

~ Proceedings ~

Western Weed Awareness Summit

June 1-2, 2005
Boise, Idaho



Montana Statewide Noxious Weed
Awareness and Education Campaign



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June 1-2, 2005
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Executive Summary

Raising awareness of the impacts of nonnative invasive plants on our ecosystems and economy is the key to gaining support for invasive plant management and prevention programs. In recognition of the many weed awareness activities being conducted in the West and the need for a communication network among the many supporters, a Western Weed Awareness Summit was organized for June 1-2, 2005 in Boise, ID. Sponsors were the Center for Invasive Plant Management at Montana State University, the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign, the Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign, and the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension.

Planners had three goals: 1) begin to build a network of weed-awareness educators in the West; 2) offer professional development opportunities to improve attendees' outreach efforts; and 3) minimize Summit expenses to maximize attendance of local- and county-level advocates who generally have little or no budget for out-of-state travel.

To assure that everyone would have an opportunity to talk and get to know each other in this initial meeting, Summit attendance was limited to invited guests. State weed coordinators in western states nominated two weed awareness/outreach educators from their states. Summit planners also invited representatives of federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations that were already involved in weed awareness activities. Forty-three people attended, representing 16 states and Washington, DC.

The Summit agenda included presentations, case studies, and breakout-group discussions. Major topics were "Targeting Your Audience," "Funding Your Program," "Innovative Delivery Methods," and "Program Evaluation." The 1½ -day Summit concluded with a discussion of regional coordination and support in the future. Final action items were:

- Establish a weed-awareness listserv to provide each other with continuing inspiration, resources, ideas, and support;
- Publish a Summit proceedings and make the proceedings widely available;
- Investigate how to tie in the Summit to National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week in Washington, DC;
- Organize a follow-up weed awareness conference in 2006 or 2007.

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Summit Rationale and Planning

Raising awareness of the impacts of nonnative invasive plants on our ecosystems and economy is the key to gaining support for invasive plant management and prevention programs. By 2004, “weed awareness” programs were being developed by a variety of groups in communities throughout the West. Creative websites, videos, brochures, mascots, placemats, fair booths, and imprinted cups, pens, and even rub-on tattoos were being used to promote weed awareness – often on a shoestring budget. Certainly we could inspire each other and perhaps share development and distribution expenses if we put our heads together.

In recognition of the many weed awareness activities being conducted in the West and the need for a communication network among the many supporters, a Western Weed Awareness Summit was organized for June 2005 in Boise, ID. Organizers were the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign (Roger Batt) and the Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign (Carla Hoopes), the Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM) at Montana State University (Janet Clark, Mary McFadzen), and the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (Sue Donaldson). Montana and Idaho had the only statewide programs in the West and so were natural hosts, CIPM had a regional network and organizational capabilities, and the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension had expertise in educational theory, marketing, and evaluation. Planning was conducted primarily through email and conference calls during the preceding 10 months.

A distinction was made by planners between “weed awareness” (i.e., outreach to people who have little or no knowledge of or commitment to weed management and prevention) and “weed education/training” (i.e., a more comprehensive approach to teaching already-aware people about weeds). Effective messages to these two audiences would be distinctly different. Planners agreed that the focus of the Summit would be on general awareness.

From the start, planners had three goals: 1) begin to build a network of weed-awareness educators in the West; 2) offer professional development opportunities to improve attendees’ outreach efforts; and 3) minimize Summit expenses to maximize attendance of local- and county-level advocates who generally have little or no budget for out-of-state travel.

To assure that everyone would have an opportunity to talk and get to know each other in this initial meeting, Summit attendance was limited to invited guests. CIPM asked the state weed coordinators (or equivalent) in 16 western states to nominate two of their “most fired-up weed awareness/outreach advocates” in the state. The state representatives were the bulk of the invited participants. CIPM provided travel assistance of up to \$300 for each of the state reps (except Montanans) if they needed it. Montana’s Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign assisted the representatives nominated from Montana. The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign handled local arrangements in Boise and paid for Summit meeting rooms, coffee breaks, and two luncheons. BASF and Dow

AgroSciences also contributed to hotel costs. Organizers of the National Invasive Weed Awareness Week in Washington, DC, provided canvas bags to hold Summit registration materials. The result of this collaborative effort was a no-cost registration for participants. Many participants noted later that their trips would not have been approved by their supervisors if they had had to pay their entire travel expense and a registration fee. Summit planners also invited representatives of federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations that were already involved in weed awareness activities.

Participants were invited to bring examples of their weed-awareness materials to display on tables on the perimeter of the meeting room. Long breaks were scheduled in the agenda so attendees would have time to examine materials from other programs and visit with each other. In the 1½-day format, there was not time for everyone to make a presentation, so planners scheduled breakout discussion groups after each topic to encourage more one-on-one sharing.

Finally, notes were kept throughout the Summit by Anita Downing of the Idaho Department of Agriculture and Connie Bollinger of CIPM. Special thanks to Anita and Connie for their detailed notes from which these proceedings were developed.

June 1, 2005

Welcome

Roger Batt, Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign (IWAC) Coordinator, welcomed the 45 attendees who then introduced themselves, provided a brief job title or description, noted their work location, and gave a short statement of their interest in attending the summit. States represented included Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and Washington, D.C.

Roger thanked the summit sponsors for their support and participation. Sponsors were Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign (IWAC), Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM), Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign, and University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. BASF and Dow AgroSciences also contributed to the Summit.

What Does "Weed Awareness" Mean?

Sue Donaldson, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, led the group in defining the term "weed awareness" for discussion purposes related to the Summit. In this context, it is important to clarify the difference between "weed awareness" and "weed education."

Group Discussion

Attendees broke into small groups to create three key words or phrases defining "weed awareness." Results were posted on the wall. Reconvened, attendees categorized and prioritized the concepts. The group agreed that they would define "weed awareness" as *"being exposed to issues, understanding the problems, creating a sense of urgency to compel involvement, leading to the development of partnership and strategies, which results in action."*

People must be able to understand a problem before they can (or will) do anything about it. Awareness → Education → Action

Understanding and Targeting Your Audience

Dick Larsen, Natural Resources Public Affairs, Boise, ID

Dick Larsen, Natural Resources Public Affairs (ret.), provided a PowerPoint presentation. He encouraged people to approach weed awareness marketing concepts as if they are working for a sales commission – sell what you have to in order to survive. This "produce or perish" approach differs from a government agency approach.

Dick outlined a general media formula for success in marketing: Ask who, what, where, when, why, and how. Remember that the audience is most likely not composed of weed experts. Start with the lowest common denominator and build from that level. Look at the various groups in society to determine your audience.

Who is the audience? Factors to consider are: political party loyalties, age, education, gender, personal values, rural or urban location, and lifestyles/hobbies (e.g., hunters, fishermen). These factors can influence how the audience receives the message being sent. A single message will not appeal to everyone; the message will not succeed if there is a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

What result(s) do you want? Do you want the audience to do something? Change attitudes? Accept something? Do the right thing? Don't do something? Consider desired outcomes. Parts of the population are already convinced pro or con; focus efforts on the majority in the middle. "One size fits all" messages don't work because they fit no one. Pursue specific results.

Where is your target audience? Where can you most effectively reach them? At play? At home? At work? Rural versus urban setting? Age may be a factor.

When is the message effective? Messages must be timely. They should run in the appropriate seasons of the year (for example, don't run commercials during the off-season when weeds are more difficult to identify without full leaves or blooms) or be tied to a current news event, and should provide an emotional connection.

Why should they care? Will the audience have a vested interest in the outcome? Does the issue worry them? Do they have a desire to do the right thing? Does empathy or outrage move them to action? Are they at personal risk?

How will the targeted audience receive the message? Radio? Television? Newspapers? Internet? Speeches or exhibits? Pamphlets or brochures? Distribution of materials – such as at county or state fairs – may not be the most effective way to communicate. One drawback to this approach is the limited ability to follow up or answer questions, assuming the handout is actually read.

