



HWCWMA Newsletter

Spring 2018
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Watching For Ventenata — An Invasive Weed On Our Western Horizon

Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) is a concept to identify potential invasive species prior to or just as they are becoming established. Early detection allows for development of an integrated pest management plan to contain and eradicate the invasive species before it spreads further. This will avoid costly, long-term control efforts.

Ventenata and Medusahead are invasive grasses that have been identified in parts of northern Nevada and are now slowly spreading south. We need to be aware of what these grasses look like and how they spread so we can be prepared to deal with them should they show up in your are of the state. If they become established within the Humboldt River watershed, they could devastate the ecology and range production.

Ventenata is an exotic, invasive, self-pollinated, shallow-rooted winter annual grass that is tawny to light yellow. It germinates in the fall and overwinters as a seedling. It is typically 4-20 inches tall. The leaves are folded or rolled lengthwise and appear narrow. Each plant may produce 15 to 35 or more seeds. The inflorescence is an open panicle, pyramidal in shape. The nodes turn a reddish-black color in May-June. Awns become twisted and bent when plant senesces in July-August. Seed longevity is two to three years. Ventenata has been shown to displace cheatgrass and Medusahead.

Ventenata has a high silica content and is slow to decay. Long-distance Ventenata seed distribution can be attributed to contaminated seed, crops, hay, animals and human activities. The long Ventenata seed awns help the seed adhere to clothing and hair of animals to help with its dispersal. Ventenata is generally found on south-facing slopes with heavier, rocky soils.

Ventenata’s high silica content makes it a less desirable forage, but it can be grazed early – timing is important. It can replace desirable perennial grasses and forbs in rangeland, pastures, CRP and hay meadows. Heavy infestations can reduce forage production by 50% within a few years. With the loss of production, land values decrease and ecological biodiversity is severely impacted. In rangeland and pasture proper grazing management practices that maintain a diverse and healthy native plant community are key to preventing establishment of Ventenata.

Burning shows no promise as a control measure. Ventenata’s rapid growth early in the growing season allows it to flourish after prescribed burns. Hand pulling and removal in small sites can be effective, but labor intensive. Multiple rotary mowings after each flush and prior to heading may help reduce seed formation. Revegetation must be carefully considered due to timing and precipitation events needed for germination of the desirable species.

Chemical applications can be effective, but costly. Many herbicides are labeled for Ventenata management, including glyphosate, imazapic, and other products. Be sure to read, understand and follow all label directions. Application timing can be critical for proper control. Follow-up treatments may be required. The site/crop to be treated must be on the label.

Prevention is the best means to control Ventenata. Once found, a strategy integrating several management options will be more effective than a single practice to control this invasive weed. Monitoring and follow-up treatments usually will be needed to keep the Ventenata in check and limit its spread.

Source: uml.edu



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2018 WEED

EXTRAVAGANZA

This year's Noxious Weeds Extravaganza will be held May 2-3 at the California Trails Center, located at the Hunter Exit off of I-80. Please contact Candy Kevan (775-738-7291) at the Elko Cooperative Extension Office to reserve your seat.

A Pesticide Applicator Training will be held at the California Trail Center on May 3, 2018 (credits available), the test will be given the same day. The applicator's exam fee is \$50.00 and payable the day of the exam. Please contact the Nevada Department of Agriculture if you are interested in attending this training at (775) 353-3601.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am in awe of what a wonderful organization the Humboldt Watershed Cooperative Weed Management Area is and of the endeavors we have undertaken, successfully completed and of the activities currently underway.

If you would like to be a part of the HWCWMA, I urge you to attend our monthly meetings and consider becoming a Board member. We are currently looking for a local landowner or energetic member of the public to fill a position on our Board.

We hold our monthly meetings the last Monday of each month at 2:00 via VTC at local UNCE offices. Please visit our website for more information.

WEED – FREE FORAGE

We are all affected by noxious and invasive weeds. We all benefit from stopping their spread. Non-native weeds invade roadsides, take over waterways, reduce pasture and field-carrying capacities, and erode the attractiveness of our landscapes. The NDA Noxious Weed Free Certification Program allows producers to certify forage or gravel materials as Noxious Weed-Free. Nevada's Weed-Free Forage and Gravel certifications comply with the national standards set by the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA).

The objective of this program is to provide a source of materials that is free of propagating plant parts from any of the plants listed as noxious on the Nevada Noxious Weed List or the NAISMA Weed List. The overall goal is to eliminate and/or drastically reduce the amount of noxious weeds that are transported and spread through forage and gravel products across and into the state of Nevada.

The use of certified weed free materials is recommended to decrease the chance of new noxious weed infestations from establishing in new areas. As a consumer, purchasing weed-free forage or gravel materials is a smart choice to prevent new noxious weeds

from invading your property and to prevent the spread of infestations to new areas.

As a producer, producing weed-free materials is an easy step to further protect Nevada lands from noxious weed invasions. Those who participate in the Nevada Weed-Free Program by certifying their products are not only practicing good land stewardship, but also establishing themselves in a growing market across the western United States.

