catch and release event there, but there

are some logistical issues with accessibility and timing of haying. But when Tamara went pretty late in the season in 2024, the bugs were still active, so she says she wants to look into the bug activity timing more this year at that site by checking every single week. Shane Talvacchio and Jim Haskins are willing to help shuttle people into this area, but Tamara wants to do a test run with people who are familiar with the project to see if they think it's worth having people wander around in there given the rough terrain. It's just downstream of the Dorsey boat launch. We've put spurge island on the backburner for catch and release because the water stays on there later, it gets hayed later, and we don't find the bugs there reliably.

- i. Continue the youth outreach educational workshops
 - i. We had nine kids from Totally Kids out of Hayden on June 25th and twelve kids from Yampatika on June 26th
- j. Organize a Show Me Float
 - i. We did this in June. Ben will get Emily B the final number of attendees.
- k. Continue updating and revising the website
 - i. There's a description of the Inundative Biological Control Strategy grant, and the interactive map had quite a bit of work done on it this year.
- l. Continue outreach to landowners to Routt and Moffat Counties
 - i. Jonathan reports that every time he talks to someone that has leafy spurge, he gives them the link to our website.
 - ii. Ben asked if we want to invite the chairmen of the weed boards to these meetings. Jonathan will share the contact info for Routt County to Emily B so she can add them to the mailing list. Tamara reports that Jesse communicates with the weed board also.
 - iii. The article that was published in the Pilot and the Craig Daily Press also fits under here. It generated a very useful contact in Jim Haskins. Tamara will share his contact info with Emily S because he and his wife are interested in coming to Idaho in 2025. Also generated a commitment on Pete and Tamara's part to revisit the Haskins ranch to map their spurge. All their patches of spurge have bugs in them, unbeknownst to the Haskins. Tamara will keep Jonathan in the loop on when this mapping will occur.
- m. Update the County Commissioners regarding the new grant and keeping them advised of annual financial needs

- i. Ben, Tiffany, Jonathan, and Emily B gave a presentation to the Routt County Commissioners in late October
 - ii. John H, Tamara, and Jesse gave an update to Moffat County in December
 - iii. Emily B reports we did receive \$2,000 from Routt County and \$1,000 from Moffat County for 2025
 - iv. Tamara wondered if we need to do that every year or if we can do every other year. John H says he thinks it depends on if we have new things to update them on. Ben brought up that the counties have statutory responsibility for weeds, and that it's important to keep them involved in what we're doing. Jonathan says he and Tiffany usually do a yearly update to the Commissioners, and would be happy to fold in YRLSP updates to that. Tamara says it may not be necessary to do a spurge-specific update every year. Consensus is that if there are new things or changes, we'll do a Commissioner update, but if not, we might not need to do one every year.
- n. Continue outreach and reports to supporting orgs
 - i. Emily B keeps the FOTY board up to date
 - ii. Ben tabled at FOTY's State of Yampa
 - iii. John H and Emily B went to the Colorado First Conservation District annual landowners meeting to table
- o. BLM to report on progress of the proposed targeted sheep grazing management of leafy spurge in Tepee Draw
 - i. Tamara will let Emily B know if anything related to this pops up; she emailed Chris yesterday but hasn't heard back yet.
- p. Dinosaur National Monument to implement the activities of the Inundative Biological Control Strategy grant, including at least 1 river trip for leafy spurge beetle releases and 1-2 for Russian knapweed insect releases
 - i. Emily S did 1 river trip for leafy spurge and 2 for Russian knapweed
- q. Moffat County Weed and Pest to continue working with landowners and partners on leafy spurge management
 - i. Jesse wasn't present at this meeting, but Tamara said Jesse is still bringing up biocontrol to landowners. Jesse doesn't have areas that he's been using herbicides that he's super excited about this year, so no big news on this front. But Tamara and Jesse did talk about the stretch between Loudy Simpson and South Beach being a focus area for 2025. It includes a lot of city and county land, as well as a large parcel of State Land Board land and a few private parcels. Tamara will

get in touch with Jesse this winter to identify potential release sites within this reach for 2025.