The same message can be delivered by different messengers. For example, a message on canal safety could be tied to current events (six people died in two months); it could involve personal testimony, which is extremely powerful (“My child drowned”); it could take the “clutter cutter” approach (brief, factual presentation); or, the message can be presented from an outsider’s viewpoint (emotional experience of emergency worker pulling child’s body from canal).

Things to avoid:

- Devoting resources, time, and energy to messages that only provide “feel-good” results (e.g., distributing x number of brochures).
- Undercoverage (hitting the audience frequently over a short time period seems to be more effective than infrequently over a long time period).
- Getting lost in the clutter (22-25 min/hr devoted to commercials on radio, 22 min/hr on TV).
- Technological jargon and industry-specific acronyms.
- Too much detail.
- Beware of public service announcements (PSAs). Often PSAs are only run when there are gaps in paid advertising schedules. Paid commercial time guarantees that your message will run.

A message is received when it: 1) is clear, 2) hits home, 3) is timely, 4) has impact, and 5) is targeted.

Where can one go for professional assistance in targeting audiences and choosing formats? Attendees offered suggestions:

- Professional PR firm (PR companies may have dedicated pro bono budgets, or may find you a deal on TV, etc.).

- Universities with communications/marketing/PR students may offer free student help.
- Federal agency (NRCS, BLM, USFS) public affairs specialists can be helpful.
- Commodity commissions may have done studies on PR, audience demographics, etc.

Dick Larsen may be contacted at idah2oan@cablone.net.

Breakout groups

Throughout the Summit, attendees split into breakout groups after each topic was introduced to further discuss the topic and share their own experiences. The goal was to help attendees get to know one another and to actively participate in the Summit. Breakout groups reported back to the entire group. For each topic, the questions to be addressed were:

What have you tried that worked?

What have you tried that didn't work or turned out differently than expected?

What are your ideas for the future?

Group Reports: Targeting Your Audience

(Responses collated from all groups; see complete flipchart notes in Appendix.)

What worked?

- Work backwards from first determining the action, then suiting the plan to the appropriate audience – define objectives.
- Target a group of small-acre landowners.
- Make door-to-door contacts with homeowners' associations to find volunteers for community weed pulls.
- Place ads in local papers.
- Focus education on fifth-graders in elementary school, who speak to their parents. Bookmark, bumper-sticker, poster contests.
- Incorporate invasive plant info into teacher training and science curriculum.
- Build strong partnerships with groups having similar interests and goals.
- Give weed talks to groups like Master Gardeners, Native Plant Society, herbalists, "horse people," etc., with an understanding of their interests.
- Focus education efforts on landowners with 10 or fewer acres.
- Focus message on realtors who may typically be resistant to cooperation because of liability issues.
- Present a strong message to specific audiences during statewide weed awareness weeks.

- Provide education to new landowners who may be more receptive to the message than someone who may have inherited land from a long-time resident.
- Meet with pesticide applicators.
- Provide a lunch or entertainment with a weed tour.
- Place ads on city buses.
- Place ads on movie theater slides (do not include a telephone number to call, but offer an easily remembered website).
- Use public displays (for example, airport to catch incoming visitors).
- Use radio PSA spots.
- Use hooks such as fire and water costs.
- Provide freebies: Bring in a plant, have it replaced with a safe alternative plant.
- A weeds tour was held, but legislators did not attend. When the public later was targeted to help them understand how weeds affect them, they were encouraged to contact their legislators.
- With weeds talks, keep them interesting, appeal to needs, spread the word.
- Take pictures of events and weeds; share with others.
- Push individual landowners' responsibility, not government agencies or programs.

What didn't work?

- Weed workshops were not as well attended as hoped; however, there was a good diversity of landowners present.
- Beware of buying audience lists.
- Don't preach to the choir.

Ideas for the future?

- Budget restraints should not confine the project – expand resources through good partnerships with other cooperators.
- Target leaders who are best able to spread the message within other groups.
- Bring in a brainstorming squad – informed focus group.
- Define the scope of the issue/audience.
- Leave open opportunities; think outside the box.
- Determine who else is in contact with the target audience.
- Determine when to bring in professional help.
- Determine baseline of audience's understanding.
- Be aware of opposition – appeal to/include/work with them rather than offend or attack.
- From an agency standpoint, educate on-the-ground employees.
- Cross-train federal and other governmental employees to recognize and report weeds.

- Keep legislators informed; continue to provide success stories and discuss funding strategies; build a strong rapport with senators and representatives and their staffs and encourage them to attend meetings; keep them on mailing lists.
- Identify key legislative partners and their interests – do they hunt or fish? Tie message to how weeds affect them personally or the impacts on their constituency.
- Invite Legislators and media on a weed tour
- Develop a good rapport with county commissioners.
- Develop a tactical plan.
- Dream plan: Regional strategy for the West/urban areas.
- Successful programs aimed at kids will influence their homes and spread into the community.
- Measurable outcomes are important; for example, has better education and awareness resulted in more funding opportunities, or can training a child to get in the lifetime habit of pulling weeds be considered a measurable success?
- At fairs and expositions, make sure visitors do not leave empty-handed.
- Work through expos and gardening shops.
- Pool resources between states; share knowledge, photos, “hooks.”
- When the audience interest is raised, there must be an outlet for action. Provide audience with something they can do once they are aware of the problem.

Idaho video

Summit attendees viewed a video on noxious weed awareness prepared by Idaho Public Television as part of the *Outdoor Idaho* program for the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign. Roger Batt explained that PBS contacted him and offered to do the video for free if IWAC would provide the information, speakers, and sites. Following the 30-minute airing of the program, there was a 30-minute question-and-answer session on PBS' *Dialogue*, where viewers were encouraged to call in with questions about noxious weeds and to obtain a free copy of the booklet *Idaho's Noxious Weeds*.

Funding Your Program: Sources and Methods

Case Study - Roger Batt, Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign

The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign (IWAC) began in 2001 with \$33,000. It was officially created by the IWCC in cooperation with Idaho weed awareness and agency people. In-kind contributions have been crucial – combinations of cash, volunteer hours, and items such as spray rigs. Roger referenced the Marina Signage group that has partnered with 13 organizations and agencies to post educational signs at marina boat

ramps and other locations instructing boaters on cleaning their boats and trailers when leaving the area. IWAC works with publications such as the *Sportsmen's Access Guide* with a distribution of 100,000, providing the hotline number 1-866-IDWEEDS. Calls to the hotline are directed to the county weed superintendents' offices for response. The top five weeds that are likely to be found in elk habitats or wooded areas are listed in the state's big game regulations. Waterfowl regulations go out to an estimated audience of 300,000, and weed education materials can reach this audience. The Idaho classroom tool kit for teachers proves to be an ongoing success.

With partnerships in place, cooperators work together to address common issues and the actual dollars received can be stretched. Roger noted that IWAC's initial funds received were approximately \$33,000 from Idaho State Department of Agriculture. Now, IWAC has a nearly \$500,000 budget (including in-kind matching), partnering with numerous groups and agencies.

Idaho's Governor Kempthorne has declared a noxious weed awareness week, occurring annually in the second week of May.

IWAC receives about 25% of its funding from federal grants, with other funds coming from Idaho State Department of Agriculture through its Cost-Share Program, and other state agencies such as Idaho Fish & Game and Idaho Department of Lands. Federal earmarked monies are extremely important to the success of the program. Each year several representatives from Idaho attend the National Invasive Weed Awareness Week (NIWAW) in Washington, D.C., to meet with the Idaho delegation (two senators and two representatives and/or their staff) and others to present accomplishments and stress the need for consistent, reliable funding sources. Although the cost-share funds appropriated from Congress are extremely important, contributions from private landowners also play a key role in the success of any Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). Private organizations (DuPont, BASF, Wilbur-Ellis) and conservation groups (The Nature Conservancy) are valuable partners too. Other possible contributors include Resource Advisory Committees (RACs), Resource Conservation and Development groups (RC&Ds), and Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Through successful partnering, IWAC has increased its funding approximately seven-fold in the past two-and-a-half to three years.

