

IMPACT

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Fort Hall Extension weed partnerships achieve results

The Situation

The Fort Hall Reservation contains approximately 346,000 acres of rangeland. This expansive rangeland is utilized by Tribal members for cultural purposes and to hunt, gather, recreate and graze cattle. This rangeland is also an excellent, reliable source of income to the Tribe and its' members. Several thousand animal unit months (aum's) are available for cattle grazing and are leased to tribal and non-tribal members on five year permits. These permits are what serve as an economic resource for the Tribes.

Most of the rangeland is relatively healthy and is classified as stable to good range condition. Our rangeland contains an abundance of natural resources including vast stands of native grasses, forbs and shrubs. However, some areas of this rangeland are mildly to moderately infested with noxious weeds. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes recognize the Idaho State Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed list and have recognized the need to identify, map, and control noxious weed infestations. Many of the noxious weed species found on reservation rangeland include Russian knapweed, Canada, musk and scotch thistle, houndstongue, black henbane, whitetop (hoary cress), and many others. If these noxious weeds are not contained and controlled, vast acres of natural resources can be rendered useless to the Tribes, landowners, hunters, gatherers and cattle permittees. For many years, the Tribe did not have a department that was focused on and able to identify, map, and control noxious weeds. The problem continued to grow until Extension identified a need to develop weed programs and work with local agencies and departments to provide an integrated weed management program for the Tribes.



Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Agricultural Resource Manager releasing stem mining weevil in a Canada thistle infestation.

Our Response

The Fort Hall Extension office partnered with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Agriculture Resource Management (ARM) Department and the Power County Cooperative Weed Management Advisory (CWMA) Board and the Weed Superintendent, to develop an integrated weed management program and a variety of projects that would help the Tribes' better identify, manage and control noxious weeds within the Fort Hall Reservation boundaries. Our goal was to develop and initiate a program to identify, map and implement projects to begin actively working on and controlling noxious weed infestations located on the reservation. Through a special cost share program with the Power County CWMA, funding was procured to help pay for custom herbicide treatments, biological control agent releases, and re-seeding of treated ground. The ARM department provided labor, transportation and some materials, particularly herbicide, in exchange for the Power CWMA work. The ARM

department also committed to working on the weed problem aggressively and agreed to spray noxious weed infestations for home and landowners.

The Extension office provides education, program leadership, labor and some materials as well. Extension also works closely with producers, permittees, and affected home and landowners on weed problems. Often, a client will contact the Extension office to have weeds identified and learn what control measures are needed. The Extension Educator identifies the weed(s) and recommends control measures. However, sometimes a home or landowner simply does not have the ability or resources to control noxious weeds. Many noxious weeds must be controlled with restricted use pesticides that require a license to purchase and use. This is not a feasible option for a home or small landowner. Now, as a result of our successful collaboration, the Extension office can contact the ARM department and knowledgeable, trained personnel will travel to the problem site to begin a recommended control program for any identified noxious weed infestations.

Program Outcomes

Through these collaborative efforts, over eighteen biological agents have been released on rangeland and pasture leases since 2009. A very successful mapping project was initiated in 2013 which involved the mapping of 20,040 acres of weeds, 1,051 weed points were taken, 303 weed lines were established, and 107 weed areas of concern were established. The Tribal ARM program was so pleased with the mapping results, they have plans to continue mapping other areas of Tribal rangeland. In addition, Extension helped coordinate the spraying of 300 acres of Russian knapweed for tribal members in 2013 alone! The majority of these acres were re-seeded to both native and introduced grasses this spring and last fall to help improve overall land health and provide healthy competition against noxious weed species. Furthermore, the Tribal ARM department now participates in the annual "Weed Warrior" training conducted every June, in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Participation in this training gives tribal employees the opportunity to learn about new herbicides, surfactants, spraying techniques, weeds and much more. This training enables tribal employees to become even more effective in their weed control efforts.

Four main outcomes have resulted from this program:

- Tribal departments and individuals are more aware and knowledgeable about noxious weeds and ways to manage them.
- Treated areas can now be better utilized for cultural practices, hunting, gathering, and grazing.
- Land values are increasing as more land is treated and rehabilitated.

- Several thousand acres of rangeland have been mapped, treated and rehabilitated for noxious weed infestations.

The Future

UI Fort Hall Extension will continue collaboration with the Power County CWMA and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal ARM Department. This June, we released a new biological control agent for Russian knapweed. We will be monitoring this release for the next few years to determine establishment. We also have plans to map several thousand acres of rangeland in 2014-2015 in other areas of the reservation. Several roadways and tribal ranches have been treated for hoary cress, Russian knapweed and musk thistle. We plan to expand our weed program every year to continue our successful "Tribal War on Weeds."

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Power County Cooperative Weed Management Area

Power County Weed Superintendent

Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Agricultural Resource Management Program

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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