Missouri River Watershed Coalition – Saltcedar Management Project
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 6, 2008
8:00 am – 12:15 pm
DRAFT
Location: Gering Civic Center, Scottsbluff/Gering, Nebraska

29 Meeting Participants:
Amy Mesman, USDA APHIS PPQ (SD) Rod Litzel, Johnson County Weed & Pest (WY)
Andrew Canham, SD School & Public Land Ron Moehring, SD Department of Agriculture
Bruce Helbg, USDA APHIS (SD) Ruth Richards, Big Horn County Weed & Pest (WY)
Darwin Kurtenbach, SD Department of Agriculture Scott Bockness, Yellowstone County/MWCA (MT)
Dave Burch, MT Department of Agriculture Scott Guffey, Pennington County Weed & Pest (SD)
Dick Sackett, Crook County Weed & Pest (WY) Slade Franklin, WY Department of Agriculture
Greg Sundstrom, CO State Forest Service Ted Teitjen, SW Nebraska RC&D Council
Kelly Sharp, MVM (SD) Roger Stockton, SW Nebraska RC&D
Kelly Ubing, CO Department of Agriculture David Boschholt, NE Department of Agriculture
Kristi Paul, Sheridan County Weed District (NE) Galen Niehues, NE Department of Agriculture
Liz Galli-Noble, Center for Invasive Plant Mgt (MT) Tim Carlson, Tamarisk Coalition (CO)
Mara Johnson, Center for Invasive Plant Mgt (MT) Julie Allen, Carbon County Weed & Pest (WY)
Mike Sarchet, Twin Cities Development Assoc (NE) Denny East, Diamond Mowers (SD)
Mike Stenson, SD Department of Agriculture Kim Mann, USDA – ARS (MT)
Nathan Jagim, Meade County Weed & Pest (SD)

I. Welcome: Liz Galli-Noble, the new CIPM Director, introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the MRWC spring meeting.

II. Introductions: Roundtable introductions.

III. Approval of October 2007 meeting minutes:
Edits to the minutes – Colorado was in attendance at the last meeting. A motion was proposed to approve the minutes as amended; it was seconded and approved (see Attachment A for final version of the minutes).

IV. MRWC Program Coordination – Center for Invasive Plant Management:
Dave Burch presented a draft technical work plan and budget submitted by the Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM) to coordinate the MRWC program (see Attachment B). The Montana Department of Agriculture recently received funding from the US Forest Service State and Private Forestry’s Cooperative Forestry Assistance program for enhancement of multi-state, EDRR efforts. If the MRWC membership is in agreement, a portion of that funding ($100,000) will be directed to the CIPM for MRWC program coordination and administration, meeting facilitation, production of educational materials, investigating future funding opportunities, mapping assistance, and the like (May 2008 to May 2009).

Discussion –
- There was some additional discussion of State and Private Forestry funds and how they are being used in Colorado.
- Greg Sundstrom mentioned the Great Plains Riparian Forest Management Summit – to be held from September 9 to 11, 2008 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota – which is sponsored in part by S&PF.
- Slade Franklin commended Dave for providing the MRWC with program coordination funding. He also recommended that the group focus on #6 – EDRR component of the work plan. He said that that should be where the CIPM coordinators focus much of their attention. Slade asked that #6 be moved to the top priority in the work plan and Kelly Ubing agreed.
• Dave Burch suggested that the CIPM should document the process of forming the MRWC, to be used by other regional efforts – to assist them in their processes.
• Dave was asked if he needed to show match for this contract? He explained that Montana already has enough match. However, he would welcome other states showing that they have match for these funds. He was asked if in-kind contribution could be used as match? Dave responded, “yes.” Dave is also hoping that other groups (BLM, Corps of Engineers) will kick in funding. Liz Galli-Noble was asked to send the MRWC membership an official form to allow the states to consistently document in-kind and cash match for MRWC meetings and other efforts.
• Liz Galli-Noble said that CIPM staff can work on the EDRR, but that we could also subcontract EDRR tasks, depending on what is needed.
• Chris Dionigi with the National Invasive Species Council is working on an EDRR plan.
• Colorado will be hiring an EDRR person so they will be focusing more on this as well.
• Scott Bockness suggested that MRWC come up with subcommittees or work groups that can work on specific components of the work plan, such as a work group for leveraging funding or appropriations, education and outreach, etc. It was suggested that we start this on the listserv – members would sign up via the listserv. This idea was supported by group. Liz will set this up and send out a “sign up” for work groups in the next month or so.

Decision: Dave Burch will move forward and sign a contract with the CIPM for MRWC program coordination. The final work plan will include the changes suggested by the MRWC membership documented above.

V. 2008 Fall MRWC Meeting Discussion:
It was proposed that the MRWC 2008 fall meeting should be in conjunction with one of these two other events:
1. Great Plains Riparian Forest Management Summit in Sioux Falls, SD; September 9-11
2. North American Weed Management Association meeting in Billings, MT; September 15-18 (date confirmed).

• Greg Sundstrom thought that the Sioux Falls meeting was a good match for the MRWC because the focus will be broader than just weeds – it will include water quality, fisheries, forests, etc.
• Discussion of the benefits of each meeting followed with no consensus reached by the group on which to attend.
• Liz asked if the group was comfortable having the Executive Committee make a final decision; there was no opposition.