- ii. Also, the beetle releases we did on the Show Me Float were by Jesse's suggestion
 - r. Routt County Weed Program to continue monitoring management of leafy spurge on SMV Stetson Ranch and adjacent properties
 - i. Jonathan reports that communication with the owner of SMV Stetson hasn't really improved. Chris said he used Tordon REU to spray his spurge (though that's a stump treatment) and he wasn't able to get an aerial sprayer out this year.
 - ii. Tiffany did submit a permission slip for doing biocontrol here. Tamara said she'll give a field kit to Emily B so she can coordinate biocontrol releases and data collection. We're no longer really looking at eradication on Stetson SMV. There's one draw that's harder to reach that could be good for bugs, says Jonathan. Jonathan also said that he did find a small infestation upstream on Winding River, but that landowner was more than willing to take all the necessary steps to manage it. Tamara says that it's definitely worth trying to get bugs in that draw, because as we've seen on the Haskins Ranch, these populations can persist for more than a decade. Tamara and Jonathan will go to the Haskins place when the spurge starts flowering to Jonathan has a mental image of what it could look like at Stetson SMV.
 - iii. The spurge is not in the area of the Stagecoach Mountain Ranch development; it's on the conservation easement. Emily B will send Jonathan the Weed Mitigation Plan that Discovery Land Company submitted as part of their preliminary application so he can review it for their leafy spurge management plan.
 - s. Emily B will draft an accomplishments list for 2024 based on the discussion of these goals.
2. Set 2025 goals
- a. Tamara suggested using the 2024 goals, tweaking it, and sending it out for review. Emily B will do this.
 - b. Baili wondered if we want to include headwaters herbicide treatments on the Forest in 2025 goals. All were in support. Baili and Emily S have talked about doing some mapping. Baili will send Pete the mapping for known locations. Tamara says any patches that are 1/10 of an acre or larger are candidates for biocontrol because the bugs seem to be able to persist even on small patches. And spraying and bugs are compatible as long as you don't spray in

July when the adults are feeding on the above-ground plant matter. Baili will loop Doug from Yampa Ranger district into this conversation as well. Baili reports that the patches she's visited are very small patches that look like they were brought in by hunters or horses, though she says the ones that are nearer to the Bears Ears/Black Mountain area might be larger. Tamara says any time anyone goes out to a patch, they should bring a net and look for bugs if it's between beginning of June and middle of August.

3. Start prepping for 2025 season

a. Updates on Idaho trip

- i. Everyone should plan on July 7-10 this year. All of the Rankin Motel rooms are available for the nights of the 7th, 8th, and 9th. Emily B will call and pay for the deposit.
- ii. We have 12 people that are committed already. And we can take 14-15 people. So Emily S thinks we can definitely fill the rooms. Jim and Dana Haskins, Emily B. Pete, John K, Skid and Jamie Skidmore, Roddy, Emily S, 2 Dino seasonals, Dino intern.
- iii. We'd likely all travel up on the 7th, collect and sort on the 8th and 9th, and travel back on the 10th. Kim Ragotzkie is still on board for letting us know when peak bug collection is, but this time frame has seemed to be a good time in the last several years.
- iv. Ben volunteered as well.

b. Financial future of grant

- i. Any unallocated IRA money will be swept on January 20th. The good news is that we have no money left sitting on the table. The \$86,000 that was going to remain with Dinosaur to hire seasonals and for some travel got sent to FOTY, so it's off Dinosaur's books. Now, FOTY will be doing the hiring of seasonals in collaborations with Dinosaur, as well as paying travel reimbursements for Dino employees. Emily S only has \$480 left to spend after going through the supplies list. She already purchased a bunch of nets, electric aspirators, splitters, cups, etc., so we should be set with supplies into the far future.
- ii. Mileage rate went up to \$0.70/mile, so be sure to use this new rate. Emily B will change the mileage rate on the travel reimbursement form.
- iii. Emily S is meeting with the CDA insectary on Feb 4th to talk about bug orders for the season. Everyone should let Emily S know if they have a need for Russian knapweed insects. Another volunteer opportunity is sending folks down to collect RK galls near Delta in April and

collecting leafy spurge bugs on the Front Range. John K will be out looking at potential collection spots for RK galls on Front Range as well. Any travel associated with any of this will be covered by the grant. Emily S will send out the RK gall opportunity to her list of Dinosaur volunteers and will also keep the YRLSP in the loop.

