BOX ELDER COUNTY WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

**A. STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Box Elder County Weed Board will organize, supervise, and coordinate a Box Elder County Weed Management Plan in accordance with the State of Utah Noxious Weed Act. They are to direct the work of the county weed supervisor and serve notices to landowners requiring prompt attention to control their noxious weeds or have their property declared a public nuisance.

The Weed Board focuses their attention on the following general areas of noxious and nuisance weed involvement:

1. Public Relations and Education
2. Mapping and Monitoring
3. Prevention, Early Detection and Rapid Response
4. Control - Integrated Weed Management
5. Restoration of Affected Property
6. Authority and Enforcement
7. Funding

**B. ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETINGS**

The County Weed Board composed of five appointed individuals shall hold four coordination meetings every three months, each year. Other meetings may be held to discuss pressing weed control issues such as new weed discoveries, weed law violations, and enforcement.

Attendance at the County Weed Board meetings also includes the County Weed Supervisor, Road Director, and the applicable County Commissioner. Notice of the meetings shall be posted in compliance with County code and State Law.

Organizations concerned with weed control will be invited to have a representative in attendance to include: Utah Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, State Trust Lands, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Box Elder County Extension, Union Pacific Railroad, PacifiCorp, irrigation companies and municipalities.

The purpose of these meetings is to discuss and record current problem areas, discuss effective weed control efforts, record and discuss new infestations, coordinate county priorities with the Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) priorities, and plan and organize the ongoing weed control program.

The first meeting held in the year will inform the Weed Board of the activities of the Weed Department for the past weed season. The ***Annual Weed Progress Report***with a summary of the year’s activities shall be provided.

**C. WEED CONTROL SERVICE AREA**

Any individual, corporation, municipality, governmental agency, or organization owning, leasing, or controlling property within Box Elder County may request the services of the County Weed Department in accordance with weed control priorities established and approved by the County Weed Board. All requests for agricultural crop spraying and residential yard or garden spraying will be referred to commercial applicators.

Property owners are encouraged to participate in weed control activities by locating, identifying, and controlling infestations on their properties. The County Weed Department shall conduct weed control activities where required throughout the County.

In the case of weed control adjacent to organic farms, the County shall actively spray up to the property boundaries to include all County road right-of-ways and easements. The responsibility to provide a “no-spray” buffer remains with the property owner.

If noxious weeds are present on organic farms, the property owner is to control them in compliance with this policy, County code, and State law with non-chemical applications. If the property owners are unable to control their weeds, the property may be declared a public nuisance in compliance with County code and the weeds will be controlled accordingly.

**D. CATEGORIES OF WEEDS**

For the purpose of organizing efforts and funding weed control programs, noxious and invading weeds are classified as follows:

**CLASS 1A: Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) Watch List**

These weeds include: Common Crupina, African Rue, Small Bugloss, Mediterranean Sage, Spring Millet, Syrian Beancaper, Ventenata (North Africa Grass), Plumeless Thistle, and Malta Thistle.

**CLASS 1B: Early Detection Rapid Response**

These weeds include: Camelthorn, Garlic Mustard, Purple Starthistle, Goatsrue, African Mustard, Giant Reed, Japanese Knotweed, Vipers Bugloss, Elongated Mustard, Common St. Johnswort, Oxeye Daisy, and Cutleaf Vipergrass.

**CLASS 2: Control**

These weeds include: Leafy Spurge, Medusahead, Rush Skeletonweed, Spotted Knapweed, Purple Loosestrife, Squarrose Knapweed, Dyers Woad, Yellow Starthistle, Yellow Toadflax, Diffuse Knapweed, Black Henbane, and Dalmation Toadflax.

**CLASS 3: Containment**

These weeds include: Russian Knapweed, Houndstounge, Perennial Pepperweed (Tall Whitetop), Phragmites (Common Reed), Tamarisk (Saltcedar), Hoary Cress (White Top), Canada Thistle, Poison Hemlock, Musk Thistle, Quackgrass, Jointed Goatgrass, Bermudagrass, Perennial Sorghum ssp. (includes Johnson Grass), Scotch (Cotton)Thistle, Field Bindweed, (Morning-glory) and Puncturevine (Goathead).

**CLASS 4: Prohibited**

These weeds include: Cogongrass (Japanese Blood Grass), Myrtle (Blue) Spurge, Dame’s Rocket, Scotch Broom, and Russian Olive.

