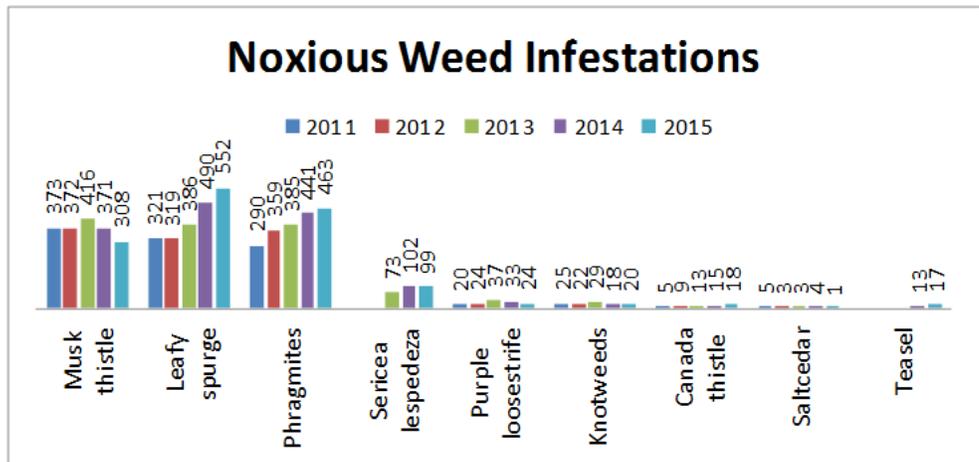


# Lancaster County Weed Control – City of Lincoln Weed Abatement

## 2015 Weed Program Review

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**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES  
IN YOUR TRACKS.**

PlayCleanGo.org

*“Our mission is to stop the spread of new invasives before they get a strong foothold in Lancaster County”*



Camera, Beau Wolfe with 5-City TV and Brent Meyer, Lancaster County Weed Superintendent

### Early Detection Rapid Response

(EDRR) continues to be the main focus 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, as well as 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. It has the ability to spread rapidly and cause economic loss for property owners. Our inspectors have already documented 17 locations and aggressive treatment is underway. Canada thistle, leafy spurge, phragmites, and knotweed all saw increases this year, while musk thistle, purple loosestrife, saltcedar and sericea lespedeza infestations decreased.

No piece of land is safe from noxious weeds. They are found wherever they're able to establish a root system. In 2015, our inspectors documented 1,503 sites infested with noxious weeds. 367 of those sites were located within Lincoln city limits. Due to their introduction as ornamentals saltcedar, purple loosestrife and knotweed are more commonly found in the city than rural areas in Lancaster County. Saltcedar has escaped its ornamental settings and is now found along the banks of some creeks.

## Nebraska Developing Weed ID Videos

One of the goals of the Nebraska Weed Control Association (NWCA) is providing education to the public on noxious and invasive plants. One of the keys to eradicating any noxious weed infestation is the ability to correctly identify the

plant. As farmers and ranchers turn more to technology based operations we realized the need to do more than just hand out brochures and send letters. In today's society folks would rather pick up a smart phone or tablet

and watch a video instead of reading a brochure. Check out the latest videos on [leafy spurge](#), [musk thistle](#) and [purple loosestrife](#) on our web site.

[lancaster.ne.gov/weeds](http://lancaster.ne.gov/weeds)

## 2015 City Enforcements above 5-Year Average

*“The overall number of enforcements in 2015 rose by 87, totaling 386; this is a 29% increase”*

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. If the assessment is not paid, a lien is attached to the property and is treated the same as unpaid property taxes.

<b>Weed Abatement Enforcements</b>	
• 2011	261
• 2012	168
• 2013	325
• 2014	299
• <u>2015</u>	<u>386</u>
<b>Average 288</b>	

The overall number of enforcements in 2015 rose by 87, totaling 386; this is a 29% increase. The number of legal notices issued rose from 1,485 in 2014 to 1,575 in 2015. During the same period the number of properties inspected decreased from 3,607 to 3,312. In addition to the legal notices, we also sent 1,895 letters and made 50 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 2015, 32.2% 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, many along the creeks and in waste areas.

Our city inspectors made 1,030 inspections on 591 sites and found 367 sites to be infested with noxious weeds.

<b>Lincoln’s Noxious Weeds</b>	
<i>number of sites infested in 2015</i>	
➤ Musk thistle	118
➤ Phragmites	87
➤ Leafy spurge	103
➤ Purple loosestrife	12
➤ Knotweed	20
➤ Canada thistle	15
➤ Teasel	11
➤ Saltcedar	1

## City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program

*“With the ease of turning in complaints electronically on our web site, the Citizen Action Center and smart phones we received 1,863 complaints”*

<b>Weed Abatement</b>	
<i>total inspections</i>	
<b>2011</b>	<b>4,788</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>5,354</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>7,099</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>8,310</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>7,802</b>

