Extension Internship Abstract

Internship Title: *Inventorying Custer County Noxious Weeds for improved management and engagement.*

Internship Mentors: Guinevere Nelson-Custer County Extension Director

The goal of the internship is to improve the county's understanding of weed infestations and improving engagement with the community in the control of noxious weeds. The scope of the project entails field mapping of infestations and creating a guide for community members on noxious weed impacts. Objectives of the internship to accomplish this goal are 1) mapping weed populations across the county and 2) creating a homeowners guide to managing noxious weeds.

The intern selected for this position will apply knowledge of field data collection techniques specific to weed management. The student will construct messaging and outreach materials for landowner engagement. Through these learning objectives, the student will have opportunities to gain skills in natural resources/ag program development, working with boards, drafting technical reports, working with landowners, and assisting with noxious weed identification. Although not required, the intern will have the option to learn about herbicide selection and application.

This project was identified by the Custer County Weed Advisory Board. They see a need to assist the County Noxious Weed Manager in preventing weed infestations in light of the expansive population growth Custer County is experiencing. This growth increases weed populations from increased grazing pressure on small acreage, new builds, and new roads. Additionally, new residents have limited knowledge on the identification of noxious weeds and the impact they have on the landscape. This internship and its applied research component will fulfill a need to conduct inventory as well outreach and engagement while the weed supervisor focuses on spraying weeds.

The intern will work with the Custer County Weed Advisory Board, landowners across the county, and the County Weed Manager. Other stakeholders may arise as this work progresses.

At this time, we continue to seek housing for the intern. Intern may be housed in an RV, at the Extension Director’s house, Custer County staff’s shared house and/or a Forest Service bunkhouse.