Decision: In the next month or so, the Executive Committee will decide on where and when the fall 2008 MRWC meeting will be held. The Executive Committee will compare agendas and times and make the decision, which will then be announced by the CIPM via the listserv.

VI. Draft MRWC Constitution and Bylaws Review and Discussion:
Ron Moehring presented a revised version of the MRWC constitution and bylaws for review and discussion.
Suggested edits and comments:
• Ron Moehring was commended for his hard work and the solid document that he presented to the group.
• Under Article VII there is a “3” and it should be “4”.
• Under Article I “Land Management” should be deleted and it should read “Federal Agencies.”
• Article VII refers to the Executive Committee but the make-up of the Executive Committee is not clearly defined anywhere in the document. Ron Moehring explained that he thought it was covered under Article III – which reads: “... each member state shall be entitled to one vote. Which is to be cast by the noxious weed coordinator or his authorized representative from his state.”
• Liz commented that if the document is approved, we may wish to have written ballots ready for the fall MRWC meeting for the election of officers. This is what is required under Article II of the bylaws.
• Ron was asked for clarification on Article IV - defining qualified candidates for election of officers. Would it be just the six state weed coordinators who could be elected as officers, but everyone could vote? Or would there be one vote per state? Would the terms for officers be staggered, so we don’t have all three officers appointed in the same year? Who can be officers? Given that six states are voting, if there is a tie vote, how will it be broken?
• A suggestion was made that perhaps what the MRWC needs more is a Board (including the CIPM director) and not necessarily Officers.

Decisions:
1. Given that no consensus was reached on many of these issues, the decision was made to have MRWC membership further review the document over the summer and then provide edits and feedback to Ron Moehring.
2. Liz and Ron will send out a revised draft to the full MRWC group over the summer with edits and suggestions made at this meeting.
3. Ron will have a new working draft for the fall MRWC meeting.

VII. Round Table – State Updates:

South Dakota:
• Mapping projects with CAPs and APHIS are just about complete. Western South Dakota: they have been treating as they go.
• Looking for possible site for release on the Cheyenne River.
• Two seasonals are working on mapping saltcedar.
• They have gotten press in the papers (see press release hand out, Attachment C).
• Commission last week voted to put Phragmites on the local invasive species list.

Wyoming:
• Lovell bio-control site.
• Presentations will be given this week on the Powder River and mapping on the North Platte.
• They are trying to do more in-depth mapping on the North Platte with hyperspectral imagery, which the University Wyoming is working on. They might take the preliminary map and then try to find a grant to finish it. Asked about mapping evapotranspiration with hyperspectral imagery - some information out there.

Montana:
• Four counties are working on saltcedar and one county added Russian olive to their noxious weed list.
• Scott Bockness has a big control project in Yellowstone County.
• JHS is comparing resolution of imagery.
• Carbon County found a few acres of purple loosestrife and they will be working on controlling it so it doesn’t spread down river.
• Dawson County is working on saltcedar control.
• NAWMA will be in Billings in September 2008.
• The summit advisory council to Montana’s governor will have a subcommittee on invasive species. That committee will be in charge of all invasive species in Montana.
• They are working with NRCS to specifically target Russian olive and saltcedar for landowners.
• Department of Agriculture is looking at putting Russian olive on the noxious weed list as a Category 4 species (not for sale). There’s been a petition from several NGOs and groups to get it on the noxious weed list. It seems that the perception has changed on Russian olive in Montana.
• They received funds from DNRC to compensate a nursery that is raising Russian olive to offset their loss.
Nebraska:
- Last summer the Nebraska Legislature created a Governor’s task force for riparian management.
- *Phragmites* is on the noxious weed list.
- Funding: $5 million for invasive plants – $2 million in 2007 and $2 million in 2008 for competitive projects on Russian olive, saltcedar and *Phragmites*.
- Nebraska has a statewide, web-based mapping program that works great: [http://www.neweedmapper.org/Weed/](http://www.neweedmapper.org/Weed/)

Colorado:
- Colorado is starting to look into web-based mapping.
- House Bill 1399 passed, which will reinstate the Colorado Weed Fund for cost share projects throughout the state – allocated $300,000 to the weed fund. New funding is through the “unclaimed property” account and interest from that account.
- They will hire an EDRR specialist and state weed mapping specialist with this new funding.
- Every year Colorado asks for information on specific species from counties and then comes up with management plans for those species – Kelly handed out resultant maps, which are amended into rules.
- Kelly discussed EQIP funding for invasive species in her state. Right now it can only fund Russian olive when it is managed with saltcedar. The RFPs come out in July.
- Working with conservation districts - Grazing Lands Initiative funded High Plains weed specialist. The point is to bring conservation districts together with weed people.
- $1 million for seven years – a fund for Republican River pipeline.
- Aquatic Nuisance Species Bill in Colorado is up – will give law enforcement personnel the authority to inspect for aquatic nuisance species (ANS).
- Colorado has an ANS management plan in the works.
- Society of Range Management and WSSA are planning a joint conference in Denver in February 2010 – they are expecting about 3000 to 4000 people.
- Comprehensive mapping through whole state has been completed for saltcedar.
- Several management plans have been completed.
- NRCS has been a great partner.
- State Ag Palisades Insectary has been very active in about a dozen states.

North Dakota: Not present.

CIPM:
- Announcement: There is a new Center for Aquatic Nuisance Species – which is a western-region focused, nonprofit group based in Livingston, Montana.