Audience questions elicited further discussion:

- Roger's position is full-time.
- Funding flow in Idaho: Federal agencies such as Forest Service or BLM provide funding to state or other entities, who distribute the funds through an application process. Money received through the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Cost-Share Program is distributed to the Cooperative Weed Management Areas.
- The Idaho Weed Control Association manages the \$40,000 in funding received from ISDA and is the financial recipient/payee.
- The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign is a separate entity from the Idaho Weed Control Association. There are several weed-related associations in Idaho –

IWAC, Eurasian Watermilfoil Task Force, Idaho Weed Coordinating Committee (IWCC), Idaho Weed Control Association (IWCA).

- How do you start a state awareness campaign without upsetting or interfering with other associations? The key is to involve all agencies and groups with similar purposes to work together. Once they understand why the education/campaign is necessary and how it can benefit their group, you will have obtained partners willing to work together instead of maintaining diverse individual groups. IWAC took about three months to set up.
- Idaho's Strategic Plan for Managing Noxious Weeds was created in 1999. Within that plan, the Idaho Weed Coordinating Committee was formed to enforce the Strategic Plan. The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign was then created to assist with statewide education and outreach.
- The Idaho Weed Coordinating Committee recognizes the importance of having state and federal representatives on its board to represent those large land areas under their control.
- Does funding from state or federal agencies come with strings attached? Generally, there are no strings attached, aside from required quarterly reports. Targeted dollars assist the agencies, such as Fish and Game, in meeting their obligations to take care of state or federal lands. The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign typically will not include logos or provide sponsorship information, mainly because the multiple partners would require too much space in acknowledgment areas.
- Each year the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign must re-apply to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture Cost-Share Program for funding. Other longer-term funding approaches are Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) (for example, with Parks and Recreation.)
- It is extremely important to have the awareness and support coming from the top down (i.e., from the governor's office).
- Start-up funds of \$33,000 came from Idaho's Cost-Share Program.
- In-kind funding is estimated, usually. For example, if Fish and Game donates a full-page ad in a newspaper, the value is approximately \$11,000. Another example is the *Idaho's Noxious Weeds* books obtained from the University of Idaho extension office. Normally, these books cost \$5 each, with an updated control guidelines in the back. By ordering in quantities, IWAC can get about a 30 percent discount. These books are distributed to the public free of charge upon request through the online order form on the website or by calling in to radio or television shows.
- How much does it cost to advertise in the fishing and big game publications? Often these are free of charge, which can be counted as an in-kind contribution.
- What do you see for IWAC's future? Last year the budget was doubled. Federal money may not always be available. Montana has a noxious weeds fund; Idaho may have to consider a tire tax or similar statewide approach.
- Where to from here? More media presentations with increased frequency of messages. Following some media spots, weed superintendent contacts have increased up to 150 percent; these contacts are tracked by county and show the success of the ads.

Case Study - Carla Hoopes, Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign

Carla Hoopes, Project Coordinator of the Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign, noted that the campaign was celebrating its 10-year anniversary in 2005. From 1994 to 2005, the program funding has increased from about \$95,000 of seed money from the Montana Dept. of Agriculture Noxious Weed Trust Fund to about \$990,000 of real dollars, with approximately 330 campaign partners. Funding does not always come in the form of actual dollars. Time, expertise, and workdays are alternative (in-kind) sources to stretch dollars. Instead of spending \$100 on a few acres, it may be more effective to spend \$100 on a workshop to motivate and train 100 people who might then each spend \$100 on weed management, thereby leveraging the original \$100 into \$10,000.

Montana has a full-time weed awareness coordinator (Carla) to help partners meet their educational goals, to implement the statewide campaign projects, and to secure funding for the campaign. Developing partnerships is critical. Some people have time, some people have expertise, some people have a strong back and a vehicle. Everyone has something to offer. Effective coordination of experts and volunteers is essential. New partners, such as ARS and NRCS, provide enthusiasm and new ideas.

One effective attention-getter has been the production of a calendar, which gets the noxious weed message to the public and provides an opening for discussions with new partners. The 2005 calendar had 66 contributors (cash and in-kind) – 37 weed professionals wrote or reviewed the content, 24 people contributed photos, eight people served as editors. The 25,000 calendars printed in 2005 were disseminated via 96 distribution points. The calendar project is overseen by a committee that takes orders, collects the money, and ensures distribution to Montana's 52 counties. The 2006 calendar will feature success stories.

More information about the Montana statewide campaign can be found at www.weedawareness.org. The website is useful for connecting to partners and helping people make connections with others.

The overall strategy of the Montana campaign is to coordinate weed experts and resources to make the program grow. The campaign has built a constituency in the state and now it keeps going.

Further audience discussion:

- How do all these projects get done? Carla helps interested people create a committee, facilitates meetings, and helps the committees meet their goals. However, she doesn't do the work for the committee.
- The Montana campaign works from a management plan that targets nine specific audiences with 120 total projects.

- For many years in Montana, state and federal agencies and other organizations collaborated on (and financially supported) specific weed awareness pieces such as brochures and videos. Eventually they decided that their pooled dollars would be better spent on the salary of a full-time coordinator who could then organize people and projects and solicit funding for individual projects. This is how the statewide Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign was begun.
- Carla is employed by Montana State University, but 100% of her salary and project funding come from campaign partners.

Group Reports: Funding Your Program

(Responses collated from all groups; see complete flipchart notes in Appendix.)

What worked?

- Cooperative partnerships are needed at all levels.
- Partners such as Fish and Game, NRCS, etc., are key; they can help search for and write grants.
- Registration fees for pesticides are a possible source of funding.
- In Montana, vehicle registration fees (at about \$1.50 per vehicle) generate \$1.2 million. Funds go into the Montana Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Trust Fund which is allocated to counties and individual projects through grants.
- Cost-share programs with landowners.
- Private foundations.
- MOUs, federal and state partners.
- Non-profit organizations, chemical companies, The Nature Conservancy, state Invasive Species Council, state boards, Department of Agriculture, trust funds, county boards, CIPM.
- Garage sale or silent auctions (proceeds went to scholarships for weed science students).
- Commissioners at the county level need to be included and informed.
- If a group is professional and organized, funding sources are more likely to buy in.
- Marketing plans must be specific.
- It is important to ensure county and state funding that is clearly earmarked for a specific program or purpose.
- Set small, attainable goals. Success breeds more success.
- Think of funding in terms other than actual dollars – in-kind matching.
- Keep informed about what other states and regions are doing to be successful.
- Understand funders' incentives to participate.
- Cooperative Weed Management Areas (partnerships) are eligible for many kinds of funding. Use private landowners' in-kind contributions for matching.
- Matching funds.

What didn't work?

- Competing for grants has become more difficult; for example, this is the first year PTI has required prequalification.
- Nonfederal match is difficult if no state support is present.
- Conflicts with associations (for example, nursery industry: exotic versus native plants).
- One-time funding (for example, receive \$75,000 one year, next year zero) leaves those interested out on a limb
- Receiving funding at the wrong time to be used.
- Restrictions on use of funding (for example, salaries).
- Pulling Together Initiative (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) grants may be difficult to administer.
- Weed supervisors' offices are expected to write grants, spray weeds, do publications, conduct media surveys – this is not feasible, especially since many counties only have one employee to run the department for large areas.
- Projects with no measurable return on investment.
- Cold contacts: phone, email, telemarketing.
- “Feel good” media.
- Lack of follow-up. (Keep funders informed.)
- Total dependency on federal funding.
- Mandated programs with no funding.

Ideas for the future?

