



Nevada-Placer Weed Management Area

2014 Annual Report and Newsletter

Dedicated to preventing and controlling invasive weed species in Nevada and Placer Counties by sharing resources and information

Project Highlight

Invasive Weed Eradication in Sierra Nevada Meadows

In 2014, the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) and Placer County Agriculture Department (PCAD) partnered with the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC), Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Gas & Electric, and private landowners to eradicate invasive weeds from meadows in the Sierra Nevada. Cal-IPC spearheaded this project with funding support from the Wildlife Conservation Society's Climate Adaptation Fund, and bolstered long-standing efforts to survey and treat invasive weeds in meadows along the Truckee River and in Bear Valley.

Meadows in the Sierra Nevada serve as resource-rich habitats for wildlife including deer, bear, and birds such as the endangered willow flycatcher. Invasive weeds targeted by the TRWC and PCAD like musk and Scotch thistle, spotted knapweed and perennial pepperweed degrade these habitats and negatively impact the important ecosystem functions they provide.

The TRWC, through their Weed Warriors program and with the help of a qualified weed treatment contractor, identified and worked to eradicate invasive weeds on nearly 300 acres of meadow lands along the Truckee River east of Truckee. Through an intensive effort, with additional support from the Martis Fund, the program treated a staggering 26,000 musk thistle plants and sizeable infestations of spotted knapweed, perennial pepperweed, Russian knapweed, bull thistle, Klamathweed, teasel and white sweet clover.

PCAD Agricultural Inspectors meanwhile conducted surveys and treatments in the 500-acre Bear Valley meadow near Emigrant Gap, completing surveys of the meadow in May, August, and October. In addition to revisiting and treating historical Scotch thistle infestation sites, inspectors also located and began work on a previously undocumented skeletonweed infestation. In total, treatments were conducted on .5 net acres of Scotch thistle and 1.25 net acres of skeletonweed, resulting in a 99% reduction in Scotch thistle infested acreage and a 73% reduction in skeletonweed acreage. Inspectors also treated 16 spotted knapweed, diffuse knapweed and perennial pepperweed infestations in the vicinity of Bear Valley which threatened to invade the meadow.

Thanks to support from Cal-IPC, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Martis Fund, survey and eradication work along the Truckee River and in Bear Valley will continue in 2015.



Placer County Agricultural Inspector Diego Davalos working to eradicate Scotch thistle in Bear Valley.



Truckee River
Watershed Council
Collaborative solutions to protect, enhance
and restore the Truckee River Watershed



Pacific Gas and
Electric Company



Placer County Agricultural Inspectors surveying Bear Valley for Scotch thistle.

Project Highlight

Forest Fires and Invasive Weeds

The American Fire burned in August 2013, on Tahoe National Forest lands in the American River Ranger District. The area that burned and access roads to it were known to have infestations of several nonnative invasive plant species (NNIP): spotted knapweed, skeletonweed, Scotch broom, bull thistle, Italian



Tahoe National Forest Biological Technician Kelly Eldridge pulls yellow starthistle from native shrubbery on Ralston Ridge.

thistle, cheatgrass, lens-podded hoary cress, barb goatgrass, French broom, tree-of-heaven, Klamathweed, Himalayan blackberry and yellow starthistle. In addition, firefighters staged the wildfire suppression base camp in an area that is heavily infested with yellow starthistle. Over 71 miles of dozer and hand lines were constructed to help suppress this fire, utilizing 4 helispots, more than 20 water sources, 1 spike camp, and 13 drop points.

In 2014, the Tahoe National Forest surveyed about 170 acres – including all suppression dozer

lines, drop points, water sources, and helispots – for presence of NNIP, and found 35 new or increased existing infestations. They found several locations of single plants (yellow starthistle, skeletonweed and bull thistle), primarily along back roads and within turn around areas. Larger patches of spotted knapweed and yellow starthistle were found mainly along Foresthill Divide Road, the main access road to the wildfire area. All infestations were treated except for about 12 acres of skeletonweed and medusahead. Manual treatment is not effective for skeletonweed, and the medusahead had already gone to seed before it was discovered.

Late in 2014, the King Fire burned from the Eldorado National Forest onto the Tahoe National Forest. The base camp for suppression of the Tahoe National Forest side was again located in the area that is heavily infested with yellow starthistle, and the main access for wildfire suppression was again the Foresthill Divide Road. The Tahoe National forest will survey all dozer lines, drop points, etc. used to suppress the King Fire and will treat new infestations in 2015.

Preferred areas for suppression base camps are large, flat, centrally located areas, and the best area on the American River Ranger District is the old mill site located within Foresthill. This site is privately owned and leased by the Forest Service when the need arises. The Nevada-Placer WMA, with Placer County as the lead, will attempt to work with the private property owners at this site to help them control or eradicate the yellow starthistle infestation. Treating the yellow starthistle at this site contributes greatly to reducing the spread during suppression activities.

2014 Highlights

Control and Eradication

- 1,080 invasive weed infestations were treated covering over 1,100 acres
- Species Controlled: artichoke thistle, arundo, barb goat grass, bermudagrass, black mustard, bladder senna, bull thistle, Canada thistle, cheatgrass, chickpea milkvetch, Chinese tallow, Dalmatian toadflax, diffuse knapweed, Dyer's woad, everlasting pea, foxglove, French broom, gorse, Himalayan blackberry, hoary cress, Italian thistle, Maltese starthistle, milk thistle, medusahead, Mexican tea, musk thistle, oblong spurge, perennial pepperweed, pokeweed, red sesbania, rush skeletonweed, Russian knapweed, Russian thistle, Scotch broom, Scotch thistle, Spanish broom, spotted knapweed, stinkwort, teasel, tree of heaven, tumble mustard, white sweetclover, woolly distaff thistle, and yellow starthistle.



Spotted knapweed growing along Foresthill Divide Road threatens to invade areas recently burned in the American and King Fires.



Nevada-Placer Weed Management Area Partners:

Bear Yuba Land Trust California Department of Fish & Wildlife, California Department of Food & Agriculture, California Invasive Plant Council, California State Parks, Caltrans, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Placer County Agriculture Department, Placer County Resource Conservation District, Placer County Starthistle Awareness & Removal, Placer Land Trust, Nevada County Agriculture Department, Nevada County Fire Safe Council, Nevada County Resource Conservation District, Truckee River Watershed Council, U.S. Forest Service-Tahoe & El Dorado National Forests.