**VIII. Rethinking MRWC’s Mapping Objective:**
Mike Stenson presented a new South Dakota multiple-layer, saltcedar map to the group. He explained that there was some confusion after the fall 2007 meeting, what exactly the MRWC wanted on the new six-state map. It was suggested that four layers be added:
  1. Presence/Absence saltcedar by county map with acres
  2. Point data for saltcedar
  3. Threaten and Endangered Species
  4. Cultural sites
Mike asked the group, where should be go from here? What exactly do we want and why? Which layers should be included?

Discussion –
- For the short term we should update presence/absence data.
- Originally, adding T&E species was proposed to help leverage additional funding. Some states are having difficulty getting T&E species information. Putting T&E species data on a published map
could cause problems and in some instances will not be allowed. This is also true for cultural sites, whose locations are often kept secret in order to protect them from vandals.

- Several comments reiterated that the objectives of the presence/absence map were: a representation of the invasive plant big picture in the Missouri River Watershed, to be easily updatable, to use for education/outreach materials, and as solid information in funding proposals.
- T&E species data may be good information on a project-specific level; it may also be beneficial to have this data consolidated.
- Kelly Sharp doesn’t mind managing these types of data, if people can send the data to him.
- We may need to release a statement that says MRWC will address/document T&E species and cultural locations. Could each state coordinator identify where T&E species data is housed, just in case MRWC wishes to use it in a future mapping effort?
- Kristi Paul showed the group a new six-state saltcedar poster that she made for the meeting. She also presented the new MRWC brochure.
- Kelly Sharp is planning to make the new six-state map web-based, to update it in real time and add additional layers. Access to update data directly would be limited to state coordinators.
- Several comments were made concerning problems with the new six-state map: (1) several river locations are incorrect, and (2) the South Platte River is not on the map and needs to be added. Kelly Sharp can make these corrections and asked everyone to review the map and contact him with suggestions for changes.
- Tim Carlson talked about mapping in Colorado. He said that the MRWC should consider showing the following on the new map: inventory; indicate riparian v. upland infestations; and effects of treatment methods and costs. In the end, these things help policymakers understand “what gains they will get out of funding this action.”
- Greg Sundstrom will bring it up at the Great Plains Riparian Forest Management Summit that assessing the condition of riparian forests could be a priority for state and private forestry funding.

IX. MRWC Mapping (continued)

Dave Burch presented a new, six-state, saltcedar presence/absence, web-based, interactive, Internet-accessible map designed by JHS – a Montana company that also works on the Barrier Zone project. The Internet link for the new map is: http://gis.jhsincorporated.com/mrwc/; however, the map will likely be taken off the site in a few weeks.

- Kelly Sharp commented that this type of interactive, web-based mapping is very much what he intends to do.
- It was suggested that the MRWC could contract out to Kelly Sharp to do this type of project but no action was taken the MRWC will revisit this issue again at the fall meeting.
- A question was asked whether or not there is a national group doing this type of mapping? Kelly mentioned that a USGS group was doing this work. A short discussion concerning several national mapping efforts ensued.
- Dave Burch asked Kelly Uhing about Colorado’s quarterquad weed data. Many agreed that this is a good way to present weed presence/absence information.
- In the future, we need to add to the map: treated/non-treated areas, project locations, bio-control sites, etc. The South Dakota mapping team indicated that this would be easy to do. However, a comment was made reminding the group that the counties are busy, so ask for the basics first.

Decisions/Action Items:

1. States want to settle for a simple, six-state, saltcedar presence/absence map; MRWC needs accuracy and predictability; MRWC needs to be able to update acres per county in a timely manner. The MRWC will not pursue T&E species data mapping at this time.
2. Liz Galli-Noble will send out an e-mail reminder to the MRWC group to send Kelly Sharp (and the South Dakota mapping team) data updates and suggestions for changes to the map. Specifically, all new data to be added to the map must be to them no later than August 1, 2008.

3. The Kelly Sharp and the South Dakota mapping team will have a new, six-state, interactive map to present by the MRWC fall meeting.

X. 2009 Appropriations Requests
(1) Andy Canham distributed a handout on the Fiscal Year 2009 agriculture appropriations request to South Dakota’s Senator Tim Johnson. There was additional discussion by the different states and their appropriations requests at NIWAW. Andy had updated the budget in his FY 2009 request by calling different coordinators and getting their input. EDRR was a priority. The FY 2009 request was very similar to the FY 2008 request; however, in FY09 several states endorsed and supported the request, not just South Dakota, which was the case in FY08. There was discussion on the likelihood of getting the appropriation request and when the Noxious Weed Control Eradication Act of 2004 is due to sunset. The same appropriation request form could be used in the next federal funding cycle (FY10) with just an authorization title change. However, Andy stressed that FY10 is MRWC’s last chance to apply to for this funding, and consequently, the MRWC needs: to show a collective effort, to work on this ahead of time, to have the Appropriations Work Group focus on this funding source, and all of the MRWC states need to sign on in support of the request.

(2) Water for America (formally “Water 2025”) will be pursued by Kelly Uthing and Slade Franklin as an alternative funding source. It was noted that the Bureau of Reclamation is using a Texas A&M study as evidence that there is no water savings from saltcedar removal; therefore, it is justified that the Department of the Interior (BOR) is not doing much with regard to the saltcedar problem. There was further discussion of the message they got from the Department of the Interior and the importance of showing response to customer needs.

