

**LEAFY SPURGE CONTROL ~ A BEST PRACTICE:
CAMERON, GLENWOOD, SIFTON
WEED CONTROL DISTRICT**

A report of the Covering New Ground project
*Assisting Landowners / managers with Establishing, Implementing and Sustaining
Integrated Pest Management Plans (IPM) for Leafy Spurge*

March 15, 2005



Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group

The Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG), a broad coalition of agricultural and conservation groups and all three levels of government, was formed in the fall of 1998 to examine the issues and impacts of leafy spurge. The long-term goals of the LSSG are:

1. to design a process whereby an integrated and comprehensive approach to a province-style strategy can be effectively and efficiently implemented. It is hoped that the RDI / LSSG partnership will result in the establishment of a centre of excellence for leafy spurge issues and research in the Province of Manitoba; and
2. to design a strategy or strategies to reduce levels of leafy spurge infestation in those areas of the province most severely affected.

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research centre and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere.



RDI functions as a not-for-profit research and development organization designed to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural issues. The Institute provides an interface between academic research efforts and the community by acting as a conduit of rural research information and by facilitating community involvement in rural development. RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of multi-stakeholders.

The Institute has diverse research affiliations, and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. RDI disseminates information to a variety of constituents and stakeholders and makes research information and results widely available to the public either in printed form or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences.

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Leafy Spurge Control ~ A Best Practice: Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed Control District

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Introduction

Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula* L.) is an invasive noxious weed that came to North America from eastern Europe. The weed was first reported in Manitoba in 1911 and now infests more than 340,000 acres of land throughout Manitoba.

The Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG), a broad coalition of agricultural and conservation groups, plus all 3 levels of government, was spearheaded in 1998 by the Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association (MWSA) and is coordinated by the Rural Development Institute (Brandon University). The goals of the LSSG are to increase awareness of leafy spurge, examine the issues and impacts and enhance coordination among stakeholder agencies.

The research project entitled *Assisting Landowners / managers with Establishing, Implementing and Sustaining Integrated Pest Management Plans (IPM) for Leafy Spurge* provided the LSSG with an opportunity to document management plans and best practices for the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District in the Western Region of the province. Other activities undertaken within the research project included conducting key informant interviews to develop a framework of information needs and developing an inventory of programs, services and other resources available to assist with tackling the issue of leafy spurge. The results of the key informant interviews are reported in the document *A Framework of Priority Information Needs: Interviews with Key Informants*. The key informant interview reporting, inventory, as well as this best practices document, will be posted on the LSSG Website available at www.brandonu.ca/rdi/lssg/.

The process used to develop this best practice involved a file review and interviews with some of those directly involved with the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District. The file review took place from December 2004 to January 2005 and included the following documents:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association, 2001
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association, 2002
- Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District Annual Report, 2001
- Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District Annual Report, 2004

As the interview process entailed research involving humans, application to the Brandon University Research and Ethics Committee (BUREC) was made in February 2005. The BUREC application dealt with issues related to informed consent, data collection, handling and retention of data and confidentiality. Prior to starting the interview, the interviewer reviewed the nature of the research and confidentiality issues. Interview participants were assured that information collected from them would be kept in confidence. Participants were also informed that the results of this research would be made available to the project partners and funding agency, as well as to the general public. BUREC approved the project in March.

Upon completion of the file review, a number of questions were developed to assist in further exploring the practices and programming of the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District. These questions were designed to be flexible, allowing the interviewer to gather necessary information while being able to explore appropriate discussions.

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Interviews with the weed supervisor, councillors and landowners were conducted in March. The interview with the weed supervisor was conducted in person and took 2 hours to complete. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone. It took approximately 20 minutes to complete each of those remaining interviews.

Background

In 1960 there were 10 organized Weed Control Districts operating in the Province, and by 1968 there were 31 Weed Control Districts involving a number of municipalities that received provincial grants. It was about this time that the Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association (MWSA) was established as a non-profit organization of local Weed Supervisors. However, by the early 1990s, the Weed District grants were phased out, leaving local governments totally responsible for covering the costs of operation. Another result of the loss of the grants was the loss of the full-time requirement for a Weed Supervisor's position.

