

Weed Awareness

Prepared by the Lancaster County Weed Control Authority

The Weed Control Authority

The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority staff assists landowners in the job of controlling noxious weeds. Many landowners are accomplishing control without any assistance or contact from the Authority. The Authority carries out a strong information and awareness program along with an extensive inspection program to encourage voluntary compliance of the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act.



The Authority has also provided the inspection and administration of the City of Lincoln's "Weed Abatement Program" since entering into an interlocal agreement with the City.

The County Commissioners serve as the Lancaster County Weed Control Authority. Russell Shultz serves as the superintendent and supervises a seasonal staff of six weed inspectors with the assistance of Chief Inspector, Barb Frazier and Linda Spilker, account clerk.

Contact Info

Lancaster County Weed Control Authority
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Lincoln, NE 68528-1507
441-7817

Annual Report — 2002 in Review

Even though 2002 was a very dry year, more acres of noxious weeds were found and the acres of weed abatement violations was about the same as 2001.

The most significant change during the year was the drop in purple loosestrife violations found. There were 482 violations found in 2001 as compared to 143 purple loosestrife violations found in 2002.

Inspection Activity

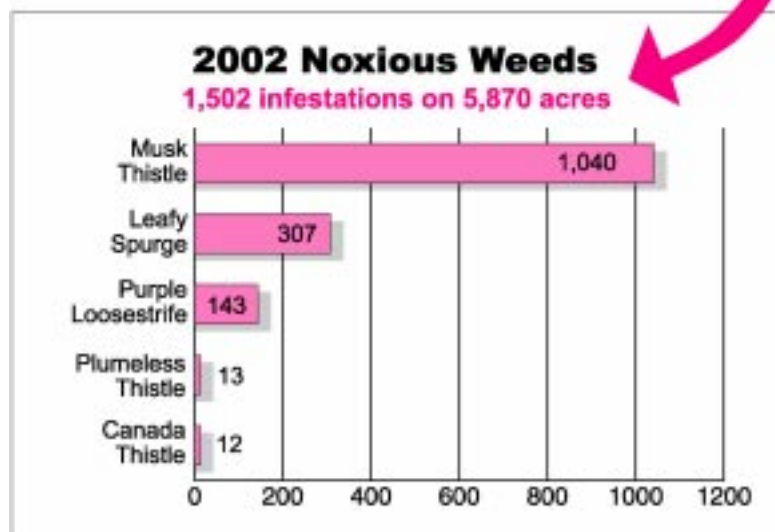
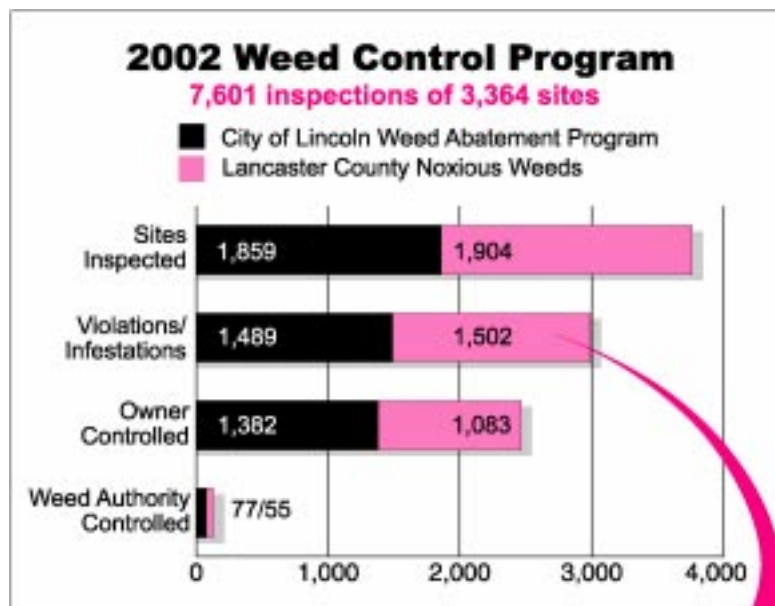
There were 7,601 inspections made of 3,763 sites on 28,503 acres during the year. There were 3,364 violations found on 6,980 acres. Violations dropped 376 from last year but acres of violations increased by 983.

Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Program

We found 1,502 infestations on 5,870 acres. The number of infestations found decreased by 576 but the acres increased by 1,033. There were 344 less purple loosestrife infestations found. This was due to the excellent response from homeowners that removed their ornamental plantings of lythrum. The number of infestations found by noxious weed is shown below. Of these sites, 1,083 were controlled by landowners. The Authority controlled 55 sites and 36 were contract controlled and owners billed \$9,931. We assessed 12 properties for nonpayment.