XI. Other Interest Groups
Someone asked if the MRWC had invited other interest groups (such as TNC, WWF, RMEF, Turkey Foundation, BASF, DuPont, etc.) to our meetings? It was noted that they have been invited in the past and this might be something the CIPM coordinator should pursue for the future.

XII. MRWC Workgroups
At the fall MRWC meeting, time will be reserved for MRWC workgroups to meet – for a maximum of two hours – before the main meeting. Workgroups will report to the full group during the meeting. These workgroups will form over the summer and MRWC members are asked to sign up for specific groups (Funding/Appropriations, Education, Mapping, etc.) via the listserv.

XIII. USDA ARS Saltcedar Biocontrol Presentation
Kim Mann, ARS personnel from Sidney, Montana, presented a PowerPoint on saltcedar biocontrol projects. The quarantines facility in Sidney should be dedicated in August and will start working with a Kazakhstan scientist on other biocontrol agents for saltcedar. ARS is also hiring a new ecologist in Sidney to work on non-indigenous species issues.

XIV. Schedule MRWD Fall Meeting: The fall MRWC meeting will be held in conjunction with either the NAWMA or Great Plains Riparian Forest Management Summit meetings in September – to be decided by the Executive Committee after reviewing dates and agendas.

XV. Meeting Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.
Action Items / Decisions:

1. In-Kind/Match Form
   Action Item: Liz Galli-Noble will send the MRWC membership an official form to allow the states to consistently document in-kind and cash match for MRWC meetings and other efforts.

2. MRWC Program Coordination
   Decision: Dave Burch will move forward and sign a contract with the CIPM for MRWC program coordination. The final work plan will include the changes suggested by the MRWC membership during the May 6, 2008 meeting.

3. MRWC Work Groups
   Action Item: CIPM will facilitate work group formation for the MRWC fall meeting; and will send out a “sign up” announcement for MRWC work groups (Appropriations, Education, Mapping, etc.) via the listserv in the next month or so. These work groups will meet before and present at the fall MRWC meeting.

4. MRWC Fall Meeting
   Decision: In the next month or so, the Executive Committee will decide on where and when the fall 2008 MRWC meeting will be held. This will then be announced by the CIPM via the listserv. It will be held in conjunction with one of these events: (1) Great Plains Riparian Forest Management Summit in Sioux Falls, SD; September 9-11; or (2) North American Weed Management Association meeting in Billings, MT; September 15-18. CIPM will make arrangements for the meeting once the decision is made.

5. MRWC Constitution/Bylaws
   Decisions: No consensus was reached at the May 6 MRWC concerning the constitution and bylaws.
   a. Ron Moehring and Liz Galli-Noble will send out a revised draft of the MRWC constitution/bylaws to the full MRWC group over the summer including edits and suggestions made at the May 6 MRWC meeting.
   b. The MRWC membership will further review the document over the summer and then provide edits and feedback to Ron Moehring no later than mid-August. In addition, the MRWC Executive Committee will discuss the structure of MRWC administration and election of officers over summer through listserv and e-mails and also provide feedback to Ron.
   c. Ron will have a new working draft of the constitution/bylaws for the fall MRWC meeting.

6. MRWC Mapping
   Decisions:
   a. The MRWC states want a simple, web-based, interactive, six-state, saltcedar presence/absence map with acres per county, good accuracy and predictability, and that is easily updateable.
   b. Liz Galli-Noble will send out an e-mail reminder to the MRWC group to send Kelly Sharp (and the South Dakota mapping team) data updates and suggestions for changes to the map. All new data/corrections to be added to the map must be to Kelly Sharp no later than August 1, 2008.
   c. Kelly Sharp and the South Dakota mapping team will have a new, six-state, interactive map to present by the MRWC fall meeting.

7. Water for America will be pursued by Kelly Uhing and Slade Franklin as an alternative funding source for the MRWC.

8. CIPM will look into inviting outside groups to MRWC meetings.

9. The MRWC Executive Committee will look into 501(c)3 status – CIPM (Janet Clark) will assist in this discussion.

10. MRWC press releases MRWC members should contact Ron Moehring or Mike with ideas for summer 2008 MRWC press release (it’s going to be a general release about the MRWC). It was suggested that money spent and the money being sought should be in the press release. Liz Galli-Noble will send out a reminder via the listserv reminding MRWC members to send Ron this information.
Next meeting: May 6, 2008, at Scottsbluff, Nebraska, in conjunction with the Russian Olive Summit