Many Districts have been able to maintain the positions as full-time by expanding the duties and responsibilities of the Weed Supervisor. Others have expanded to cover larger areas, or taken on custom weed control responsibilities for neighbouring municipalities. Others have simply let the position become seasonal. In all cases, this has resulted in the Weed Supervisor's labour and ability being stretched such that some issues do not receive the time required to do an adequate job. It has also led to some districts having difficulty recruiting people for such a demanding position on a seasonal basis. While the MWSA membership still works closely with Department staff, specifically the Soils & Crops Branch, their time requirements and manpower availability also have a limiting effect on the level of communication and interaction. While both the Department and the MWSA are still committed to the importance of a good extension program, time and financial considerations have served to reduce the amount of this work that can be accomplished. While both organizations have worked tirelessly to support some of the important programs initiated in past years, and continue to be on the look-out for new weed problems such as herbicide resistance and invasion of new problem plants, the resources and time available for these issues is limited at this time.

(MWSA, 2001)

Today, the MWSA represents about 34 Weed Control Districts comprised of around 70 municipal corporations. This number seems to fluctuate in the mid-thirty range, as there are on occasion amalgamations or new members. There are variations in the composition of weed districts based on area served and economic considerations. Some weed districts are simply departments of a single municipality. Other Weed Districts involve a single municipality and incorporated towns within that region. Other districts serve 2 to 5 municipalities, and the membership of local incorporated towns is optional. Any municipality belonging to a weed district does so on the decision of its own council and ratepayers, and thus, some individual municipalities will occasionally decide to withdraw their membership with that District.

The aim of the MWSA is:

to increase the productivity within our jurisdictions, and across the Province through environmentally sustainable, safe, and effective weed control measures and innovations.
(MWSA, 2001)

MWSA members also provide custom weed control assistance to at least another 15 municipalities that do not belong to Weed Control Districts. Their responsibilities are outlined below in this excerpt from the Introduction of the 2001 Annual Report of the MWSA:

While individual supervisor responsibilities vary from district to district, we are generally responsible for the management of weed control activities to public property within our jurisdiction, enforcement of the Noxious Weeds Act of Manitoba, maintenance of local Pesticide Container Collection Programs, and maintenance of records, licences, permits, etc. in relation to these responsibilities. Most supervisors also assist with extension work for the information of councillors and rate-payers relative to noxious weed control. Almost all districts are involved in biological control programs and exploring options for innovative weed control options for producers and municipalities.
(MWSA, 2001)

Annual extension and training events continue to be offered by the MWSA. The Association maintains a regular educational program that involves a Spring Seminar, a Summer Tour (this allows field demonstrations and field identification training) and a Fall Seminar. The MWSA also hosts a Municipal Weed Control Issues Seminar for the information of councillors, ratepayers, and non-member weed control organizations. This has been held each spring since 1997. The Central Region of the MWSA also hold a Weed Identification Clinic each spring which is available to industry, government and other employees for training and reinforcement. The Association was a founding member of the Weed Fair that has evolved into Manitoba Ag Days. The MWSA still participates in this event every year to reinforce their local extension activities.

Non-weed district municipalities can elect to maintain membership in the MWSA in order to take advantage of its continuing education programs, to maintain a familiarity with the activities of neighbouring jurisdictions and to take advantage of other group activities such as biocontrol agent collection, bulk orders, etc.

While we continue our battle with weeds on all fronts across the Province, the importance of education of the public and producers to weed control strategies, issues, and concerns is as important today as in the past.
(MWSA, 2001)

Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District: A Best Practice

The Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District is in the Western Region of the Province and was formed on February 26, 1964. Originally, the rural municipalities of Cameron and Sifton formed the Weed District. In the early 1990s, the RM of Glenwood asked the Weed District to conduct some custom weed control work. After a few years of this practice, the RM of Glenwood then approached the Weed District with its request to join the Weed District. It is now comprised of the 3 rural municipalities of Cameron, Glenwood and Sifton.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District is “to establish, maintain and improve where necessary weed control within the boundaries of the District” (Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed District, 2001). The objectives are to provide:

- ratepayers and all people in the district with recommendations on the correct and most economical measures of weed control;
- identification of new and unknown weed species;
- information on new herbicides, new application equipment and methods; and
- a large selection of information on weed control made available by Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) to people in the district.

