

FY 2009 CHALLENGE COST SHARE PROPOSAL

Station: Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Date: October 20, 2008

Phone: 406-276-3536x303 Submitted by: Suzanne Beauchaine

Project Leader Signature: [signed via email] Jeff Warren

Project Title: Stopping the new invaders - Partnering in the Centennial Valley

Project Description:

Red Rock Lakes NWR (Refuge), encompassing 47,000 ac of the Centennial Valley (CV), has been a partner in the Red Rock River Watershed Weed Management Area since 2001. Although residential development in the CV has not occurred similar to other valleys in Montana (e.g. Paradise Valley, Bitterroot Valley), threats to refuge resources still exist. The refuge is still relatively free of non-native invasive plant species; however, infestations are increasing in number and frequency, posing a growing threat to wildlife habitat and the visitor experience. Within the CV, prevention, early detection, and treatment of invasive plants are crucial to the management of native plant communities and wildlife habitats. To prevent weeds from invading is the most cost effective and ecologically sound approach to managing invasive plants. Landscape level invasive species management, such as is occurring within the CV, provides resilient native ecosystems and habitat corridors that may allow plants and animals an avenue to be able to move and adapt to changes in climate.

Since 2001, the Refuge, The Nature Conservancy, Beaverhead County Weed District, Centennial Valley Association (comprised primarily of local landowners), USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Strike Teams, and Bureau of Land Management, have worked cooperatively in sharing technical assistance, equipment, herbicides, project management support, and staff to treat and map weed infestations and survey thousands of acres for new infestations within the refuge and entire Centennial Valley.

In cooperation with partners, the refuge is proposing to provide funding to the Beaverhead County Weed District to hire 1 technician and 1 intern for the summer of 2009 to expand and improve current invasive plant management activities for the refuge and Centennial Valley.

Project Deliverables

1. Aggressively survey, map and treat all new infestations of target invasive species in high-risk and high-priority habitat areas.

- **High-risk areas** include transportation corridors, dikes, sandhills, etc. – **approximately 800 acres**
 - Target species include: houndstongue, spotted knapweed, black henbane, cheat grass, Russian thistle, field bindweed, yellow toadflax, Dyer’s woad, and Canada thistle
- **High-priority habitat ‘units’** within the refuge will be selected in wetlands and riparian habitats – ~ **500 acres**
 - Target species include: common tansy, Canada thistle, spotted knapweed, and musk thistle

Funding Proposal: FWS Request \$ 14,000

PARTNER

CONTRIBUTIONS

1) The Nature Conservancy	\$ 7,146
2) Beaverhead County Weed District	\$11,657
3) Centennial Valley Landowners Association	\$ 4,000

Special Considerations:

This project will meet “Fulfilling the Promise” recommendations:

WH8 Develop refuge inventory and monitoring plans for species

WH9 Design or use existing databases to analyze and archive information

WH10 Develop systematic habitat monitoring programs

WH14 Use adaptive management techniques to evaluate effectiveness

P8 Strengthen partnerships with states, Tribes, nonprofit organizations, and academia

RAPP goals 1.42-1.51 - Invasive species treatments

IF MULTIPLE PROPOSALS ARE SUBMITTED - PRIORITY OF PROPOSAL _____