

# SUCCESS

REGIONS 1 & 4, STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

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Shoshone County  
Commissioner*

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*Larry Yergler,  
Shoshone County  
Commissioner*

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## Noxious Weed & Hazardous Fuels Reduction in Shoshone County, ID

### **Recovery Act Funding Aids Fire Hazard Reduction Effort**

*Janet Valle—State and Private Forestry’s State noxious weed grant coordinator—recognized the Recovery Act offered a unique opportunity to address the growing threat of increased fire hazard from noxious weeds on forested lands. Each of the counties that received Recovery Act funding for noxious weed and fuels reduction projects approached the effort in a different way, reflecting their county’s specific needs.*

With a buildup of forest fuels in Shoshone County, Idaho that is thought to be higher than conditions preceding the infamous 1910 Fire, the potential for a catastrophic fire is very much on the minds of the Shoshone County commissioners. Commissioner Vince Rinaldi says the county was elated to receive roughly \$1 million in Recovery Act funds for noxious weed and fuels reduction work.

The project is one of three in northern Idaho and Montana coordinated through Janet Valle, noxious weed grant coordinator for the Forest Service’s State and Private Forestry. Working with the Idaho and Montana Departments of Agriculture, Janet saw the potential to combine noxious weed treatments with fuels reduction work to reduce the fire hazard in forested areas like Shoshone County.

Commissioner Jon Cantamessa says the need to both reduce noxious weeds and offer young people employment was recognized by the northern Idaho Resource Advisory Committee or “RAC” a

few years ago and the Recovery Act project allowed that need to be addressed.



Shoshone crew member treating weeds

The employment contribution to the county is important. Commissioner Cantamessa notes, “This isn’t a community that retains many young people after graduation,” due to the lack of employment options. The project gave nine local young people jobs. According to Cantamessa, the funding has allowed the county to get slightly ahead of the noxious weeds and hopefully keep up with them.



Treated area surrounding Shoshone County nursing facility

It was significant that the county was able to purchase additional weed equipment through the project so the weed work can continue when the project ends in September 2013.

Commissioner Larry Yergler says that the equipment purchased not only contributes to the county's ability to respond to noxious weeds, but also supported the local businesses where the equipment was purchased.

The Shoshone County effort is marked by close cooperation of weed and fuels reduction entities working

in the county. The project coordinator hired to lead the project, Rick Stillwell, works closely with Greg Rapp, Shoshone County weed supervisor and the Shoshone County public works department.

Through that cooperative effort, the project has been able to inventory and map both known locations and new weed locations. In conjunction with the weeds work, the project was able to keep employed a local fuels reduction crew whose funding was about to run out.

To increase public awareness of noxious weeds, Rick wrote a series of articles for the local newspaper—the Shoshone News Press—that include identification and treatment information about the primary weed species the project is battling; viper's bugloss, knotweeds, hounds tongue, and scotch broom.