



Nevada-Placer Weed Management Area

2016 Annual Report and Newsletter

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

Project Highlights

Invasive Plant Management and Forest Health

2016 marked the completion of the two year North Sierra Forest Health Project undertaken by the Nevada and Placer County Agriculture Departments and Truckee River Watershed Council along with support from the California Invasive Plant Council, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and U.S. Forest Service.

This project targeted Cal-IPC North Sierra region eradication targets Russian knapweed, Dyer's woad, saltcedar, Russian olive, and artichoke thistle. These invaders occur in our region in small, eradicable populations all of which were treated during 2015 and 2016. Infestations of other leading edge and priority species were also surveyed for and treated including skeletonweed, Scotch thistle, stinkwort, myrtle spurge, red sesbania, Scotch and Spanish broom, perennial pepperweed, and yellow starthistle.

Watershed improvement projects often end with restoration construction. Forest health projects often end with fuels management and thinning. In both cases, these sites are left disturbed and vulnerable to weed infestations. Without further intervention, non-native invasive plant species can degrade these sites that land managers have invested time and money to restore.

The Truckee River Watershed Council, the U.S. Forest Service Tahoe National Forest, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife have partnered to finish the job of restoring these sites. This partnership successfully applied for more than \$360,000 in grant funding that will provide three years of intensive and repeated surveys and treatment of high priority noxious weed species. The funding for this project was provided by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, an agency of the State of California, under the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1) grant cycle and in support of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program. This project is one component of the Ecosystem Restoration Programs on the Tahoe National Forest.

Treatment efforts will begin in 2017 and will be guided by field surveys at watershed improvement, forest health, and known infestation sites north of Truckee. Crews from TNF and CDFW will be joined by the California Conservation Corps to annually treat 500 acres of musk thistle, yellow starthistle, and spotted knapweed infestations. Noxious weed removal will promote native plant diversity, and reduce fuel loads and erosion.

These projects exemplify the necessary partnerships and commitments of multiple agencies to control and eradicate invasive plants on a regional scale.



Pre-and post-treatment photos of saltcedar (top) and Russian olive (below).



Invasive Plants to Watch for and Report

Spotted Knapweed

Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe* ssp. *micranthos*) has long been established in eastern Nevada and Placer Counties, but ongoing control efforts by WMA partners have successfully prevented its spread westward into the Sierra foothills. The I-80, Hwy 89, and Hwy 267 corridors serve as avenues for spotted knapweed movement. In recent years extensive infestations along the Truckee River between Tahoe City and Truckee have also been found.

Spotted knapweed is a biennial or short-lived perennial that grows 2 – 3 feet tall and produces pink to purple flowers that bloom from June through September. Flower head bracts have dark tips, thus the name spotted knapweed. Reproduction is primarily by seed, but new rosettes may also develop from lateral roots.



Spotted knapweed rosette (left) and mature flowering plant (right).

Hoary Alyssum

Hoary alyssum (*Berteroa incana*) was first found in Placer County at the base of Alpine Meadows ski area in 2015. This detection is notable because there are only a few other reports of hoary alyssum in California. Coincidentally, the initial detection in 2015 came shortly after a news story broke in Washington state highlighting hoary alyssum's toxicity to horses. The Placer County Agriculture Department and Truckee Ranger District are working closely to eradicate this noxious weed at Alpine Meadows before it becomes established and spreads to other areas.

Hoary alyssum is an annual to short-lived perennial of the mustard family. It reaches 2 ½ - 3 feet tall when mature with small white 4 petaled flowers that bloom spring through fall. A single plant can produce over 2,500 seeds—its only means of reproduction.



Hoary alyssum in flower at 6900' elevation.

2016 Control and Outreach

- 1,120 invasive weed infestations were treated covering over 1,800 acres.
- Species Controlled: artichoke thistle, arundo, barb goat grass, bull thistle, Canada thistle, cheatgrass, Dalmatian toadflax, diffuse knapweed, Dyer's woad, French broom, gorse, Himalayan blackberry, hoary cress, Italian thistle, Maltese starthistle, milk thistle, medusahead, musk thistle, oblong spurge, perennial pepperweed, red sesbania, rush skeletonweed, Russian knapweed, Scotch broom, Scotch thistle, Spanish broom, spotted knapweed, stinkwort, teasel, tree of heaven, and yellow starthistle.
- The Truckee River Watershed Council hosted 7 invasive plant events including outreach at the Tahoe Truckee Earth Day Festival, a weed ID workshop, 2 field trip weed talks, and 3 weed pulls.

Report invasive plant occurrences to:

Placer County Agriculture Dept. (530) 889-7372

Nevada County Agriculture Dept. (530) 470-2690



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.