**E. NOXIOUS WEED SEED RESTRICTIONS**

It shall be unlawful for any individual or company to sell, offer, or expose for sale or distribute in the State of Utah any agricultural, vegetable, flower, tree and shrub seeds, or seeds for sprouting for seeding purposes which contain, any prohibited noxious weed seeds. “Prohibited” noxious weed seeds are determined by the Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food to be injurious to public health, crops, livestock, land, or other property. (Utah Seed Law, R68-8)

**F. WEED CONTROL PRIORITIES**

1. Control of noxious weeds or plants deemed a nuisance or hazard on property in the county.

2. Control of noxious weeds on steams, drainage, and irrigation systems. Other plants impeding irrigation system’s water flow can be done as part of a noxious weed application.

3. Control of noxious weeds on non-crop land areas such as rangeland, wet pastures, fence lines, vacant land, right-of-ways, easements, county road sides, etc.

**G. GENERAL AREAS OF NOXIOUS WEED INVOLVEMENT**

The Weed Board working with the county weed supervisor will be involved in the following areas of weed identification and control. Technical assistance and control of noxious and other nuisance weeds through voluntary compliance and enforcement is always the preferred plan of action.

1. **Public Relations and Education.**

Public awareness through education is one of the most important activities to stop the introduction and spread of noxious weeds. The public can help identify and report to the Box Elder County Weed Department and the Weed Board noxious weeds found and their efforts in controlling them.

This public education effort can be accomplished in a variety of ways and includes the following: Town Hall meetings, newspaper articles and notices, weed tours, high school presentations, letters with brochure information to ranchers and farmers, essay contests, model weed displays at county fairs, billboards, permanent roadside signs, etc.

1. **Prevention, Early Detection and Rapid Response.**

Prevention. Identifying and addressing new invaders early on is the cheapest prevention. As individuals, ranchers, farmers and businesses are educated and made aware of the importance of preventing new infestations, control is much easier. Prevention involves the following areas:

1. Contaminated seeds, feed grain, hay and mulch.
2. Movement of animals having seeds in their digestive system or attached to their bodies.
3. Movement of un-cleaned machinery from noxious weed contaminated areas, this includes spraying equipment, graders, caterpillars, and construction equipment.
4. People scattering seeds as they walk in infested terrain. The seeds attach to clothing and shoes and can be transported for miles.
5. Use of gravel, road fill or topsoil contaminated with noxious weed seeds.

Early Detection and Rapid Response. This includes the following:

a) An action plan with the property owner to treat the noxious weed infestation.

b) Coordinated efforts on the part of the property owner and the County Weed Department for the property owner to begin recommended herbicide treatments.

c) If the weed infestation involves multiple property owners the County Weed Department will advise and assist as needed in the rapid response activities.

1. **Mapping and Monitoring**

Mapping of weed infestations is a critical step in controlling and limiting the continued spread of weeds. The Weed Department currently uses various methods that involve GPS and GIS technology to track weed populations for more efficient control.

We intend to use the software called **EDDMaps West** to be the repository for mapping all noxious and nuisance weeds found in the county. Any individual can input data to this public system and the Weed Department Supervisor is tasked to review and accept this data. This is a state wide and national system used to inventory, map and monitor weeds.

1. **Control – Integrated Weed Management**

Knowing that prevention is the best method of weed management, an integrated approach used to manage the control of noxious and nuisance weeds is the best way working with landowners. In developing an Integrated Weed Management Plan the Weed Department considers and incorporates the following items as they apply to the control of noxious and nuisance weeds:

a) Weed reproduction and dispersal

b) Weed interactions with each other

c) Growth suppression of one plant by another due to toxic substance releases

d) Plant competition

e) Biological weed control

f) Chemical control

g) Preventive weed control

h) Cultural (human) weed control

i) Mechanical weed control

j) Integrated pest management

k) People

Other specific efforts of the Weed Department to control weeds includes: roadside spraying of county roads, roadside mowing of county roads, and working with the railroad to spray the railroad right-of-ways.

1. **Restoration of Affected Property**

Very often the tasks to restore affected property to a desirable plant species composition is beyond the capability of the Weed Department because of manpower constraints and the rugged terrain involved. However, it becomes feasible when all involved agencies and the property owners are willing to work together and funding is available. The action items involved include the following:

1. Understanding the desirable vegetation.
2. Identifying the problem weed(s), control, and eradication.
3. Plant the desirable vegetation with the end result in mind.
4. Develop a realistic plan for each situation that may occur.
5. Evaluate the success (as a minimum) on a yearly basis.
6. **Authority and Enforcement**
7. Authority: The Utah Noxious Weed Act is found in Title 4, Chapter 17, of the Utah Code Annotated, and Rule 68-9 of the Utah Administrative Code. It provides for the control and management of noxious weeds in the state of Utah. Private property owners, municipalities, and state agencies are subject to the Utah Noxious Weed Act.

