

Lancaster County Weed Control – City of Lincoln Weed Abatement

2014 Weed Program Review

INSIDE THIS REPORT:

2014 Weed Program Review	1
Cutleaf & Common Teasel	1
2014 Enforcements	2
Noxious Weeds Inside City	2
Weed Abatement Program	2
Map of All Weed Violations	3
Combined Weed Program	4
Education & Outreach	4



**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES
IN YOUR TRACKS.**

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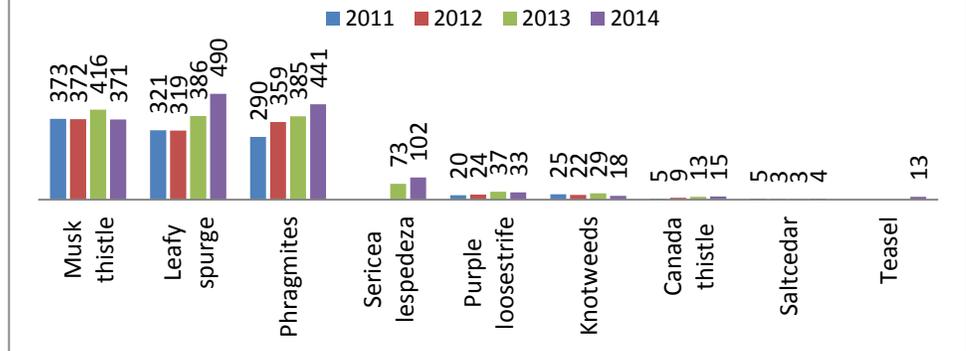


Common teasel



Cutleaf teasel

Noxious Weed Infestations



Early Detection Rapid Response

(EDRR) continues to be the main focuses of invasive weed control in Lancaster County. The earlier the landowner can start an aggressive effort to control infestations, the better chance they have to eradicate the problem. Our mission is to stop the spread of new invasives before they get a strong foothold in Lancaster County and to aggressively manage the invasives that already exist. Cutleaf and common teasel were added as

noxious weeds in Lancaster County because of the aggressive nature of the plant and its ability to rapidly spread and cause economic loss for property owners. Our inspectors have already documented 13 locations and aggressive treatment is underway. Leafy spurge, phragmites and sericea lespedeza all saw increases this year, while musk thistle, purple loosestrife and knotweed infestations decreased. Canada thistle and saltcedar have remained steady in recent years.

Inspection totals increased dramatically in 2014. Our overall inspections were up 14.1% over 2013, this following a year where inspections were up 28.8% from 2012 to 2013. In short, our 2-year workload increased by a whopping 46.9%. In 2012 we completed 7,510 total inspections compared to 11,034 in 2014. I am very proud of our staff to be able to handle this 46.9% increase in work, while being able to hold our budget to only a 1.78% increase over the same period.

Cutleaf & Common Teasel Added To County Noxious List

On July 1st, 2014 Greg Ibach, Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture approved the designation of cutleaf and common teasel as noxious weeds in Lancaster County. The Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act allows

individual counties to designate local invasive weed problems to their own county list, without being added to Nebraska's statewide list. After holding public hearings, gathering information and testimony, Lancaster

County Weed Control proceeded with the process to add both teasels to our noxious weed list. Lancaster County is the first county in Nebraska to add cutleaf and common teasel.

2014 City Enforcements above 5-Year Average

“The overall number of enforcements in 2014 dropped by 26, totaling 299, this is an 8.7% decrease”

Any time a property owner does not comply with our legal notice to maintain their property below the 6” city height ordinance; our office hires a contractor to cut the property. Once the cutting is complete we file a “notice of possible unpaid weed assessment” with the Register of Deeds office. If the assessment is not paid, a lien is attached to the property and is treated the same as unpaid property taxes.

Weed Abatement Enforcements	
• 2010	189
• 2011	261
• 2012	168
• 2013	325
• <u>2014</u>	<u>299</u>
Average	248

The overall number of enforcements in 2014 dropped by 26, totaling 299, this is an 8.7% decrease. The number of legal notices issued dropped from 1,629 in 2013 to 1,485 in 2014. During the same period the number of properties inspected rose from 3,099 to 3,607. In addition to the legal notices, we also sent 2,391 letters and made 40 personal contacts to get properties controlled.

