



Lancaster County Weed Control

June 2012

www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds

Weed Control host “Weed Walk”

Lancaster County Weed Control hosted the “Weed Walk” tour sponsored by the 5 Rivers Weed Management Area on June 21st at [Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center](#) south of Denton.

We were lucky to pick a day when the temperature was in the low 80's with low humidity. A good crowd



showed up to hear Ben Mullarkey, Habitat Program Manager at Spring Creek Prairie described the management practices, some of the history of the

property, grazing practices and the goals for the prairie.

The group then went on a walk out on the prairie with Chris Helzer, Program Director for [The Nature Conservancy](#).

Chris was able to point out many different plant species and tell about what makes them thrive. He pointed



out that some of the plants were there because of overgrazing or prior year's management and some thrive because of weather conditions and soil types. Chris's message is that by looking at the plants that exist you can often tell what is right or wrong with the management on a piece of property.

Following the tour a picnic lunch was provided by the 5 Rivers WMA.

Noxious Weed Updates

Musk thistle

We've completed 840 inspections on 432 properties and had to do force controls on 8 properties. It still amazes me that as easy as this biennial plant is to control that some landowners aren't more aggressive on eradicating this from their land. I guess it's been around over 50 year's and it will still be here when I'm gone, but compared to some of the other noxious weeds it is actually pretty easy to control. While we were successful on working with most landowners to get control, the one's that didn't get done we will work on for fall control.

Leafy Spurge

Leafy Spurge was flowering by the end of March so its early season is over and we will now gear up to work on it again in the fall. We did 563 inspections on 397 properties this year. The roadsides and landfills that we had sprayed last year with a new herbicide have shown positive results this year.

Phragmites

We began inspecting phragmites again in late June. Our goal is to utilize the information gathered with inspections done in March and April along with the summer inspections to get landowners on board to have either ground application or helicopter application done in late August to early September. The NDA grant received earlier is helping fund some of the phragmites eradication effort. At this time we are a little less than half way done with the first round of survey's having completed 226 inspections.

Knotweed

Education continues on the knotweeds and seems to be working as we continue to get new reports of previously unknown infestations. The good news is that almost everyone is doing some type of control work with their infestations.

Canada thistle

We continue to find new infestations of Canada thistle. This plant is often misidentified by landowners as musk thistle, but is a very dangerous, aggressive, deep rooted, perennial thistle.

The following article went out on this month's Acreage Owners list serve from UNL – Extension

Purple loosestrife

By [Brent Meyer](#), Lancaster County Weed Superintendent

Purple loosestrife was originally sold as an ornamental plant in Nebraska, but after its escape into the state's rivers, wetlands and marshes it was designated a noxious weed in Nebraska in 2001.



Purple loosestrife on the Platte River

Despite the sale of "sterile" cultivars in the nursery industry, and even though most owners of ornamental plants never saw any spread or escape in their own landscapes, sterile plants were producing viable seed after pollination by wild loosestrife plants.

[Purple loosestrife](#) is extremely difficult to control



and once it gets into wetlands and rivers it has the ability to spread very rapidly. It is a perennial forb that originated in Eurasia and North Africa. It typically flowers from July to September, but this year with the warmer weather it is flowering in June and will

continue to produce rose-purple flowers for the next few months. Its ability to produce flowers for extended time along its spike beginning at the bottom and slowly flowering to the top is one of the

reasons it was a popular plant with homeowners, unfortunately it is also one of the reasons it is able to spread so rapidly on the rivers and in wetlands. Purple loosestrife is capable of producing millions of seeds that may lay dormant in the soil for many years. Another unique identify part of the plant is its square 4-angled stem.

Lancaster County Weed Control inspectors continue to find ornamental plantings occasionally, but they are very few compared to when it was first designated a noxious weed. We also have about 15 locations where purple loosestrife has spread into the wild. Those locations are being managed



Ornamental plant

by the property owners. Chemical control has proven to be the most effective method to eradicate large infestations. Individual plants can be hand dug, completely removing all the root system and put in a closed container to allow the entire plant to completely dry out before placing it in a tightly wrapped dark plastic bag to prevent contamination at the landfill.

Contact Information

We need everyone's help, so if you would like more information on purple loosestrife or would like to report an infestation contact the [Lancaster County Weed Control](#) Office. Email: weeds@lancaster.ne.gov or phone 402-441-7817.

July Planned Activities

- 4 Holiday
- 9-13 Brent's Vacation
- 10 5 Rivers WMA
- 12 Management Team Meeting
- 13 Invasive Species Council
- 17 LPWMA Meeting
- 19 NWCA Region 1
- 24 Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance tour
- 26 Problem Resolution Team