

**Fremont County
Weed Advisory Board**

May 18, 2022

**Fremont County Pathfinder Community Center
Conference Room**

6655 HWY 115

Florence, CO 81226

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m.

Board Members Present (in Person):

Ed Norden, Chairman

Tony Telck

Paul Garrett

Donna Landrum

Rick Romano

Justin Kurth

Fred Smith

Ralph Kunselman

Board Members Present (Zoom): None

Board Members Absent:

Bud Chess

Roy Roper

Paul Telck

Others Present (in Person):

Brittany Pierce, Weed Management Director

Sunny Bryant, County Manager

Alicia Stone, Recording Secretary

Debbie Mitchell, Fremont Conservation District

Greg Langer, NRCS

Devin Everhart, Recreation District

Aaron Richter, BLM

Mia Cory, CSU Extension

Mark Chiaro, Fremont County Weed Department

Freia Hooper-Bradford, Guest

Others Present (Zoom): None

Minutes:

The minutes from the March 16, 2022 meeting were presented. The minutes were approved as presented.

Chairman's Report:

Nothing to report.

Agency Reports:

- **Commissioner's Comments**

No Commissioners were present; however, County Manager, Sunny Bryant spoke about the possibility of the Sheriff moving the fire ban from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

- **BLM**

Aaron Richter stated that besides fire issues, they are starting out the season as usual and coordinating with Brittany Pierce on the yearly projects that the County does for BLM. He stated that the Blue Heron project is coming up dealing with the Eurasian water milfoil in the ponds. He stated that they did a couple of treatments last year with a contractor and it did a pretty good job at controlling it. So far this year, they haven't seen any new growth, so they are putting it on hold a little bit and just keeping an eye on it. Aaron stated that's a good sign that the treatments have been successful so far and there is still native vegetation growing in the pond. He stated that they have the helicopter project coming up this summer for the elongated mustard and also the Grape Creek project again this summer. Aaron brought up issues with the Martin Marietta Parkdale Pit, but wasn't sure if it would need to be discussed under old business or not. They are expanding their operation onto BLM land, which is a 100-year, 700-acre project and he noted that their weed plan is pretty weak. He also noted that they are using their weed management plan from over 20 years ago when the pit first started as Front Range Aggregates. Aaron stated that they have a leafy spurge problem out there onto BLM all the way down Tallahassee Creek and also on the private side where the quarry is. He stated that there is a history of the issues being addressed through the Weed Advisory Board sending a letter about the issues, although the letter was sent to the previous owners of the quarry. He noted that their attorney at the time responded, stating that they would spray the weeds with 2-4-D prior to them even starting mining operations. Aaron stated that they probably have even more leafy spurge than when they started and what takes place on private land, BLM doesn't have any authority over. Aaron made a comment on his review about their weed plan and is hoping that they can get a better plan from them, as their current plan will not only have an effect on their reclamation, but they are also probably transporting the seed as they mine. He stated that he is waiting to see what they come up with as a response to their comments on the weed plan.

Chairman Ed Norden asked if they have to cross Tallahassee Creek. Aaron stated yes, and noted that they probably have leafy spurge growing where their operation is currently. Aaron stated that it's probably been at least a year since he has been out there. Ed clarified that the quarry was originally Agile Stone, then Front Range Aggregates, and now Martin Marietta. He noted that their CUP Modification has already been approved by the Fremont County Board of County Commissioners. He suggested that when BLM finishes their EIS, they should make a referral to the Fremont County Planning and Zoning and Fremont County Weed Departments and request that they make an amendment to their CUP in relation to their Weed Control Plan.

Aaron stated that they did have a Weed Control Plan, but it just didn't seem adequate to him. He noted that their EIS is approved, but the contract hasn't been approved. He stated that they are still working through their process, because there are issues with their reclamation plan holding it up also, they are requesting an updated Weed Control Plan.

Ed suggested that he keep in communication with Brittany and if they both feel like it needs to be amended into their CUP, that is an option.

Tony Telck asked Brittany if the County has gone in and sprayed at the quarry.

Brittany stated that they didn't spray last year, but they did the year prior.

Aaron said at one point through their permitting in the past there was a statement in their weed plan that the weeds would be taken care of by Fremont County, but he isn't sure if they are coordinating that with the County.

Brittany stated that they were going to go out and spray last year, but Martin Marietta told them not to, but they did spray the year prior.

Aaron recommended that they at least spray a couple times per year and maybe they can hire the County to do so and coordinate it when the County goes to spray the BLM land, they can spray their side.

On a separate note, Aaron stated that BLM is working on an EIS to get indaziflam approved as well as about ten other chemicals approved. He also wanted to report that New Zealand mud snails have been discovered at Badger Creek; they are an invasive snail to be aware of.

- **CSU Extension/NRCS Small Acreage**

Mia Cory stated that their office is no longer located in the County Administration building, they are now housed in the front of the Pathfinder Park building. She stated that Cara Harder has left and is now in South Dakota for their State Extension Office. Mia stated that they held a draught symposium and had 55 attendees, which was a really good turn out

and there is discussion on having another one. They will be having a Native Plant workshop on June 18th at the 4-H building in Canon City from 9:00am-12:00pm. The cost will be \$5.00 and is being put on by master gardeners. She said they are in the works with NRCS to put on an irrigation type of workshop/symposium. As far as 4H, their numbers are up about 100 kids from last year.

