

# Sangre de Cristo Resource Conservation & Development Council

## UPPER ARKANSAS COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA

### A Decade of Cooperative Weed Management in the Upper Arkansas River Basin

In the West, the patchwork of land ownership between federal, state, municipal, and private land requires cooperation if weed management is to be carried out on a watershed basis.

In 1998, the Sangre de Cristo Resource Conservation and Development Council sponsored a planning meeting to initiate coordinated weed management in the upper Arkansas River Basin.

From this meeting developed the Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), a group of federal, state, and local partners who have worked together across jurisdictional boundaries for almost a decade to manage invasive weeds on a watershed basis.

Each of the partners contributes funding, technical assistance, and equipment, per their particular budget, to help implement a comprehensive weed management program.

Partners also collaborate on training and workshops, share and coordinate resources, and work toward common goals. Through building local, state and federal partnerships, the Upper Arkansas CWMA is able to leverage resources and be more effective in their weed management efforts.

A coordinated approach has helped this group of likeminded individuals to set common goals, acquire funding, and carry out tested and proven weed management on a watershed basis. The group operates under a "Standard Operating Procedures and Agreement for Managing Noxious Weeds." The agreement serves as an educational tool, especially for newly-elected officials, agency personnel, and others, about the purpose and operating procedures of the group. It also provides a basis for an entity to participate.

The Upper Arkansas CWMA developed a strategic plan with input from a broad range of people with an interest in or responsibility for weed management. The plan includes those aspects key to a successful program: education, political support, financial support, and methods to accomplish weed management. The partners have demonstrated a commitment to carry out their strategic plan through their leadership and a commitment to getting things done.



#### Keys To A Successful Cooperative Invasive Weed Management Program

- Involvement of people with mutual goals who want to get something done
- Willingness to take individual action and responsibility to implement group effort
- Leadership
- Technical expertise
- Open participation
- Central communication and coordination
- Each partner's strengths and talents are utilized
- A neutral organization manages regional funding
- Meetings have an agenda, a clear purpose, and are facilitated
- Successes are recognized and celebrated
- Laugh a lot and have fun!

