

Colorado Weed Management Association



Colorado Parks and Wildlife Merger - Talking Points for Invasive Species Program Comments due January 16, 2012 (see above).

- **Do Not Eliminate the Invasive Species Program!!!!**
 - At the start of the merger process, Invasive Species was listed as one of the new CPW's **top ten core functions**, and yet the words "invasive species" do not appear in any organizational chart or functions of the new CPW as outlined in Draft #2.
 - Place the Invasive Species Program at an **organizational level** in which it is not buried under either Terrestrial or Aquatic, since it should carry both terrestrial and aquatic duties.
 - There will be an invader in the future that is not an ANS (we have no idea what we will be working on in 5 years or 10 years), and if our only coordinator is an ANS Coordinator, we will find the state with a hole that leaves CPW unable to effectively lead, participate in, or carry out a rapid response with our partners because there will be no overarching Program to Coordinate the Incident Response. The Invasive Species umbrella provides a mechanism to catch new invaders (regardless of taxa) that we aren't otherwise prepared for.
 - An umbrella Invasive Species Program allows for a Coordinator to work on and respond to non-weed and non-ANS invaders as needed. Maintaining the agility of the Invasive Species Program is critical to prevent other invaders from establishing (i.e. insects that would wipe out our forests).
 - **Duplication and Consistency** - Having an Invasive Species Coordinator that can manage the ANS Coordinator and Weed Coordinator to ensure there is no duplication of efforts and there is consistency in approaches and messaging is the best way for CPW to operate. For example, "ANS" includes aquatic weeds, while "noxious weeds" include both aquatic and terrestrial weeds. If there is no umbrella Invasive Species Program, then there will have to be representatives from both ANS and Stewardship on all cooperative weed groups. This is a waste of resources that could cost us thousands of dollars annually in a time when the agencies are merging to save money and increase efficiency. Eliminating the Invasive Species Program, and further segmenting the ANS and Weed Programs, will result in a huge increase in duplication and a lack of consistency.
 - **Firewood, Insects, Mammals** – Draft #2 does not address how these critical issues are going to be managed within CPW. These are current functions performed by the Invasive Species Program, on an as needed basis, along with the Program's partners, and need to continue for the protection of our state's resources.
 - **Education/Information** – in the past Colorado state agencies and local government programs have operated independently with respect to the delivery of invasive species messaging. One day we tell customers to clean ATV tires for weed seeds, the next day they have to clean waders for NZMS, and the third day we tell them their boat has to be cleaned for mussels. In reality, it's the same basic message for all users – don't move or release plants, plant seeds, firewood, mud or animals/pets. A single message for all invaders, tailored towards each user group, is proving effective. The elimination of the Invasive Species Program would halt the progress that has been made in recent years, which is projected to continue.

- **Service** – an umbrella invasive species program means that there is a single contact for staff, the public, and our partners when questions arise. If people (internals or externals) have to call multiple people to find an answer, CPW is not going to be able to provide quality customer service on this issue.
- **Protect and Fully Merge the Parks and DOW ANS Programs. Continue the program at its current levels of operation statewide.**
 - Draft #2 recommends 3 Program Level FTE for ANS Boat Inspections on properties we don't own or manage. This is a really great thing and should be implemented.
 - All 4 of these FTE are titled "ANS Coordinator". This is confusing and would be more efficient to have one Coordinator and three ANS Biologists.
 - Keep all ANS activities (with the sole exception of laboratory analysis) under the same umbrella (preferably an Invasive Species Program) and do not divide the program between Aquatics and Terrestrial.
 - Parks and Wildlife should immediately fully integrate inspection and decontamination field operations practices (i.e. pre-inspection and yellow seals).
- **CPW Needs a Dedicated Noxious Weed Coordinator** – Like other biological functions, the Wildlife Invasive Species Program approaches weed management from a statewide level (with a priority on our properties), and Parks Stewardship approaches weed management from a property level. Both are good, necessary and should be fully integrated for maximum functionality.
 - CPW needs a dedicated Noxious Weed Coordinator, preferably within the Invasive Species Program. This person should be the Coordinator between the many CPW activities related to weeds (Stewardship, CNAP, ANS (aquatic weeds), HPP, Wetlands, Field Operations, Grants, etc.) and the many, many partners.
 - This person should be facilitating the formation of Cooperative Weed Management Areas with our partners. This is our best change to manage noxious weeds for the protection of wildlife habitat statewide. Similar to the ANS Program, CPW should be working collaboratively with partners to leverage resources and treat weeds across jurisdictions. This approach is much better for wildlife and also ensures proper management of CPW's Parks and State Wildlife Areas.
 - CPW needs to approach weed management from a broad level to ensure the protection of wildlife habitat and natural resources statewide. If CPW ignores the issue on a landscape/statewide - the wildlife will suffer, the sportsmen will suffer, the agency will suffer, and ultimately we will all suffer and irreversible loss of our lands and wildlife habitat to noxious weeds.