



Teller-Park Conservation District

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May 25, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

The Teller-Park Conservation District was first made aware of the Foxtail Pines weed mitigation plans in late April, 2017 through the offices of Debra Lester with Park County CSU Extension. She thought that I may be able to offer some form of assistance in regards to the eradication of the Canada thistle problems within roadsides and common area surrounding the pond and pavilion. Through my duties as TPCD district manager; I have been able to make many connections in the weed world through the district's involvement with the Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Association as well as currently studying for my Qualified Supervisor's license in the state of Colorado. I am in no way an expert in pesticide management but I have access to many outstanding people in this field. After speaking with Debra, I gave Janine Snyder a call that afternoon and offered my services to be a tool for the Foxtail Pines OA if they needed access to anyone with expertise in this area. Shortly thereafter; Janine contacted me and asked me to come out for a site visit so I could see what their organization had in mind. I have to say that this group has taken weed mitigation seriously and are working hard to satisfy the Colorado Noxious Weed Act (35-5.5 CRS).

On May 11, 2017 I met Janine, Tammy and John at the pond area along with TPCD board member Elaine Kist. In order to prepare for this visit I studied the Foxtail Pines website and read two weed mitigation plans. One was prepared by Jude O'Connor and one was put together from an un-named group which emphasized the use of goats as a non-chemical way to eradicate the invasive weeds. Elaine was invited to attend by me because she is a Park County producer and has worked with a large number of goats on her own property and I felt she would have something beneficial to add to the conversation. We were shown around the property and given a little background on how the board is leaning at this point. The Canada thistle rosettes were just starting to emerge so it was somewhat difficult to envision the extent of the coming infestation. Burning, mowing, grazing and spot spraying with vinegar/clove oil mixture is the plan that was most discussed. I did read Ms. O'Connor's integrated plan before this meeting and although in large part this office feels that it is a well thought out and encompassing plan there are a few points in which should be addressed. Park County does have a weed budget for rights-of-way- and as such that contract is allotted to the Teller-Park Weed Management program. We are tasked with following the law for weed control and generally speaking, this office will be spot spraying 30 feet in either direction from the center line of all county roads in Teller and Park counties. When I approached Greg Kasperek, Park county Right-of-Way Manager, about the borrow ditch problems in

Foxtail Pines , he made it clear to me that any homeowner action on right-of -way would have to be permitted through him.

After the tour and discussion pertaining to the goat grazing both Elaine and I shared a few concerns with the board members in attendance.

1. The proposed area is very limited in acreage for that number of goats to graze. If the berm and surrounding area is burned in late May or early June then there will not be many rosettes for the goats to eat and we believe that they will go straight to the Potentilla bushes in the wetland areas surrounding the pond. That many mouths could quickly make short work of the existing vegetation.
2. If that many goats are brought in for the whole week that is proposed then our feeling is that there will not be enough unwanted vegetation to eat. This could lead to a bare ground scenario and that leaves a niche for more invasive plants to move in after the goats have left.
3. 450 sets of goat hooves can disturb the soil and release dormant seeds out of the seed bank.
4. We suggest that the board start with mechanically stressing the plants through mowing, weed whacking or grazing a smaller number of goats and then spot spraying either with your vinegar/clove mixture or Milestone which is an aminopyralid herbicide that provides effective control with a low application rate. Continual mechanical stressing throughout the growing season over a period of two to three years should put a significant dent in the noxious weed problem. Pulling the Toadflax and Scentless Chamomile is a pesticide-free way to treat those invasive weeds as well. This is an economical way of addressing the issue without going all in on 450 goats at a total of \$10,000. One year would likely not fix the problem so you would have to budget for subsequent visits. If you choose to burn first, then the board would be responsible for all permitting of that process. Any way you choose to stress the plants should always take care to leave the roots undisturbed as the Canada thistle is a creeping perennial and will throw multiple shoots up shoots if cut or pulled.
5. Whether the group goes with goats or not, seeding the area with native grasses will be a vital way to keep the noxious weeds out. The Teller-Park Conservation District has staff on hand to facilitate in helping you come up with a formula that would work well in your area. We also have a licensed/insured Qualified Supervisor who can assist in weed spraying if you choose to go that route. The rate starts at \$125 per treated acre and goes down incrementally depending on total acres sprayed.
6. In conclusion; TPCD is not offering an endorsement of any one plan but we do applaud the efforts put forth by the Foxtail Pines OA and anything you choose to do would be better than choosing to do nothing. The sooner you start the sooner you will see results. Please let me know if this office can be of any assistance along the way. We would love to see photo documentation of the process and hope for a speedy outcome to your noxious weed predicament. I will also let you know that Teller-Park Conservation District offers a cost share of 50% up to \$250 on any noxious weed eradication. This would only be a drop in the bucket for the goat grazing but every little bit helps.

Sincerely,

Marisa Neuzil

TPCD District Manager