At the end of each season, the weed supervisor makes an oral presentation of the season’s activities to the Weed District Board. Evaluation of the Weed District’s objectives and programs includes visual observation in the field, as well as feedback from Board members. Based on this observation and feedback, the weed supervisor believes that all the above objectives have been met.

The Role of the Board

A Board of six councillors, two each from the participating rural municipalities, operates the Weed District. Board members attend Weed District meetings, and they participate in field trips to view biocontrol sites and assess leafy spurge infestations. Board members respond to complaints, and most of the major ones involve leafy spurge.

The Weed District makes decisions around funding, staffing, etc., and it makes recommendations to the member municipal councils. A secretary treasurer, provided by the RM of Cameron, as well as the weed supervisor, assists the Board.

The Role of the Weed Supervisor

The weed supervisor for the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed Control District has a number of responsibilities. He manages the Weed District’s programs, supervises the assistant weed supervisor, is responsible for regulatory matters and works with outside agencies to promote and lobby on weed control issues. The weed supervisor manages inventory records (herbicides, etc.) electronically. He also uses the computer for maintaining accounting

records and for reporting. In 2004, the weed supervisor held 3 Weed District meetings, maintained regular office hours and prepared maps for roadside spraying.

One of the roles of the weed supervisor is to deal with landowner complaints. The receipt of a written complaint activates the process created to handle regulatory matters. One complaint can take up to four days to deal with, through visiting the site, taking photos, paperwork, etc. The weed supervisor notifies the Board and the respective ward councilor, and he meets with the landowner first to try to deal with the situation. Every attempt is made to deal with the landowner in a cooperative manner. If these measures don't resolve the situation, then the Weed District issues an official notice to destroy under the Noxious Weeds Act.

The landowner has a maximum of 15 days to comply with the notice. If the landowner does not take appropriate steps to correct the problem, the Weed District takes action and can recoup any cost they expend to deal with the problem from the landowner, up to a maximum of \$500 per quarter section of land. In the following year by March 1, a levy of \$10/acre per year is issued on the property. This Weed District processes about ten levies per year. The levy shows up on the municipal property tax assessment, and it is cancelled if the landowner does the required work to resolve the issue. The Weed District has used the allowable portion only once and cancels these levies almost every year as the landowners have complied.

The \$10.00 per acre special levy was applied to a number of parcels of land in 2004. The special levies were applied due to problems we had in past years. As stipulated in the Noxious Weeds Act the levies were applied prior to March 1 and registered letters were sent to notify the landowners. The special levy charge was not used on any of the properties, as the parties involved cooperate and control the leafy spurge on their property.
(Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton, 2004)

For the 2005 tax year, the weed supervisor recommended to the RM of Sifton and the RM of Cameron councils that the levy be placed on a number of properties.

The weed supervisor is responsible for detailed reporting related to pesticide use permits. He completes about 300 of these each year. There is also the end-of-season report that must be filed with the Province as it is a legal requirement of the licensee. These reports need to be kept on file for seven years. In addition, the weed supervisor files Material Safety Data Sheets for about 8-10 products per year, and these need to be kept on file for 30 years. The weed supervisor also compiles an Annual Report each year.

John Johnston joined the Weed District as its full-time weed supervisor on January 16, 1989. John is just the second weed supervisor in the Weed District's 40-year history, an anniversary that it celebrated in 2004.

His educational activities for 2004 included the Spring Weed Supervisors Seminar in Russell, the Summer Tour in Portage la Prairie, the Fall Training Seminar in Winnipeg and Ag Days in Brandon.

John was instrumental in the formation of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG) in the fall of 1998. In his capacity as weed supervisor for the Weed District, John continues to serve on the LSSG as a member of both the Steering Committee and the Research Committee. He has been a past Western Regional representative for the MWSA,

and he has organized the annual Municipal Weed Meeting held in Holland for a number of years, including the current year. He is often invited by the MWSA to participate in meetings with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and with Assistant Deputy Ministers of Manitoba Conservation.

