

Field Note

July 25th



2013

By Jeff Clarke




Crews collect seed of native grasses and forbs as it ripens. The field crew bagged blue bunch wheat grass, rough fescue, Idaho fescue, green needle grass, needle and thread grass, owl clover, blanket flower, and scorpion weed last week. We will collect as much seed as possible over the next month.



The 16,000 plants in Ylva's native/invasive study flourish and fill their plots. The field crew notices big changes as they remove undesired weeds from the study area every other week. Knapweed grows faster than most invasive plants; fringed sage and yarrow outcompete other native forbs.





Native koshia thrives in the disturbed, lower elevation soils. If given enough water, it can grow six feet tall and mass a two inch trunk. It becomes more competitive as it grows. We've mowed, weed whacked, and sprayed it to death in an attempt to limit its seed bank. It proves difficult to eradicate without the use of herbicide.

The crew transplanted bull rush, (not to be confused with cattails) from the north end of the Clubhouse Pond to the new south end. More stands of bull rush in the pond will create additional habitat for critters that reside there.



The crew uses backpack sprayers and an ATV to herbicide roadside weeds on the front side of Mount Baldy. We target roadside weeds because their seeds hitchhike and spread via vehicles and animals that use the road system.



The crew continues to herbicide spurge infestations. It takes a month for the spurge plants to die.

I returned to the site where we used severed aspen limbs to protect new aspen recruitment. The scattered limbs have kept the ungulates at bay, and the vulnerable saplings have responded well. Next year, we can add more branches on the outside edges and encourage the forest to creep outward.



The Clubhouse Floodplain buck-and-rails prevent deer-browse, and aspen suckers have started to fill the exclosure. While I walked the perimeter of the fence, I noticed several deer beds within feet of the rails (inset). I wonder if they view the fence as a protective barrier from predators, or if they stop to sit and admire the luscious protected aspen?





I have not seen a trace of a beaver since we placed a protective fence around the aspen stand adjacent to the Pond. I suppose the beavers will move on if you take away their food source. Sorry beavers, we like our aspen forests!

Planted forbs and grasses explode from the re-contoured hillside in Lower Tongue Creek.



Knapweed root weevils climb knapweed stalks in the summer heat. The field crew will collect and relocate the bugs to knapweed populations devoid of weevils.





Berries burst from forbs, bushes, shrubs, and trees. Hungry critters will soon take notice.



Though an early spring frost killed most of the apricot flowers, a small crop emerged this year! Apples and pears bloomed a little later; heavy bushels of fruit cause the branches to bend. We should have a great fall harvest in the Orchard!



Duckweed blooms in the Clubhouse Pond.

The time to bail alfalfa nears!



Temperatures soared into the 90's everyday this week. Hot temperatures, thirsty plants, and a lack of rain cause low river levels. The Bitterroot River flows at less than half its normal level. If it continues to drop some plants may have to go without water. Pray for rain!!!





Recent Field Work:

- Weed whack Orchard
- Weed whack Center Pivot
- Weed whack hedge rows
- Weed whack koshia
- Build cattle fence in Boondocks
- Collect seed
- Transplant bull rush
- Weed Ylva's plots
- Assist Molly with study
- Assist with bitterbrush study
- Spray spurge
- Spray weeds on roadsides
- Assist at MPGN
- Build larger exclosures for planted trees