

BLACKHAWK RANCH POA
Noxious Weed Management Plan



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BACKGROUND

- Scope:** The management of noxious weeds on the Blackhawk Ranch is the responsibility of individual property owners and is enforced by the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. Each property owner is responsible for the inspection and control of noxious weeds on their property. Since noxious weeds are opportunistic, and sprout more often where the soil has been disturbed, the Board has assumed that responsibility for the road setback (30 feet from the center of the road, on each side of the road), and has assigned this task to the Weed Committee. This does not, however, relieve the property owner of weed management responsibilities for their property. The Weed Committee will make a courtesy report to property owners of any noxious weeds observed beyond the road easement.
- Purpose:** To maintain the natural beauty and value of the Blackhawk Ranch and to fulfill the intent of the Colorado Noxious Weed Act.

COLORADO NOXIOUS WEED ACT

Noxious weeds have become a threat to the natural resources of Colorado, as thousands of acres of crop, rangeland, and habitat for wildlife and native plant communities are being destroyed by noxious weeds each year. This has resulted in a loss of revenues for farmers and ranchers, and if not checked we stand to lose our wildlife habitat and entire ecosystems to noxious weeds. Colorado enacted the Noxious Weed Act, declaring that there is a need to ensure that all the lands of the state of Colorado, whether in private or public ownership, are protected by and subject to government jurisdiction. If government officials have reason to believe noxious weeds exist on private land, they shall notify the landowner of the noxious weed violation and advise the owner to commence eradication efforts within a specified period. If the landowner does not respond within ten days the local officials can undertake the eradication process and charge the landowner the full costs, plus up to twenty percent for inspection and other incidental costs.

The preceding paragraph was condensed from 17 pages of the Noxious Weed Act. The Act is not as cut and dry as stated above, but it must be understood by all property owners that noxious weeds on the Ranch are a threat to the value of the land, that Colorado realtors and sellers are required to disclose the presence of noxious weeds to buyers, that Colorado has legislation in place that requires the private owner to manage their noxious weeds, and in the event that the private owner does not assume their responsibilities for managing the noxious weeds state officials will, and bill the owner for the costs.

IDENTIFICATION OF NOXIOUS WEEDS

A Noxious Weed is a plant that generally fits the three following descriptions: a) is not native to the area/region/state; b) has no food or habitat value for wildlife or livestock; and c) is more competitive than our native vegetation.

Colorado has identified about 50 varieties of noxious weeds. The list may change from year to year. The number of noxious weeds that grow on the Ranch is much smaller, but may also change from year to year. Refer to Appendix A for a list of noxious weeds that are currently found on the Ranch, the best herbicides to use for each plant, and the best time to spray.

CONTROL METHODS

There are four basic methods to control the growth of noxious weeds. They can be used separately or in combination. An Integrated Management Plan would use a combination of control methods to achieve specific management objectives. The Weed Committee shall use a Chemical Management method almost exclusively. The four methods are:

Biological

The use of an organism to disrupt the growth of noxious weeds.

Chemical

The use of herbicides or plant growth regulators to disrupt the growth of the noxious weeds.

Mechanical

Methodologies that physically disrupt plant growth, such as, tilling, mowing, burning, flooding, mulching, hand-pulling, hoeing, and grazing.

Cultural

Methodologies that favor the growth of desirable plants over noxious weeds, including maintaining an optimum fertility and plant moisture status in an area planting at optimum density and spatial arrangement in an area, and planting species most suited to an area.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The state of Colorado has listed four objectives in the management of noxious weeds. The Weed Committee will strive for Eradication, but in most cases probably only achieve Suppression. The four objectives are:

Eradication

Reducing the reproductive success of the noxious weed to zero.

Containment

Maintaining an intensively managed buffer zone that isolates infested regions.

Suppression

Reducing the vigor of noxious weed populations and decreasing their propensity to spread.

Restoration

The removal of noxious weeds and reestablishment of desirable plant communities.

NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

Colorado requires property owners and Property Owners Associations to manage noxious weeds to prevent the spread of invasive weeds on our properties. If left unmanaged, noxious weeds will rapidly overtake natural grasses and plant life creating a danger to the wildlife habitat.

