

# Summit County Weed Advisory Board

## Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2015

11:30 – 2:00 p.m.

**Attendees:** Mark Johnston, Rick Farrell, Donald McCreer, Rick Geise, John Taylor, Frank Gutmann, Chris Johnsen, Brett Lockard, Ray Lazuk, James Wong, Larry Sawyer, Lisa Taylor, Ben Pleimann, Jim Curnutte, Dan Schroder, Beth Huron, Karn Stiegelmeier

**I. Call to Order:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:37 a.m.

**II. Roll Call and Introductions:** Introductions were made around the table.

**III. Review/Approval of November 19, 2014 Meeting Minutes:** Rick Farrell motioned to approve the minutes, Brett Lockard seconded the motion and the November 19, 2014 minutes were approved.

**IV. New Business:**

- **Introduction of New County Weed Manager:** Ben Pleimann has worked for the Summit County Weed Control Department for nine years. In his new position as Weed Manager, he'll work eight months of the year, with winter months off.
- **Update on 2015 USFS Work Plan:** The USFS has targeted 2,000 acres for noxious weed treatment in the East Zone in 2015. Invasive plant staff will consist of one FTE Range Technician (Stephen Elzinga) and three seasonal technicians. Kate DeMorest, who is currently a Wilderness Technician, is currently being trained in weed management skills. Once trained, Kate will focus her efforts on Eagles Nest and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness areas. The goal is to allocate about 33% of invasive plant staff time during the treatment season (July 1 to September 12), precluding any range or fire duties that come up during the summer season.

The Dillon Ranger District weed program will focus on:

- Abandoned Mine Land funded sites near the Town of Blue River, in French Gulch, along the Swan River and in the Montezuma area
- Timber Trust Fund Small Sales funded sites: Spring Creek road system, Frey Gulch road system, Barton Creek Salvage and Keystone Gulch
- Eradication of priority species in the Keystone Area (Dalmation Toadflax), Lowry Campground (Diffuse Knapweed) and Heaton Bay Campground (Sulfur Cinquefoil), as well as others that may be brought to USFS attention by Summit County Weed Control.

(In 2014, the USFS treated USFS managed lands adjacent to Keystone, South Forty, Straight Creek Drive and Ptarmigan Ranch after being contacted by Summit County Weed Control.)

- Denver Water Funding for cutting timber units in the Blue River and Snake River watershed south of I-70 (funding is pending).

The plan for 2015 is to have two crews fully equipped to work through the prime weed spraying season.

Ben and Lisa have met with the new District Ranger, Bill Jackson, and he is very supportive of weed management. Budget cuts are greatly impacting USFS activities. The USFS may not be able to enforce zebra mussel inspections on Dillon Reservoir this year and are looking for alternative means to assist with that effort.

- **Updates on Weed Management Efforts:**

- The Town of Breckenridge is recruiting a seasonal employee for summer and plans to run the weed mitigation program as usual.
- Summit County Weed Control has hired a new seasonal weed technician this year (Michelle) to replace Ben, but otherwise there will be no big changes in the county program. The county will maintain current contracts with the towns, open spaces and CDOT. Ben raised the subject of goats: The county last used goats for weed control in 2007. Should the county bring back the goats? Discussion followed on the benefits and costs of using goats:

- The last time the county used goats, it cost \$10,000 for 15 days.
- Goats were very popular and served as a positive outreach tool, particularly when used in highly visible areas such as the Willow Preserve in Frisco.
- Goats were very effective in getting weeds that couldn't be seen in the early season, but it's important that they be managed by a good herder.
- Summit County Weed Control will find out how much it would cost to bring the goats to Summit County, then let board members know so they have an opportunity to assist with the cost.

Every two years Summit County Weed Control maps all the weeds in DRReC (Dillon Reservoir Recreation Committee) boundaries around the Dillon Reservoir. Ben will meet with DRReC next week to go over the results to determine which areas have improved and which still need improvement.