Programs and Planning

To carry out its objectives, the Weed District has implemented a number of programs. It has a roadside spraying program on all graded roads and most machinery roads for the control of weeds and brush. It maintains a spot-spraying program for many hard-to-control weeds. In addition to managing weeds on its own lands, the Weed District runs a custom spraying program for ratepayers and other organizations in the Weed District. It is also involved in a container collection program that includes the safe disposal of pesticide containers and promotion of the safe use of pesticides. And of course, it is also responsible for the enforcement of the Noxious Weed Act where and when necessary (Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton, 2004).

Program planning is very important. A planned program assists in “determining the budget, personnel and equipment required” (Glenwood, Cameron, Sifton, 2004). The plan includes a list of target weeds, and type and amount of herbicides required to implement each program. The planned program “gives the supervisor set guidelines and the board a chance to review and assess each program.” The Weed District has a management plan for weed control, and leafy spurge specifically, but the plan has not been committed to paper. Portions of the plan appear in the Annual Report prepared by the weed supervisor each year.

Leafy spurge has always been the top priority for this Weed District. The noxious weed continues to spread in the District each year, with an estimate of 28,000 acres of leafy spurge infested land in the District in 2004. Using the calculations from the LSSG report *Leafy Spurge Economic Impact Assessment - Manitoba, 1999*, the District estimates the annual loss of income to producers at \$240,800.

The large areas in all three municipalities that are infested with leafy spurge are found mainly in the sandhills and bush areas. “The terrain in the sandhills makes them inaccessible to equipment. Also, the sandy textured soil limits the types of herbicides that can be used. There is little that can be done in most of these areas either by the landowner or the Weed District. Biological control is the only economical and environmentally responsible means of control in the sandhill areas” (Glenwood, Cameron, Sifton, 2004). Although beetles were released at over 200 sites in the Weed District in the early 90s, the program has not been expanded.

The intention of the roadside spraying program is to prevent the spread of leafy spurge from the infested areas, with the roadsides and road allowances serving as a buffer zone. Spraying along the right-of-way stops seed set “so that seeds are not picked up by passing vehicles and transported to other areas of the District” (Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton, 2004). The special weed and spot-spraying program uses herbicides too expensive for an overall application on a specific weed problem or to spray areas where the roadside truck can’t reach. “In 2004 we sprayed 133 tank loads with the spot-spraying unit in the half ton, plus 72 loads with the 1 ton sprayer unit” (Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton, 2004).

Landowners are encouraged to spray leafy spurge infestations on their property, particularly those in open accessible areas. To encourage landowner cooperation, there are special services provided to landowners. The three rural municipalities have two pasture sprayers that are for the use of landowners at no charge, and the RM of Sifton offers to landowners herbicide sales at municipal tendered pricing. A large number of landowners in the RM of Sifton take advantage of the herbicide sales program each year. In 2004, the sales amounted to \$41,384.76.

Leafy spurge programming includes a number of control strategies by municipality. In the RM of Glenwood, the focus is on confining leafy spurge infestations to specific areas of the municipality through a “program of spraying the roadsides in the infested areas and a very thorough program of spraying any new patches found outside the main infested areas” (Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton, 2004). These efforts are aimed at preventing its spread (containment), primarily concentrated in the northwest corner of the municipality where the majority of the leafy spurge is found. A tank-mix of 140 litres of Garlon 4 and 75 litres of 2,4-D LV Ester 600 sprayed about 100 pass miles of roadside. Garlon 4 is replacing Vanquish, as Garlon 4 breaks down much faster, making it safer to use in all areas of the District. In Ward 6 (with the heaviest leafy spurge infestation), the roadside spraying program has reduced the infestation. “Where once there were patches of leafy spurge, there are only a few scattered plants,” but there are new plants growing in new areas each year.

Approximately 180 pass miles of roadside were sprayed in the RM of Cameron. Herbicides used mainly for the control of leafy spurge and brush were 2,4-D Amine 500 (690 litres), Vanquish (196 litres), 2,4-D LV Ester 600 (80 litres) and Garlon 4 (120 litres). The rate of Vanquish used for the roadside spraying program is much lower than the recommended rate in an effort to reduce the possibility of contaminating the groundwater. In areas heavily infested with spurge that includes the majority of the roadsides in Wards 2 and 3, a tank-mix of 2,4-D Amine 500 and Vanquish was applied at a rate of 1 litre/acre 2,4-D Amine 500 plus .375 litre/acre Vanquish (Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton, 2004).