The management objective that the Weed Committee shall follow, with the noxious weeds within the road easements on the Ranch roads, is Suppression with an effort to achieve Eradication. The control method shall be chemical. The chemical currently used by the weed committee is Milestone[®]. It is a systemic, post emergent herbicide designed for the management of invasive species and broad-spectrum, broadleaf weed control for roadside, rights-of-way and other non-crop

vegetation control. Milestone[®] has been recommended by the Las Animus County Noxious Weed Supervisor.

The Board shall encourage property owners to use a similar approach on their own property while reminding them, through the newsletter and the web page, that driving ATVs, riding horses, or even walking through areas with noxious weed populations will likely track seeds away from the infestations and aid the spread of the weed. Not only does this mean that weeds could be spread over the Ranch, but if property owners ride or camp in other areas of the state they could bring seeds with them to the Ranch. Only certified weed-free hay or feed should be brought onto the Ranch. Additionally, property owners will be reminded not to bring plants from areas outside of Colorado for replanting on the Ranch.

INSPECTION AND NOTIFICATION

Each Spring and Fall the BHR Weed Committee surveys the ranch roads and road easements for noxious weeds. With the help of volunteers, we spot spray noxious weeds using a common herbicide as a primary means of management. Property owners are required to manage noxious weeds on their own properties. Our management plan and the efforts our community members has been very effective in controlling the spread of noxious weeds on BHR.

Noxious weeds grow predominately, but not exclusively, in areas where the ground has been disturbed, such as roadsides and building sites. Once a weed flowers, its seeds can be spread to other areas, sometimes to great distances. Noxious weeds seem to have invaded the Ranch from the east. Consequently, the presence of noxious weeds is far greater on the eastern side of the Ranch than on the western side.

Road Easements:

The Weed Committee Chair shall inspect the road easements in early spring, first part of May, to determine the prevalence of noxious weeds and level of growth. The results of this inspection will dictate the scheduling for spraying and indicate the level of effort required in order to meet stated goals. The results of this inspection will also be reported to the Board along with the Weed Committee's plan of action.

Adjacent Properties

During the roadside inspection, the Weed Committee Chair will also make visual inspections of properties adjacent to the road. This inspection does not call for entering the boundaries of member's properties. Weed infestations found during this inspection shall be reported to the Board, to include the parcel number, the level of infestation sighted, and the type of noxious weed present. If possible, a picture of the infestation shall be included.

The Board shall send a notice to property owners whose parcels have communities of noxious weeds. The notice shall provide suggested action to be taken by the owner, with a reminder that controlling noxious weeds on the Ranch is beneficial to all and that it is also mandated by the State.

If the owner fails to take action to manage the noxious weeds, the Board may inform the county noxious weed management authority. The County Noxious Weed Manager will send a notice to the property owner advising the owner of the steps to be taken to ensure that the noxious weed problem on their property is addressed.

Notice of Spraying Events

The Weed Committee Chair will send an e-mail to all residents, permanent and periodic, to inform them that spraying operations will start on Date . The e-mail shall encourage any resident that does not want the road easement adjacent to their property sprayed, to notify the Weed Committee Chair by return e-mail prior to the start of spraying operations. They shall also state that they will manage the noxious weeds on road easement(s) of their own property. The Weed Committee Chair shall include this information in the Weed Committee Chair report to the Board.

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL PROCESS

General

In accordance with the details in Appendix A, the Weed Committee Chair shall initiate the noxious weed spraying process on the road easements when the plants are actively growing. This means that fall and spring are generally the best time to apply herbicides. Growing conditions are dependent on climatic conditions and therefore summer applications may also be valuable. It's typically desirable to kill weeds prior to them producing seed. However, since they have multi-year life cycles, it is not realistic to target only the immature plants. Consistent efforts, year to year, will pay big dividends in reducing the weed infestation.

Spraying Techniques

Nozzle adjustment is critical to efficient spraying. The nozzle should be adjusted to deliver a medium spray mist. A fine spray mist is subject to wind drift and a coarse spray mist tends to splatter off the target surface. Selecting the right spray nozzle adjustment takes a little practice, but observe the spray droplets and adjust the nozzle accordingly. If spray droplets are running off the plant, you've sprayed too much. It is not necessary to drown the plant, just spray until the leaves are damp. Remember, if plants are growing in a colony, you may need to work at getting the spray down to the lowest plants.