Certified weed-free forage and gravel materials are required on all Forest Service Land. In addition, the BLM, NDOT and other entities require these materials on a contract by contract or district by district basis. As of right now, there are no other areas where it is required but certified weed-free is always recommended. Demand for the use of certified weed-free products is growing as the awareness of the negative impacts of noxious weeds increases. The use and production of certified weed-free products helps limit the spread of noxious weeds in Nevada and throughout the country. More information about Nevada's WFF program, including contacts for county weed superintendents, can be found at www.agri.nv.gov.

HERBICIDE COST-SHARE PROGRAM

The HWCWMA is offering a 50/50 cost share program that enables stakeholders with smaller projects to purchase herbicide at substantially lower costs through IFA in Elko and Ron's Seed and Supply in Winnemucca. With minimal paperwork requirements, watershed land-owners/managers can purchase and apply their needed herbicide; then notify HWCWMA staff to arrange a site visit; we will gather some site and application method information from you, and map your project if needed. You will be able to purchase \$500 worth of herbicide for only \$250, or purchase less herbicide if you have a smaller project area. The weeds are going to start showing up soon, so please head down to IFA or Ron's Seed And Supply and get your herbicide while you can!

PROJECTS IN THE WORKS...

The HWCWMA is very excited to be taking on new partners for treatment and support projects in 2018! By combining forces we will be working more effectively to control these destructive weeds. The threat is, if ignored, these noxious weeds have the potential to “move in and take over”. The opportunity is now - if we work together there is a strong chance that we can keep them at acceptable population levels, minimizing the economic and environmental losses. HWCWMA’s goal is to control and contain the populations, even if we can’t completely eradicate them.

The Union Pacific Railroad corridor is a project that HWCWMA has been striving toward initiating for several years, we have been building awareness of noxious weed issues with UP staff. In the near future, with UP’s assistance, the HWCWMA will be using GPS units and drones to create an inventory of noxious weeds along the UP right-of-ways from Wells to Lovelock. Once this information is compiled, we have a better chance of drafting an effective management plan for the treatment of the weeds along UP’s corridors, ultimately reducing the spread within our watershed.

The HWCWMA partners successfully worked together this year to treat approximately 1,000 acres of the noxious weed, medusahead. This is the largest treatment project of its kind, to date, in Elko County. A strategic plan was developed by the CWMA partners based on funding and an effort to capitalize on natural fire occurrences and defendable adjacent boundaries. The CWMA partners who participated in 2017, were the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS) and private landowners. A project of this scale would not be possible without the coordinated focus of each of these individuals.



TREATING WEEDS AT THE RIGHT TIME

Noxious weeds are problematic because they tend to be difficult to control. These non-native plants do not have natural enemies to help keep them in check. Most are prolific seed producers and can survive regardless of weather patterns and conditions. While it may make a person feel good about overdosing a mature musk thistle with herbicide and watching it kink up and turn brown, one needs to ask themselves, if they really accomplished anything? These untimely treatments are usually non effective or cost efficient. All herbicide labels provide information regarding the best time to treat a specific plant. Chemical companies do extensive research to provide the end user with the best control. A herbicide labeled to treat before flowering may not be the best choice once the plant flowers and matures. However, different herbicides act in different ways depending on growth stage or time of year. It is important to know the target pest and the best growth stage to treat the pest. Some

plants respond well to spring treatments, while others might be best suited for summer or fall treatment. Regardless of the noxious weed you plan to control, there are a number of herbicides readily available for treatment. Know the habitat in which the noxious weed is found and study a number of herbicide labels to see which product will work for you and your situation. Treating noxious weeds at the wrong time will give one limited results. Timing is critical for one to achieve the best results and best bang for your buck. Consistent and timely control will gain good results. Treating noxious weeds just once is not a good approach. Follow-up treatments need to be a part of the overall plan to contain and control targeted weeds. As mentioned earlier, these weeds can produce large amounts of seed and it can take several years to deplete the seed bank that the noxious weed has created. Don’t give up!



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Humboldt Watershed CWMA's Mission

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.

We have an opportunity to stop potentially invasive species from spreading if we act quickly and our staff 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 (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.

Project Partner Perspective

Managing invasive species is one part of a large movement to conserve native ecosystems. The HWCWMA is unique in that it is made up of diverse partners that offer insight into a number of environmental factors.

CWMA's allow partners to cross boundaries; invasive plant management can be carried out along ecological, rather than political, boundaries. They allow partners to share and leverage limited resources (volunteers, tools, herbicides, mailing and printing costs, media contacts, etc.) to the benefit of all. They are highly visible, building community awareness and participation as well as focusing attention and presenting a united effort to state and federal legislators. They can also reduce the risk of control efforts to water, crops, threatened and endangered (T&E) species, and other resources by assuring that all partners are using best management practices. CWMA's can provide an early detection and rapid response network by ensuring that all the partners are aware of and are able to identify new invaders and have a response mechanism. Finally, CWMA's help partners secure funding.

Thanks to our project partners, the HWCWMA has been able to assist local land-owners control and monitor noxious weeds on their properties. With assistance from our partners, the HWCWMA has been allowed to make significant strides in preventing plant invasions and protecting native plant biodiversity on a scale that no individual organization could achieve alone. Our wonderful sponsors include:

