

COLUMBIA GORGE COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA



2019

Annual Report



Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area

ANNUAL REPORT

Who Are We

The Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) exists to foster and support collaborative weed management among public land managers and private landowners. Because weeds travel over the landscape and extend across multiple ownerships, collaboration and partnerships are essential for effective weed management. In addition, partnerships increase capacity, professional expertise, efficiency, and access to new and diverse funding sources. The intention of the CWMA is to provide guidance to local government and land managers on methods for utilizing available resources to control invasive weed problems regardless of political boundaries. The Columbia Gorge CWMA promotes weed education and outreach, weed inventory and prevention, and weed control activities.



Attendees of our annual Field Day event pose in front of Elowah Falls.

OUR PARTNERS

- Bureau of Land Management—Northwest Oregon District and Prineville District
- Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development
- Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District
- Columbia Land Trust
- Confederated Tribes & Bands of the Yakama Nation
- East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
- Friends of the Columbia River Gorge
- Hood River County
- Hood River County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Klickitat County Noxious Weed Control Board
- Oregon Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Control Program
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Sandy River Watershed Council
- Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program
- Underwood Conservation District
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Forest Service—Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and Mt. Hood National Forest
- Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District

STEERING COMMITTEE

Our Steering Committee consists of devoted members from our partner organizations, who help direct and assist the activities of the CWMA. Tasks aided by our Steering Committee include directing financial and grant opportunities, facilitating meetings, updating official documents, writing letters of support for our partner organizations, and providing guidance to our CWMA Coordinator.

This year, the Steering Committee updated our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Management Plan and will be reaching out to new and existing partners in the coming year. The MOU, which is renewed every five years, is the agreement between the CWMA and its partners to collaborate on invasive plant management and control within the Columbia Gorge. On the other hand, our Management Plan is our primary organizational document that displays the goals, roles, and intention of the CWMA. In the start of 2020, the group has plans of reviving our Operational Plan, which is a single working document that displays the priority areas and weed control efforts conducted by our partner organizations. It allows other partners and members to see the on-the-ground work and priority areas of the CWMA. The Steering Committee will continue to brainstorm ways the CWMA can better serve its dedicated partner organizations.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Education and Outreach Committee exists to coordinate outreach opportunities and educational events for our CWMA members, partners, and interested members of the public. The committee is responsible for planning events, hosting public committee meetings, updating and creating educational materials, and brainstorming new ways to engage communities in our collaborative weed management efforts.

This year, the committee helped co-host the Invasive Species and Exotic Pest Workshop, a day-long workshop in Stevenson, Washington, where invasive experts presented on the latest research and findings in invasive species management. The group also co-hosted a more hands-on training, Stop the Invasion, where attendees were educated on the practical implementations of invasive plant and pest management. Members from our Education and Outreach Committee held a weekend-long public engagement event to share the importance of boot brushing at major trailheads throughout the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. The group also planned and executed the annual Field Day, which took place in the Eagle Creek Fire burn area this year, showcasing a variety of collaborative restoration projects before and after the fire occurred. The committee continues to make updates to the CWMA website and will look for opportunities to make it more useful and accessible to weeds practitioners as well as the public.

CWMA COORDINATOR

We are pleased to announce that our CWMA Coordinator, Courtney Gattuso, has successfully completed her first year in her new role as our Coordinator! She serves a multifaceted position as the CWMA Coordinator for the Columbia Gorge CWMA as well as the 4-County CWMA, which supports the Portland metropolitan area. As the Coordinator, Courtney devotes 25% of her staff time to the Columbia Gorge CWMA in assisting its general activities, like event and meeting advertising, organizing official documents, supporting our CWMA committees and partners, and maintaining the website. She is beyond excited to be a part of the larger CWMA network which allows her to see the amazing work of our partners. In the past year, Courtney has provided plenty of updates to the website, designed numerous event flyers, and kept our partners engaged in CWMA activities through our new email listserv and teleconference speaker. In the coming year, she looks forward to continuing to support the CWMA and its list of growing partners.