For best results, spray only when you know the weather will be dry and calm for at least 2 hours. Rain could wash the herbicide off the plant before it has had time to get into the plant and wind can blow the spray away from the target.

WEED SPRAYING EQUIPMENT

Trailer Mounted Sprayer

The POA owns a Scorpion brand sprayer. The sprayer sets atop a utility trailer, has an on-demand electric pump and a self venting tank that holds 150 gallons. The sprayer is equipped with a twenty-foot hose, on a self rewinding reel, and a trigger operated hand held spray wand with an adjustable spray nozzle. The electric pump is typically powered by the tow vehicle through a utility trailer connector. Alternately, a free standing battery could be used.

Backpack Sprayer

The POA owns three 4.5-gallon backpack sprayers. The backpack tank is pressurized by an attached hand pump that can be configured to accommodate both left and right-handed operators. The backpack has a hose about three feet long attached to a trigger operated hand held spray wand with an adjustable spray nozzle. These can be used by the weed committee, but are primarily for the use of property owners. They can be rented from the Weed Committee Chair. An empty backpack can be rented for \$5 and a backpack full of solution can be rented for \$15.

SAFETY

Herbicide

All herbicides come with a label and product safety data. The label and the product safety data will list where and when the chemical can be applied, which weed species can be controlled and how much chemical to apply, the type of protective gear to wear while applying the chemical, and who to call or what to do if the chemical is spilled or comes in contact with the human body. Chemical application is highly regulated and the information on the labels and in the product safety data are not suggestions; they are rules that must be followed. The herbicide used on Blackhawk Ranch is Milestone[®]. The safety precautions for Milestone[®] are summarized in Appendix B. The person spraying the weeds on the Ranch shall read Appendix B completely before any chemical application takes place. This information shall also be provided to the property owners using a backpack made available by the Board.

Spray Equipment

Trailer - The trailer is equipped with a safety rail on each corner of the trailer. The operator should stand inside of this railed area and hold on to the rail while the trailer is in motion. Do not get on or get off of the trailer while the trailer is in motion.

Backpacks – A full backpack can weigh over 40 pounds. Ensure that the user is in a physical condition that is suitable for lifting and carrying this amount of weight. Each gallon of chemical mix weighs approximately 8.5 pounds and the backpack itself weighs approximately 5 pounds. Reduce the volume of chemical mix, as necessary, to reduce the weight of the unit.

Spray Nozzle – Never point the spray nozzle toward a person or in a direction that the spray mist will drift into a person. Do not use the sprayer or adjust the spray nozzle without water proof gloves

Tow Vehicle – During spray operations the tow vehicle should have its hazard warning lights turned on. The driver must be vigilant of both the rules of the road and the spray operator's needs. The tow vehicle should not exceed 15 mph in transit or 7 - 8 mph while spraying is in progress. Sudden starts and stops are to be avoided as this has the potential to cause the spray operator to lose balance and fall. There must be a means of communications between the driver and the spray operator.

APPENDIX A
DETAILS OF NOXIOUS WEEDS
found on the
Blackhawk Ranch

Derived from Colorado Department of Agriculture

[Noxious Weed Species ID | Department of Agriculture \(colorado.gov\)](#)

Canada Thistle

Canada Thistle is a creeping perennial which reproduces by seeds and fleshy, horizontal roots. It stands 1 to 5 feet tall and branched at the top. The leaves are close set on the stem. The leaf is generally dark green, but varies widely from oblong to lance-shaped. Sharp spines are numerous on the outer edges of the leaves and on the branches and main stem of the plant. The flowers are small and compact; about 3/4-inch or less in diameter, and light pink to rose-purple in color. The seeds are oblong, flattened, dark brown, and approximately 1/8-inch long.

Canada thistle emerges in April or May in most parts of Colorado from 4,000 to 9,500 feet. It is one of the most widespread, and economically damaging noxious weeds in Colorado. Infestations are found in cultivated fields, riparian areas, pasture, rangeland, forests, lawns and gardens, roadsides, and in waste areas. Because of its seeding habits, vigorous growth, and extensive underground root system, control or eradication is difficult.



