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Regional and interstate efforts to coordinate leafy spurge and noxious weed work

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The need for coordinated and cooperative efforts in Noxious Weed Management has never been greater. The response to that need has been tremendous. Much of the credit can be given to the formulation of an informal working group called the Western Weed Coordinating Committee, (WWCC).

The WWCC got its start in 1989 at a meeting held in Billings, Montana. The attendance was by invitation and was limited to 45 participants. The composition of the attendees was focused on federal agencies and State Departments of Agriculture weed program leaders. The primary objective of this informal gathering was to get those state and federal agencies involved in weed management together in one place to get to know each other. More formal objectives developed later include to:

- 1) Identify barriers to more effective management of noxious weeds and develop actions and opportunities to remove those barriers.
- 2) Serve as a catalyst for improvement of cooperation across state and international boundaries.
- 3) Communicate information on noxious weed management and coordinate successes.
- 4) Improve the awareness of the need for good weed management.

The WWCC is still in existence and grows in size and strength with each passing year, with the most recent meeting in Sparks, Nevada drawing over 75 participants. This meeting was attended by such divergent agencies as the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bonneville Power Administration.

Achievements of the WWCC to date include:

- 1) Development of an Information and Education Catalog which provides information on available posters, pamphlets, videos, etc. that focus on noxious weeds.
- 2) Development of a noxious weed short course for federal land managers. This course has been on line for two years and has served personnel from 10 states. The state of Montana and the USDA Forest Service were the initial cooperators in the development of this course.
- 3) Development of State memorandum of understanding. With the passage of Section 15: Amendments to the Federal Noxious Weed Act, WWCC provides a liaison between states and federal agencies that are writing memorandums of understanding and developing cooperative agreements at the local level.
- 4) Development of a directory of State and Federal Agency noxious weed personnel.

The WWCC has provided a much needed forum for the exchange of information between states, between federal agencies and between state and federal agencies.