**Action items determined at October 2007 meeting:**

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<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>When?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Compile T&amp;E data and send to Ron Moehring (SD) to overlay on six-state saltcedar occurrence map</td>
<td>State weed coordinators</td>
<td>By Dec. 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review draft brochure and send comments to Kristi Paul (NE)</td>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>By Nov. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post finalized brochure on MRWC website for others to download and use as needed</td>
<td>Kristi P., CIPM</td>
<td>By Dec. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post updated six-state map on the MRWC website</td>
<td>CIPM, Kelly S.</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post .jpg of six-state map created by JHS, Inc., on MRWC website</td>
<td>CIPM, Dave B.</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send proposed MRWC constitution and bylaws to the listserv for review and comment.</td>
<td>Ron M.</td>
<td>Finalize documents at May 6, 2008, MRWC meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compile annual evaluation of MRWC project; distribute to group for review</td>
<td>CIPM</td>
<td>By Nov. 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange for meeting space for MRWC at Russian Olive Summit</td>
<td>Dennis B., Mike S.</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
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<td>Create a MRWC poster/display for the Russian Olive Summit next May – everyone to send pictures of their projects to Kristi P. or Mike S.</td>
<td>Kristi P., Mike S., and everyone else</td>
<td>By April 1, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow up on six-state MOA; get it signed by all six state departments of agriculture.</td>
<td>CIPM</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<td>Send sample communication flowchart to other state weed coordinators to start building a six-state EDRR system.</td>
<td>Dave B.</td>
<td>By Dec. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four overlays (?) will be developed for the MRWC map.</td>
<td>Ron M., Kelly S., Bill W.</td>
<td>By May 6, 2008</td>
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<td>Create new MRWC one-pager</td>
<td>CIPM</td>
<td>By Jan. 1, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write up two saltcedar projects and distribute to media and legislators statewide</td>
<td>State weed coordinators</td>
<td>By May 6, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft press release about MRWC to be adapted and distributed by members</td>
<td>Kevin F.</td>
<td>By Dec. 31</td>
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MRWC Semi-Annual Meeting Minutes – October 30, 2007

Roundtable Introductions
Approximately 30 meeting attendees representing five states (MT, ND, NE, SD, WY, CO) introduced themselves and checked off their name or signed an attendance list which will be distributed after the meeting via email.

State and Agency Reports
Comments during state reports included:

- Saltcedar awareness has increased greatly in South Dakota in the past four years. SDSU has created a saltcedar Extension bulletin. It has been helpful to take a live plant to events to show the public.
- There is evidence of establishment of biocontrol agents in South Dakota.
- Saltcedar treatments were effective on the North Platte River in Wyoming this summer. Russian olive is being targeted on the Nebraska border.
- University of Wyoming is helping manage data from hyperspectral aerial mapping in Wyoming.
- A mulching project is being conducted on the Powder River in northeastern Wyoming. Herbicides are also being used. Quail and whitetail deer are returning and the area is again useful for livestock grazing. However, land managers note damage on cottonwoods in sandy soils. Bill Walker will check with Dow.
- More private landowners are getting involved in saltcedar management in the Big Horn (WY) area. A biocontrol site generated lots of agents for redistribution this summer.
- Counties on the Yellowstone River in Montana are actively treating saltcedar, working from the top of watersheds down. The Army Corps of Engineers has been especially active on the Fort Peck Reservoir.
- New projects were initiated in Nebraska funded by a $2 million grant program. More saltcedar is being found and treated. It is often mixed with Russian olive and phragmites.
- It is often difficult to spend sudden windfalls of money well by short-term deadlines. Long-term follow-up management is crucial to success. Continuous funding is needed.
- More information is needed regarding 1) saltcedar seed viability and 2) post-saltcedar land restoration in northern states.
- A new eight-county weed management area is forming in Nebraska. The group received funding for mapping Russian olive and saltcedar.
- “The Weed Watch,” an eight-page publication produced by PRIDE Weed Management Area and the High Plains Weed Management Association, was distributed to 40,000 households in the 11 Panhandle counties of Nebraska in Fall 2007.
- The Army Corps of Engineers has been very active in managing saltcedar in North Dakota.
- Although a plant species may be prohibited to be sold or distributed in one state, the plant can often be purchased in a neighboring state and brought across the border. There is an opportunity for states to work together on this issue.
• The BLM has completed its programmatic EIS for the nation. It is also creating a nationwide database and GIS system with information on inventory and control as well as weed management areas.
• The Forest Service is having to put much funding into fuels management, resulting in less funding for on-the-ground invasive plant management.

**Russian Olive Summit**
The MRWC voted to be an official supporter of the Russian Olive Summit that will be held May 6-8, 2008, in Scottsbluff, NE. The summit will focus on watershed-scale management of Russian olive, saltcedar, and phragmites. Other supporters include the National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Tamarisk Coalition, Center for Invasive Plant Management, and others. MRWC will create a poster/display for the Summit.

**Legislation**
• The Saltcedar Demonstration Act has appropriation support from several senators, particularly those from Colorado, Nebraska, and New Mexico. People are encouraged to contact their congressmen about this legislation next Feb/March; 20-24 senators are needed to sign on.
• The 2007 Farm Bill may have new opportunities for invasive species control in riparian areas and wetlands.
• There is some cause to feel optimistic about appropriations for the Weed Eradication Act (assigned under APHIS) in 2008.
• DuPont is hosting a legislative summit in Colorado in June 2008 to encourage recognition of invasive plant problems.
• A grassroots group – tentatively called National Coalition for Invasive Plant Advocacy – is forming to track legislation and federal funding for invasive plant management. The group will help organize lobbying efforts on issues of national concern.

**Outreach to Other States/Tribes Along the Missouri**
Kevin Fridley (SD Dept Agric) will give a presentation about the MRWC on Dec. 11 to the Missouri River Basin Association of States and Tribes in Pierre, SD.

**Angostura Reservoir (SD) Saltcedar Project**
Dennie M. (SD Game, Fish & Parks) reported on a project that treated 715 acres of saltcedar around the reservoir in low-water conditions. The project will continue in future years.

