



May 2014

# NuisanceNews

A bimonthly publication from the Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Department

## In This Issue:

Early History of  
Noxious Weed  
Control in  
Ada County

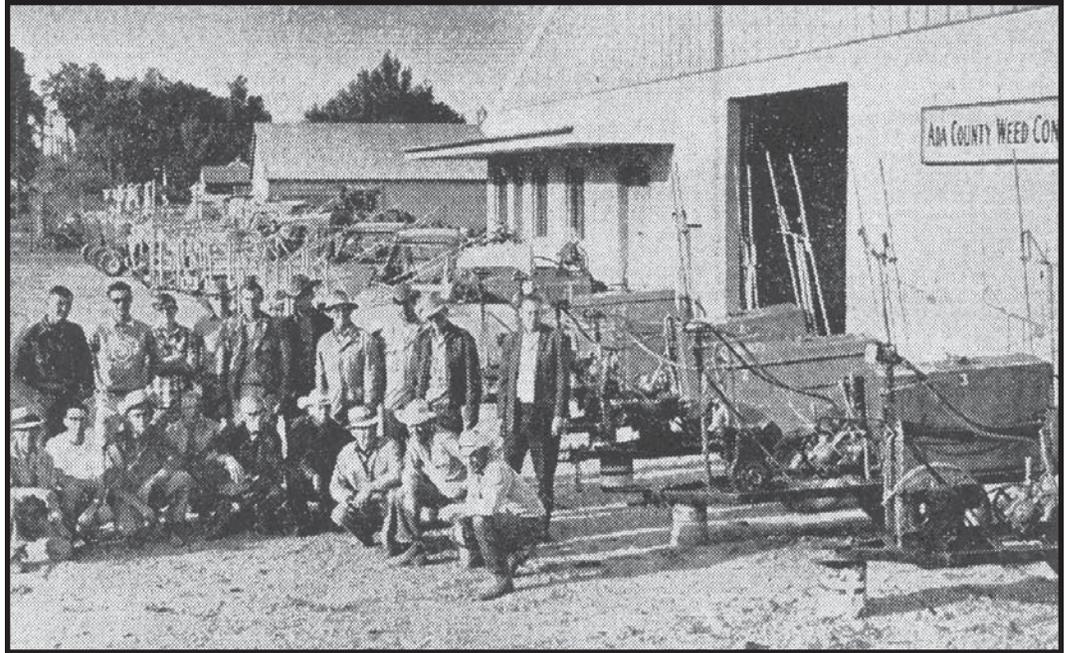
Stay On Trails  
This Spring

Have You Seen  
This Noxious Weed?

West Nile Costs

Mark Your  
Calendars

## Early History Of Noxious Weed Control in Ada County



*Ada County Weed Control in the 1930's*

Since the early 1900's Ada County has waged a war against noxious weeds. An article written by Doran A. Peterson in 1967 highlighted some of the names in charge and the methods and services they provided the county.

In 1929 Sodium Chloride was the herbicide of choice and Ada County hired a Mr. Hatfield to spray roadsides for two years. In the spring of 1931, Jess Hedges of Meridian was hired by the county to control noxious weeds. Hedges hired Joe Marcum to assist him. The county furnished a Model T truck equipped with a 200 gallon tank with two hoses. They hired a third man, Ralph Scott, so they could have a driver and an operator for each hose. In 1933, following an approval from Congress, 152 men reported to Jess Hedges at the old lumber yard building in Meridian. They were divided into crews of 15 and were assigned to treat perennial noxious weeds with carbon bi-sulfide, commonly called "gas". The men were shuffled from assignment to assignment. In 1934, Ada County purchased a Co-op tractor to start a cultivation program. For three years they cultivated 630 to 800 acres six times each summer. During the depression in the early thirties the county purchased an old prune packing shed in Meridian which served as the county weed office. That location is now home to Bruneel Tire off Meridian Road. In 1940, Verl Cox replaced Hedges and worked another 12 years. In that time the county purchased three more tractors and a Jeep spray rig. Tractor foreman, Frank Jensen succeeded Cox. He was instrumental in developing 2,4-D spray rigs and replacing gas.



# STAY ON TRAILS THIS SUMMER



Easy access to the outdoors has always been one of the benefits to living in Ada County. A well established trail system makes it possible for people to get to their favorite outdoor destinations and provides safe passage for ATVs, motorcycles, mountain bikers, and hikers. These trails also keep people out of undisturbed plant life that can become inadvertently attached to you, your vehicle, or your pet.