Federal agencies are subject to the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-629) as amended in 1990 (Section 15, Mgmt of Undesirable Plants on Federal Land). Under the 1990 Amendment, federal agencies are directed to enter into agreements with appropriate state and local agencies to coordinate the management of noxious weeds.

All landowners and property managers within the boundaries of Box Elder County are also subject to any applicable Box Elder County policies and ordinances.

1. Enforcement: Enforcement of the Box Elder County Weed Management Plan will be accomplished through the procedures outlined in the Utah Noxious Weed Act. Under this Act the Box Elder County Weed Board, County Weed Supervisor, and field representatives of the Utah Department of Agriculture’s Division of Plant Industry have enforcement authority. The duties of each of these groups are specified in the Handbook for County Weed Boards.

Each year before May 1, the County Weed Board will post a general notice of the noxious weeds within the county in at least three public places in the county and publish the notice in a newspaper or other publication of general circulation on at least three occasions.

The Utah Noxious Weed Act requires that all landowners or people in possession of property be responsible for the control and spread of noxious weeds on their property. This action is required each year as long as the infestation exists.

Section 4-17-7(2) and (3) of the Utah Noxious Weed Act states:

(2) If the County Weed Control Board determines that particular property within the county requires prompt and definite attention to prevent or control noxious weeds, it shall serve the owner or the person in possession of the property, personally or by certified mail, a notice specifying when and what action should be taken on the property. Methods of prevention or control may include definite systems of tillage, cropping, use of chemicals, and use of livestock.

(3) An owner or person in possession of property who fails to take action to control or prevent the spread of noxious weeds as specified in the notice is maintaining a public nuisance.

A property owner who fails to make efforts to control noxious weeds on his property will be served the notice described above. If further action is needed, the procedures for taking corrective action on that property will be carried out as outlined in Section 4-17-8 of the Utah Noxious Weed Act:

1. If the owner or person in possession of the property fails to take action to control or prevent the spread of noxious weeds within five working days after the property is declared a public nuisance the county may, after reasonable notification, enter the property, without the consent of the owner or the person in possession, and perform any work necessary, consistent with sound weed prevention and control practices, to control the weeds.
2. Any expense incurred by the county in controlling the noxious weeds is paid by the property owner of record or the person in possession of the property within 90 days after receipt of the charges incurred by the county. If not paid within 90 days after notice of the charges, the charges become a lien against the property and are collectible by the county treasurer at the time general property taxes are collected.

A property owner who is served with a notice to control noxious weeds may appeal the notice through the procedures outlined in Section 4-17-8.5 of the Utah Noxious Weed Act:

1. Any person served with a notice to control noxious weeds may request a hearing to appeal the terms of the notice before the county weed control board within 10 days of receipt of such notice and may appeal the decision of the county weed control board to the county legislative body.
2. Any person served with a notice to control noxious weeds that has had a hearing before both the county weed control board and the county legislative body may further appeal the decision of the county legislative body by filing a written notice of appeal with a court of competent jurisdiction.

The treatment of articles capable of spreading noxious weeds will be as outlined in R68-9-3 and R68-9-4 of the Utah Administrative Code.

Property declared a public nuisance through the above described procedure will be quarantined by the state agriculture inspector or the county weed supervisor. Quarantine means there shall be no movement of feed crops, fertilizer, soil, livestock or equipment until the problem has been controlled and inspected and approved by the state agriculture inspector or the county weed supervisor and the property is taken off the quarantine list.

The Box Elder County Weed Board realizes it is not always the property owner’s fault that there is an existing uncontrolled infestation, but the infestation problem cannot be permitted to spread further in the area.

1. **Funding**

A limiting resource always seems to be the funding of desirable projects. Obtaining new funding resources and/or redirecting existing funds will be a high priority. The following resources are to be actively pursued:

1. Federal: US Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
2. State: Invasive Species Mitigation (ISM), Utah Department of Ag and Food (UDAF), Forestry Fire and State Land (FFSL), and Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI)
3. Local Government: None known at present.
4. Private: None known at present.

**Bibliography**

Cache County Weed Department, “Cache County Weed Control Policy”, Mar 2003

Tooele County, “Tooele County Weed Plan”, Aug 1999

Utah Noxious Weed Act (Utah Code Annotated: Title 4, Chapter 17). See State of Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, <http://ag.utah.gov/plantind/noxious_weeds.html>

Utah Weed Control Association (UWCA), “The Utah Strategic Plan for Managing Noxious and Invasive Weeds”, Feb 2004