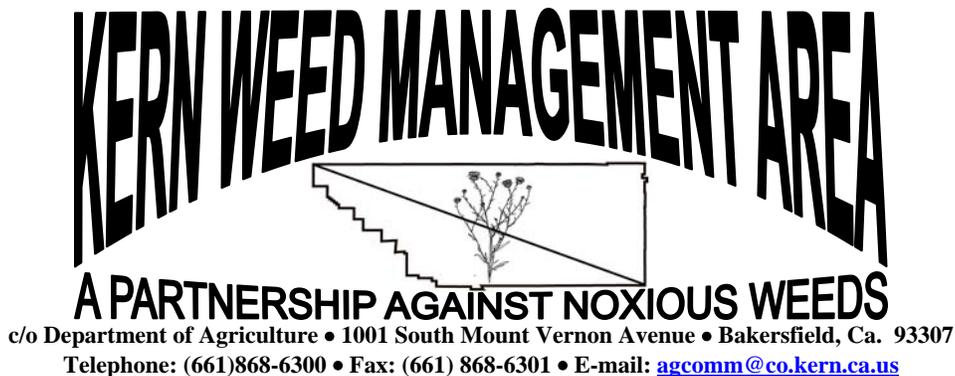


Chair:
Pat Quist

Vice-Chair:
Glenn Harris

Secretary:
Donna Thomas

Treasurer:
Michael Allen



November 21, 2008

To: Russell Scofield
Department of Interior Coordinator
California Desert Managers Group
russell_scofield@ca.blm.gov

SUBJECT: Desert Managers Group (DMG) meeting December 4, 2008.

Mr. Scofield,

Thank you for your interest in the Kern Weed Management Area (WMA), and your invitation to brief the DMG on December 4, 2008, at your meeting in Primm, Nevada. I forwarded your email to other Kern WMA members that reside in the desert portion of Kern County. Unfortunately, neither they nor I will be able to attend. That being said, we would like to take this opportunity to tell you about the Kern WMA, its members, and some of the projects we have been involved with.

In 1998 and 1999 Kern County residents began meeting about their concerns with noxious weeds. The Kern Mountain Desert WMA was formed through a Memorandum of Understanding in April of 2000 to establish partnerships to cooperate and coordinate activities necessary to prevent, control, and eradicate noxious weeds within the boundaries of the WMA. The boundaries of the WMA were increased to include the entire County in 2001, and the name was changed to the Kern WMA. The Kern WMA helped its members to obtain funding sources to tackle some common noxious weed concerns. It also helps to facilitate the sharing of information and resources among its members.

The Kern WMA tackled two (2) projects that focused on the desert portion of Kern County. The Ridgecrest field office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) led a project to control tamarisk in the desert. While tamarisk is a problem in many areas of our desert, the BLM targeted their control in the Butterbredt Canyon area. Over 2,000 tamarisk plants were removed from an area covering 20 acres in 2002. Saplings were pulled, and larger trees were cut down and then treated with herbicides. BLM personnel and volunteers have periodically returned to the area, surveyed, and removed new tamarisks plants discovered. This project was a huge success. Native plants are returning to this riparian area and surface water has also returned to were it had not been seen since the tamarisk invaded.

The Eastern Kern County Resource Conservation District (EKCRCD) also led a control project to stop pioneering populations of perennial pepperweed in the Ridgecrest / Inyokern area. In 2001 these infested sites were measured at 40 to 90 percent (%) pepperweed cover. By 2004, pepperweed was reduced to 20% cover at the heaviest infested location, and pepperweed had been completely eradicated from four (4) sites. While the funding for this project has vanished, the EKCRCD continues to monitor the pepperweed and work with other stakeholders to eventually eradicate peperweed from the area.

The control of Yellow starthistle (YST) has always been a priority of the Kern WMA and its members. Another pioneering project undertaken by the Kern WMA was to attack YST populations within the WMA. We wanted to slow YSTs spread; begin controlling, and even eradicate infestations. Kern WMA members worked together mapping YST infestations, and educating the public on YST, and our control program. YST treatments were conducted on every roadside infested with YST, and other public and private properties were also targeted. YST has never invaded the desert portion of Kern County. This is a testimony to the work that the Kern WMA has done. Besides stopping YSTs spread, we estimate that we eradicated YST from 120 sites throughout the County. Our roadside mapping data showed that in 2000 there were 184 miles of roadside infested with YST. In 2006 only 71 miles of roadside were infested with YST. The Kern WMA continues to battle YST and we continue to survey and treat infested roadsides. The Kern WMA is currently also working on two (2) other YST projects. One project hopes to eradicate YST from the Cummings Valley, and the other project is containing, and even push back YST's spread into the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

In the past, the Kern WMA and its members have also been involved with projects to control Purple loosestrife, Spotted knapweed, Russian knapweed, Dalmatian toadflax, Russian thistle, and other noxious weeds. In 2009, Kern WMA members will receive funding to target noxious weeds on the California Department of Food & Agriculture's (CDFA's) "A" rated noxious weed list, and to attack other newly discovered, isolated, and pioneering noxious weed infestations.

Our membership includes: Audubon California's Kern River Preserve, Bear Valley Community Service District, Bureau of Land Management, California Conservation Corps, California Department of Fish & Game, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Caltrans, Cummings Valley Protective Association, Eastern Kern County Resource Conservation District, Greenhorn Mountain Veterans Association, Honda R&D Americas, Inc., Kern County Department of Agriculture, Kern County Parks & Recreation Department, Pine Mountain Club POA, Quist Farms, Share, Care, and Prayer, Inc., Tehachapi Resource Conservation District, T.R. Ranch, University of California Cooperative Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S.F.&W.S. Hopper Mt. / Bitter Creek N.W.R. Besides these members, our regular quarterly meetings attract other stakeholders including numerous agencies and interested individuals.

We encourage any and all interested parties to become involved with, and join the Kern WMA. We believe that through cooperation we can prioritize our common goals, and coordinate our efforts to make a lasting difference in protecting our local environments. If anyone is interested in being included on the Kern WMA's e-mail (or mailing) list, please contact:

David Neville
Kern County Department of Agriculture
1001 S. Mount Vernon Ave.
Bakersfield, CA 93307
(661)868-6300
agcomm@co.kern.ca.us

Or

Donna Thomas
Eastern Kern County RCD
1525 N. Norma St., Suite C
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760)446-1327
ekcrd@iwvisp.com