8TH ANNUAL INVASIVE SPECIES AND EXOTIC PEST WORKSHOP

In partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Washington Invasive Species Council, Washington State University Extension, and Skamania County, the Columbia Gorge CWMA co-hosted the eighth annual Columbia Gorge Invasive Species and Exotic Pest Workshop on February 28th, 2019. This yearly event is designed to provide information on invasive species management to land managers, land owners, and the interested public. It was held at the Skamania County Hegewald Center, located in Stevenson, Washington, and brought in nearly 100 attendees, ranging from various professional backgrounds, including local, state, and federal governments; universities; urban and rural land managers; non-profit organizations; and private landowners.



John Goetz III (Clean Water Services) presents on riparian restoration management.

Despite the icy weather, we had a packed house of attendees, who were eager to hear the latest news on invasive species identification and management. Our diverse group of speakers dove into a variety of topics including riparian restoration in urbanized watersheds, Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR)

management in the Eagle Creek burn area, flowering rush control in the Columbia River, regional pesticide research updates, aquatic species decontamination, spotted lanternfly prevention, and more! After lunch, to avoid the food coma sleepies, the group participated in an interactive invasive species quiz through *Kahoot!*, hosted by Marty Hudson, Coordinator of Klickitat County's Weed Control Board. Attendees were even able to obtain a variety of recertification credits from Washington State Department of Agriculture, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and International Society of Arboriculture for partaking in the event.



Sven-Erik Spichiger (WSDA) showcases a fascinating display of invasive insects.

Currently, the CWMA is working with its partner agencies and organizations in preparation for the ninth annual Invasive Species and Exotic Pest Workshop! The upcoming event is scheduled for February 27th, 2020 at the Hegewald Center once again, and we promise to provide equally engaging presentations, plenty of invasive species research, and even more recertification credits. We anticipate that it will be our best event yet!

STOP THE INVASION

The Columbia Gorge CWMA co-hosted, yet another, fantastic event with the Washington Invasive Species Council, United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and Washington State University Extension called Stop the Invasion. This informative event provides a more technical, hands-on training opportunity for anyone who is interested in combating invasive species! The all-day workshop was held on April 4th, also at Skamania County's Hegewald Center. Like the Invasive Species and Exotic Pest Workshop, we offered a variety of recertification credits from Oregon Department of Agriculture, Washington State Department of Agriculture, International Society of Arboriculture, as well as Oregon Landscape Contractors Board.

This year, the event drew in 36 attendees who engaged in various plant and non-plant pest management topics. In the morning, Rachel Suits (*Oregon State University*) discussed Integrated Pest Management (IPM) of weeds, Mitch Bixby (*City of Portland*) focused on western weed management and identification, and Josh Vlach (*Oregon Department of Agriculture*) taught the group about invasive insects. After lunch, the group was informed on the new and lesser known noxious weeds of Washington from Wendy DesCamp (*Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board*), Brianna Widner (*Washington Invasive Species Council*) discussed decontamination and prevention of invasive species, and Marty Hudson (*Klickitat County Noxious Weed Program*) closed the event by covering the basics of herbicide labels and the fundamentals of



Live noxious weed display provided by Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District.

sprayer calibration, equipped with a live demonstration. We had plenty of posters, outreach materials for attendees, and even a display of potted noxious weeds. We'd like to give a big thank you to our partners with Skamania County for continuing to host us, and to our amazing speakers for helping put on another successful event!

BOOT BRUSH KICK-OFF

On March 23rd and 24th, the Columbia Gorge CWMA "kicked off" hiking season with the fourth annual Boot Brush Kick-Off and hosted informational booths at trailheads all throughout the Columbia River Gorge. This event

is designed to inform the public and raise awareness on the importance of brushing boots, dogs, and equipment to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. Our partners at Skamania County, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, and Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District distributed over 300 packable boot



Boot Brush Kick-Off volunteers distribute outreach materials at a popular trailhead in the Columbia Gorge.

brushes and 400 Worst Weeds of the Gorge invasive plant booklets to our dedicated volunteers to help give invasive species *the boot!*

On the days of the event, we had a total of 20 volunteers stake out at numerous boot brush stations at trailheads throughout both sides of the Gorge who connected with over 1500 visitors! They educated multiple recreational groups on local invasive weeds in the area, taught them about various seed transportation vectors, and how brushing is a very effective form of decontamination and prevention. The CWMA was blown away by the successful turnout of the event, and our volunteers are already buzzing about next year!

