

This fact sheet was developed to give interested individuals the fundamental information needed to form a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). Several resources are available that provide detailed, step-by-step information. These have been summarized and included at the end of this document.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Cooperative Weed Management Area? A cooperative weed management area is a partnership of federal, state, and local government agencies, tribes, individuals, and various interested groups to manage noxious weeds or invasive plants in a defined area.

What are the benefits of forming a CWMA? Sharing of funding and resources is usually the reason that most CWMA's are formed. However, the benefits that come from a CWMA are many. They include:

- ❖ Improved relationships at the grassroots level between state, local, and federal agencies; members of the public; and private groups.
- ❖ Providing a way for groups with the common goal of controlling weeds to help each other get their jobs done in a more effective and coordinated manner.
- ❖ Allowing local weed management issues to be brought to the state and federal levels.
- ❖ Increasing local and statewide awareness of weed-related issues across a broad cross-section of the public.

Is there funding available for CWMA's? Yes. Currently most CWMA's are funded using grants from state, federal, and private organizations. Some CWMA's receive county funding as well.

What kind of things do CWMA's do? It depends on how long the CWMA has been established and the resources available. In general, CWMA activities include three broad components:

- ❖ Education – It is essential to make the local community aware of noxious and invasive plants and the detrimental economic and environmental impacts they can cause. Without an informed and motivated community, effective weed management cannot be implemented.
- ❖ Prevention – Identifying ways to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. Once methods of spread have been identified, CWMA partners can work together to develop and implement plans to control the spread of the noxious weed species in their area.
- ❖ Cooperative work projects – CWMA's organize cooperative work projects to control existing noxious weed infestations. This is typically done through cost-share programs between agencies, landowners, and private citizens.

How do you form a CWMA? Here are the steps *(taken from the 2003 Idaho Noxious Weed Coordinating Committee CWMA Cookbook*

1. **Choose an initial leader or champion** - This champion should be someone who is excited about noxious weed management. They should have energy, commitment, and available time. The CWMA champion should lead only until the CWMA is fully organized and operating. At that time a chairperson and vice-chairperson assume leadership responsibilities.
2. **Determine common goals** - Locally you may have one specific noxious weed of concern. Some may have a great love for a river corridor or wetland. Maintaining real estate values may be another priority. Communities may even have a productive area not yet infested with noxious weeds and want to keep it that way. Talk to neighbors, friends, politicians, and community leaders about noxious weed issues in order to elevate awareness and support.

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Find at least one common concern and focus on it to initiate a CWMA.

3. **Identify potential partners and begin building support** - View each major land management entity within a CWMA as critical. Federal, tribal, state, county, local municipalities, public utilities, transportation departments, irrigation companies, and private landowners should all be represented to ensure success. Remember that while your CWMA must be big enough to handle your weed problem, it needs to remain manageable.
4. **Develop an agreement** - The purpose of an agreement is to facilitate cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries and eliminate administrative barriers. Establish a document specifying the terms of agreement. Assure that every partner carefully reads and supports that agreement. Example Memorandums of Understanding are available from the State Noxious Weed Coordinator.
5. **Establish a steering committee** - The steering committee will organize members, set priorities, make assignments, and accomplish the goals that brought participants together. This group will provide direction and establish priorities, operating procedures, locate opportunities, and in general further the common goals of the CWMA.
6. **Select a chairperson** - After organizing efforts evolve, and in the early stages of operating a CWMA, it is necessary to select a steering committee chairperson. The chairperson will facilitate meetings and help organize efforts, while ensuring steering committee members comfortably provide input and help make decisions.
7. **Develop a CWMA strategic plan** - A strategic or integrated weed management plan will help you clearly identify concerns, quantify the scope of problems, and establish criteria for CWMA operations. Work priorities for the upcoming year can be identified in the annual operating plan portion of the document. Annual operating plans vary greatly in size and complexity. Newly established CWMA's may have one or a few annual projects and may utilize grant applications as part of the annual operating plan.

CWMA Resources & Contacts

Center For Invasive Plant Management

The Center for Invasive Plant Management out of Montana State University closed in 2015. However, their archives are full of resources for Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs). Check out the website at http://msuinvasiveplants.org/archives_CISM/index

Weed Website - NMSU Extension Plant Sciences has developed a website to serve as a clearinghouse for information on weeds in New Mexico. The website (<http://weeds.nmsu.edu>) contains fact sheets for the noxious weeds in the state, an interactive weed identification tool (over 275 species), weed distribution maps for state listed species, and many more features.

People to Contact

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