**USDA-ARS Biocontrol Research**
ARS representatives did not attend the MRWC meeting as planned.

**MRWC Management Plan**
Colorado has been incorporated into the MRWC Management Plan. Kelly Uhing submitted Colorado saltcedar info (presence/absence by county) to Kelly Sharp and a new six-state map has been created. It is available on the Mid-Dakota website. A copy will be posted on the MRWC website.

**MRWC Committee Updates**
• **Management:** A map of T&E species for South Dakota was overlaid on the state saltcedar map. A similar map created for all six states could help tell the story of the importance of healthy riparian habitat in the Missouri River watershed. On the other hand, it could also be used to argue against some forms of management in fragile habitats. The group agreed to submit info for the states and Ron Moehring would compile it.

• **Education:** Kristi Paul (NE) drafted a trifold saltcedar brochure aimed at hunters and fishermen. The brochure could be used throughout the Missouri River watershed. She will accept comments through Nov. 9. The final brochure will be posted on the MRWC website for anyone to download and use.

• **Communication:** A website for the MRWC has been created and can be found at [http://www.weedcenter.org/Missouri_wtrshd/miss_watershed.htm](http://www.weedcenter.org/Missouri_wtrshd/miss_watershed.htm), hosted by the Center for Invasive Plant Management.

• **MRWC Executive Committee:** Under the leadership of Ron M., the six state weed coordinators drafted a MRWC constitution and bylaws. Copies were distributed. Ron will send it out electronically and accept comments through Dec. 31. The Executive Committee (reps of the six state Depts of Agric) will finalize the document and present it to the membership at the next (May 6) meeting. The group agreed that it is important to formalize the MRWC as a legal entity and perhaps pursue 501(c)3 tax status.

**Committee Discussions and Action Items**

- **Coordination/Communication:** 1) A six-state framework for Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) will be established. Dave Burch will send other state weed coordinators a sample flowchart/template for communication. A framework will be finalized at the May 6 meeting.

- **Management:** 1) A comprehensive six-state map with four overlays will be devised by Ron M. and Kelly S. with input from state weed coordinators. 2) MRWC endorses NAWMA mapping standards. 3) Stories of successes and failures will be submitted to the MRWC website by a designated representative from each state. A questionnaire will be sent (by whom?) (to whom?) (when?).

- **Education:** 1) CIPM will create a new MRWC one-pager to include a bullet point from each state highlighting something. 2) Each state will write up two saltcedar projects and distribute it to the media in the state. 3) Kevin Fridley will draft a press release about the MRWC and distribute to all to be adapted to their states.
Attachment B.

Technical Work Plan
Missouri River Watershed Coalition – Saltcedar Management Project
and
Center for Invasive Plant Management

Project Title: Missouri River Watershed Coalition (MRWC) – Project Coordination
Project Duration: May 1, 2008 – May 1, 2009
PIs: Elizabeth Galli-Noble, Janet Clark and Mara Johnson
Institute: Center for Invasive Plant Management at Montana State University

Purpose: Recognizing the critical need for protecting the water resources of the Missouri headwaters, the state weed coordinators from Montana, Nebraska, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming and other interested parties formed the Missouri River Watershed Coalition to strategize invasive species management and water resources in this region. The Coalition coordinates its efforts with the state Departments of Agriculture, Native American sovereign nations, weed districts, county weed boards, and other county, state, federal agencies and private landowners concerned with the spread of saltcedar (tamarisk) and other invasive plants throughout watersheds that cross jurisdictional boundaries. The Coalition has met semi-annually for three years, written a management plan, and is working on developing a constitution and bylaws. The success of the Coalition, continued growth, and desire to further increase collaboration has highlighted the need for formal coordination of the Coalition.

The Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM) proposes to provide formal coordination for the Missouri River Watershed Coalition. CIPM successfully served as the initial project coordinator during the development of the Coalition. Building the coordination of the MRWC and formalizing the documentation and structure of the group will provide an ideal model for other states to use for regional coordination of invasive species.

Objectives: CIPM project coordination will focus on (1) organizing and facilitating intergroup activities, events and communication, (2) coordinating communication and disseminating information to parties outside of the group, and (3) providing evaluation of Coalition progress.

Methods: CIPM aims to increase the coordination of activities between the members of the six Missouri headwaters states – Montana, Nebraska, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming – through both general coordination of the group and facilitating specific key projects and products. Specific key projects and products for the first year have been identified from the Action Plan outlined in the MRWC Management Plan (see Attachment A, pages 18-19). The members of the Coalition believe that achieving these broadly defined actions will (1) protect the water resources of the Missouri headwaters from saltcedar and (2) achieve the overall goals of stopping the spread of saltcedar and containing or eradicating current infestations.

Organize and Facilitate Intergroup Coordination and Communication

1) The MWRC has identified Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) as a priority management tool that would be most valuable if coordinated on a regional scale. CIPM will assist with the coordination of initiating a six-state EDRR system.
2) CIPM will facilitate and organize semi-annual meetings and record and distribute minutes. At each joint meeting the states and the different entities in the group will give status reports. As each state reports its activities, other members can evaluate and compare them to their own situations. This will provide one of the opportunities for the different entities to decide on collaborative efforts. The MRWC will act as a clearinghouse where projects can be discussed, analyzed, and coordinated between the states and various entities; and the CIPM will facilitate that discussion, document those actions and disseminate information to MRWC members as well as the interested public.

3) CIPM will maintain the MRWC listserv. Between semi-annual meetings, the MRWC communicates via the Headwaters Tamarisk listserv, which has been maintained by CIPM. CIPM will continue to maintain and update the listserv and send key information to the Coalition via the listserv as needed.