Following the event, the CWMA contributed several boot brush donations to various organizations including Multnomah County, Columbia Hills Historical State Park, and Oregon State University Extension Master Naturalists, donating over 85 packable boot brushes and 70 Worst Weeds of the Gorge booklets for education and prevention purposes. We also helped our nearby friends at Willamette National Forest implement their own boot brush installation program modeled after our very own!

FIELD DAY IN THE EAGLE CREEK FIRE BURN AREA

The Columbia Gorge CWMA takes pride in its annual Field Day event as a means to showcase some of the amazing work of our devoted and hardworking partners. The event allows our partner organizations to present projects to fellow CWMA members on the work they've been conducting and teaches the group about diverse habitats and ecosystems within our jurisdictional boundaries. And the best part is...*it's free!*

This year, our partners were eager to receive a behind-the-scenes tour of the Eagle Creek Fire burn area to see how the landscape was transformed by the 2017 fire. The tour was focused on the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge within the fire containment zone, and we were excited to have our partners from U.S. Forest Service Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area and Oregon State Parks grant us access to various closed trails and areas to allow the group this rare opportunity to see life after the fire. Due to the hazardous and unstable conditions of the terrain, attendance was restricted to only 40 people, which was easily met the first week registration opened.



Mika Barrett (*Friends of the Columbia Gorge*) and attendees hike Wahclella Falls trail along Tanner Creek.

We had a fabulous lineup of speakers who have devoted countless hours and hard work to the overall restoration of the Gorge, before and after the fire. To start the day, Mika Barrett (*Friends of the Columbia Gorge*) and John Cowan (*Oregon Parks and Recreation Department*) discussed how dedicated volunteer efforts have dramatically restored the Angel's Rest Trail leading to Coopey Falls in the removal of various noxious weed species. The group then moved to the John B. Yeon Trailhead to see views of the McCord Creek Delta floodplain where Chris Aldassy spoke about East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District's approach to a large blackberry removal project, and Alex Stauch of Mosaic Ecology LLC shared his experience conducting the on-ground work of the restoration project. From there, the attendees

Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area

hiked to Elowah Falls where we looked at the succession of vegetation, including some rare native plants sightings, and absorbed the majestic views of the waterfall.



Understory vegetation regenerates amongst charred trees from the Eagle Creek Fire.

After enjoying lunch at a shaded picnic area at the Bonneville Fish Hatchery, the group arrived at their final stop of the day at the Wahclella Falls Trailhead. Sarah Callaghan (U.S. Forest Service) talked about the collaborative restoration efforts of the many partners who have contributed to the clean-up and maintenance of the Eagle Creek Fire and thanked everyone for their continuous hard work. The group proceeded along the narrow trail, running along Tanner Creek, until a large rockslide blocked the route and we decided it was time to head back to our meeting spot. The CWMA would like to thank our partners, attendees, and planners for making this a successful and unforgettable Field Day!

GENERAL MEETINGS

Our General Meetings allow our partners to discuss the latest news in weed management and share updates on their respective programs to keep our members engaged in regional weed removal efforts. Our quarterly meetings are hosted in Hood River, the most central location of the CWMA boundaries, to allow equal participation amongst our diverse members. This year, we had a total of 67 attendees participate in our four General Meetings, all of which were hosted in Hood River. The CWMA recently changed their meeting location to the Hood River Fire Department, which has been very accommodating for our group. We thoroughly enjoyed this year's diverse partner discussions and look forward to the engaging topics we will have in 2020.