City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program

The City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement Program requires landowners to maintain weeds and worthless vegetation at



less than six inches on their properties and on one half of the adjacent streets and alleys. There was a continuing emphasis on obtaining voluntary compliance of landowners. After notification, 93 percent of owners cut their overgrowth. This was accomplished with a 10 percent reduction in legal notifications issued from 66 percent down to 56 percent. After notifying 13 different entities by letter or phone, 32 of the 33 violations on public property were taken care of. The east side of 84th Street was not cut. The adjacent landowner is outside the City limits and not subject to the City ordinance. There were 101 properties force-cut and owners billed \$14,087, properties were assessed for nonpayment.

Weed Awareness

A high voluntary compliance with the noxious weed control act and the weed abatement ordinance is

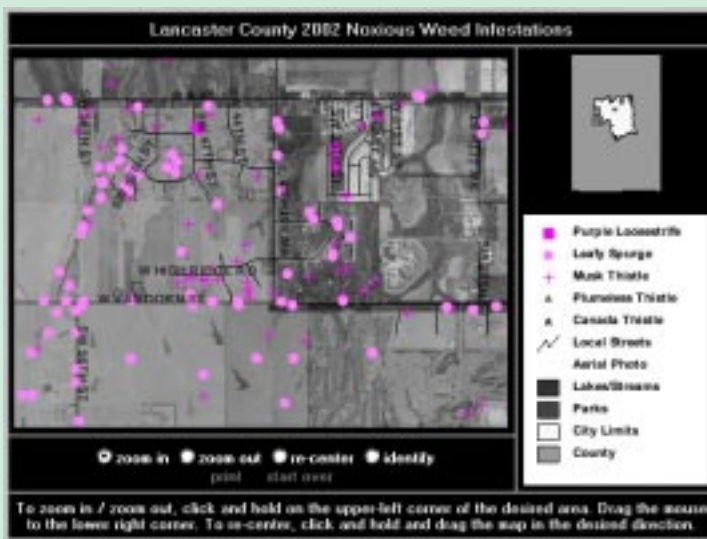
dependent on landowner awareness and acceptance. Several approaches were used to improve the public awareness. This began with a Weed Awareness Special insert to the April Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Service Neblin with a circulation of nearly 11,000. The Authority Web site at www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/cnty/weeds was maintained and updated. Over 1,000 special mailings were made to multiple violators, leafy spurge owners, homeowner associations, CRP contracts, nurseries and garden centers, public land managers and others. An exhibit was prepared and displayed in the lobby of Lancaster Extension Education Center, at the Nebraska State Fair and other locations.

Lancaster County Weed Control Web site

The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority Web site at www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/cnty/weeds provides very useful information about the Authority's program and activities and about weed control and management. The site is continually being updated. In 2002, the site received more than 37,000 hits.

Via the Web site, you can:

- Contact the Weed Control Authority.
- Make a weed complaint.
- Make a real-time search of current weed inspections.
- Look at a map of noxious weed locations in the county.
- See the latest listing of possible weed special assessments.
- Study noxious weed and weed abatement laws and regulations.
- Learn about noxious weed identification.
- Read about the County Noxious Weed and City Weed Abatement Programs.
- See plans and reports.
- Check on noxious weed controls.
- Learn about managing natural areas in an urban setting.
- Test your knowledge about Nebraska weeds.
- Link to other weed control Web sites:
 - Nebraska Weed Control Association: www.neweed.org
 - North American Weed Management Association: www.nawma.org
 - Federal Noxious Weed Program: www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/weeds



Map of Noxious Weed Locations

Maps of noxious weed locations are available on the Authority Web site. A county map is displayed with the noxious weed locations. You may zoom into an area of interest. As you zoom in, an aerial photo background with ownership lines becomes visible. You also can see symbols representing the approximate location of a noxious weed site. You then may find 2002 information on the site by clicking on a symbol.



Current Weed Inspections Search

You may now access information on the Web site about any active inspection made by the authority.

All inspections are shown for sites with infestations not yet under control. You may search for individual sites by entering the address of the parcel, the parcel ID number or the owner's name. You may also look at all the inspections for a weed problem: musk thistle, plumeless thistle, Canada thistle, leafy spurge purple loosestrife or weed abatement in Lincoln.