

Foxtail Pines Owners Association

2017 Weed Mitigation Plan Final 7/1/2017

Over the past 3 years the Owners have expressed concern for, and interest in, the mitigation of the noxious weeds within the borders of our subdivision. In addition, the Colorado Noxious Weed Act "finds and declares that certain undesirable plants constitute a present threat to the continued economic and environmental value of the lands..."

The most severely impacted areas in the subdivision is around the pond and in the bar ditches. The past Board and your current Board have worked diligently to produce a recommendation for a cost effective and habitat friendly plan for this year, and Jude O'Connor researched an Integrated Weed Management Plan. The Board has met with Marisa Neuzil and Elaine Kist from the Teller Park Conservation District on site and discussed our mitigation plans. We have taken her recommendations into consideration and we will post those written recommendations on the website.

In the process of creating this plan, the Board researched several noxious weed mitigation methods (mechanical, herbicidal – chemical vs. natural, burning, goats), our consideration of the risks associated with, and optimal timeframe for maximum impact for each method. The result of this evaluation, is the following proposal that fits within the proposed budget and timeframe for this year. Please keep in mind that the mitigation process will take more than just one year to achieve the desired results. That result would be to have us in more of an annual maintenance program in future years vs. the more aggressive mitigation program proposed for this year.

The proposed plan for this year will be a **two-phase** approach. It was determined by the Board that the first year should be the most aggressive plan to knock down the weed spread so that we may accurately assess the results and to formulate future mitigation plans.

PHASE I:

Proposed Method:	Time Frame:
Mechanical (Mowing/Cutting)	May 2017
Controlled Burn (sterilize existing surface seed pods)	May 2017

~~This process will knock down and eliminate the over brush (existing dead thistle and other noxious weeds on the dam and in the drainage area to the west of the pond) exposing the new growth (Rosettes) for the second phase of mitigation. The controlled burn permit will only allow a cubic yard to be burned at a time (3'x3'x3') to ensure that the burn does not "get away" from the crew. This controlled burn will be performed by at least four firefighters (two active duty firefighters and two retired firefighters) for the duration of the burn and mop up or extinguishment.~~

Although Ms. Nuezil agreed on site that burning would be the best way to eliminate the existing seed pods, it is too late into the season for this to be accomplished without risk if damaging the beneficial plants/grasses and stimulating thistle growth.

PHASE # I:

Proposed Method:	Time Frame:
Animal (Goats) or Mowing	Late June/Early July 2017
Revegetation (native grass & legume seed)	Late June/Early July 2017

~~If goats are used, this process will limit the animals to predetermined areas for a monitored time period to graze down the weed rosettes, aerate the soil, spread the new seed mixture and fertilize the area naturally over a period of time, without requiring Board member participation in the monitoring of the livestock. Mowing will also accomplish the knock down of the weeds at a later development stage, however, the Board is waiting on advice from the herbicide applicator to determine the best time if at all to mow. Mowing alone will need to be done more frequently every 3-4 weeks.~~

PHASE ## II:

Proposed Method:	Time Frame:
Natural Herbicide or Chemical - Milestone	September 2017

This process will allow for the selective application of this natural or chemical herbicide to the thistle rosettes/juvenile plants that survive the first phase of treatment. The purpose is to damage the root system enough in the fall that the plants do not have the time to regenerate growth and are weakened going into the winter months, giving them a lesser chance of re-emergence in the spring. A natural herbicide such as acetic acid/clove oil mixtures are generally not as effective as Milestone and would require more applications. Should a chemical herbicide be decided upon, the pond/recreation area will be closed for a minimum of 7 days or as long as the Board deems necessary for the safety of our residents. The Milestone product is not very toxic, but we want to be as safety conscious as possible.

In both phases, we would endeavor to protect areas that we don't want damaged – we are not considering a total pond area treatment plan.