



CONSERVE OUR CANYON 2020 REPORT



A cooperative effort to protect the Gallatin Canyon from the threats of invasive species.

The Upper Gallatin Watershed encompasses some of the most ecologically and economically important resources in our county, which provide vital habitat and water for fish, plants, wildlife, and the people who live and recreate in the area.

The presence of noxious weeds in the Gallatin Canyon is directly attributed to human activity, such as construction, recreation, and travel.

Conserve Our Canyon cooperative project aims to facilitate effective management of noxious weeds in the Gallatin Canyon to protect the natural resources to the benefit of all who live, visit, and rely upon them.

Partners

- Gallatin Conservation District
- Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance
- Gallatin National Forest
- Montana Conservation Corps

Funded by

- Gallatin Conservation District
- Gallatin Resource Advisory Committee
- NorthWestern Energy



2020 Work

Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) Wildland Restoration Crews worked in the Gallatin Canyon for the Bozeman Ranger District for the last week in June and first week of July 2020.

The Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance worked closely with the Gallatin National Forest to select sites with known infestations of noxious weeds, heavy recreation use, or critical wildlife habitat in the Gallatin Canyon. Sites of particular focus were recent and future river restoration projects (spearheaded by the Gallatin River Task Force) and bighorn sheep habitat (southwest of Highway 191 and Lone Mountain Trail).

River Restoration Sites

To address the increasing number of users and recreationalists, the Gallatin River Task Force (GRTF) and the Custer Gallatin National Forest developed a long-term partnership to restore streambanks and improve river access in Gallatin Canyon. This year, Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance was brought in to address noxious weeds pre and post construction.

Moose Creek - site was restored in 2017. Noxious weeds benefitted from disturbance, and new species were brought to the site during construction via topsoil. Noxious weed species (common in the area) were Canada thistle, musk thistle, oxeye daisy, houndstongue and wooly mullein. Poison hemlock, likely brought in via topsoil, was the primary concern as it was abundant and increasing throughout the restored area, including along side native plantings. The Alliance and MCC team took great care to prevent harm to the native plantings by shielding them with cardboard during treatment.



Upper Deer Creek (Beatis Alley) - site currently under construction. The Alliance joined GRTF to map existing noxious weeds in June prior to construction, and found few and sparse noxious weed populations. As expected, most noxious weeds were located along user created roads. The Alliance will plan to visit this site during our 2021 effort to treat noxious weeds post construction in our continued partnership with GRTF.



Bighorn Sheep Winter Range



The Alliance initiated the bighorn sheep habitat improvement project in 2010, has been assisted by the Gallatin County Weed District, Montana Highway Department, MCC, and Gallatin National Forest crews. The Alliance's 10-year investment of \$15,092 has been matched by partners in the amount of \$140,485, which is over a 1:9 match. The combined effort has made a marked impact over the years, resulting in the reduction of noxious weeds and the return of native grasses and forbs to the benefit of the Spanish Peaks bighorn sheep herd.



2020 Efforts

The teams was comprised of 5 MMC crew, Nathan Baver with Gallatin National Forest Service, and Jennifer Mohler with the Alliance. Together they treated a total of 129.5 acres and sprayed 354.5 gallons of chemical at 13 different sites over 8 days.

Crews experienced good weather this year, and the accommodating weather allowed for effective treatment. Noxious weed species treated included hoary alyssum, musk thistle, poison hemlock, spotted knapweed, oxeye daisy, Canada thistle, houndstongue, yellow toadflax, and common mullein. Timing of treatment was ideal, as many of the weed species were bolting and had not produced seeds for the year.



Treatments



WEEK 1 (JUNE 22-25)

Locations: 7

Bighorn Winter Range, Moose Creek, Deer Creek, Greek Creek, Bighorn / Dudley Creek, Shenango

Acres

73

Gallons

147.25

WEEK 2 (JUNE 29-JULY 2)

Locations: 7

Doe Creek, Twin Cabin, Indian Ridge, Deer Creek, Hodgeman, meadow north of zipline, Durnham Meadows

Acres

56.5

Gallons

207.25

Total Acres: 129.5

Total Gallons: 354.5

Costs

Conserve Our Canyon Project

MCC Wildland Restoration Crew

Cost

\$4,000

Funded by Gallatin Conservation District and Gallatin Resource Advisory Council

Matching Funds

Northwest Energy Funding for week 2 of MCC

GNF Staff (Noxious Weed Specialist)

GNF Travel & Equipment

GNF Herbicide

GNF Contract Management

GISA Program Coordination & Field Work

Other Cooperator Non-Cash Contributions

Cost

\$4,000

\$3,272

\$1,129

\$500

\$986

\$2,537

\$3,525

TOTAL MATCHING FUNDS \$14,923

Total Cost of 2 Week Effort

\$18,923