Hello from the Humboldt Watershed CWMA! The HWCWMA was developed to address the invasive weed problem and subsequent decline in water quality within the entire 16,843 square mile watershed, which covers most of Northern Nevada. The primary function of HWCWMA has been to provide land managers, owners and weed control groups assistance in the areas of funding, agency and weed group coordination and cooperation.

This month we would like to introduce you to one of Nevada’s state listed noxious weeds, rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*). A native to Eurasia, rush skeletonweed currently infests several millions of acres of rangeland, cropland, rights of way and waste areas across most of the western United States. Competing for water and nitrogen, it can severely reduce crop yield and forage for livestock and wildlife, and its wiry branches interfere with harvest.

Rush skeletonweed is a perennial with many branched, wiry stems that range from 1 to 4 feet tall. The rosette leaves resemble common dandelion and are hairless with deep, irregular teeth that point back toward the leaf base; they wither by flowering time. The flowers are bright yellow and strap-shaped in the axils or at the ends of branches. The flowers are often found in groups of 2 to 5 flowerheads, each with 9 to 12 flowers.  Mature, healthy plants can produce 1,500 flower heads, and up to 20,000 seeds.  The plant has milky juice; coarse, reddish downward-pointing hairs at the base of the single flowering stem; and small yellow flowers and plumed seeds that ride the wind. It thrives in well-drained sandy or gravelly soils and has invaded extensive areas of shallow silt loam soils in other areas as well. In addition to deep (8+ feet) taproots, it has lateral roots that produce daughter rosettes. Plants also grow from buds on root fragments cut by cultivation or other equipment.

**Chemical Control**

There are several effective herbicides including Tordon, Transline, Milestone and Escort for rush skeletonweed control. Timing of application should be in the summer before flowering to prevent seed production. Follow‐up will be required later in the fall and the following year to retreat plants from surviving rootstocks. If infestations are detected after seed production, fall herbicide treatments to newly emerged rosettes are also effective. Persistence will be required for several years given the persistence of rush skeletonweed roots in the soil.

**Mechanical Control**

Hand-pulling can work for small infestations. Areas must be controlled 2 to 3 times per year for 6 to 10 years to remove seedlings and re-sprouting roots. Removal of deep tap roots is easiest when soils are damp. Mowing plants repeatedly may reduce plants' biomass and seed production but may not provide eradication.

**Cultural Control**

Using beneficial forage species for competition will not suppress the dominance of rush skeletonweed. Continual grazing decreases populations while rotated grazing increases populations.

**Biological Control**

The gall midge (*Cystiphora schmidti*) was introduced to California in 1975 and is established throughout the Pacific Northwest. The gall midge impacts the rosette and flowering stems of all biotypes in this region. Affected stands are often a noticeable purple to reddish color.

As always, please notify the HWCWMA if you see rush skeletonweed growing within the Humboldt River Watershed - it is not currently established in this region and we may have an opportunity to stop this highly invasive species from spreading if we act quickly. Our [staff](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/program-information/who-we-are.aspx) can provide the property owner or appropriate public agency with site-specific treatment options for these plants. The HWCWMA also maps and monitors heavily infested sites in the watershed which allows the HWCWMA the ability to provide educational and financial assistance to land owners and groups in their management efforts, ultimately improving all of the qualities of the land and water in our watershed.

The HWCWMA has also developed a website to serve as a clearinghouse for information on invasive weeds in the Humboldt Watershed. Our website (http://www.humboldtweedfree.org) contains fact sheets for state listed noxious weeds in Nevada, Board of Director’s information, funding partner’s links, and many more features including a detailed project proposal packet that you can print, fill out and mail back to us at your convenience. We are looking to expand our project area outside of the Humboldt River and always welcome new funding opportunities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Andi Porreca, HWCWMA Coordinator at (775) 762-2636 or email her at aporreca@humboldtweedfree.org. You may also speak with Rhonda Heguy, HWCWMA Administrator at (775) 738-3085, email: hwcwma@gmail.com.