- Western Regional Weed Awareness Coordinator position.
- Consistent, reliable funding is needed.
- Work on developing in-kind resources with related industries (tractor/equipment sales representatives).
- Approach legislators in election years.
- States could have statewide coordinators as in Idaho and Montana.
- See www.grants.gov for federal grant sources.
- See www.weedcenter.org/grants/rfp.html for many sources of funding.
- More education and awareness regarding funding.
- Short-term funding and one-year grants are easier to write and maintain, but a three-year or more agreement is ideal.
- Funding is needed through “lobbying” Congress and at the statewide level.
- A successful program includes good grant writing, using the same language and wording as in the grant offering. Write grants to respond to agency needs and guidelines.
- Plan ahead. Be aware of state and federal initiatives and potential sources of funding.

Innovative Delivery Methods

Case Study - Laurel Shiner, Whatcom County (WA) Weed Control Board

Laurel Shiner (Whatcom County, Washington) showed creative video advertisements using a humorous approach to appeal to the public. The messages about aquatic plants were to have homeowners be aware of the harmfulness of plants that may appear pretty. “Joe and June Gardener” demonstrated myths about plants; the script was based on actual questions and comments fielded from members of the public through contacts at weed offices or county fairs. Geared toward the urban population and pond gardeners, the video’s key messages were: Know what is on the weed list before buying at nurseries; identify early stages of plant growth; know what happens when plants go beyond your backyard; clean boats and equipment; and identify and report a new invader.

Two 30-second public service announcements were developed by Black Dog Productions (Bellingham, WA) to focus on knotweed and aquatics. A number of partners funded them; creative professionals donated their time. The video footage ran in movie theaters before shows, as well as on public access cable TV. The closer a PSA runs to the feature (11, 17, or 21 minutes), the more expensive it is to air. The publicity generated more phone calls about knotweed and more recognition and identification.

Olympus Flag & Banner (of Milwaukee, WI) took sketches Laurel provided and developed a mascot costume for the character “Lucy Loosestrife,” who shows “Pretty Plant” on one side and “Noxious Weed” on the other. The mascot has appeared at fairs, meetings, parades, and National Invasive Weed Awareness Week and has generated interest in purple loosestrife. The costume cost \$3,600, including development. Copies can be ordered from Olympus Flag & Banner for less.

Video ideas:

- The science fiction approach works well, as do TV or film take-offs (“Extreme Makeover: Salmon River Edition,” “Fish Factor”).
- Hire professional actors and producers.
- Grab the audience. Put yourself in the shoes of the uninformed.
- Be brief; use bulleted items, not narrative format.
- Use good “before and after” photos.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Present your message as a package with logos, giveaways, technical information.

Case Study - Gary Grimm, Mountain Visions, Boise, ID

Gary Grimm, Mountain Visions (www.mountainvisions.com), demonstrated computer video capabilities that enable viewers to experience a 360-degree virtual tour. Sound effects and narration can be added. Hot spots within a picture allow specific narrative within a set panoramic view. Download time has been reduced, and even those with slower modems have had few complaints. This technology is being used on the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign website (www.idahoweedawareness.org).

Mountain Visions offers an extensive range of services to deal with resource issues. Some areas of assistance are: providing links to other states' websites; sharing of information; natural resource networking center; bulletin board listings of projects, calendar of events, volunteer sections, links, monitoring; management plans for comment. Some benefits include reduced travel costs and availability of publications online without having to spend funds on printing.

Audience questions elicited further discussion:

- The two-year web project for the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign cost about \$100,000. The goal was to provide education in conjunction with schools and colleges. The project focused on watersheds initially, creating a library in PDF format, movies, PowerPoint, etc. This interactive journey had hot spots in the panoramic view. By using high school students, and with relatively low-cost technology, the majority of the cost is the professional effort itself. Some cameras cost as little as \$300; other tools include digital or still cameras or video with sound and motion.
- Still cameras are used to keep the picture quality high so, for example, pictures can be enlarged for use on a billboard.
- End results are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Group Reports: Innovative Delivery Methods

(Responses collated from all groups; see complete flipchart notes in Appendix.)

What worked?

- More hands-on learning versus lectures.
- Science camps are good forums for providing education.
- Use field guides or technical manuals, CDs, or websites.
- With volunteers, it is essential to keep them motivated.
- Groups with catchy names get attention; for example, "No Ivy League."
- Use AmeriCorps or similar groups for door-to-door canvassing.
- Fairs create a lot of exposure; keep the displays current and changing to retain interest.
- Kids like take-home freebies like coloring books or bookmarks.
- Hawaii gives out awards to recognize weed-aware businesses.
- Alaska conducts an annual dandelion-pull day.
- Always have a reason for using a marketing gimmick such as bookmarks, magnets; how effective are they? One example was having a bumper sticker/magnet on display, which would result in discounts at sponsors' businesses.
- Trailhead signs.
- In Alaska, roadside crews were heckled for pulling "pretty flowers"; the solution was to post signs along the road explaining why the weeds were harmful.

- Make presentations to schools and community groups.
- Visual aids can be effective, such as weeds playing cards or video games.
- Create a portable herbarium with live plants.
- Field guides, identification books are useful visual aids.
- Public awareness through television.
- Commercials on radio and television – get the local media involved.
- Montana uses public service announcements directed to all counties, along with local radio and TV spots.
- Provide some sort of bounty or reward system incentive.
- Incorporate GIS training into weed identification or weed-pull days.
- Use roadside signs or informational kiosks at rest stops.
- Learning should be hands-on and action-oriented.
- Press releases, newspapers, letters to the editor.
- Calendars are a constant reminder of weed awareness.
- Seek out opportunities for face-to-face, one-on-one contacts.
- Target training with like-minded groups, such as the Master Gardeners.
- Pictures are great visual aids in newspapers and with wildlife expos.
- Obtain non-profit rates for television and radio spots.
- Insert information in hunting and fishing guides.
- Put together weed tours, weed pulls, or other community events.
- Use color pictures of native versus nonnative plants.
- Be creative, especially when the audience is mostly kids. For example, leafy spurge can project seeds in an area up to 15 feet away – have a sunflower seed spitting contest with prizes for the seed that goes the longest distance.
- Project a “cool” image.
- Idaho counties give credit for teachers to attend two-day workshop; field/identification work, poster contest, calendars (sell or give away).
- Erect memorable displays at gardening shows.
- Participate in plant exchanges with help from 4-H or Boy Scout groups.
- “Liatrix for loosestrife” plant exchanges held in North Dakota, as well as saltcedar exchanged for a nursery voucher.
- River raft trips to identify purple loosestrife.
- Create a “weed demonstration garden” for fair displays.
- Exchange a bag of weeds for coupons from sponsoring local businesses.
- Utah-Idaho CWMA sponsors a “Bag o’ Woad” annual event – they pay for each 40-pound bag of dyer’s woad collected, and youth groups, Boy Scouts, and nonprofit groups can use this as a fundraiser event.
- Use plastic weed models in displays and for giveaways.

- A Master Weed Advisors Program (based on the Master Gardener program) was developed in Washington with assistance from county weed superintendents. Training consisted of eight three-hour classes on weed control. Participants were required to take the state pesticide exam (so they could make recommendations) and volunteer 80 hours of their time over a two-year period. If a landowner called the county weed superintendent's office for assistance, a call would be placed to the nearest volunteer, who could drive out and meet personally with the caller to discuss the problem and a solution. This spread out the actual manpower hours, as well as increased the ability to cover a larger territory with more resources, reducing travel time and expense.
- Retired folks have served as weed-awareness volunteers at campsites in state parks in Arizona. They live in campers and visit with other campers throughout the season.
- Have a weed tour at a ski area.
- Offer "bakery bucks" for a bag of knapweed.
- Have a "giant weed" contest with awards for the tallest weed.
- "Native or Noxious" guessing game at a fair booth focused on aquatic weeds using six 1-qt. containers of aquatic plants.
- Use public access TV.
- Insert weed info in tax notices or water bills.
- Print weed info on hunting/fishing license-holders.
- Establish a call-in telephone hotline to report new weeds or ask questions.
- Hold a weed awareness gala or fundraiser.
- Target training to specific groups. In Wyoming, paragliders found four new Dalmatian toadflax infestations on remote hillsides.
- Weed pulls. But to attract adults, the pulls must be in a visible place and for a memorable reason such as Earth Day. Partner with a local nature center to bring in environmentalists. Have botanists there for plant identification. Work with local schools to offer extra credit to students who participate. Offer a free lunch.

