A Partnership to Protect Agriculture, Communities, and the Environment

John Jones, Chair

Great Basin Institute/U.S. Bureau of Land Management
What is a CWMA?

Cooperative Weed Management Area =

- **Common concern**
  - Landowners, agencies, and organizations concerned about weeds in a given area

- **Helping each other**
  - Share information and resources
  - Leverage funding

- **Coordinating the work**
  - Weed prevention and detection
  - Weed control treatments
Southern Nevada CWMA

• **Background**
  - Previous CWMA efforts in southern NV
  - Las Vegas Wash Weed Partnership

• **Need**
  - Fountaingrass issue in Laughlin
  - Other serious weed concerns:
    - Sahara mustard, Camelthorn, Malta starthistle, Russian knapweed, more

• **Organization**
  - Working group for Fountaingrass Control Initiative
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing CWMA
Partners (so far)

• **Landowners/Organizations**
  - Private landowners, Coyote Springs Land Development, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, Southern NV Water Authority, Eastern NV Landscape Coalition, Tri-County Weed Control

• **County**
  - Clark County Desert Conservation Program, Parks and Recreation, Town of Laughlin, Lincoln County Cons. District

• **State**
  - NV Dept of Agriculture, Dept of Wildlife, Dept of Transportation
  - NV Div of Forestry, Div of State Parks
  - University of NV Cooperative Extension, AZ Coop. Extension

• **Federal**
  - USDA: National Park Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation
  - USDA: Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service

• **Tribes**
  - Moapa Band of Paiutes
Nevada Weed Laws
NRS Chapter 555.130-201

- Noxious weeds = plants that are a public nuisance, detrimental or destructive and difficult to control or eradicate
- Regulated by Nevada Department of Agriculture
- May not be sold or brought into Nevada
- Landowner/occupant is required to eradicate
- Remedies for compliance
Nevada Noxious Weed Field Guide

http://agri.nv.gov/Plant/Noxious_Weeds/brochures/
Priority Weed Species in Southern Nevada

- SNCWMA identified 45 Priority weed species
  - 24 species are listed as Noxious Weeds in NV
  - 16 species are considered EDRR weeds
  - Some are still used as ornamentals/utility plants

- EDRR = Early Detection, Rapid Response
  - Find and control new infestations while small
  - Less cost to treat, greater chance of success
Fountaingrass Control Initiative

Your help is needed to protect Nevada’s healthy ecosystems.

Stop the invasion of fountaingrass in Southern Nevada!
Green (or Crimson) Fountaingrass
*Pennisetum setaceum*
NOT Recommended:

Red/Purple Fountaingrass

*Pennisetum setaceum*

var. “rubrum”

Cultivar of green fountaingrass

Reported to be sterile, but…

some seeds have produced viable green fountaingrass
Red or Green?
The Problem

• Fountaingrass is planted in ornamental landscaping
• Seeds are carried by wind and by water
• Seeds germinate readily
• Plants spread into undesirable locations, including:
  o riverbanks, roadsides and canyons
  o agricultural fields and orchards
• Invasive plants:
  o compete with and crowd out native plants or crops
  o alter wildlife habitat and food sources
  o increase the threat of wildland fire
The Plan

• Assess the scope and scale of the problem
  o Map and evaluate extent of infestations

• Public awareness and education
  o Fountaingrass is a Noxious Weed and banned in Nevada
  o Why it’s bad for the environment, agriculture, communities
  o Alternative plants suitable for landscapes

• Community action
  o Incentives for removing fountaingrass from private lands
  o Volunteer “Weed-Pull” events in parks and open spaces
  o Coordinated treatments on public lands

• Restoration and monitoring
  o Plant native species in sensitive natural areas
  o Follow-up treatment of new fountaingrass seedlings
Funding

- **US Bureau of Land Management**
  - $15,000

- **US Bureau of Reclamation**
  - $20,000

- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**
  - $75,000

- **NV Department of Agriculture**
  - $16,000

- **NV Department of Wildlife**
  - $1,000

- **Matching contributions (in-kind)**
  - $81,000 projected non-federal agencies, organizations, volunteers
Community Outreach

