



High Country RC&D
 302 Profit Street
 Rexburg, ID. 83440
 www.hcountryrcd.org
 Phone: (208) 356-5213 ex 5
 Fax: (208) 356-7240



Forest Service Helicopter preparing for Bug Bomb drops along the Ashton Hill.

“HOLDING THE LINE” YELLOWSTONE LEAFY SPURGE PROJECT

Biological controls protecting our national park.

Eastern Idaho 2009: The RC&D launched the “Holding the Line” project with a grant from the U.S. Forest Service. The aim of this project is to prevent Leafy spurge from expanding its range in Eastern Idaho and Yellowstone National Park. Leafy spurge is well established in Eastern Idaho and this project is “taking it on” at a landscape scale. Biological weed control is one of the main techniques being used to control and contain Leafy Spurge throughout this project. However, herbicide and goat grazing will also be utilized to create a more complete treatment.

Flea beetles were first released in Eastern Idaho over fifteen years ago. Since then vast amounts of positive impacts have resulted from the colonies that took hold. Once established the beetles work 24 hours a day / seven days a week for free. In Madison County, some large canyons have seen a dramatic reduction in Leafy spurge along with the recovery of native vegetation.

During July and August teams from the Madison and Fremont County Weed Departments, Bingham County Mapping team, and various volunteers collected nearly four million Leafy spurge flea beetles from local insectaries. Once collected, the biological controls were sorted into colonies ranging from 2,000 to 12,000 and dispersed to new locations throughout Forest Service, private, state, and Cooperative Weed Management Area lands.

During 2009, nearly 2.2 million Flea beetles were released at 365 new sites along the Rexburg Bench in Madison County. In Fremont County, 350,000 beetles were released at 65 locations in ten miles of Conant Creek where Spurge has almost created a monoculture and destroyed valuable habitat. 400,000 beetles were packaged into 78 “bug bombs” and released from a Forest Service helicopter onto Spurge infested sites along the Ashton hill. An additional 300,000 were carried in on horseback to 17 remote locations.

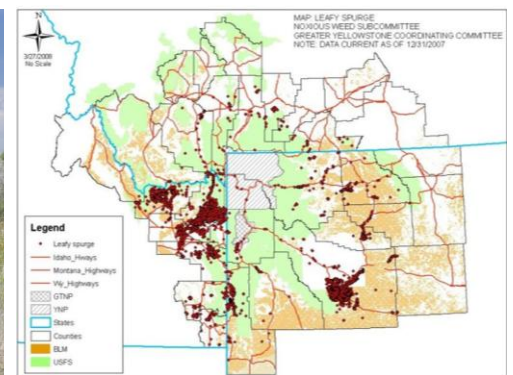
Project funds continue until 2012 and hopefully longer until biosaturation has been accomplished and we are confident the invasive weed is manageable. The ongoing war against Leafy Surge is not won yet, but “Holding the Line” has definitely “ramped up” our attack.



Collection Station: bugs were sorted counted, and packaged for redistribution.



Sweep nets were used to collect on the insectaries created from previous releases.



Red dots are known infestations of Leafy spurge around Yellowstone National Park

Project Funding:

- \$87,000 Forest Service (2009-2012)
- \$20,000 Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (2010-2011)

FY 2009 in-kind match:

- \$67,925 Total match

Project Partners: High Country RC&D, US Forest Service, Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Fish and Game, Madison, Fremont, Clark, Teton, Bonneville, Bingham, and Jefferson Counties, Henrys Fork Foundation, North Fremont and Rigby High Schools, Eastern Idaho FSA, Eastern Idaho NRCS offices, multiple local landowners, and local volunteers.