What didn't work?

- Mass mailings, telemarketing.
- Handouts (no follow-up, but they do provide a "hook").
- Movie preview slides if there is no easy-to-remember phone number.
- Weed pulls – in some cases, poorly attended by adults
- Websites need follow-up and maintenance. Keyword searches should get your site in the top ten searches; otherwise, users may go elsewhere if they don't find your group immediately.
- Lots of "educational curricula" is available of differing quality. Be aware that the National Science Teachers Association is not in favor of curricula that assign human characteristics (faces, emotions, etc.) to plants.

- “Free weed relief” promoted widely in a homeowners association journal. A local weed group offered tools, manpower, etc., but only two homeowners participated.

Ideas for the future?

- Homeowner associations need information and education.
- Get the message out before there is a problem.
- Get recreationists in the habit of identifying and reporting noxious weeds locations.
- Make frequent classroom appearances, develop good rapport with teachers, fit in weed education in the appropriate place in the curriculum.
- Develop rapport with nurseries.
- Measure impacts and track the number of people contacted.
- Work with camps and groups, such as 4-H.
- Use educational tool kits in grades K-6, follow up in middle school, build to a more advanced level in high school.
- Be very clear in the difference between “education” and “awareness.”
- Develop a weed-related video game for kids.

Curriculum announcement

In Oregon, a noxious weeds curriculum for grades K-12 is currently in the graphics/design stage. It has taken seven years and many partners to develop. Professional writers, graphic artists, and education professionals were involved. Teachers have volunteered to test the curriculum. It is tied to the national science teaching standards. The completed program should be available in about a year. They are currently looking for teachers to review the draft materials (for pay); they require a signed contract with an agreement for follow-up. Contact Lesley Richman (lesley_richman@or.blm.gov) for more information.

Volunteer opportunities

Anna Cherry (National Invasive Species Council staff) announced a national effort to enlist volunteers following the recent airing of National Geographic’s *Strange Days on Planet Earth*. To follow up on the “Invaders” episode, a nationwide coalition of organizations designed and has provided lesson guides, mapping information, and other resources about invasive species. A volunteer kit provides a balance of science and nature information, invasive species lists, certified training for volunteers with staff expertise. See <http://www.pbs.org/strangedays/episodes/invaders/> for more information.

June 2, 2005

Program Evaluation: Did Your Program Have the Desired Outcome?

Case Study - Sue Donaldson, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

Sue Donaldson, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, noted that the response to a question about a project's success is often answered, "I think it worked." Unless the project or product leads to action concerning the weed problem, it's a waste of money. There must be a measurable outcome such as weeds being identified and reported to the right place. Another example is teacher training: did it achieve its desired outcome? Did teachers use the materials? Are the students learning from the materials? Did the students act on the information received? Was behavior influenced, and how is that measured?

The purpose of evaluation is to improve your program, to inform others (e.g., report to funding agency), to guide future actions and programs, to determine whether the program was worth the cost, to win further support and funding, and to fulfill academic interest.

Plan an evaluation while you plan the program. Do not tack on evaluation at the end of the project. To plan evaluation, consider the following:

- What do I want to know and how will I know it?
- What is the desired outcome of the project or product?

Design a program with a specific learning or action objective in mind. What results do you want? To impart knowledge and understanding? To affect beliefs, attitudes, and opinions? To influence behavior?

Outputs are not the same as outcomes or impacts. Outputs are things you produce, including brochures and printed materials or numbers of contacts. These facts and results are required by federal grantors to show accomplishments with dollars spent.

Some questions to ask when designing an evaluation are:

- What do people do differently as a result of the effort?
- Who benefited? How?
- Are program accomplishments worth the cost?
- What are the social, economic, and environmental impacts?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program or product?
- Did the program or product respond to a real need?
- How efficiently are resources being used?

Information to answer these questions (i.e., indicators of success) can be found through:

- Participation (numbers, amounts).
- Reactions (was interest maintained?).
- Learning (this must be tested somehow).

- Message received/lesson learned shown by change in habit or attitude.
- Action (what are people doing with their knowledge?).
- Impact (do we have fewer weeds?).

Report information should contain numbers (statistics) as well as a narrative with anecdotal information and photos. Sources of information may be surveys, observations, interviews, tests, group techniques. Identify target audiences (e.g., city/county government, citizens/neighborhood advisory board meetings, or the general public). Sue offered a case study of how her group was able to get the attention of a governing board. She reviewed tools such as bus advertisements, homeowner association groups, movie slides, or a website. Unfortunately, there is often no way to measure the impact of these messages. They may be lower in cost, but is the low cost worth it if the message is not being received? Don't abandon printed materials entirely, but don't rely solely on them to be effective.

It is important to learn about the psychology of learning – how people receive information and process and retain it. Knowing that will assist in targeting an audience and presenting an effective message.

Case Study - Carla Hoopes, Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign

Carla Hoopes, Montana Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign, emphasized the need to effectively measure and evaluate weed awareness programs. Groups should be equipped to demonstrate to their funding sources that action is needed and that public support for funding will follow. Surveys are useful tools to assess the public's level of awareness, provide an opportunity to change erroneous perceptions, and help the surveying group focus on its strengths and improve its weaknesses.

A 1994 Montana survey indicated a lack of support for weed programs and a feeling that noxious weeds were someone else's responsibility. The public did not see noxious weeds as a serious problem. There was a low level of knowledge about how weeds are spread. Those with this low level of exposure are those who seldom operate machinery, seldom fish, seldom work outside, and seldom drive off-road vehicles.

The statewide education and awareness campaign began in 1995. The public survey was repeated (by an independent agency) in 2002 and 2005. The mid-term survey revealed the need to create more training opportunities for weed professionals. There has been an increase in respondents who:

- Know weeds.
- Assess the weed problem as more serious.
- Can name a noxious weed.
- Can name two or more noxious weeds.
- Can name associated problems.
- Are active in weed management or prevention.

- Understand how weeds spread.

There has been a decrease in awareness of

- The belief that leafy spurge less serious than Canada thistle.
- Weed spread by wildlife.
- Weed spread by hay transport.

Copies of the surveys can be requested from Carla by emailing choopes@montana.edu.

What are measurable results? Examples include inventories, use of in-kind matches to stretch funding dollars, acres treated, partnership diversity, funding increases/decreases, designated weed-free areas.

When looking at partnerships, consensus on weed ideas, outreach messages, and product delivery is needed. Are messages from the different groups conveying the same concept?

Audience questions elicited further discussion:

- Surveying expertise was provided through the Montana State University-Billings and an independent consulting firm (J.L. Consulting, \$2,500). They provided the professional staff and completed the calls for a telephone survey. The key is having professional staff who can survey properly.
- If you mail out a survey and it is sent out only once, only about 10 to 20 percent of the people will respond. If a notice card is sent out first informing recipients that a survey is on its way and you can cultivate an interest in completing it, then the chances of receiving a completed survey increases to about 80 percent.
- Survey results are sent to the county offices so they can notify and work with local media and public as appropriate.
- Be aware of the need to follow up on public responses if your campaign is successful. If you raise interest, be ready to respond. Make sure you have personnel to deal with the response, answer questions about what to do, etc.
- It is important to communicate an outreach plan well in advance to those who will be affected (such as weed supervisors or Extension agents who may receive an increase in calls or requests following a successful event or educational presentation).
- Conduct an internal evaluation to assist in building on strengths for future events.

