

Eagle Hill Ranch Weed Management Plan

October 1, 2019

This plan is intended to be a subpart of overall area management for the HOA common grounds, which includes the mitigation of wild fire risk, specifically because one of the weeds to be controlled (Cheat grass) is a known ignition source for other fuels.

Noxious Weed definition as noted by CO State Statute:

- a. Aggressively invades native plant communities or is detrimental to economic crops.
- b. Is poisonous to livestock
- c. Is a carrier of detrimental insects, diseases or parasites
- d. Directly or indirectly is detrimental to environmentally sound management of natural or agricultural ecosystems.

Effects of weed infestations: they are widespread and affect many aspects of our lives.

a. Ecosystems:

1. Infestations can alter fire patterns and intensity resulting in major ecosystem changes – see article “A sea of sagebrush disappears, making way for fire-prone Cheat grass”
2. Infestations can affect soil erosion and aquatic habitats in streams and ponds (Spotted Knapweed)

- b. Wildlife: infestations provide poor habitat leading to decrease in the use of grazing land, i.e. there is a 95% decrease in elk herds where bunch grass has infected an area.
- c. Agriculture: infestations create economic loss by decreasing croplands and grazing land for livestock, i.e. many noxious weeds are poisonous to animals.
- d. Biodiversity: weeds are “stealth destroyers of our environment”. Invasive species are second only to the actual physical destruction of many species as a cause of species decline.
- e. Public lands: infestations colonize 4600 acres of federal land daily, roughly the size of Delaware annually. Infestations cover 7 million acres of National Park lands and 250,000 acres in CO.
- f. EHR: infestations will affect our yards, gardens and local pasture lands in a deleterious manner.

At the very least, a reason to create a weed management plan is to be a good neighbor to each other and to our surrounding communities. And we will be more successful if we work together rather than separately in this endeavor.

An adaptive management strategy should include:

1. Establishing goals
2. Identifying noxious weeds and prioritize control and elimination of these weeds
3. Identify measures for controlling and elimination of these weeds
4. Develop a weed management plan
5. Monitor it's effectiveness
6. Adapt as needed.

Management Goals:

1. Be a good neighbor
2. Maintain a diverse landscape of trees, shrub land and grasses in EHR
3. Improve a condition of the riparian areas and wetlands along Dallas Creek (Off of the Sweetwater Cul de sac) and the entrance to the subdivision.
4. Contribute to the protection of our watershed (Cattails ponds)
5. Preserve habitat for native plants and animals
6. **Educate the EHR community to the issue of noxious weeds in our development, including absentee property owners**

Weed Management Objectives:

1. Comply with Ouray County regulations regarding weed control,
2. Maintain our properties in a neat, attractive and safe manner,
3. Recognize weeds are often the primary ignition source in a fire danger risk management plan.

Targeted Noxious Weeds in EHR

1. Knapweed in patches
2. Canadian Thistle along the roadside and along the pond. (The short variety. The tall variety is native Thistle and is not considered noxious)
3. Cheat grass in **accessible places** such as road shoulders, around transformers, hydrants, and other utilities where there is a risk of ignition. Individual lots should also be considered for eradication when within 25 feet of a neighboring building. Cheat grass is often but not always found in previously disturbed areas with other dry inflammables.

Management Plan

1. Physical removal of the noxious weed when feasible. This is best done in the early spring, especially with Cheat grass (See a Homeowner's Guide to Cheat grass)
2. Targeted species-specific herbicides professionally applied in the minimum applicable amount in the fewest required locations.
3. Early spring spraying should be done for Cheat grass and Canadian Thistle as noted in #2.
4. Early fall spraying should be done for Knapweed and Canadian Thistle, as noted in #2.
5. Contract with Climb or other arborists to perform cutting and trimming as directed.

The projected cost for this plan is:

1. \$1,500 - \$2500 for weed spraying
2. \$750 - \$1500 for arborist services

This plan is intended to be a initial policy for EHR and is expected to be completed on an annual basis to ensure that each successive board of directors fulfills the objectives noted above for the EHR common grounds.