Common Mullein

Common Mullein is a biennial that produces a large, thick rosette of fuzzy leaves the first year and a single, stout, erect stem, 2 to 6 feet tall, the second year. The leaves are alternate, overlapping one another, light green, and densely woolly. Flowers are arranged in long terminal spikes and are sulfur yellow. Flowering and seed production occurs from June to August.

This weed is found along river bottoms, pastures, meadows, fencerows, and disturbed areas. It is especially prevalent on gravelly soils.

This weed can easily be killed by spraying if sprayed before it flowers, as shown in top left picture. If the weed has already flowered, as shown in the bottom left picture, then the flower and the lower leaves should be sprayed with the herbicide.

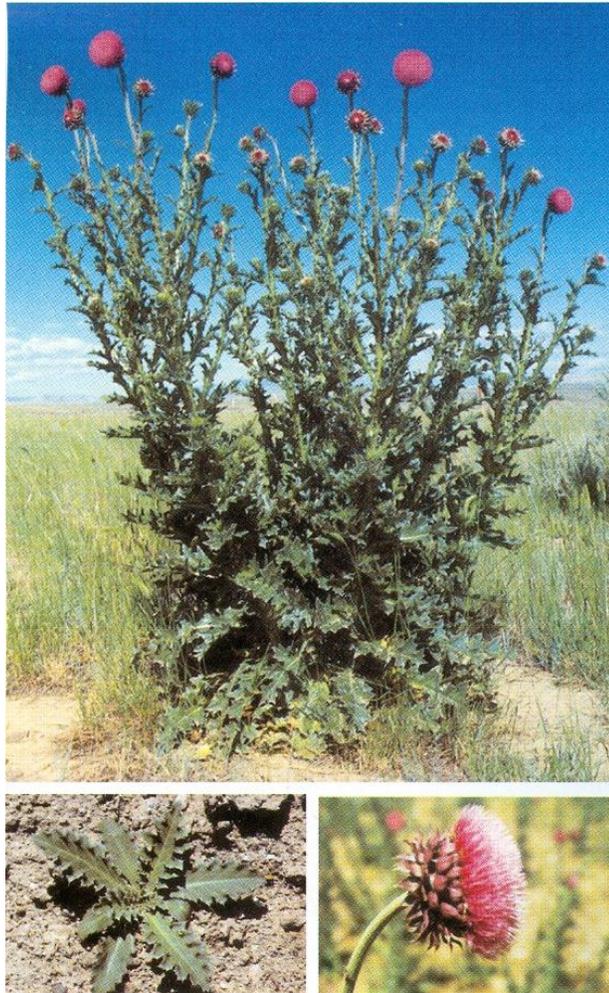


Musk Thistle

Musk Thistle is a biennial and reproduces by seeds. The first year's growth is a large, compact rosette from a large, fleshy, corky taproot. The second year stem is erect, spiny, 2 to 6 feet tall and branched at the top. The leaves are alternate, deeply cut or lobed with five points per lobe, very spiny, 3 to 6 inches long and extend (clasp) down the stem. The waxy leaves are dark green with a light green midrib and mostly white margins. The large and showy flowers are terminal, flat, nodding, 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 inches broad, purple, rarely white, and surrounded by numerous, lance-shaped, spine-tipped bracts. Blooms appear in late May and June and set seed in June or July. Seeds are straw-colored and oblong.

Musk thistle is commonly found in pastures, roadsides, and waste places. It prefers moist, bottom land soil, but can be found on drier uplands, also. It is becoming an increasing problem throughout Colorado.

The Musk thistle is spreading on the Ranch and may begin to poses high threat to property owners. Large populations are popping up in flat areas boarding our roads and in meadows deep into several properties. They will often be growing near culverts and low water areas. It is best if they are sprayed before they flower.