- Town of Laughlin:
  - Laughlin Town Advisory Board, Town Manager, Community Development

- Organizations
  - Colorado River Heritage Greenway Trails Association
  - NV Cooperative Extension
  - Master Gardeners

- Businesses
  - Hotel-Casino Resorts
  - Garden Centers (Bullhead City)

- Residents
  - Home Owners Associations
  - Schools
  - Library, Community Centers

- Media
  - Laughlin Nevada Times
  - Las Vegas Review-Journal
Community events

• Clark County Fair
• Wings and Wildlife Festival
• National Public Lands Day
Weed-Pull Events
Weed Treatments

Invasive Plant Management
Lake Mead Exotic Plant Management Team

Keeping Fountain Grass out of the Mojave Desert

Fountain Grass (Pennisetum setaceum) is an escaped ornamental perennial bunchgrass from Africa that has invaded parts of Hawaii and the Sonoran Desert. It is adapted to fire and increases hazardous fuels causing wildfires in areas that may not have historically occurred. It was detected in the late 1990s within the Mojave Desert at Joshua Tree NP and along the Colorado River corridor on the shores of Lake Mohave. The extent of these populations was limited and a rapid response was necessary to keep it from spreading out of control. If no action is taken then fountain grass would spread by windblown seed similar to the way tamarisk has infested the region. The National Park Service began controlling these recently detected populations in 2001. Control is also occurring on adjacent US Fish and Wildlife Refuges by the NPS Lake Mead EPMT through partnerships agreements. Nevada designated fountain grass on the State Noxious Weed List in 2002 and one the largest commercial nurseries in the state voluntarily withdrew it from sales prior to listing. Populations of this weedy grass have dramatically declined due to successful control actions.

Escaped Ornamentals: What you can do

- Assess the invasive potential of a plant prior to planting.
- Remove plants that are establishing outside of intended area.
- Do not share plants that are overrunning your yard.
- Never dispose of aquatic plants in waterways.
- Follow prohibited plant laws in your area.
- Be aware of what you plant.

Further Information
Curt_deuser@nps.gov
www.nature.nps.gov/biology/invasivespecies/
BOUNTY on fountaingrass!

- **FREE 1-gallon sacaton grass plant in exchange for fountaingrass removed from private property**

- **Take a photo of your fountaingrass after removal**

- **Bag and dispose of fountaingrass (don’t spread seeds!)**

- **Report fountaingrass removal through EDDMapS (via smartphone app or online), or by email or mail**

- **On confirmation, arrange to pick up your free plant!**
Alternate Plants

Alkali Sacaton (Dropseed)
*Sporobolus airoides*
-native
Plant Exchange
Restoration
Lessons Learned

- Private landowner participation - direct contact
- Volunteer participation - partner with orgs
- Plant exchange - removal/planting assistance
- Red or Green? - confusion over cultivars
- Bigger than just Laughlin - wider outreach
- City/County/State properties - set the example
Weeds information

- NV Dept. of Agriculture (agri.nv.gov)
- NV Cooperative Extension (unce.unr.edu/publications)
- USDA PLANTS database (plants.usda.gov)
- US Forest Service: Fire Effects Information System (fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants)
- Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health (www.invasive.org)
- Jepson Interchange (ucjeps.berkeley.edu)
- CA Invasive Plant Council (www.cal-ipc.org)
- EDDMapS - Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System (www.eddmaps.org)
How Can I Help?

• **Spread the word**
  - Tell others how invasive weeds are harmful
  - Report noxious weed locations
    - www.agri.nv.gov, EDDMapS-West app/online

• **Act/Recommend**
  - Safely treat or remove fountaingrass, other weeds
  - Plant/replace with only non-invasive plants

• **Volunteer**
  - Sign up for volunteer weed-pull events
  - Help recruit, organize or supervise volunteers
Questions?

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