Noxious Weeds Inside Lincoln City Limits



Ornamental purple loosestrife in Lincoln

Noxious weeds know no boundaries. They find themselves at home inside the city limits along the creeks, in wetlands and waste areas just as well as in the rural areas. Saltcedar, purple loosestrife and knotweed were first introduced as ornamentals and planted in our landscapes, so they are found more in the city than in rural areas. It’s important to control them in the city to prevent the spread into rural areas.

In 2014, 33.8% of our noxious weed inspections occurred inside the city limits. While these infestations are very small in the total number of acres infested, we continue to find noxious weeds all around the city.

Our city inspectors made 923 inspections on 564 sites and found 399 sites to be infested with noxious weeds.

Lincoln’s Noxious Weeds	
<small>number of sites infested in 2014</small>	
➤ Musk thistle	161
➤ Phragmites	84
➤ Leafy spurge	83
➤ Purple loosestrife	23
➤ Knotweed	18
➤ Canada thistle	14
➤ Teasel	12
➤ Saltcedar	4

“the ease of turning in complaints electronically on the web and smart phones has led to the biggest share of the increase”

City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program

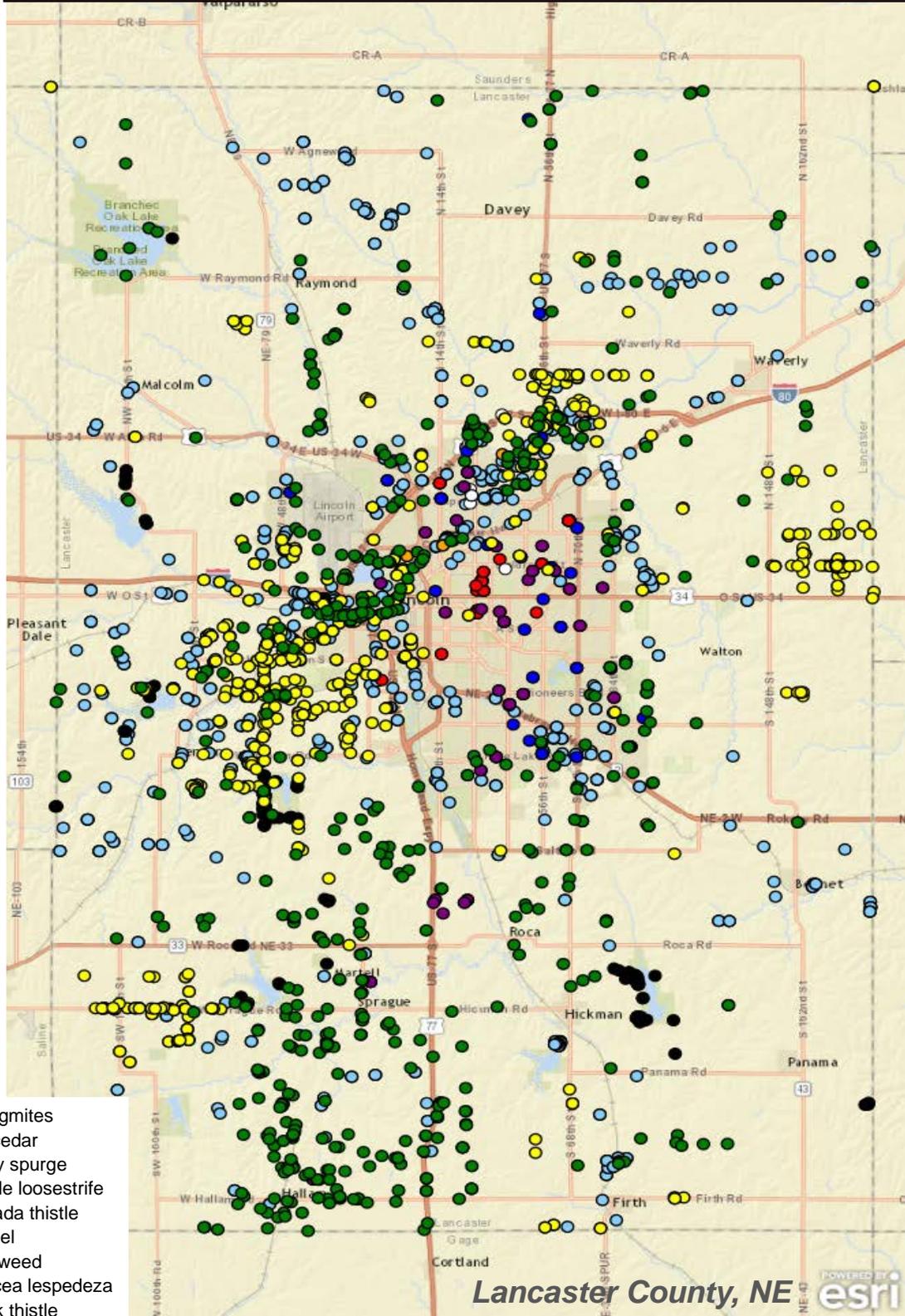
Weed Abatement	
<small>total inspections</small>	
2010	4,344
2011	4,788
2012	5,354
2013	7,099
2014	8,310

