



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Good Morning Chairman Rhodes and committee members,

Again, my name is Michael Vermeys, Weed Mgmt. Spec. for the BLM-Battle Mountain District.

It is my distinct pleasure to provide you and the committee with testimony regarding the status of BLM-Nevada's noxious weed program and more specifically on our District, which is comprised of much of central Nevada including the southern portion of Nye County and all of Esmeralda County or 10.4 million acres.

Chairman Rhodes, it is also my understanding that noxious weeds are a concern that you feel strongly about citing your scheduled appearance to speak at ENLC's 4<sup>th</sup> annual invasive weed workshop in February. Thank you for your continued interest!

I would first like to mention that BLM-Nevada has an active noxious weed management program in each of its 6 Districts. While each District has their own particular weed issues, each District has the same yearly directives concerning noxious weeds:

To survey for new infestations,

To treat new infestations under the concepts of Early Detection, Rapid Response

To control or eradicate existing infestations,

To post-treatment monitor previously treated areas,

To provide education and public outreach concerning noxious weed issues

And to foster a productive working relationships with community partners.

**EXHIBIT K - LANDS**  
Document consists of 5 pages.  
Entire Exhibit Provided  
Meeting Date: 07-14-08

In 2007, BLM-Nevada, as a whole, inventoried 4.5 million acres, treated 13, 000 acres and monitored 18,000 acres. More specifically on the Battle Mountain District in 2007, with the help of the 5 community partners, District staff and the Tonopah-Bootstraps Program we inventoried 547,000 acres, treated 800 acres and monitored 1,700 acres. We will exceed these numbers in 2008.

In all, State –wide funding levels for the BLM noxious weed programs have remained fairly static.

I would now like to applaud and shine some light on our community partners. Community Weed Mgmt. Areas or CWMA's are vital and irreplaceable in BLM's effort to identify, not only locally but Bureau-wide, noxious weed infestations... And control those weeds in timely fashion. The Battle Mountain District is currently working with 5 CWMA's. They are:

Diamond Valley Weed District

So. Nye Conservation District

Tonopah Conservation District

Esmeralda Co. Conservation District

and Lander County Conservation District

Briefly,

Diamond Valley Conservation District serves this area around Eureka. Diamond Valley has been an excellent partner, accomplishing 189 acres of treatment and 350 acres of survey for noxious weeds in 2007. In 2008, they have already treated 110 acres of noxious weeds.

So. Nye Co. Conservation District's primary mission is the control of Salt cedar, also known as Tamarisk in and around the town of Beatty, Nevada. The removal and control of Tamarisk is helping to combat one of Nevada's most problematic noxious weeds as well as enhance

Armargosa toad habitat. In 2007, they completed 800 acres of survey and 112 acres of treatment and are off to a strong start in 2008.

Tonopah Conservation District's sphere of influence includes all of Northern Nye County including the agricultural/ranching communities in the Upper Reese River Valley, Railroad Valley in the east to the Ione Valley in the West. The Battle Mt. District and representatives Tonopah Conservation District recently completed an annual work plan outlining noxious weed treatment in Monitor Valley, the Upper Reese River and the town site of Ione, which I personally post-treatment monitored last week.

Esmeralda County Conservation District is in a unique position to help fund the Tonopah-Bootstraps program, the District's partnership with University of Nevada-Reno Cooperative Extension Service. Tonopah-Bootstraps is a small crew, supervised by a crew boss, of youth ranging in age from 18-21 gaining valuable work experience and life skills. For example, they are expected to study for and pass the NV-Department of Agriculture's pesticide application certification exam. In August, Tonopah-Bootstraps will have the important task of surveying all of Esmeralda County for the presence of noxious weeds. An extensive survey like this has never been completed to date and will provide some important information for the District and related projects.

Lander County Conservation District is an important community partner for the District. Being based in Battle Mountain, the Conservation District works closely with the District identifying local noxious weed infestations and assisting the local farming/ranching community with noxious weed issues and developing community outreach. Lander County Conservation District also helps to fund the Bootstraps Program for work done specifically in Lander County. Please see the following page.



In Sept. 2007, BMD Integrated Weed Management Program and BMD Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program working with the help of UNR-CE Bootstraps-Tonopah crew to control Salt cedar in Fish Creek near Battle Mountain. Two miles of thick Salt cedar were controlled with an additional 1.5 miles scheduled for control in Sept. of 2008.



Hazardous fuels staff using chainsaws to cut mature salt cedar trees while BMD Weed Mgmt. Spec. and Bootstraps-Tonopah crew swamp litter. Photo by M. Easton-Bootstraps crew boss



Fish Creek Salt cedar control project as seen in Nov. 2007 for the same photo point. Salt cedar stumps were treated with an herbicide labeled for use around riparian areas. Yearly post-treatment monitoring will ensure that more native riparian plants return to Fish Creek.

Photo by M. Vermeys



The District is most immediately concerned with four of the State of Nevada's noxious weeds:

Salt cedar: Estimated 72,000 acres of infestation

Russian knapweed: 18,000 acres of infestation

Perennial pepperweed: 20,000 acres of infestation

Hoary cress: 46,000 acres of infestation.

This does not include the potential for some very aggressive noxious weeds found in surrounding Districts to spread and in become established in our District.

As we all know, Cheatgrass is a range wide problem particularly following wildfires.

Following the BLM's issuance of the new 17 State Vegetation Management EIS we now have approved the use of Plateau® an herbicide specifically formulated to target annual grass species while allowing important native grasses and forbs to germinate. I am committed to using this product in addition to other Integrated Weed Management methods, including prescribed grazing, to enhance our emergency stabilization and rehabilitation efforts. I have completed an Integrated Weed Management Plan for the District and am in the beginning stages of analyzing the identified Integrated Weed Management processes through an Environmental Assessment. The Integrated Weed Management Plan includes the use of Plateau® and biological agents, like the leaf beetle which has shown success controlling Large stands of Tamarisk in test locations throughout northern Nevada.

Chairman Rhodes and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to briefly discuss the state of the noxious weed program for the BLM and the Battle Mountain District and I look forward to fielding any specific questions you may have. Thank you.