

**2004 INNOVATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM**  
**Application Form**

1. Program Name: **North Dakota Cooperative Weed Management**
2. Administering Agency: **ND Department of Agriculture**
3. Contact person (Name and Title): **Roger Johnson, Agriculture Commissioner**
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**9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.**

The "Cooperative Weed Management" concept is a method where local, state, and federal agencies can work together to control invasive weeds on public and private lands. This program encourages the sharing of resources (funding and personnel) for the control of invasive weeds.

**10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on May 1, 2004, to be considered.**

This concept was started in the summer of 2001.

**11. Why was this program created? (What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?)**

In the past, local weed control officials were not able to persuade state and federal land managers to control invasive weeds on public lands. This program was created out of necessity to improve relationships between public and private land owners in order to control the spread of invasive weeds. This concept allows the different entities to share resources for a common cause.

**12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.**

•In the summer of 2001, four county weed boards in southeast North Dakota and the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) organized the first

cooperative weed management group. This purpose of the group was to work toward the eradication of Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum*) along the Sheyenne River.

- In the summer of 2001, NDDA discovered the existence of saltcedar (tamarisk) along the Yellowstone River in northwest North Dakota.
- In the fall of 2001, NDDA organized a meeting attended by county weed boards and state and federal agencies to design an eradication plan and to educate all involved on the invasiveness of saltcedar and to determine the process for dealing with this invasive weed.
- In the summer of 2002, a large-scale saltcedar survey and control venture along the Yellowstone River and Lake Sakakawea were conducted to determine the extent of saltcedar spread.
- In January of 2002, the US Army Corps Engineers (COE), and NDDA, started a Lake Sakakawea Saltcedar Taskforce. Cooperating entities are the COE, US Forest Service (FS), USDA-Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), NDDA, North Dakota Game & Fish (NDG&F), North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department (NDP&R), Three Affiliated Tribes, and six county weed boards.
- In the winter of 2003, the data collected in 2002 was used to leverage \$250,000 from the state legislature to survey and control saltcedar for the 2003-05 biennium.
- In 2002, the Western North Dakota Weed Management group was organized and encompasses the Little Missouri River from the South Dakota border to Lake Sakakawea. This group consists of five county weed boards, COE, US Forest Service (FS), APHIS, and NDDA.
- In 2003, the Lake Oahe Saltcedar Taskforce was organized by NDDA and the Emmons County Weed Board. This group consists of COE, USDA-APHIS, USFWS, NRCS, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), ND Parks & Recreation, ND G&F, SD Department of Agriculture, SD Game, Fish & Parks, ND & SD Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST), SD Cheyenne Tribe, four counties in ND, and eight counties in SD.
- In 2003, there were 1,070 saltcedar sites marked by GPS units by various organizations. These sites were treated at the time they were marked.
- In 2003, because of the success of the cooperative efforts in surveying and treating saltcedar, the concept of cooperative weed management was expanded to include other noxious and invasive weed control efforts.

- In January 2004, NDDA received an award from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its efforts in initiating and participating in cooperative weed management.

### **13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?**

Cooperative weed management is not a new concept, but it was generally unsuccessful in the past. The prevailing attitude in the past was that the landowner was responsible for weed control. On public lands, weed control was a low priority because of a lack of resources (funding and personnel). This caused friction with adjoining landowners and county weed boards. In North Dakota, this concept has been a huge success because the attitudes of those involved and their desire for the concept to succeed.

### **14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology, and staff already in place.)**

This program started with existing state and local funds for weed control and existing staff from NDDA and county weed boards. Because of the discovery of saltcedar in 2001, the 2003 North Dakota legislature allocated \$250,000 for saltcedar control. These funds are being used by county weed boards to purchase all terrain vehicles and global positioning systems to survey and control saltcedar and other invasive weeds. These funds are also being use to match available federal funding.

Since the inception of the cooperative weed management concept, the success of the program has allowed state and federal agencies to allocate additional funding for weed control. The U.S. Forest Service has allocated an extra \$600,000 over two years for noxious weed control in the national grassland areas. The U.S. Corps of Engineers has increased its weed control budget from \$50,000 to \$170,000 per year. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been a leader in making funding available to county weed boards and NDDA through its Challenge Grant program. The emphasis of this program is for local, state and federal entities to share resources for a common cause. A requirement for this program is that all invasive weeds sites surveyed and treated must be marked with GPS coordinates for future reference. NDDA accumulates these data points and creates maps at the local, county or state level. This allows for tracking to determine the long-term success of the program.

NDDA and county weed boards hire extra staffing during the summer months for weed control purposes. These summer employees are supervised by permanent NDDA staff and county weed officers.

Numerous educational materials have been developed and disbursed to private organizations and individuals including hunting and fishing enthusiasts and

campers who regularly visit and enjoy the wildlife environment. These educational materials have motivated private organizations to join the efforts of identifying invasive weeds.

**15. What are the program's annual operational costs?**

The costs of the program are allocated by legislative appropriations and tax levies. State funding used in this program is about \$250,000, county funding allocated is about \$125,000 and landowner contributions total about \$75,000. These funds are used to match approximately \$750,000 of federal funds from a variety of agencies to work in different areas where common weed infestations occur. Under the cooperative weed management program, the funding is able to be spread over a greater area and used in a more efficient manner in controlling invasive weeds.

**16. How is the program funded?**

This program is funded through the legislative appropriations and tax levies. These funds can be used to match available federal funding sources. Because of the success of the program, federal agencies in North Dakota have increased weed control funding allocations over the past two years.

**17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.**

No. This program is able to utilize existing statutes and regulations to accomplish its goals.

**18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?**

The requirements of this program include the purchase and use of a GPS unit and GIS software for mapping. Existing equipment and technology can be shared between the different entities under this program.

**19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.**

Although cooperative weed management is not a new concept it has not been very successfully implemented concept in the past. Because of North Dakota's success with the program, other states have inquired about how we were able to get all the entities to participate as successfully. Although NDDA Noxious Weeds Program acts as the lead contact agency, it is the participation, involvement and communication of the local, state, and federal agencies that have made cooperative weed management a success.

**20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?**

We are not aware of any other successful cooperative weed management programs existing in other states.

**21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?**

No. We are trying to expand participation in the cooperative weed management program to other state and federal agencies that are not fully engaged. We also plan to encourage the participation of private clubs and organizations such as: Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, Sierra Club, etc. More participation into the program results in greater success in invasive weed control.

**22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.**

Appropriate cooperative weed management allows agencies to use the same funding allocations and mechanisms but use the funding in a more efficient manner in obtaining better weed control. It also encourages cooperating entities to communicate and work together toward a common goal and help to ensure successful long-term results. Entities are able to share resources (funding and personnel) and each party gets positive results from the "team" effort.

The hardest part of getting this program running was changing past approaches and attitudes concerning weed control.

**23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?**

The program has increased in the number of participants and includes more state and federal agencies than were originally targeted at its inception. The program has also gained in recognition by different agencies and private individuals. In January 2004, NDDA received an award from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its efforts in initiating and participating in cooperative weed management.

**24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?**

One obstacle is the reluctance of potential agency heads to look forward and realize the benefits of cooperative weed management to control or eradicate invasive weeds. It also will take improved communication efforts of all agencies and possibly two agencies will have to be willing to take the lead effort in organizing this type of program.