4) CIPM will continue to host and maintain the MRWC website. CIPM will oversee the posting of data for education and mapping to the site as well as maintain the links, graphics and MRWC program information on the site.

5) CIPM will monitor and communicate potential funding opportunities to the Coalition.

6) CIPM will assist with the coordination of mapping efforts. The MRWC continues to work on creating six-state maps of saltcedar distribution for publications. Future mapping efforts will include inventories and surveys.

Coordinate Communication to Parties Outside of the Group

1) CIPM will share information with other groups through the website and/or by traveling and presenting at meetings, workshops and conferences.

2) CIPM will invite agencies and other interested parties to MRWC meetings and sponsored events.

3) CIPM will review national legislation and communicate opportunities to the MRWC via the listserv and semi-annual meetings.

4) CIPM will assist with the development of public relations materials – one-page summaries, brochures, posters, press releases, etc. – that showcase MRWC projects and activities for a target audience of peers, policymakers, potential funders and landowners.

Evaluation

The success of the MRWC will be evaluated annually at a joint meeting and CIPM will collate and distribute the results. The MRWC will review the Action Plan each year and assess the status of each of the items in the plan. The key measures of success will be:

- Buy-in by additional agencies, groups, and individuals not currently involved with saltcedar control;
- Commitment of the six states to continue the group;
- Increased awareness of the saltcedar problem;
• Increased funding from internal and external sources;
• Increased research on all aspects of Saltcedar; and
• Increased coordination of management efforts.

2008 - 2009 Milestones

May 2008:
• Montana Department of Agriculture and CIPM will finalize the MRWC/CIPM 2008-2009 Coordination Work Plan.
• MRWC will discuss and approve the MRWC/CIPM 2008-2009 Coordination Work Plan on May 6, 2008.
• CIPM will coordinate, develop the agenda, and facilitate the 2008 MRWC Spring Meeting in Gering, Nebraska in conjunction with Invasive Species Control Summit.
• CIPM will participate as a MRWC mapping group member and attend meetings with MT NRIS in Helena to discuss interactive mapping and other products.

June – September 2008:
CIPM will:
• Assist with the coordination and development of a new six-state salt-cedar infestation map for website and public relations materials.
• Organize and assist in the implementation of a Public Relations Plan for MRWC – which will involve the development of a brochure, one-page MRWC handout, new poster for Rocky Mountain Weed Summit, two saltcedar project write ups, and the distribution of these materials to the media, legislators and the interested public.
• Set up a system for documentation of MRWC activities (for example, agendas, minutes, contacts, projects, publications, etc.).
• Work with Dave Burch on building six-state EDRR system starting with sending a sample communication flowchart to other state weed coordinators.
• Attend pertinent regional meetings in support of the MRWC.
• Assist with the planning, coordination and developing the agenda for the Fall 2008 MRWC meeting.

October 2008 – April 30, 2009:
CIPM will:
• Coordinate and facilitate the Fall 2008 MRWC Meeting.
• Maintain listserv headwaters_tamarisk@listserv.montana.edu
• Maintain the MRWC website http://www.weedcenter.org/Missouri_wtrshd/miss_watershed.htm
• Organize and assist with the implementation of a Public Relations Plan for MRWC – which will involve the development of a brochure, one-page MRWC handout, new poster for Rocky Mountain Weed Summit, two saltcedar project write ups, and the distribution of these materials to the media, legislators and the interested public.
• Maintain a system for documentation of MRWC activities (for example, agendas, minutes, contacts, projects, publications, etc.).
• Attend pertinent regional meetings in support of the MRWC.
Chinese bugs enlisted to battle invasive plant species in South Dakota

**Seth Tupper The Daily Republic**
*Published Wednesday, December 12, 2007*

PIERRE — The Chinese ringnecked pheasant, imported to South Dakota in 1898, has been a boon to the state’s economy. State officials now hope another Chinese import — a quarter inch-long beetle — will guard the state’s water and native vegetation against an invasive plant species.

The state Department of Agriculture has introduced the yellow, striped Chinese Diorhabda beetle in recent years to combat the spread of saltcedar, a shrub or tree that was introduced to the United States in the 1800s for stream-bank stabilization, windbreaks and ornamental purposes. Saltcedar has since “escaped” into the wild and today covers as many as 2 million U.S. acres.

Saltcedar is considered a particularly menacing noxious weed in South Dakota and some other western states. It can crowd out native plant life and wildlife habitat by growing into a massive, 25-foot-tall mass; it can kill surrounding vegetation by secreting salt into the ground; it can dry out small waterways by sucking up 200 gallons of water per day, a rate twice that of other native plants its size; and it’s of no nutritional use to most animals.

The Diorhabda beetle, aka saltcedar leaf beetle, feeds on saltcedar and can be used as a tool to control it. Besides beetles, state officials also are using herbicides to combat the spread of the plant.

Mike Stenson, a weed management technician with the Department of Ag, said the state is trying to halt the saltcedar threat before it grows too large.

“I’d say it’s a concern — a major concern,” Stenson said. “If we ignore it, it will be a major problem.”

Stenson and Kevin Fridley, director of the state’s Division of Agricultural Services, gave a presentation about saltcedar Tuesday afternoon at the Ramkota Hotel in Pierre to members of the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST). The two-day MoRAST gathering continues through today with presentations on many other river-related topics.