- iv. Emily S has slated the weeks of May 12-30th for RK releases in the monument. Her large focus for this year is along the Green River Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge just above Gates of Lodore. The bulk of RK is just above the monument. Then she might want to put some down below the monument near Ouray. The goal is 2-3 trips for RK bug releases.
 - v. For leafy spurge, Emily S says June 17th-21st is the goal for getting bugs from Front Range and releasing them in Yampa Canyon. By the time we go to Idaho to get bugs, the water level might be unreliable for releases. The goal is at least 1 trip for leafy spurge bug releases.
 - vi. Tamara reports that there's RK and leafy spurge on Darrel Steele's property, and she's talked to him about biocontrol.
 - vii. The insectary raises the RK galls and the bugs are ready to go by mid-May and all the way into mid-June.
- c. Show Me Float
- i. CDA Lodore Trip is June 24-28 and Show Me Float is June 12, so Emily S is going to ask who of Commissioner Greenberg's staff wants to come on the Show Me Float. John K says there's a new division director who might be excited about both the Lodore trip or Show Me Float (Evanne Cavidness). Bethany Howell and Kristy at CDA are helping to coordinate.
 - ii. Last meeting we talked about not opening up the Show Me Float to general invitations because we were trying to get the Noxious Weed Advisory Committee. Tamara says she has had communication with Dan Tekela, who said they're still on for that, and the contact person is Patty York. John H says he's happy to plan the float, but he is doing a different trip with the tourism board the week before so will have a bit of time where he won't be available, but Ben will help as well. So the plan is still to get the Noxious Weed Advisory Committee to be our Show Me Float participants. It'll be about 15 people. There are still some potential release sites in the same reach (city and county land and Hume and Duzik are willing private landowners). We put a lot on Camilletti the last few years, so Tamara suggests that if we still want

to do the Show Me Float from Dorsey to Loudy Simpson, try to put bugs in different spots. There are some potential release sites between Loudy and South Beach, but Tamara will target these sites as release sites from Idaho bugs.

- iii. Ben says he wants to get the final number because there might be some individuals we want to invite as well, like the new Routt County Commissioner.
- iv. John K will send Patty York's contact info to John H.
- d. Potential release sites
 - i. Tamara has a list: Stetson SMV, potentially Darrell Steele at Maybell. On her to-do list for the next month or so is to work with Jesse to identify spurge patches on private land for the Show Me Float and for Idaho bugs from Loudy Simpson to South Beach. Also she's going to check in with Shane Talvacchio on the State Wildlife Area sites.
 - ii. Emily S says Vernal BLM is interested (on the Green below Dino), and Island Park can take all the spurge bugs in the world. She wants private landowners and folks who have not yet received insects to have priority, but Island Park can take all the bugs in the world, and it's accessible at that time of year.
- e. Youth outreach event
 - i. Laurel is the one who has coordinated this event, and she's not on the call. Emily B will remind Laurel to start planning this.
- f. Monitoring sites for 2025
 - i. Tamara asked John H if he can help contact Dale Haskins where we put bugs in Maybell a few years ago. We'll try to get permission to come out in late July to see if the bugs took out there. John H will get back to Tamara to let her know what Dale says.
 - ii. Tamara wants to go back to K Diamond in Axial Basin right below Duffy boat ramp this year. She'll contact Cody Deacon.
 - iii. Tamara will coordinate with Shane on some sites on the State Wildlife Area
 - iv. Sam MacIntyre passed away at the end of last summer. His daughter is still interested, but Tamara didn't bother them again since his passing was so recent, but she'll put this on her list for 2025 monitoring.
 - v. Tamara will check in with Chris Rhyne on Tepee and Fortification Creek sites.

