

Marias River Watershed

NEWSLETTER

Website: www.mariasriver.com



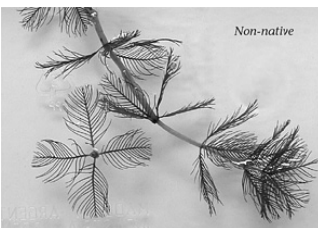
Picture by Roger Zentis

Protecting and Improving The Land and Resources

New Noxious Weed Extension Bulletins Are Available

By: Jeannie Olmstead, Toole Co. Extension

Three new noxious weed Extension bulletins are available that describe the biology, ecology, and management of Eurasian watermilfoil, hoary alyssum, and blueweed. These weeds are relatively new to the Montana noxious weed list and are limited in their distribution across the state. Therefore, awareness and education about these species is important to prevent further spread.



Non-native

Eurasian watermilfoil: Has slender stems encircled by farther leaves in groups. Produces small 4-parted flowers that stick out of the water 2"-4". Flowers may be 4-petaled, although there may be no flowers. The fruit is a hard capsule with 4 seeds.

recreation (i.e. boats and boat trailers) is the predominant vector of long distance dispersal. Eurasian watermilfoil can be confused with native watermilfoils that occur in Montana. The new bulletin can assist in proper identification and differentiating among species. After prevention, early detection and immediate action to contain and eradicate infestations are the more important management actions for Eurasian watermilfoil.

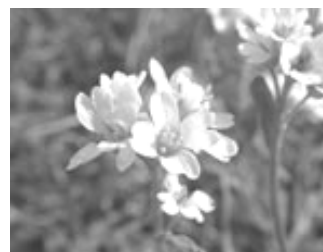
Hoary alyssum (*Berteroa incana*) is an annual to short-lived perennial that is common in forage crops, pastures, and disturbed areas. It has been reported in 27 counties in Montana and is especially prevalent in the southwestern counties of Gallatin, Ravalli, Madison and Jefferson. It spreads via seeds. Toxicity to horses has been reported when green or dried forage

is contaminated with hoary alyssum. Management options vary and are discussed in the new publication.

Blueweed (*Echium vulgare*) is a biennial to short-lived perennial that was introduced as an ornamental due to its bright blue, showy flowers. Most of the blueweed in Montana is found in Ravalli County. It also occurs in Canada just north of Glacier and Toole counties. This species is typically found in disturbed areas and thrives in sandy, well-drained soils. It contains toxic alkaloids that can cause liver failure if grazed by livestock. Prevention and early detection of



Blueweed: The dimpled appearance of the leaves and bright blue to purple flowers of blueweed helps to distinguish this weed from most other weed species.



Hoary Alyssum: Flowers are w/4 petals, leaves are alternate and blades are simple, & it usually only branches at the top of the plant.

Montanans identify Eurasian watermilfoil, hoary alyssum, and blueweed, properly manage existing infestations and prevent their further spread. The booklets can be downloaded or ordered through MSU Extension publications online at <http://www.msuextension.org/store/>; or by contacting your local Extension office.

The Board & Regional Chairs:

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Ramsey Offerdal
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The next regular MRW Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 12 at 1:00pm, Marias River Electric,

Conservation District Contacts:

Pondera 406-278-7611 ext. 101
Glacier 406-873-5752 ext. 101
Liberty 406-759-5778 ext. 102
Toole 406-434-5234 ext. 113
Big Sandy 406-378-2298
Hill 406-265-6792 ext. 101
Chouteau 406-622-5627 ext. 101

This newsletter was compiled and edited by Kody Farkell, PCCD Administrator

Fall Meeting Speaker

Dr. Sharlene Sing, Research Entomologist at the US Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station in Bozeman, will be the featured speaker at the Marias River Watershed Group's fall meeting on October 12. Dr. Sing is involved in a range of studies with the overall objective of improving the efficacy and safety of classical weed biological control. She is also a part of some long-term monitoring projects, including ecological and bio-control studies on salt cedar as well as evaluating the potential for integrating herbicide treatments and biological control of Dalmation toadflax. A new project of Dr. Sing's is to study the effects of climate change on weed control efficacy and evaluating the ecological impacts of aquatic weeds.

Dr. Sing will give a presentation to the Marias River Watershed focusing on the bio-control of Russian olive, a topic that has had increasing popularity throughout the state. For more information on Dr. Sing and her studies visit the Rocky Mountain Research Station's website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/bozeman-lab/>.

MRW Summer Update

The quarterly Marias River Watershed Group meeting took place July 6 at Marias River Electric in Shelby.

Guest speakers Gary "Stan" Benes, BLM District Manager, Lewistown; Gary Slagel, Missouri Breaks National Monument Manager and Janelle Holden, Wilderness Society presented a proposed release of flow from Tiber Dam to enhance the regeneration of Cottonwood trees, restoration of pallid sturgeon and benefit riparian and aquatic habitat on the Missouri River. Benes introduced the presentation saying that the proposal was still in the discussion stages and they welcomed input/discussion. The event, if it happens, will only be a two day event with a maximum of 10,000 cfs released. This method has been used successfully in other areas but the timing is critical for cottonwood regeneration.

Slagel gave a presentation about the Monument area that was created January. Approximately 520 acres have been clear of Russian olive with more planned to be done this year. Nearly all grazing allotments have changed management from season long grazing to actively managed allotments. The next major step will be floodplain mapping. BLM offered to put together a boat trip down the Missouri River in September if there was interest.

A youth float trip, scheduled for August 5th, was discussed. Following a safety talk and river dynamics demo, the float included several topics including insects, weeds, fisheries etc. a DEQ Mini-Education grant for \$1,500 provided funds for fuel, rafts and porta-potties.

Warren Kellogg, watershed consultant, reported that he collected data on 18 permanent monitoring sites in early July and picked up an additional 4 sites on the Pondera Canal system. He offered to conduct a monitoring workshop for the group in August or September if there was interest.

Jim Ghekiere, Liberty County Weed Supervisor, reported that the BLM has allocated \$20,000 for MRW to continue the Russian Olive removal project. The money will allow removal to continue downstream from MRW's original removal demonstration site. This would likely be used on private property affected by overgrowth of Russian Olives.

The next quarterly meeting of MRW is scheduled for Tuesday October 12 at 1:00pm at Marias River Electric in Shelby. Contact your local conservation district for confirmation of the meeting time and place.