Please be aware when recreating in our parks, foothills, and deserts this summer. Don't ride or walk cross-country and stay on established trails. Cross country travel can increase soil erosion, ignite a wildfire, damage wildlife habitat, and spread noxious weeds. Also, keep your dog on a leash. Noxious weed seeds can stick to their fur and get deposited to other locations. It only takes a short time for your favorite outdoor recreation spot to be overtaken by an infestation of noxious weeds. Prevention is the key and once a weed becomes established it is very difficult to remove. Most noxious weeds are highly aggressive and will compete with and eliminate native plant species while taking over an entire hillside or open field.

Staying on trails is good for the environment and safer for recreationalists. It keeps the public from trespassing on private property and prevents local wildlife from being disturbed.

## Have You Seen This Noxious Weed?



### Orange Hawkweed

Like many noxious weeds, Orange Hawkweed is native to Europe and was first introduced to America as an ornamental plant. Its a highly aggressive plant that reproduces and spreads through prolific seed production. It competes with native plant life for space, light, and soil nutrients.

Orange Hawkweed is a fibrous rooted perennial herb that grows 10-36 inches tall and is branched at the top to produce flower heads. Orange-red flowers bloom from June until September. Each flower produces 12-30 tiny seeds that are dark brown or black, cylindrical, elongated, barbed and bristled. Seeds are spread by wind, water, or hitch-hiking in contaminated soil associated with transplanting new plants into gardens and flowerbeds.

Orange Hawkweed invades urban sites, moist meadows, pastures, hay fields, roadsides, gravel pits, forested areas, tree plantations and riparian areas. Plants prefer full sun or partial shade and soils that are well drained and coarse-textured.

# West Nile Costs Reach \$778 Million

by Michael Smith, North American Correspondent, MedPage Today

Since it was first seen in the U.S., serious cases of West Nile virus have cost about three-quarters of a billion dollars, researchers reported.

The total cumulative costs associated with West Nile patients admitted to a hospital from 1999 through 2012 are an estimated \$778 million across the U.S., according to J. Erin Staples, MD, PhD, of the CDC's Arboviral Diseases Branch in Fort Collins, Colo., and colleagues at the agency.

The bulk of the cost -- an estimated \$448 million -- comes from lost lifetime productivity of those who died from the illness, Staples and colleagues reported online in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

Hospital care during acute illness accounted for an estimated \$252 million while long-term medical care and long-term lost productivity totaled \$54 million.

West Nile is a "noteworthy issue," especially in communities affected by outbreaks, but it is highly variable from year to year and place to place, and many patients have no symptoms, commented William Schaffner, MD, of Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

The study "brings into light" many aspects of the illness that are often forgotten, commented Cameron Wolfe, MD, of Duke University Medical Center.

Over the study period, Staples and colleagues noted, the CDC has had reports of 37,088 WNV disease cases, including 16,196 cases of neuroinvasive disease -- acute flaccid paralysis, encephalitis, and meningitis.

Of those, 1,529 died and an estimated 18,313 were admitted to a hospital.

But there has been little information on the economic burden of the disease, so to fill the gap, Staples and colleagues analyzed costs associated with a cohort of 80 West Nile patients admitted to hospital in Colorado in 2003. With that information, they extrapolated costs to the entire U.S. over the period since 1999.

About 80% of patients with West Nile infection have no symptoms and most of the remainder suffer from an acute systemic febrile illness. Fewer than 1% of patients have the more serious neuroinvasive disease.

- Patients with acute flaccid paralysis were most expensive to treat, with median initial costs of \$25,117 and median long-term costs of \$22,628.
- For encephalitis, median initial and long-term costs were \$20,105 and \$8,055, respectively.
- For meningitis, median initial and long-term costs were \$7,942 and \$10,363, respectively, while for fever the costs were \$4,617 and \$2,271.

Extrapolating those numbers to the rest of the country yielded the cumulative total of \$778 million, Staples and colleagues reported, but they cautioned that costs vary from state to state and that the initial cohort is a nonrandom sample.

# Mark Your Calendars!



Here are a few tentative events that our education trailer will be participating in this summer. Additional events will be scheduled so check our Facebook page for dates and locations. If you have an idea on where to display our trailer, please give us a call at 208-577-4646. See you this summer.

- June 20 Meridian Dairy Days Parade / Meridian, ID (7:00)
- July 12 Eagle Fun Days Parade / Eagle, ID (2:00)
- Aug. 15-24 Western Idaho Fair

Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement  
975 E. Pine Ave.  
Meridian, Idaho 83642

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Boise ID  
Permit No 533