Group Reports: Program Evaluation

(Responses collated from all groups; see complete flipchart notes in Appendix.)

What worked?

- Surveys are a good chance to be honest, as they are usually anonymous.
- Surveys can provide a baseline before a project is started, which will clarify the direction.

- Phone surveys before and after an activity or outreach demonstrate coverage and provide a guaranteed response.
- Sometimes you can share the costs of a professional survey with a partner with a similar audience; for example, an end-of-year customer survey by the county could include some weed questions.
- See the online service www.surveymonkey.com for free or basic subscription to create a ten-question survey with up to 100 responses. Your group provides the email list, they provide a link to the online survey, and database results are then given. You can also use your own website to generate a survey.
- If conducting a survey at your fair booth, physically move the survey away from your display.
- One survey question to determine message effectiveness could be, “Where did you hear about the event?”
- Build feedback into an activity. For example, coupons can be tracked when they are redeemed at local businesses.
- Websites can track the number of “hits.”
- Measure increase/decrease in calls to weed hotlines; correlate to awareness activities.
- Evaluate the audience and the need before producing brochures.
- Key to evaluation: Track information and data to evaluate (use a database that is “query-able”).
- Boat shows are good forums for providing information on aquatic weeds, with a feedback form .
- Contacts can be tracked through information requests, phone calls, or hotline messages received.
- See what kids can teach you – can they identify weeds? Was it just a fun day, but they really don’t remember the message?
- Conduct one-on-one interviews at places such as WalMart.
- Poll county officials for election positions.
- Gather feedback through news interviews and talk radio.
- Get feedback from elected officials.
- An increase in partnerships and participation shows the success of your program.
- Product sales, such as *Weeds of the West* books or t-shirts, sparked interest and provided a visual attraction to fair booths or displays.
- Anecdotal information is useful for showing progress or success – save copies of memoranda or letters.
- Take pictures showing before and after shots, especially in areas with biocontrol releases.
- Measure and report weed-free acres rather than treated acres.
- Canvass county weed superintendents.
- Get baseline information before the project is undertaken so results can be measured against something.
- Anecdotal information can be useful; keep records of where and when.

What didn't work?

- Time or personnel constraints impede progress (tally results, track phone calls). Results are often difficult to track because other duties take priority or due to circumstances beyond one's control.
- Prevention is needed, not just reaction. Prevention "results" are difficult to evaluate. How do we measure what *didn't* happen?
- It's hard to evaluate a program you do not have in place.
- Many haven't evaluated successes yet; the "squeaky wheel concept" usually prevails.

Ideas for the future?

- Formal evaluations are not always necessary; sometimes results are obvious.
- Use GIS and other technology to evaluate weed populations every five years.
- On-the-ground programs must include an education element
- Professional assistance is recommended for surveys, especially to avoid privacy law issues, etc.
- Need to gather feedback from teachers using Ag in the Classroom or toolkits.
- Hard numbers are not always necessary to demonstrate success; depends on what the federal grant requirements are.
- How do you know if a behavioral change is due to program efforts?
- Everyone has a lot to learn about evaluating programs and demonstrating success.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Group Discussion

Janet Clark and Sue Donaldson asked for input from the group on what the next action steps should be. Should a follow-up group be created? What are short-term goals (accomplish in 12 months)? What are mid-term goals (accomplish in two to three years)? What are long-term or "someday" goals? Participants wrote down their ideas, which were posted on a sticky board.

Short-term (12-month) ideas included:

- Hold an awareness conference in Wyoming (Amy Lerch volunteered).
- Hold a national meeting. Invite appealing presenters.
- Create a listserv for communication.

- Conduct a follow-up meeting focusing on lessons learned.
- Plan an annual awareness event.
- Do not plan a conference during the weed season.
- Establish a regional working group, weed awareness board, steering committee.
- Catalog all available information and material in the region. (*Note: See CIPM's online Western Weed Resource Catalog at www.weedcenter.org/inv_plant_info/weedresource_cat.htm. Also, the Center for Lakes and Reservoirs at Portland State University has created a database and catalogued information on approximately 200 outreach and education materials focused on aquatic invasive species in the West. Authors and publishers are invited to input their own records. See www.clr.pdx.edu/AISInventory/.)*
- Include extension offices in awareness conferences.
- Have members upload brochures and information into a website to minimize upkeep by one person. Add sections for evaluation and review.
- Have an electronic bulletin board such as CIPM where information can be shared more effectively.
- Find ways to continue to share information – how?
- National Invasive Weed Awareness Week attended by many in February in Washington, D.C. NIWAW is an opportunity to make a big impact nationally; first, form a steering committee or board who can take input and bring in groups that are not typically associated with the NIWAW conference and make contacts with congressional delegations from western region. If there is a unified effort, the ability to seek out new funding or maintain current levels of funding improves significantly.
- Prior to NIWAW, the group could identify important questions to ask Legislators; if there is a fragmented message, some funding may come through, and others may not
- Has this issue been discussed on a broader scale other than the Western region? Look outside our own boxes – don't limit this group, see the larger picture. NIWAW is a good idea.
- Have the Western Governors' Association declare a western weed awareness week.
- Talk about federal versus state needs; present the full package of what needs to be done.
- Provide additional training on such areas as pesticide use.
- Pool funding, plan regional projects. Evaluate programs to determine most effective methods.
- Establish priorities.

Mid-range (12-36-month) planning ideas included:

- Hold a meeting in Hawaii!

- Expand educational opportunities to biologists to make them aware of potential problems; increase awareness in professional community.
- Establish a reporting form on the web for annual updates from states – with a \$500 reward for best submission!
- Establish a list of regional weed-awareness experts.
- Establish a regional weed awareness coordinator and obtain funding.
- Conduct regional seminars.
- Meet in the Western region, changing location every two years.
- More coordination of efforts, with less re-inventing of the wheel.
- Develop a regional strategic plan with evaluation tools for better tracking.
- Cooperate in publication of a regional booklet.
- Define “regional.”

Long-term/ “someday” (3+ yrs) ideas included:

- Regional weed awareness coordinator.
- State resources devoted to a common goal.
- Make use of increased funding opportunities.
- Work with existing groups.
- State weed-awareness coordinators in every state. There should be one source available in each state to contact for help or information.
- Someday everyone will know what noxious weeds are.
- Improved attendance and participation from federal agencies.
- Get policymakers to focus on necessary resources.
- Keep group regional – focus on geographic similarities. (Some states group regions by ecosystems – coastal, mountain, aquatic.)
- Increased weed awareness across the board.
- Establish an advocacy group, with a point person for communication.
- Why establish a new organization? What is its unique role that justifies its creation?

Further discussion elicited the following ideas and comments:

- It may be important to broaden the scope of education and awareness from “noxious weeds” to “invasive species.”
- Plenty of PR information and theory already exists; make use of professionals.
- The National Invasive Species Council (Anna Cherry) offered its permanent conference call line.
- There should be a clearinghouse for sharing information, notifications of new publications, position descriptions, etc.
- Listservs can allow a live PowerPoint link – low cost, no travel involved.
- California WeedTalk provides a forum for discussion of invasive plant issues in California. Sponsored by California Invasive Plant Council, this listserv serves to facilitate information sharing between its

members and others concerned about "wildland weeds," those particular plants that damage the state's ecosystems. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to californiaweedtalk-subscribe@topica.com.