- vi. Tamara is not on the list to go to Idaho this year because she wants to spend her time this summer nailing down what the season of the bugs is. Her plan is to go out weekly all summer to try to pin down the season of when the adults are active better.
 - g. Management on SMV Stetson
 - i. Aerial spraying didn't get done in 2024 because they came out way too late but the company is hoping to get it done in 2025. July is the ideal time for this.
- 4. Outreach/communication updates
 - a. Article for Western Weed Coordinating Committee
 - i. John K wrote a draft and sent it to his boss but hasn't heard back from him yet. It's due on Wed 1/15. The group said they trust John K and don't need to review it, given the short turnaround time. This is a quarterly newsletter that goes out to anyone who does weed science in the West.
 - ii. Tamara says to make sure to give a shout out to Kim Ragotzkie and Joey Milan for going out of their way to help another state. John K says he will do that.
 - iii. Emily B requests that John K send it to the group when the newsletter comes out.
 - b. Website updates
 - i. Our website plan has to be renewed every year. \$264 due on March 3rd. Pete's credit card is on record currently, but Emily B will send Pete her work credit card info to put on record so the payment is cleaner.
 - ii. The domain payment is on a two-year cycle, and that's coming due on Feb 14th. It's \$56.50, which will give us two years. This payment also has to be with a credit card on record. Pete will log in and pay it once Emily B gets him the FOTY credit card info.
 - iii. The website is updated with all activities from 2025: Show Me Float, Youth Outreach event, newspaper article from Idaho trip, Idaho trip info. Pete updated 3 additional spurge maps from Show Me Float last year. The grant page has also been updated. If anyone sees anything that should be added or changed, let Pete know.
 - iv. The interactive map is actually a map that is on Esri ArcGIS online site. It's on Pete's personal account, not a commercial account. A link to that Esri map is embedded in the Wix site. As long as Esri is okay with Pete using his personal account for this interactive map, we'll do it this way. The downside is that when Pete has to update the data each

year, the whole thing has to be redone. Typically, Pete does this late in the fall when he has all the data from the previous season.

- v. Pete presented a graph of site visitation from the past year, with new visitors and returning visitors.
 - 1. Our bounce rate tends to be relatively high, but the average visit in the last 30 days has been about 7 minutes, which suggests that people are moving around to several pages. The pages that get the most visits are the home page, biocontrol pages, and interactive map. In the last 30 days, 80% of the visitors to our website came directly to our address. (They entered it directly and didn't get there from a search browser). So either people are getting our url directly from a reference (like a newspaper article or the brochure) or a browser bookmark.
 - 2. It ranges from 5-20 visits every week, and fairly consistently across the whole year. Pete would like to see more people visiting the site and spending more time on it, but Wix said that an average visit of 7 minutes is better than 90% of scientific research sites.
 - 3. Pete is worried about the significant bounce rate, which is a bit mysterious.
 - c. Landowner meeting in West Routt
 - i. Jonathan said this didn't happen last year but they are hoping to do this in the future. Todd Hagenbuch with CSU Extension wants to join in as well.
5. Budget check-in for 2025
- a. Emily B will send out the 2025 budget with the notes, but there are no expenses that the group doesn't know about already, except for FOTY purchasing a tablet for collecting data for leafy spurge data but also other projects. Tamara says Pete and her were thinking about giving Emily B a tablet for the summer, but if Emily B doesn't want to do that, it's helpful to have a tablet that is really set up in a good way for Pete to be able to use the data and so the tablet user can see the data that was collected the previous year to be able to navigate to release sites. Pete will send Emily B files so she can set up the new tablet and Emily B will do a test run to make sure it's working.
 - b. Emily B sent out an email for time tracking for Sept-Dec 2024, and she'll send out another reminder when she sends out the notes.

6. Next meeting: Wed, April 9th from 10:00-12:00 at Carpenter Ranch/on Zoom. Pete will add this to the website, and Emily B will send out this date when she sends out the minutes.