Missouri River Watershed Coalition

Slade Franklin, Wyoming State Weed Coordinator
MRWC Executive Committee

2009 MRNRC Conference and BiOP Forum
March 26, 2009
Billings, Montana
**MRWC – Who We Are**

**MRWC Goal** - To maintain productive, biodiverse riparian ecosystems that provide quality water, wildlife habitat, recreation, and power to meet the economic and ecological needs of the Missouri River Watershed region.

**Membership** –
- 100 active members; +80 member listserv
- Weed districts, county weed boards, conservation districts, industry, tribes, private citizens, NGOs, other local, state & federal agencies (ARS, APHIS, BLM, BOR, NRCS, USFS, USFWS, USCOE)

**Headwaters States Coalition - MT, WY, ND, SD, NE & CO**
- 5, then 6, State Depts of Agriculture spearheaded effort from the start, 2005
Ecological & Economic Need for MRWC

Headwaters States of MT, WY, CO, ND, SD & NE

- Economically rely heavily on MR headwaters system – agriculture, livestock, recreation, tourism, wildlife habitat, irrigation, drinking water, industry & power generation. Invasive plant species threaten these uses.

- **Saltcedar** (*Tamarix* spp.)
  - 1st focus of MRWC + Russian olive
  - +1 million acres of saltcedar established in floodplains/riparian zones in western US
  - Replaces native vegetation, creates dense monocultures
  - Restricts access for irrigation, wildlife, outdoor enthusiasts
  - Degrades or eliminates habitat for T&E species

- MRW states **spend millions $ annually to control noxious & invasive plants:**
  - 2008, South Dakota
    - Spent $5 million county general funds for noxious weed control
    - State & Federal Gov’ts spent $1.75 million
    - 5 – 20% of funding focused on riparian invasive plant control

- Coordinated, **WATERSHED** level, invasive species mgt effort
  - Pooling state resources, multi-state projects & research, enhanced communication, regional EDRR system, public awareness, etc.
Collaboration, Leadership & Accomplishments 2005-2008

- **MRWC Administration/Coordination**
  - 2006/08 - Six-State MOA, State Depts of Ag: MT, WY, ND, SD, NE & CO
  - 2007 - MRWC Executive Committee
  - 2008 - CIPM coordination for MRWC

- **2007 Missouri River Watershed Coalition Saltcedar Management Plan**
  *Reduce the introduction and spread of saltcedar and other noxious plants in the watershed region*
  *Increase regional coordination and communication, and develop regional management strategies and priorities for invasive plant species and water resources*
  *Maximize funding efficiency for public education, prevention, management and restoration on riparian corridors.*
  *Team government, businesses, universities, conservation groups, landowners, water users and sportsmen in private-public partnerships.*
• **Funding**
  - State & member contributions: staff time, grants match, labor, donations, etc.
  - 2008, USFS State & Private Forestry, Forest Health Program
  - Potential funding for 2009 (USFS, BOR, NRCS, project-specific grants, etc.)

• **Coalition Structure**
  - 2008 - Constitution & Bylaws
  - Executive Committee & Officers
  - Semi-annual meetings
  - Special Workgroups – Mapping, Funding, Outreach/Education

• **Watershed-level saltcedar inventory & mapping project**
  - 1<sup>o</sup> MRWC mgt goal, saltcedar 1<sup>o</sup> species reported by county
  - Electronic data entry & web accessible download system
  - Provide template for additional species

• **MRWC EDRR system**
  - High priority mgt tool, regional scale, interactive database
  - Looking to other regional EDRR systems to replicate (eg. EDDMapS, INVADERS, IPANE)
• **Watershed-level Communications**
  - MRWC Website & Listserv
  - Outreach & Education Materials – brochures, posters, presentations, publications, reports, press releases, etc.
  - Special Workgroups – Education, Awareness, EDRR

• **Program Evaluation** (annual)
Plans for the Future – 2009/2010

*Established membership, organizational structure, program coordination, technical base

Expansion of focal invasive species

- Moving beyond saltcedar; broad program focus on EDRR species & new invasives, in particular aquatic/riparian species
- Use saltcedar management plan as a model to target other species

Implement MRWC Projects

• Research Projects
  - Complete watershed-level EDRR system
  - Evaluate treatment success, Missouri v. Yellowstone rivers
  - Phragmites monitoring & genotyping
  - Economic impact data comparing action v. no action on rangeland & public lands
  - Environ impacts of noxious weeds on wildlife & habitat health

• On-the-ground Projects
  - Develop spray-seed units
  - Regional rapid response teams
Awareness, Outreach & Education Activities
- MRWC Public Relations Campaign – targeted marketing strategy
- Expand state-based K-12 education & awareness programs throughout watershed

New Watershed Partnerships
YRCDC, MoRAST, MRNRC, tribes & other Missouri River Watershed states
Missouri River Watershed Coalition

www.weedcenter.org/MRWC

Slade Franklin, Wyoming State Dept of Agriculture
sfrank@state.wy.us * 307.777.6585