- **NRCS**

Greg Langer stated they are in the process of getting contracts approved for this year's round of EQIP, which is keeping everybody fairly busy. They received 14 applications that are moving forward towards approval. Those 14 contracts are worth over \$330,000.00 cost share. Greg stated they have had a few calls from customers needing weed ID, mainly from Penrose, so they have been doing some site visits to weed ID. They are busy trying to stay on top of their workload. He noted that currently the Arkansas Basin is at 33% of normal for snow pack and year-to-date, precipitation is at 84% of normal. He noted that we are in D1-D2 draught currently in Fremont County.

Ed stated that he heard that we are about three weeks ahead on the depreciation for the snow pack run off this year.

Greg stated that with all of the wind we have had, it put a lot of dust on top of the snow which causes it to heat up the snow and melt much faster.

- **Fremont Conservation District**

Debbie Mitchell stated that they are currently doing no-till-drill rentals, but people keep canceling because of the wind and lack of water. They are working with the pre-schools on getting their gardens planted. The Russian Olive project is coming up, but she needs to check the Florence River Park and Beaver Park Water. She noted that there is only one more year on that project. She stated that they have a District Conservation Technician job opening that closes today, but they don't have any applicants yet and they may have to keep it open longer.

Donna Landrum asked if they have done anything more on the Beaver Park Water.

Debbie stated they checked last year in May. She stated that they couldn't walk through it due to 8-foot-tall kochia there and said that the Canada thistle is growing to the East on the maintenance road. There is a lot of renewed growth on the Russian Olive. She will be getting with Ron and getting out there to look at it.

- **City of Cañon City**

Not in attendance

- **City of Florence**

Not in attendance

- **Canon City Metropolitan Area Rec District**

Devin Everhart reported that they have confirmed dates to do more wood cutting on dead timber the last week of June and the first week of July and also the last two weeks of July.

Ed asked if they are affected by the Stage 1 fire restrictions.

Devin said they may have to get a water truck down there, but if we don't get any rain, they may have to cancel.

Ed asked Ralph Kunselman if all of the ditches are running.

Ralph stated yes and the hydraulic ditch is finally running.

Ed asked if they were built a bypass around the Home Depot mess.

Ralph said they did an inversion and sealed all of the joints. All together they did 113 joints at \$3,000.00/joint.

Weed Board Member and Guest Roundtable:

Freia Hooper-Bradford stated that she purchased some property that has a hay field and horse pasture in the County. She said the field has many noxious weeds, but the worst is the bouncing-bet *Saponaria officinalis* and it will destroy hay fields and pastures. She stated that she is probably going to have to till up the hay field and not have any hay. She said she has sprayed with 2-4-D, but the weeds are spreading like wild fire. She said she believes the weeds are coming from the Fremont ditch. Freia said she is hoping to get help to get her 2-acre field under control because it is poisonous to horses and cows.

Tony Telck stated that the Fremont ditch gets sprayed every year, sometimes twice per year, so they aren't coming from the ditch. He also noted that spraying the bouncing-bet with 2-4-D doesn't work. He suggested glyphosate or round-up.

Brittany Pierce stated that she will probably have to broadcast it, and will probably end up losing the alfalfa. She stated that it is best to treat in the fall.

Tony stated that plowing may not be the solution either, as the weeds will re-sprout.

Brittany also noted that there is bouncing-bet all throughout the county.

Freia said she is just asking for help, as it will be expensive.

Brittany told her she would talk to her after the meeting and give her some more information.

Rick Romano suggested spraying, plowing up, getting the nodes to commit and wait for re-growth to spray again.

Weed Director's Report:

Brittany Pierce stated they have been trying to secure contracts. She has been reaching out to a lot of landowners regarding the EM project, but it has been hard to get in contact with landowners. Brittany said she sent out notices, but just wants to make sure everyone is aware of the application. All other projects are set up with the Eurasian watermilfoil and with the mule packing weed spraying, but that take place until the fall. She stated that there are a couple of events coming up, one this weekend with the 4-H groups to release a tamarisk beetle and bindweed mites at Florence River Park. There is another one with Penrose Park was wanting to be a part of this fall with the FFA group to release puncture vine weevils. They have been treating private and city. Donna and Mark are working on CDOT to finish up by June 1st. She stated she is trying to figure out if they can work on certain areas of Florence, but hasn't been able to get ahold of the city regarding what areas they need to work on. Brittany noted that there is a nationwide shortage of most glyphosate and 2-4-D, she is on the waiting list to get some when it becomes available. She stated that the cost is higher now too. Brittany stated that they had a pesticide clean-up day. There was only eight people that showed up, so this year was a learning curve. She stated that they got approved and received the funds for the Noxious Weed Grant through the state. Brittany stated that she just purchased a new mapping device, which is a GPS sprayer logging device that automatically throws a GPS point for every time you pull the trigger and also measures output. Brittany introduced their two seasonal employees, Donna Landrum and Mark Chiaro. Donna has been a seasonal employee for the last six or seven years and this is Mark's first year. Brittany stated that Mark has been busy training and working to obtain his applicator's license.

Ed asked where they are using the mules for spraying.

Brittany stated that they use them at Grape Creek.

Rick asked if Brittany is looking for another educational outreach opportunity. He received a call from a 7th grade teacher at Harrison that he will be out at Blue Heron on May 24th.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

None.

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. in the Garden Park Conference Room. The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.