In South Dakota, where the spread of saltcedar is in its relative infancy, the covered area is about 6,500 acres.

Stenson described saltcedar as a deciduous tree that can resemble a willow. Saltcedar sprouts pink, purple or white flowers from May to August, and leaves that turn bright orange before falling off in the fall. During the winter, only the pretzelcolored stems remain.
A mature saltcedar can produce 600,000 seeds, which can be carried by the wind and water. The seeds can germinate while afloat or once they hit moist soil. On the Missouri River reservoirs Lake Oahe and Lake Sharpe, the seeds germinate while on the river surface and put down roots once they hit land.

“Every major drainage in western South Dakota, we’ve covered and have found saltcedar,” Stenson said. “And we’re starting to see it more in eastern South Dakota popping up around the cattail sloughs, which is kind of discouraging for us, but we are seeing it pretty much everywhere we look.”

Saltcedar has an unusually deep root system that can go down as far as 30 feet to satisfy the plant’s massive thirst for water.

“However deep they need to go to get to the water, they can,” Stenson said. He added that the deep root system makes saltcedar “impossible to pull out of the ground.”

So, rather than pulling the plants out of the ground, the state has used a combined approach of herbicide and beetles. The herbicide is faster-acting, but it is more expensive and labor intensive.

As John Cooper, former state Game, Fish and Parks secretary and current chairman of MoRAST said, saltcedar can grow “super thick.”

“It’s hard for me to describe how tough that would be to go 100 yards with a wand in your hand trying to spray each individual stem,” Cooper said. “I mean, that’s unbelievable work. Plus, that stuff is itchy, nasty, it’s almost got an oily deal to it, and boy, when you come out of being around that stuff, you will itch and scratch for a while.”

Federal funding to spray for saltcedar has been made available in the amount of $25,000 for eight counties bordering Lake Oahe. The state has utilized that money, and has acquired beetles for free through exchange programs with government agencies.

Stenson said Diorhabda beetles feed on saltcedar and only saltcedar. The beetles keep saltcedar in check naturally in China, and it’s hoped the bugs can do the same here.

“That’s the way all biological control works,” Stenson said. “We have invasive species from other places, and they don’t have any of their natural predators. Basically, the way it works is scientists go back to the home range, find a predator, and bring it over here.”

Fridley said the state’s goal goes beyond merely controlling saltcedar with beetles. The goal is eradication, and with that in mind, South Dakota has joined a five-state Missouri River Watershed Coalition that is conducting a saltcedar management project to coordinate efforts in the river basin.

“We hope to win the battle and eradicate it someday,” Fridley said. “It’s going to take time, money and a lot of energy to do that, but our goal is and should be to try manage it the best we can and eradicate it. There’s not a lot of good that comes out of this plant.”
Exotic tree taking over river land - fast

*Chinese beetle might be best defense against water hogs, state experts say*

Terry Woster
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PIERRE - An imported tree with an insatiable thirst and an aggressive territorial instinct threatens to suck dry and choke off rivers and streams across western South Dakota, a state weed expert says.

Mike Stenson, weed management technician for the South Dakota Agriculture Department, outlined for the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes an almost perfect plant predator and the problems it is creating. Salt cedar originally was imported as an ornamental plant, it can be seen on some lawns today.

The plant establishes a roothold on the shoreline of a stream or bay, puts roots down 30 or 40 feet, sucks in water at a rate of 200 gallons a day and drops salt that kills the native vegetation, giving it more space to regenerate and spread, Stenson said. It's resistant to drought and resistant to flood. It has few natural enemies.

"Nothing eats it, nothing likes it for cover," Stenson said.

The state had about 5,000 acres of the stuff two years ago. This year, the count is about 6,500 acres. Across the western part of the country, there are stands big enough to demand an amount of water equivalent to that used by 20 million people or 1 million acres of irrigation, Stenson said.

If a branch breaks off, it can begin to grow in new soil. Tiny seeds, produced at a rate of about 600,000 per adult plant, are carried by wind or water and are capable of almost 100 percent germination in any kind of favorable conditions. A plant cut off at the ground will regenerate from the roots.

The state goal is eradication, said Kevin Fridley, state director of Agricultural Services.

"There's not a lot of good that comes out of this plant," he said.

The best way to attack the plant seems to be with a salt cedar leaf beetle, a bug that's imported from China, Stenson said. The larvae of that bug are among the few things that appear to enjoy feasting on salt cedar. The state received some of the beetles at no charge from another state, Stenson said.
Using the beetles is a slow process but probably the most effective, he said. In a span of five to 10 years, beetles could achieve perhaps 85 percent control over the plants.

Herbicides also work, but must be applied directly and completely to be effective. A single untreated branch on a 20-foot tree can start the generation process all over.

It isn't easy work, said John Cooper, former state Game, Fish and Parks secretary, who handles special assignments for Gov. Mike Rounds.

"It's tough for me to describe how hard it would be to go 100 yards through this stuff with a wand in your hand," Cooper said.

The state treated six miles of Cheyenne River infestation last year at a cost of $7,500 for chemicals and $4,500 in labor, or about $2,000 a mile.

The plant can be found in most of the waterways west of the Missouri River and in parts of the Missouri itself. There are indications it is moving to some east-river waters.

"I'm blown away by how much more salt cedar I see," Cooper said.