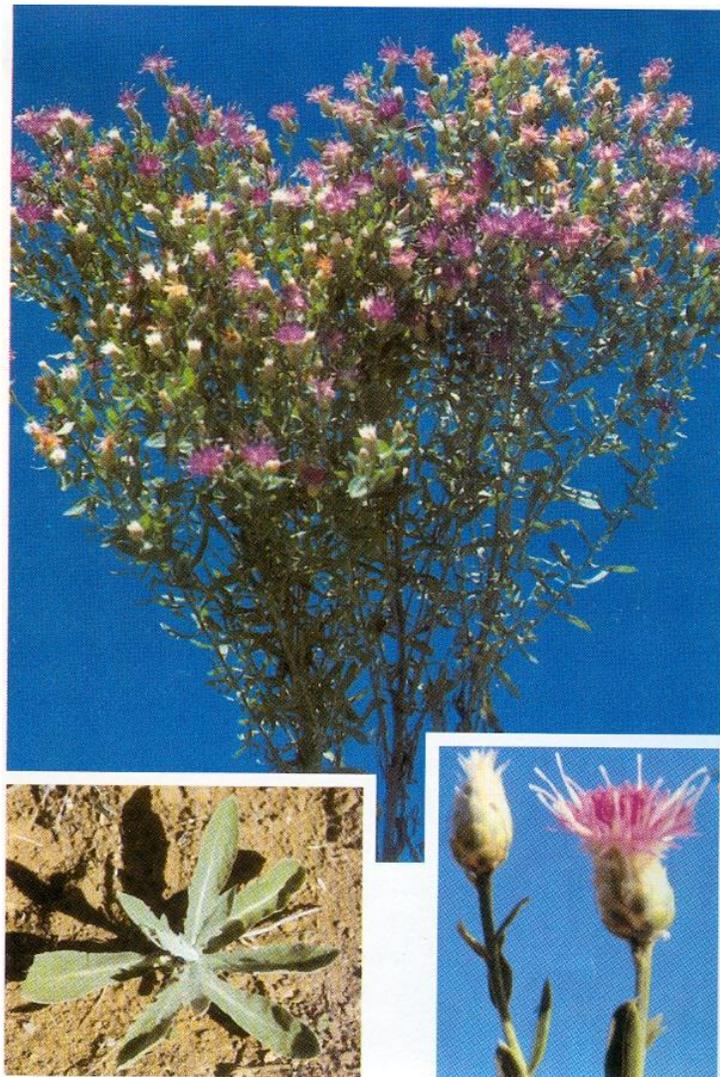
Russian Knapweed

Russian Knapweed is a creeping perennial. It reproduces by seeds and creeping, horizontal roots. The ridged stems are erect, rather stiff, branched, and one to three feet high. Young stems are covered with soft gray hairs or nap.

The upper leaves are small and narrow with broken edges. Leaves attached midway up the stem have slightly toothed margins, while basal leaves are deeply notched. The flowers are thistle-like, solitary, terminal, 1/3 to 1/2 inch in diameter and lavender to white. The plant flowers in June to August and seed is produced in later summer to early fall.

Russian knapweed is very difficult to control or eradicate once it becomes established. It grows in cultivated fields, along ditch banks, fencerows, roadsides, and in waste places. It is found at 4,500 to 12,000 feet and has been responsible for numerous horse deaths each year in Colorado.

Russian Knapweed can be controlled by spaying if sprayed in the spring before it flowers. Spraying is also recommended in the early fall.



Scotch Thistle

Scotch Thistle is a biennial that can reach a height of 8 feet. Large, coarsely lobed, hairy leaves have a velvety-grey appearance. The rosette forms the first year and can have leaves up to 2 feet long and 1 foot wide. It has a reddish-purple to violet flower and seeds about 3/16 inches long and tipped with slender bristles.

The scotch thistle is found along roadsides and railroads, but can become an impassable obstacle to livestock on rangeland and pastures.

The plant can be fairly easily controlled if sprayed in the spring when it is young and before it flowers. When very young, the plant lies close to the ground and cannot be readily seen in tall grass. By the time the plant starts to flower, green buds at the tips of the stems, an herbicide should be used for best results.

The scotch thistle is very wide spread on the Ranch and poses the highest noxious weed threat to property owners. Large populations exist in flat areas boarding our roads and in meadows deep into several properties. In the densely populated areas, Milestone® is usually the most effective herbicide to use. Milestone® is also affective for the new plants.