Weed Abatement inspections increased from 7,099 in 2013 to

8,310 in 2014, a 17.1% increase. These inspection numbers represent only the 6” height ordinance on overgrown properties; they do NOT include noxious weed inspections. The total number of properties on which these inspections occurred has also increased from 3,099 in 2013 to 3,607 in 2014,

a 16.4% increase. I don’t think the city has more overgrown properties than in prior years, I see the awareness of the program and the success we’ve had in cleaning up properties along with the ease of turning in complaints electronically on the web and smart phones has led to the biggest share of the increase.

2014 Noxious Weed Locations



Map Key

- Phragmites
- Saltcedar
- Leafy spurge
- Purple loosestrife
- Canada thistle
- Teasel
- Knotweed
- Sericea lespedeza
- Musk thistle

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We're on the Web!

www.lancaster.ne.gov/weeds



Kiosk along the trail by Salt Creek

**Good Neighbors –
 Control Invasive Weeds !!!**

Combined Weed Program

Almost every parcel outside of developed residential lots has or had one or more kinds of noxious weeds present. The key to noxious weed control is not allowing the plants to seed. This requires persistence and follow-up. Most of the public and private landowners understand this and are keeping their noxious weeds under control. It is the job of noxious weed control authority staff to assist landowners in the job of controlling noxious weeds. Many landowners are accomplishing control without any assistance or contact from the authority. The authority carries out a strong information and awareness program along with an extensive inspection program to encourage voluntary compliance of the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act.

The authority has also provided the inspection and administration of the City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement program since entering into an Interlocal agreement with the City in 1996. The County Commissioners serve as the Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Authority. Brent Meyer serves as the superintendent and supervises a seasonal staff of six weed inspectors with the assistance of Chief Inspector Pat Dugan and Account Clerk Ashley McAllister.

Education & Outreach Activities

Education and outreach are an important ongoing part of our weed control program. The public is generally not aware of the economic and environmental impacts of noxious weeds. There is a need to increase awareness of noxious weeds and to provide educational information to cooperators, land managers, and the public. As people become more aware of noxious weeds, the probability of detecting them is greatly increased, which allows for more effective and timely control. Education and awareness assist with weed identification, reporting of new infestations, prevention, control, and fosters cooperation and partnerships.

Activities in 2014:
 - UNL private applicator trainings begin in early January, we give

presentations on Weed ID to those with a private applicator license.

- The display booth is busy throughout the year at a variety of locations including; UNL Extension, State Capitol, State Fair, Husker Harvest Days, Nebraska Power Farming Show, and landowner and agency meetings.

- UNL Extension – Lincoln is a great partner to reach out to citizens throughout Lancaster county and surrounding areas. The 4 page insert in the April Nebline is by far the biggest outreach effort of the year, mailed out to 12,000 and is available online.

- The Acreage owners e-news, the Weed Watcher Program as well as our monthly newsletter keep residents up to date on what is going on at key points during the year.

- Our Web page hits continue to increase

annually so we are always keeping new, updated information on that.

- Landowner and Multi-agency meetings this year included the sericea lespedeza cost share grant meeting as well as our multi-agency noxious and invasive weed ID training.

- Other groups we were able to present to this year include; UNL-Plant Pathology class, Master Naturalist training, homeowners and neighborhood associations as well as local high schools.

- Our partnerships with City of Lincoln Parks Department and the Lower Platte South Natural Resource District have provided us with many locations to erect kiosk to inform the public using the trails and parks about invasive weeds and how to report them.