

A Cooperative Weed Management Area Saves the Shoshone River Watershed from Dalmatian Toadflax



After a local fire, the density of Dalmatian toadflax increased dramatically in the South Fork Weed Management Area.



fter a wildfire sweeps across rangelands in the West, Dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*), a non-native, invasive weed, is sure to follow in its stead. This weed forms a plant monoculture which has resulted in the loss of many native grass and forb species throughout multiple Western states. In Wyoming, especially, this plant has reduced rangeland quality by out-competing native plant species and threatening the biodiversity of the rangeland ecosystem.

Challenge:

Dalmatian toadflax infested 2,200 acres of riparian areas, scrubland, grassland and forestland along the south fork of the Shoshone River watershed in Wyoming. This watershed is home to multiple rangeland animal species, including bighorn sheep, elk and domestic livestock. It also serves as a drinking water source for over 35,000 residents and provides irrigation water for 93,000 acres of farmland. To protect this natural resource and a way of life, Wyoming residents and weed management professionals are determined to prevent Dalmatian toadflax from staying permanently.

Solution:

In 1994, the Cody Conservation District and the Park County Weed and Pest Control District created the South Fork Weed Management Area (SFWMA) to control Dalmatian toadflax. The SFWMA received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, through its Challenge Grants and Pulling Together Initiatives, to inventory existing Dalmatian toadflax infestations, establish four biological control agent insectaries and release more than 12,000 Dalmatian toadflax eating insects on public and private land. The SFWMA also treated more than 1,000 infested acres with herbicides.



Herbicide treatments contained the Dalmatian toadflax infestation and the area was reseeded in Spring of 2004 using bluebunch wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, Western wheatgrass, thickspike wheatgrass, sandberg bluegrass, annual sunflower and blanketflower.

Result:

Since the SFWMA began, it has contained Dalmatian toadflax by more than 60 percent and partnered with other organizations to expand its efforts. This includes a public education program to foster community awareness of Dalmatian toadflax and other noxious weeds in Wyoming. Programs such as these have helped communicate to Wyoming residents the management practices necessary to control unwanted weeds on public lands, which comprise more than 49 percent of the state.

The SFWMA has also partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cody Field Office and the Student Conservation Association to promote educational programs throughout the state. With these partners, the SFWMA has coordinated community events and hosted "Weed-Pullin" Days to encourage citizen involvement in weed management efforts. With projects like these, the SFWMA demonstrates the success possible within an active Cooperative Weed Management Area.



Learn More:

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