In the RM of Sifton about 325 pass miles of roadside were sprayed in 2004 using 575 litres of 2,4-D Amine 500, 194 litres of Vanquish, 160 litres of Estaprop, 220 litres of 2,4-D Ester 600 and 300 litres of Garlon 4 (Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton, 2004). “Four loads consisting of a tank-mix of 2,4-D Amine 500 and Vanquish were applied at a rate of 1 L/acre 2,4-D Amine 500 plus .375 L/acre Vanquish to areas with the heaviest leafy spurge infestations.”

Budget and Resources

Approximately 20% of the Weed District’s total budget or 50% of the municipal costs is dedicated to the purchase of herbicides. The Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Annual Report for 2004 lists in detail the herbicide purchases for each rural municipality. For the RM of Cameron, herbicide costs totaled \$13,569.50. The cost for the RM of Glenwood is \$4,596.90 and for the RM of Sifton is \$33,026.50. The total herbicide cost for the three rural municipalities for 2004 is \$51,192.90.

The Weed District’s budget for salaries is approximately 40% of the total. Two people are employed, the weed supervisor and assistant weed supervisor (part-time). The only contract work they hire at present is an aerial applicator for a small job in the RM of Sifton,

which costs under \$1,000. There is no portion of the budget currently dedicated to biocontrol of leafy spurge:

We do not have a dedicated amount of time for biocontrol. After establishing over 200 release sites in the Weed District in the early 90s with limited success, it has not been a priority to expand the program. (Weed Supervisor, March 14, 2005)

Equipment used for the Weed District's spray programs includes a roadside truck, a ½ ton truck and 1-ton truck sprayer units that are equipped with an eight-foot boom, boomless nozzle and hand wand. The Weed District does not utilize any mechanical control in its program, nor does it have a budget amount allocated for GPS/GIS at the present time.

The Weed District raises some revenue through its custom spraying program, which is available to ratepayers and organizations in the District. This revenue enables the Weed District to maintain its current level of programming, and without it, their efforts would be greatly reduced. In 2004, custom work was performed for a number of government departments, municipalities, organizations and about 20 individuals, including the Department of Highways, Canadian Pacific Railway, Canadian National Railway, Manitoba Conservation, the Town of Hartney and the Town of Oak Lake. Custom work totaled \$41,384.76 in 2004.

The Weed District has not increased the number of miles of roadside sprayed each year for leafy spurge. It probably will not increase the amount of spraying done at the present time, nor does it anticipate setting an increase in the budget over the next five years. The budget has increased over the years only to accommodate rises in costs. The Weed District has changed to using more expensive herbicides, and these costs have gone up considerably.

Benefits and Challenges

It could be said that the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed Control District provides a model for best practice in weed control; however, it is not without its challenges.

Benefits

Key success factors for the Weed District are the staffing and equipment used to implement control programs. **The weed supervisor is full-time, proactive and knowledgeable.** The current one has been with the Weed District for over 15 years. One of his main concerns is leafy spurge, and he was instrumental in the formation of the LSSG. He keeps the Weed District Board updated on issues and activities. There is also a part-time assistant weed supervisor. **The Weed District acquires and maintains good equipment for its programs, which helps speed up application.** The partnership makes it possible for the Weed District to keep the equipment necessary for custom work to augment their funding levels and to cover a bigger area.

There are other positive features of this Weed District. **The commitment and longevity of the Board provided stability and a constant to programming efforts.** The Board is comprised of dedicated people who demonstrate commitment to the control of noxious weeds. It is proactive with regard to funding issues; for example, it is now planning to set aside funding to replace trucks in the next couple of years. In addition, the Weed District has

good support from the councils of its member municipalities. The current staffing level and equipment budget could not be accomplished by one rural municipality alone but is possible because of the partnership.

