



"The Valley doesn't look this way by accident." -Bill West



Invasive Species Management

Overview

The Centennial Valley is one of the last undeveloped landscapes in Montana, containing a mosaic of healthy native plant communities and generations of conscientious agricultural families. The local community has recognized the importance of managing invasive species for many generations, protecting range health and the health of a variety of habitats. However, abundant access to public and private lands has increased recreationist, tourist, hunter, and ORV user traffic, increasing the spread of invasive species. A changing climate is creating opportunities for these invasive weed species to dominate ecosystems and impair its function and structure, affecting the biodiversity found in plant communities.

Due to years of community efforts, the Centennial Valley has remained relatively unaffected by invasive plant species, but it is not immune. The Centennial Valley Association's Invasive Species Management program follows the Early Detection, Rapid Response (EDRR) model. EDRR increases the likelihood that invasive species populations will be discovered, contained, and eradicated, slow the range of expansion, and decrease the need for costly long-term control efforts. CVA coordinates and leads EDRR practices in a collaborative effort with the Beaverhead County, The Nature Conservancy, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Taft-Nicholson Center, and dedicated landowners.



Goals

- * Protect the environmental health of the landscape by managing invasive species, preventing new invaders from establishing, and increasing community involvement and education to achieve participation in community spray days and literacy about invasive species.
- * Lead multiple organizations in an inter-state, inter-agency weed summits, twice a year, to plan for new invaders, develop effective partnership strategies, and utilize advancements in mapping technologies.

Activities

- * Mapping Weed Locations on Public Lands
- * Present Weed Updates Annually
- * Organize in Assist in Community Spray Days and Weed Weeks
- * Invasive Species Education and Outreach
- * Facilitate the Across Borders Weed Collaborative

How We Measure Success

- * Increased Landowner Participation; 100% Landowner Participation
- * Maintain a low level of early invader invasive species with no new invaders

Successes

- * Increased landowner outreach efforts for County Spray Days.
- * Increased the collaborative efforts and information sharing between partners for Centennial Valley Weed Weeks.
- * Coordinates and hosts three additional Community Spray Days.
- * Implements and facilitates the Weed Collaborative with three Montana counties, three Idaho counties, federal and state agencies, and local community groups.

What is an Invasive Species?

We commonly call unwanted plants, whether they are native or non-native, weeds. However, not all weeds are invasive. So what makes a plant invasive?

Per Presidential Executive Order 13112 (1999): "An invasive species is defined as a species that is 1) non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health."

Invasive plant species negatively impact the landscape in various ways, such as:

- * Displacing and outcompeting native flora for resources such as water, sunlight, and nutrients in the soil.
- * Reducing forage for native fauna, such as elk and sage-grouse.
- * Economic losses on grazing lands.



Black Henbane

How Weed Season Works

A typical invasive species management season in the Centennial Valley begins in late-spring, with Whitetop, and continues into the fall with Common Tansy. Collaborative efforts are focused on heavily from June through August, when most of the target species bloom and go to seed. The season has the following process each year:

- * Communicate with Beaverhead County and determine when 6 Community Spray Days will occur throughout the summer.
 - * Share with landowners when and where Spray Days will be held.
- * Create three Weed Weeks in the Centennial to focus intensely on target species.
- * Visit every weed GPS point in the Valley to observe presence/absence and treat chemically or manually.
- * Incorporate new and old GPS points in ArcGIS and Access Database for mapping and tracking purposes into future seasons.
- * If a weed point has not been observed for four consecutive seasons, it is deemed eradicated and removed from mapping purposes.
- * Create weed maps for the community and provide updates via newsletters, social media, and community meetings.



Spotted Knapweed



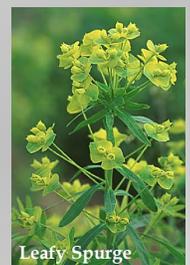
Field Bindweed

Why Managing Invasive Species is Important

If invasive species are left unaddressed, they will deteriorate native plant communities, resulting in degraded habitat, decreasing available forage for wildlife species. They will impact range health for ranching livelihoods and for pollinators. They can impact fisheries by increasing erosion and sedimentation. The spread of invasives into recreational areas can lead to trail closures for hikers and ORV users. Invasive weed species are the largest threat to Montana's environment and we strive to manage these species and encourage native flora to flourish on the landscape. For more information on how you can help decrease the spread of invasives or for a public weed map, email communityorg@centennialvalleyassociation.org.

Target Weed Species

- * Spotted Knapweed
- * Houndstongue
- * Hoary Alyssum
- * Leafy Spurge
- * Whitetop
- * Field Bindweed
- * Black Henbane
- * Common Tansy



Leafy Spurge