- Create a listserv for the western group meeting only (it may be used nationally eventually). Maintain focus on weed awareness.
- There is name recognition and confidence in CIPM – this may be the best to act as a centralized clearinghouse.
- Individual agency or association websites could provide a link to the central clearinghouse.
- By a show of hands, more than half the group present indicated they would want a listserv to serve as a springboard for starting communication with the possible end goal of forming a western regional weed awareness group.
- Summit participants may be interested in subscribing to the National Invasive Species Council's public affairs listserv at <http://listserv.nal.usda.gov/archives/nisc-pa.html>. This listserv is designed for people in public affairs, outreach, and education related to invasive species. The listserv currently comprises mostly Federal members, but state folks are welcome and encouraged to participate.
- Comment was made about having training for professionals on marketing in general, with reference being made to the Public Relations Society of America, and members of the audience responded that generic help is already available for marketing; focus should remain on the goals of the summit – exchanging ideas to take home regarding policies and success stories.

Action items

- 1) A proceedings will be created from the Summit, including CDs with the PowerPoint presentations of the speakers at this two-day event, by the end of July. Proceedings will be posted on the Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM) website (www.weedcenter.org). CIPM will take the lead.
- 2) A listserv comprising Summit participants will be established. CIPM will work with Ryan Smith (Hawaii) to get this going within two weeks.
- 3) Work with Jennifer Vollmer to tie-in or report on this event at NIWAW. CIPM will follow up.
- 4) Amy Lerch (Jackson, WY) and Roger Batt (Boise, ID) will investigate organizing a weed awareness conference in the next two years.

Appendix: Flipchart notes

Targeting Your Audience

Group 1

- Each state at a different level
- Identify issues
- Identify constituency
- Know relevant impacts
- Understand the needs and recruit help!
- Pool resources between states
- Photos-growth stages, etc.
- Factoids – poisoning cases

Group 2.

What has not worked?

- Buying audience list
- Preaching to the choir
- Tactics for realtors
- Urban audience – too general
- Local weed weeks

What has worked

- Buy in from heavy hitters
- Reaching new landowners (long-time locals are reluctant)
- Target kids

Ideas for future

- Marketing plan for regional urban audience
- State-level weed week
- Measure outcomes

Group 3.

Urban

- Video PSA (targeted community)
- Bus ads
- Movie slides
- Airport displays
- Expos (flower and garden shows)
- Radio PSA (detection, education)
- Hooks (fire, water, \$, etc.)
- Freebies (trade pest for plant, etc.)

Rural

- Plastic flower (detection)
- Bookmark contest (kids)
- School programs (teacher education)
- Expos (prizes, materials)
- Weed walks
- Trainings Education (pesticide trainings)
- Free lunch and entertainment

Group 4.

1. Small acre landowners

- Door to door

- Volunteers, community weed pull (target schools)
- County fair
- Workshops
- Advertise in local papers
- Elementary schools, 5th grade kids (+)
- Partnerships with homeowners assn (-), teachers (+), federal agencies, etc.

2. Educating employees (NPS, agency)

3. Ideas: Good

- Door prizes
- Food
- Equipment/chemical cost shares (letting people use free equipment to match labor)
- Peers convincing peers
- Send people to see the problem
- Produce reports (bulleted points dealing with the problem and level of effort)

Ideas: Bad

- Not enough bait (don't feel connected to the problem)
- Workshops

Audiences

- Small acre landowners
- Agency employees. Spreading the word to day to day managers, field workers
- Legislators
- Visitors
- Students: elementary, high school
- County commissioners

Decision makers (legislators) at center of circle. Items below arrayed around circle

- Personal relationships with legislators
- Invite legislators to meetings, etc.
- Identify key people
- Tailor format to their needs: bullet points, maps, figures
- Be aware of constituents' wants and needs (fishing, hunting)
- Press coverage

Group 5.

- Critical first step: Define your end objective/result
- ID keystone targets – target audiences who are leaders in spreading messages
- Don't go it alone. Bring in the brainstorming squad.
- Develop a checklist of specific needs,

- resources, goals for each objective.
- Define the scope (of both issue and audience) you will work within
- Leave open opportunities for partnerships and scope expansion or contraction
- Who else is in contact with your target audience
- Determine when to bring in professional

- help
- Determine the base level of understanding of your audience
- Determine your budgetary constraints BUT think outside the box (plan for manna from heaven)
- Be aware of your opposition

Funding Your Program

Group 1.

Depends where you are

\$\$ Successes

- MOUs, assistance agreements
- Registrations fee and state mill levies
- Private donations
- Permanent funding sources

\$\$ Failures

- +/- Foundations (some successes)
- Everybody competing for the same dollars

\$\$ Future Ideas

- (WA) Bill Gates, Paul Allen
- Foundations – ESRI, etc.
- Western Regional Coordinator Funding.

Group 2.

CMA/Conservation Districts (county)
/Water districts (state)

- Federal grant

In-kind

- Private sector

Other Federal Sources

- Bureau of Reclamation
- NRCS
- Forest Service
- NFWF – requires non federal match (cash or in-kind)

State Boards/Sources

- Dept. of Ag
- Trust funds

County boards

Private-Sector/Non-Profits

- Chemical companies
- TNC

State Invasive Species Councils

- OISC (unable to acquire state or federal funding for awareness efforts)
- Special interest conflicts
- In NM no state support
- Soft money constrains ability to sustain a program
- Without state funding, non-federal match becomes difficult

Group 3.

What Works

- Cooperative Partnerships (developing state and federal)
- Lobbying Congress (and state legislature)
- Show professional/organized
- Show that program is successful
- Good grant writing
- Marketing plan
- County/state funding by legislation: mill levy (county) / trust fund (state)
- Start small with attainable goal

What Doesn't Work

- No return on investment for funder
- Poor grant writing
- Telemarketing
- Feed-good media
- Lack of follow-up

Future Ideas

- Plan for future by setting aside \$\$ when possible
- Have proposals for projects ready to go (end of year federal funding)
- PLAN AHEAD
- Look at funding in terms other than \$ (time, in-kind, etc.)
- WORK WITH OTHER STATES IN REGION – SHARE INFO
- CWMA

Group 4.

SUCCESS

- State park service, Fish & Game
- Long-term funding – searches for grants (MT trust)
- RC&D/NRCS
- State/private forestry – SWCD
- Forest Service – community fundraising
- US Fish & Wildlife Foundation/Service
- CIPM
- PTI
- Foundations

Failure

- Short-term funding hurts long-term

- restoration
- PTI; hard to administer grants (scare CWMA)
- Expecting weed sups to be grant/marketing-comm/grant admin experts = BURNOUT
- Complex state/federal/foundation processes turn people off from applying

FUTURE

- www.grants.gov
- Internal audience buy-in
- EPA
- Hope for streamlining at NFWF
- Hope for dedicated staff for ed and funding-NEEA
- ** Focus on education & awareness message for funding

Group 5.

Successes/Works

Garage sale- \$300

Lobby legislatures (election year; ongoing – changes in legislators)

- Pesticide reg fee

- Vehicle registration
- State invasive species council, Hawaii (prevention, control, PR)

Grants

PTI grant

In-kind from related industries

Mill levy (WY)

Cost-share programs (CO)

Federal agency \$ → Cooperative projects

State land funded by state

Not working/concerns

One-time funding creates frustration!!

Timing of funding reaching the ground

Restrictions on the use of \$

County funding

Unfounded mandates

Need & Want

Person to coordinate (Carla)

Consistent/stable funding source

Multi year grants

Innovative Delivery Methods

Group 1.

What Worked

Calendar – coolness factor
 One on one/face to face
 Targeted training; example, master gardeners
 Curricula/teacher training
 Front page newspaper article w/pic
 PSAs
 Radio
 Press release with pictures
 NPR and cable access
 Low-cost ads
 Fishing, hunting guides
 Tours
 Weed and native posters with real color pictures
 Games

What Didn't Work

Handouts/surveys in library, etc.
 Movie preview slides ?
 Phone numbers without acronyms
 Mass mailings and bulk mail (Email)
 Weed pulls with adults
 Gimmicks

Future

Measure deliveries/impacts
 Kids' video game
 Paid TV/radio at targeted audiences
 Websites → continue

Group 2.

