

# Weed Awareness

Prepared by

**Weed Control Authority**  
Lancaster County



The Weed Control Authority is responsible for implementation of the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act throughout Lancaster County. 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 in 1996.

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 Lori Pracheil, Account Clerk.

444 Cherrycreek Road, Bldg. 'B', Lincoln, NE 68528 • (402) 441-7817 • [www.lincoln.ne.gov/cnty/weeds](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/cnty/weeds)

## 2006 Annual Report

The primary goal of the Weed Control Authority is to educate landowners county-wide of the benefits of preventing and controlling noxious weeds and landowners in the City of Lincoln of the desirability of keeping weeds and worthless vegetation cut. As more landowners and managers keep their weeds under control, less inspections and notifications are needed to achieve compliance with the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act and City of Lincoln's Weed Abatement Ordinance.

The Weed Control Authority's inspection program identifies properties that require some sort of notification and follow-up action to obtain compliance. Most landowners are responsible and do not require notification. Almost all of those who require notification respond favorably to a personal contact, card or letter. A legal notice is used in less than 25% of the notifications.

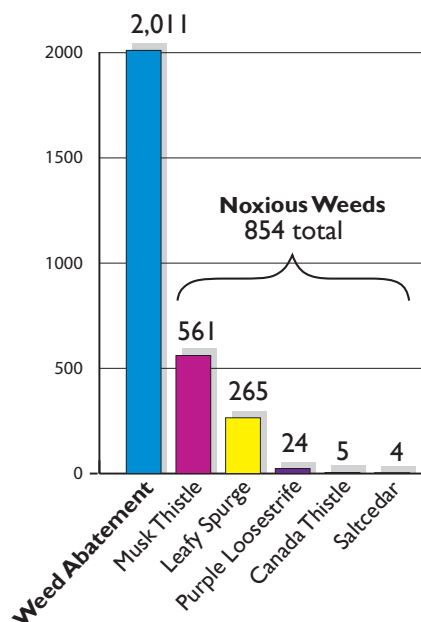
### Inspection Activity

A total of 7,498 inspections were made of 3,467 sites during the year. There were 2,866 violations found on 4,425 acres. Inspections increased by 323 from last year, a 5% increase.

### Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Program

— Infestations were found on 854 sites and 3,035 acres as a result of 2,003 inspections on 1,071 sites. The number of infestations found decreased by 150 from last year. There were 113 less purple

### INSPECTION SUMMARY 2,866 violations/infestations



loosestrife infestations found. This decrease was the result of less ornamental plants due to excellent cooperation from residential landowners. 772 of the noxious weed sites were controlled by landowners, and the Weed Control Authority controlled 15 sites.

**City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program** — A total of 5,495 initial and follow-up inspections were made on 2,396 sites on 1,474 acres. The 2,011 violations were found as a result of 1,717 complaints and inspector observations. This was 223 more violations than in 2005. Legal notices had to be published in the paper for 171 properties under foreclosure because of unclear

ownership. Of these, 72 resulted in force cuttings, almost 50% of the total forced cuttings. Forced cuttings had to be performed on 153 sites at the cost of \$21,107. This was an increase of 46 sites and increased cost of \$7,145 from last year. Of these, 117 sites had to be specially assessed for \$16,530. Only about one-third of those sites receiving a bill for forced cutting make immediate payment, collections for past special assessments make up the difference.

### Public Awareness

The major information efforts are maintaining and updating a Web site ([www.lincoln.ne.gov/cnty/weeds](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/cnty/weeds)) and publishing a four-page Weed Awareness insert in University of Nebraska—Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County's NEBLINE newsletter. In 2006, there were 57,000 hits on the Web site and 11,000 copies of the Weed Awareness insert printed. Other informational efforts last year included over 1,000 special mailings, approximately 2,866 notifications of violations, several news articles and a state fair exhibit.

### Other Activities

Other activities included making seven inspections for weed-free forage certification, participating with the Lower Platte Weed Management Area, attending required continuing education sessions and actively participating in the Nebraska Weed Control Association and the North American Weed Management Association.

### Noxious Weed Control on Public Lands

The Weed Control Authority maintains contact with 30 different public land managers in a coordinated effort of noxious weed control. They represent the following agencies and departments:

#### City of Lincoln

- Airport Authority
- County/City Property Management
- Lincoln Electric System
- Lincoln Public Schools
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Works & Utilities

#### County

- County Engineer

#### State of Nebraska

- Air National Guard
- Army National Guard
- Education Lands & Funds
- UNL Landscape Services
- Department of Roads
- Department of Corrections
- Game & Parks Commission

#### Other

- Lower Platte South NRD
- NE Public Power District

Each of these land managers has committed significant resources to plan ongoing noxious weed control on property that they own or control. They maintain two-way communication with the Weed Control Authority throughout the year. When the Authority requests follow-up control work, the land managers provide immediate response. The efforts of these land managers are a key part of keeping noxious weeds under control in Lancaster County.

The Weed Control Authority has special arrangements regarding the sanitary landfills and county roads. The Authority makes inspections of the two landfill sites and arranges the contract with a contractor to do the noxious weed control. The Authority also makes inspections of and controls more than 150 leafy spurge infestations on county roadsides.

## Learn to Recognize Nebraska's Noxious Weeds

The Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act states it is the duty of each person who owns or controls land to effectively control noxious weeds on such land. Pictured are Nebraska's noxious weeds which can be found in Lancaster County.\*



**Musk Thistle**



**Leafy Spurge**



**Purple Loosestrife**



**Canada Thistle**



**Saltcedar**



**Plumeless Thistle**

Noxious weed is a legal term used to denote a destructive or harmful weed for the purpose of regulation. The Director of Agriculture establishes which plants are noxious. These non-native plants compete aggressively with desirable plants and vegetation. Failure to control noxious weeds in this state is a serious problem which is detrimental to the production of crops and livestock and to the welfare of residents of this state. Noxious weeds may also devalue land and reduce tax revenue.

\*Nebraska's noxious weeds Spotted and Diffuse Knapweeds have not been found in Lancaster County.