- The Town of Silverthorne is getting bids for weed mitigation on town parks. The county will do the town's rights of way.
- Lisa helped put together a good weed management plan for Keystone Mountain that has clarified responsibility for the different areas (mountain, golf course, HOA areas). Keystone will probably hire a contractor for weed management on the mountain and HOA areas. The golf course has already improved significantly, but will continue to target problem weeds.
- The Town of Frisco will continue to take care of its parks, residential, and garden areas, with county assistance on town rights of way.
- Frank Gutmann from Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness expressed several areas of concern. He would like to see the county strengthen weed enforcement by imposing fines on private homeowners, and is concerned about weeds at Lower Cataract and Dickey's Landing areas, which are both USFS sites. Discussion followed: The county is doing its best to enforce weed regulations, but with limited staff the priority is to address the worst areas. Based on the number of backpack sprayers loaned out in 2014, enforcement does seem to be having an impact.
- John Taylor, also with Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness, voiced his concern about the spread of weeds in the Dickey's Landing area. The Eagles Nest HOA received a \$5,000 grant from the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Fund and will use the funds to treat the golf course and homeowners' properties. Jim suggested that the towns and county put information on these grants on their websites to encourage more private homeowners to manage weeds.
- The Town of Dillon will continue to treat its own land and work with the county on treating rights of way. The county will also be treating the town's disc golf course and cemetery. The town may be interested in working with the county on bringing in goats.
- Denver Water is working on determining a method for treating the downstream side of the dam. Last year their helicopter applicator backed out due to the EPA's new water permitting regulations. Since the county helped Denver Water develop a weed management plan, there has been more consistency in weed mitigation and the results have been much better.
- Karn Stiegelmeier, County Commissioner, agreed that it would be helpful for local entities to put Noxious Weed grant information on their websites. The county should continue to do as much as possible with available resources to carry out enforcement and education. She would like to see Pulling for Colorado continue because of its educational value.
- The Summit County Wildfire Council requires grant recipients to manage weeds on areas that have had trees cut for fuels reduction.

The county retains 10% of the grant money for two years after fuels reduction work to ensure that weed mitigation has occurred. Extension is available to assist with weed education efforts.

- **Pulling for Colorado:** Pulling for Colorado has been one of this group's biggest education efforts, with John Taylor serving as coordinator for several years and the county coordinating the event for the past two years. The chair asked for a new volunteer to run Pulling for Colorado. Discussion followed, but no one volunteered. Last year Summit County Weed Control coordinated with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Extension to hold a very successful weed workshop in the Lower Blue. Several board members expressed interested in working with the county to hold another weed workshop in 2015.
- **Other Education Items:**
  - Working with HOA's is an effective means of getting things done. Perhaps the county could send an educational email that HOA's could distribute to their members, rather than spending time working with individual HOA's.
  - Breckenridge Ski Area is not part of the Weed Advisory Board, but they need to be working on weed mitigation, especially with the increase in summer activities on the mountain. John Buhler will be moving from Keystone to Breckenridge and he's very aware of the weed issue. Once that transition happens the county may have a good inroad with the ski area.
- **Review and Approval of 2015 Weed Management Plan:** The Weed Advisory Board reviews and updates the Weed Management Plan every two years. Other than minor formatting and editing, the plan doesn't require any revisions at this time. Mark Johnston motioned to approve the 2015 Weed Management Plan; Rick Farrell seconded the motion and the 2015 Weed Management Plan was approved.
- **Election of New Officers:** The Board's bylaws require that the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary must renew every two years, and all positions need to be re-elected at this time. Jim motioned that we keep the chair; Karn seconded the motion and Mark Johnston was re-elected as Chair. Mark Johnston motioned to re-elect Sam Kirk as vice-chair; Rick Farrell seconded the motion and Sam Kirk was re-elected as Vice Chair. No one volunteered to serve as Secretary, so the group will elect a new secretary at the next meeting.

**V. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Beth Huron, Summit County Extension/ Summit County Community Development