Innovation in Education

Classroom kits, all levels K-12
 Train teachers in field ID
 Kids calendar, bookmarks
 Tie into state education standards
 Reach a broader audience than Ag
 CIPM - education website
 “Awareness” vs. “education”
 University system grants to develop courses

Other

Gardening shows
 Show leafy spurge roots
 WSU Master Gardeners Weed Advisor Program – 160 volunteers trained over 3 yrs
 Plant exchanges – county weed officers work with 4H and other kids
 Weed demonstration garden
 Weed tours
 Weed pulls; pay per bag
 Bakery bags
 Giant weed contest
 Natives or noxious game

What doesn't work

Brochures and printed materials
 Need more training and follow up
 Need more hands on

Group 3.

Kids/schools

- Hands-on
- Telecasting
- Technology
- Camps

Field guides

- On CD

Fundraisers – use to raise visibility

- Displays
- Weed starts in planters

Volunteers

- “No ivy leagues”
- Pressure nurseries
- Americorps

Fairs

- Interactive
- Live plants

Group 4.

Innovative Delivery Methods

- County fairs +/-
- Video games for kids
- Playing cards, Wyoming
- Portable herbarium
- WSSA-Weed ID data base with 1,000 weeds
- ID book, field guides
- Gov't (public) access TV stations (Free \$)
- Video
- Commercials
- Prepared packet w/PSAs (MT)
- News coverage (media story)
- Coloring books for kids
- Awards/recognition
- Denali dandelion pull (example)
- Neighborhood boards
- Homeowners' associations
- Bookmark contest (WY)
- Other contests
- Marketing tools
- Reason for using it

- Community wide cost savings/benefits
- MT = magnet for vehicle with logo
- Billboards/kiosk (recreation areas)
- Partner w/agency
- Signage - example, exotic plant control event, Alaska NPS
- Community presentations
- Schools
- Community groups

Group 5.

Website – unique URL, with agency association

Hotline – phone tree option

Info associated with hunting/fishing license, etc.

Inserts in Fish and Game regs

Bounty/reward system

Weed awareness galas and fundraisers

Virtual GIS (3D topo scenarios and mapping)

Road signs (plastic!)

Community events, weed pulls, etc.

- Work first, learn later
- Civic engagement

Signage at rest stops, regionally targeted.

Trailheads

Schools – toolkits, travel trunks, etc. K-12, 4th, 5th, college

Outdoor ed (hands on, action oriented)

Press releases – impacts, new species

Letters to the editor

Booth Events

- Tailored to audience (regionally dependent)
- County fairs, ag fest
- Boat shows, garden shows
- Displays with “Weed Expo”

Alternatives displays

Doesn't work

“Free Weed Relief,” mass mail, phone, etc. Go through developers, association heads, etc.

General workshops, meetings w/out hands-on component.

Where do we go from here?

Short-term (1-2 years)

A catalog of all the available educational material in the region.

Resource repository.

Web-based clearinghouse for weed awareness resources and idea sharing.

Network info.

Written update from each participating state – progress (“Champions”) made over last year.

Establish an Awareness/Education virtual bulletin board on CIPM's website where we all could post ideas, questions, “cool stuff,” etc.

Continued communication and information sharing within group.

PNW Board.

Strong PNW communication channel.
Proceedings from summit. Education list serve. Weed Awareness Board.
Form regional coalition.
Develop Western Region Steering Committee.
Working group or board.
Want ads bulletin board. Conference call time.
As big a group as possible to pool dollars. Hire professional advertising/PR company to help formulate a plan for a regional (or regions) invasive weed awareness campaign.
Training on the “psychology of adult education.” Need to promote education of proper pesticide use and prevention of enviro contamination. “Don’t trade one evil for another.”
Improved evaluation of programs to determine most effective methods.
Wouldn’t it be great if we . . . Had a follow-up meeting share lessons learned, applications from this meeting.
Awareness conference (in Wyoming). Amy Lerch volunteers.
Organize and conduct a national meeting.
Outcome of this meeting summarized, including participant evaluations, and distributed to participants.
Next meeting should not be during weed-killing season.
More demographic study guidelines and steps. More state reps or decision makers rather than on-the-ground people.
Plan for next year’s summit.
Distribution of info (proceedings) from Weed Summit.
Someone to compile all the info we’ve learned over the last couple days.
Not in the summer, but in the winter.
States initiate talks and weed awareness campaign within their individual states.
WAC Weed Awareness Center or clearing house.
More information about IWAC and NIWAW. Use event as kickoff for state weed awareness weeks.
Generic “weed awareness” training.

Medium-term (2-3 years)

Meeting in 2 years – Amy, Roger.
Alaska weed tour/summer.
Hawaii.
Governors from states with weed programs to work with other governors to persuade toward states weed programs. “All Western States” participating.
Put efforts into having one entity be the centerpin for our efforts – maybe the Western Weed Coordinating Committee? And have an annual Awareness/Education Session at that annual meeting.
Hire a funding/communications coordinator.
Regional Coordinator.
Another meeting to share progress, success, and future strategies. Start strategizing for regional coordinator, get Western Governors’ Association proclamation.
Second summit. Regional coordinator.
Have at least one more summit to follow up this one.
Have regional seminars (sub regions).
Regional breakouts. Back in individual states. (Additional entry in red marker, maybe from SD?)
Regional=similar issues.
One more meeting, but not during weed field season, please. I don’t think annual meetings are necessary.
Presentation of actual “outside the box” educational materials that have yielded significant outcomes.
Every 2 years have a western weed summit. Move from state to state w/field trip included in the agenda.
More coordination, less reinventing the wheel in each state.
Grant written to launch an urban weed education targeted campaign (or other funding source – foundation?)
Develop Western Region Strategic Plan.
Evaluation tools will be developed and progress toward meeting goals starting to be tracked on a statewide basis.
Become a national organization.
Regional publications.
Coordinate awareness literature by region or weed type.

Develop education resources for regional use (e.g., images, video).
Weeds curricula tied to state education benchmarks and standards.

Long-term (3+ years)

Western Region Weed Ed Coordinator.

Regional Coordinator. Grants from new weed awareness board/council.

National legislation and funding for weeds initiatives including education and awareness.

Shared resources that work toward a common goal.

Share pdf literature so others can easily modify for own state.

Developed group capable of applying for and distributing funds internally. Document and program development. Possibly hire coordinator.

Become a North American organization.

Public understanding of weed issue becomes so strong that policymakers put the necessary resources toward monitoring and control.

Improve attendance from federal agency personnel; e.g., BOR, EPA, BIA, FWS and other agencies w/invasive species directives.

Regional coordination and organizations of all state weed awareness coordinators.

When I go out to survey the local youth in the bar in the host town, they all know what an invasive is.

Everyone and their dog will know what noxious weeds are.

Grants.

Increased funding to western states via efforts from western states summits.

Secure long-term funding for all.

Funding/grants.

Every state will have a Weed Awareness Campaign similar to Idaho and Montana.

Western Weed Awareness Campaign.

Weed Awareness and education meet to work closely with practitioners via existing professional groups (but have a good network of specialists to lean on).

Where do we go from here? Summary

Short term

- Follow-up meeting
- Working group/BOD
- Web communication
- Networking
- Weed awareness week event in states. WGA declaration.
- Listserv
- Broader-scale awareness event → NIWAW
- Unified message
- Training for “awareness” professionals
- Regional PR effort

Medium term

- Regional coordinator
- Regional seminar
- Regional committee
- Regional publication/curricula
- WWAS summit (every 2 yrs)

- National organization
- Urban awareness campaign
- Strategic plan/campaign

Eventually

- Regional coordinator
- Awareness funding to all
- Campaigns in all states
- Regional coordination of coordinators
- Wide public awareness
- Increased awareness → monitoring, control
- What is “regional”? Similar audiences, issues, messages
- 100th meridian campaign