Houndstongue

Houndstongue is a short-lived perennial or biennial forb. It produces rosettes in the first year and bolts a stout, erect stem, that is 1 to 4 feet tall by mid-summer of the second year. Then it flowers and produces fruit. Flowers are reddish-purple (occasionally white) and droop slightly from densely clustered panicles. The five rounded petals are cupped by five sepals covered with long, soft white hairs. Flowering occurs from May to July. The simple leaves are lance or oblong shaped, with a smooth edge and no teeth or lobes. Leaves are alternate, 1 to 12 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide. The leaf tip is sharply pointed, like a hound's tongue, yet are covered with long-soft white hairs. Leaves often appear dusty and insect-ridden. A thick, dark, woody taproot can reach 3 to 4 feet deep.

Habitats for Houndstongue are open to shady, moist, disturbed areas, along trails, roadsides, fields, pasture, rangeland, along the edge of forests, sand dunes and ditch banks. Houndstongue prefers moist areas, but often grows on sandy or gravelly alkaline soil up to 9,000 feet elevation. Areas with more than 10% bare ground are particularly vulnerable to Houndstongue invasions.



APPENDIX B
SAFETY DETAILS OF MILESTONE®
Currently used on the
Blackhawk Ranch

CAUTION

Causes Moderate Eye Irritation

Avoid contact with eyes or clothing

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Applicators and other handlers must wear:

Long-sleeved shirt and long pants.

Shoes and socks.

Chemical-resistant gloves made of any waterproof material, such as polyethylene or polyvinyl chloride.

Protective eyewear.

USER SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

User Should:

Wash hands before eating, drinking, chewing gum, using tobacco or using the toilet.

Remove clothing immediately if herbicide gets inside. Then wash thoroughly and put on clean clothing.

FIRST AID

Eyes: If the herbicide gets into the eyes, Hold eye open and rinse slowly and gently with water for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove contact lenses, if present, after the first 5 minutes, then continue rinsing. Call a poison control center or doctor for treatment advice.

Skin: If the herbicide gets onto the skin, Rinse immediately with plenty of water for 15 to 20 minutes.

Ingestion: If the herbicide is swallowed, call a poison control center or a doctor immediately for treatment advice. Sip a glass of water if able to swallow. Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by a poison control center or doctor. Do not give anything by mouth to an unconscious person.

Have the product container or label with you when calling a poison control center or doctor or going for treatment. You may also contact 1-800-992-5994 for emergency medical treatment information.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Do not apply directly to water, to areas where surface water is present or to intertidal area below the mean high water mark. The use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination.

Do not apply this product in a way that will contact workers or other persons, either directly or through drift. Only protected handlers may be in the area during application.

MIXING INSTRUCTIONS

To prepare the spray, add about half the required amount of water to the spray tank. Then, with agitation, add the specified amount of Milestone[®]. Finally, with continued agitation, add the rest of the water and additives such as surfactants. We will use 7 ounces of Milestone[®] to 150 gallons of water. The addition of a high quality non-ionic surfactant (about 1 quart per 150 gallons of spray solution) is recommended to enhance herbicide activity. A blue dye can also be used to identify the areas sprayed. This is usually only helpful if spraying is discontinued in an area and will be resumed the next day. We probably will not use the dye.

APPENDIX C

MILESTONE® PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Copied from a Milestone reference material.

Milestone is a systemic, post emergent herbicide designed for the management of invasive species and broad-spectrum, broadleaf weed control for roadside, rights-of-way and other non-crop vegetation control. Aminopyralid, the active ingredient in Milestone, is an environmentally safe, easy-to-manage molecule that provides an effective, long lasting tool for managing difficult to control weeds in any weed control program. Milestone reduces environmental impact and is safe to use, with low use rates and buffer requirements that are significantly reduced. Milestone is a lower cost alternative to other weed control programs.

Invasive Plant Management

Milestone can be used as an important tool in integrated vegetation management programs which are designed to restore desired plant communities and remove ecologically threatening invasive plants. A rapid response to early detection of new invasive plants is key to an overall invasive plant management strategy. Essential components to manage the spread and establishment of invasive plants are containment, eradication and control.