ACCESSIBILITY

In the past year, the CWMA has been working on providing a more open and fluid means of communication for our partners who span many miles over the Columbia Gorge region. We recently upgraded our email listserv, hosted by GoogleGroups, which now allows our members to converse with each other directly and post related material to our 238 members. The new listserv allows members to ask questions, post research projects or job announcements, and keep up on CWMA updates, including meetings, events, and relevant information for new and current sponsors.

Another feature the CWMA has recently incorporated to aid communication for our geographically distant partners is our Bluetooth teleconference speaker. This portable device allows people to call remotely into our meetings, free of charge, through our audio conferencing call-in line, shared with the 4-County CWMA. Since its purchase in July, we've already had numerous partners utilize this new feature for our meetings with great results. The CWMA will continue to provide the best possible means of communication for our partners to assist in our regional weed control efforts.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

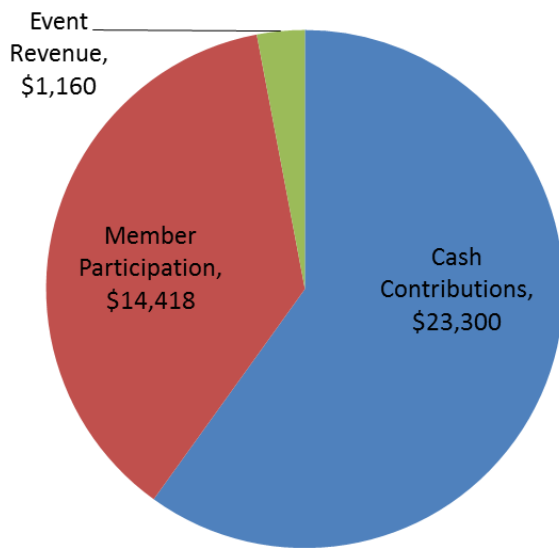
The Columbia Gorge CWMA functions through the generous support of its member organizations. Member organizations provide both financial and volunteer contributions to support the goals and mission of the CWMA.

With the hiring of a new CWMA Coordinator, there has been an active effort to secure additional funding for CWMA activities. The goal of this effort has been to increase our coordinator from a quarter-time to half-time position. This ongoing effort continues as we work to push our resources over the desired funding threshold.

The monetary resources to fund our coordinator position and other CWMA-led activities are currently provided by the following partner organizations:

- Bureau of Land Management—Northwest Oregon District
- Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District
- East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Skamania County—Noxious Weed Control Program
- US Forest Service—Mt. Hood National Forest

Total Contributions: \$38,878



The volunteer participation by CWMA members is also significant and diverse. In the past year, the Columbia Gorge CWMA documented 570 hours of volunteer staff time from a multitude of member organizations. Many more volunteer hours were spent in correspondence and administration, event planning, and project implementation on behalf of the CWMA that went undocumented. This support by our members is significant! Many thanks to all of our participants!

The Columbia Gorge CWMA also generated some revenue from our Stop the Invasion training. This event focused on teaching the basics of invasive species management and resulted in total revenue to the CWMA of \$1160. The revenue from the event will be used to support core CWMA activities.

Overall, the Columbia Gorge CWMA has a robust and diverse funding base. We are fortunate to have such broad regional support for this organization. Thank you to all of our contributing organizations and members...

We simply couldn't do it without you!

2019 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Steering Committee Co-Chairs

Emily Stevenson (*Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board*)

Lucas Nipp (*East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District*)

Fiscal Administrator

Sam Leininger (*Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District*)

Oregon Representatives

Lucas Nipp (*East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District*)

Christina Mead (*United States Forest Service—Mt. Hood National Forest*)

Washington Representatives

Emily Stevenson (*Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board*)

Marty Hudson (*Klickitat County Noxious Weed Control Board*)

Education & Outreach Committee Chair

Mika Barrett (*Friends of the Columbia Gorge*)

CWMA COORDINATOR

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This report was curated by CWMA Coordinator, Courtney Gattuso, and Fiscal Administrator, Sam Leininger.