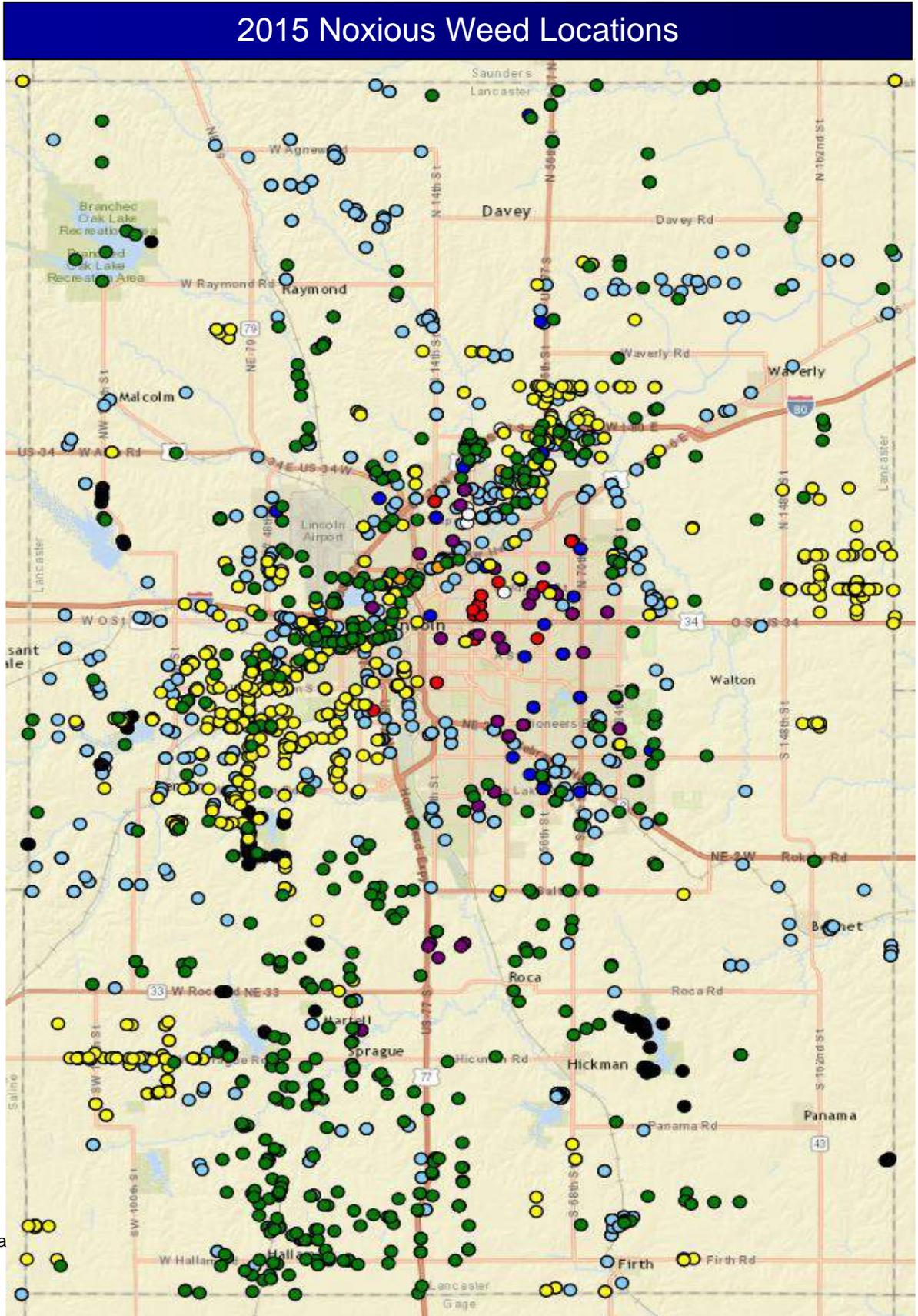
Weed Abatement inspections decreased from 8,310 in 2014 to

7,802 in 2015, a 6.1% decrease. 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 decreased from 3,607 in 2014 to 3,312 in

2015, an 8.2% decrease. Our office relies on the citizen’s to help let us know when their neighbor’s properties become a violation. With the ease of turning in complaints electronically on our web site, the Citizen Action Center and smart phones we received 1,863 complaints on properties requiring an inspection.



# Lancaster County, NE



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**We're on the Web!**  
[lancaster.ne.gov/weeds](http://lancaster.ne.gov/weeds)

*“These **THIEVES** are threatening your livelihood and they are **not** just weeds anymore”*

**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 Jasmine Mau.

## Catch the Thief Green-Handed!

*By Pat Dugan*

Deciding to Farm and/or Ranch is one of the most rewarding and challenging occupations you could possibly imagine. In most instances, your land is one of the largest investments you have and it is or will become one of your greatest assets, providing for you and your family's livelihood for generations to come.

As a landowner, you are charged every day to manage, preserve and enhance this investment. You have also committed yourself to become a business partner with every other owner in the community to protect and maintain property values. Across vast rangelands

and riparian areas, invasive plants have become established and continue to be a threat.

These **THIEVES** are threatening your livelihood and they are **not** just weeds anymore. They continue to take land out of production. Additional economic and environmental harm done by these invasive plants include reduced flow in waterways, altered fire regimes, and abandoned natural areas that were once preserved for wildlife and recreation.

No doubt trying to eradicate noxious weeds is an expensive and time consuming task. However don't underestimate the

necessity. Today's invaders degrade property, cause a degree of reduced value and have the ability to reach an economic threshold rendering property useless.

Stay educated and abreast of all the new invaders in your area, look for things that seem out of place. Rely on the local weed authority department to be an extra set of eyes keeping you informed of when there is an infestation problem. These new invaders are much more difficult to control and nearly impossible to eradicate. By being Pro-active we have a better chance of protecting our assets from environmental and economic disaster.