

Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee

Project Completion Report FY 2008

Unit: Yellowstone National Park and Gallatin National Forest (supported by the GYCC Noxious Weed Sub-committee)	
Project Name: Greater Yellowstone Area Sand and Gravel Pit Inspection Program	
Project Description: Eight counties in the GYA, including Gallatin (MT), Madison (MT), Park (MT), Carbon (MT), Sweetgrass (MT), Park (WY), Teton (WY), and Fremont (ID) worked cooperatively with private, state and federal land managers to conduct fifty-five sand and gravel pit surveys in 2008. This project continued invasive weed prevention work funded by the GYCC in 2003 in which 25 pits in the tri-state area were surveyed for designated noxious weeds with five (20%) of the pits recommended for weed free certification, while the remaining pits posed significant threats of spreading noxious weeds. The 2008 inspection program re-inspected 18 of the pits inspected in 2003 plus an additional 37 pits using updated inspection criteria. The survey program was coordinated by Gallatin County Weed Control. Patrick Lawrence, a county weed control staff member, was hired to conduct inspections in the 3 states using survey protocol developed by the GYCC Weed Subcommittee.	
GYCC Funding Received:	\$6000
Partner Funding/In-Kind Received:	\$13,000
Gallatin County Weed District	\$4000
Madison County Weed District	200
Park County (MT) Weed District	200
Carbon County Weed District	200
Sweetgrass County Weed District	200
Park County (WY) Weed and Pest	200
Teton County (WY) Weed and Pest	500
Fremont County (ID) Weed Control	100
Montana DEQ	100
A M Wells (Josh McKenzie)	1000
TMC (Randy Cline)	300
25 Additional Private Companies	2500
Gallatin National Forest	1000
Yellowstone National Park	2500
Status of the Project: Inspected 55 pits, which included re-inspecting 18 pits inspected in the 2003 effort. Also, at Carbon (MT) and Sweetgrass (MT) Counties request, pits in these counties were added for inspection. Most pits were inspected once during the summer. Twenty-four (44%) of the pits inspected were recommended for weed free certification. Plans are for Gallatin County Weed Control to again conduct the inspections in 2009 and re-inspect the 55 pits inspected in 2008 and continue working with interested pit operators to increase the number of weed free pits. Pits with weeds will have repeat inspections during the summer to assist the operators in eliminating identified noxious weeds. These extra inspections should result in more weed free pits being recommended for certification. Inspections will begin on July 1 st to enable plants to grow enough to assist with weed detection. Plans to provide future program funding, beginning in 2010, are being explored including fees paid by participating sand and gravel pit operators and funding support from material user groups including county, state and federal government entities.	

Note: You may expand and reduce size of blocks.

Products that can be shared across the GYA: (GIS data layers, maps, new protocols and methods) Maps of pits surveyed including species detected and their locations were distributed to all participating county weed supervisors and are available to other interested parties. Inspection protocols and certification standards are also available and have been provided as requested. The North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) is in the process of adopting the program for use nationally and internationally. A press release is being written to distribute to area newspapers and program information is being provided to the Center for Invasive Plant Management for inclusion in their website and newsletter.

Project results: (Information worth sharing on methods, results, partnerships, etc) County weed supervisors in the eight participating counties were contacted for recommended pits to inspect in their respective counties. All but two responded. In addition Montana DEQ, responsible for permitting sand and gravel pits, provided additional information. Pit contact information was gathered and operators were contacted by mail and phone to determine project interest and arrange inspection dates. Due to busy pit operator and county weed supervisor schedules during the summer and limited time in some areas, few operators or weed staff accompanied Patrick on his inspections. Survey forms were developed and Google photos created for mapping and documenting pit weed infestations. Maps and survey logs were distributed to the respective county weed supervisors. Fifty-five pits were inspected (including 18 pits that were inspected in 2003) in 16 days from June 3-July 24. Surveys looked for 61 invasive plant species, which included all the designated noxious weeds in the states of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Twenty-one designated species were documented, including four new invaders to the GYA located at six pits. Most common species detected included: Canada thistle (30 pits), houndstongue (19), yellow sweetclover* (18) spotted knapweed (16), black henbane (15), musk thistle (15), bull thistle (10), and whitetop/hoary cress (8). The four new invaders detected included: Scotch thistle (2 pits), tamarisk/salt cedar (1), field scabious (1), and absinth wormwood (1).

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Submit to Virginia Kelly: vkelly@fs.fed.us 406-587-6704. Contact Virginia with questions.