The Weed District takes an original approach to controlling leafy spurge through unique mixes of chemical. They always use less than the recommended rates, thereby reducing costs, while still achieving effective control. They spray twice per year on the same patch of leafy spurge – in the spring and when the plants are 4 inches high has yielded the best results. The Weed District has also cleaned up the road allowances, which are considered buffer zones. This improvement has resulted in additional landowner cooperation over the years, as they have seen you can have success in controlling spurge.

The Weed District's most important achievements include keeping ratepayers happy with the work they do; doing as much as they can with the funds available; and working cooperatively with ratepayers to control leafy spurge.

Challenges

Several challenges face the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed Control District. First, the infestation of leafy spurge is high in the area, as it is in other areas of the Province. **Although landowner awareness of leafy spurge is relatively high, landowners lack a clear understanding of the severity of the problem.** While the Weed District is containing and controlling leafy spurge in select areas of its jurisdiction, it will not be eradicated. Leafy spurge remains the top priority weed for control in the Weed District. Resident landowners in the Weed District are about 50% committed to controlling leafy spurge. Another 25% are committed to the issue but are reluctant to act. The remaining 25% do nothing.

Funding is another challenge. Herbicide costs increase almost every year. Equipment needs to be maintained and replaced. While the Weed District can earn much-needed revenue through its custom spraying program, this activity also takes staff away from expanding spraying programs for its ratepayers.

Every year, the Weed District encounters some landowners who are reluctant to dedicate funds to weed control. "With publicly owned lands, we struggle every year. Funding is an issue. They are looking for every excuse to get away from dedicating funds to weed control."

The Weed District doesn't fully enforce the Noxious Weeds Act because "the problem is too big" and it would be administratively too expensive to do because it is very time-consuming. "If we had been more aggressive on the enforcement side of things, we may have seen better results. But enforcement causes bad relationships, bad politics." The Weed District therefore reacts selectively to written complaints.

Additional challenges are an effective biocontrol program and access to a more effective herbicide. After establishing over 200 release sites in the Weed District in the early 90s with limited success, it has not been a priority to expand the program. A species of beetle that is more effective in these areas is needed.

Although staffing (recruitment, retention and training) can be an issue for other Weed Control Districts, it is seldom a problem for Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed Control District, which has benefited from the employment of the same weed supervisor for over

fifteen years. It can become an issue when a new assistant is hired, for the weed supervisor is required to spend valuable time orientating the assistant to the area and the leafy spurge infestations that need treatment.

Summary

The Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed Control District has many strengths: it employs a full-time weed supervisor and part-time assistant weed supervisor. It maintains good equipment necessary to implementing its spray programs. The Board is committed to its goal “to establish, maintain and improve where necessary weed control within the boundaries of the District.”

The Weed District is able to raise additional revenue through its custom spraying program. It has a successful roadside spraying program for leafy spurge, where in some areas it has eliminated new patches. It enjoys a good relationship with other Weed Control Districts, sharing information, equipment and herbicides. This sharing occurs on two levels: with individual Weed Control Districts and through the MWSA. The weed supervisor has a good working relationship with MAFRI field personnel (weed specialist, forage specialists, ag reps), as well as with this region’s Department of Highways and Canadian National Railway.

Upon examination of the challenges facing the Weed District, one can see some opportunities for it to improve on several fronts. There is no written management plan for the control of noxious weeds. If the current weed supervisor were to leave his position with the Weed District, this leaves the potential for some major gaps. It would be in the Weed District’s best interests if some resources were dedicated to producing a written form of the plan, a valuable resource for the succeeding weed supervisor.

The weed supervisor believes that with enhanced communications, landowner compliance would increase. He would also like to increase communication with the member municipalities of the Weed District, as he currently goes to about one council meeting per municipality per year. The weed supervisor would also like to create more opportunities to have the Weed District share its lessons learned with other stakeholders and the broader community.

As well, the Weed District does not have a budget allocation for GPS/GIS at the present time. The weed supervisor would like to use GIS/GPS so that when a new supervisor comes on board, there is a permanent record of leafy spurge sites. Some data has been collected, but there is no management of it.

In conclusion, this profile of the Cameron, Glenwood, Sifton Weed Control District can serve as a best practice account of what is, for the most part, a well-functioning partnership that is having an effective impact on the control of leafy spurge and other noxious weeds.

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The role of the RDI Advisory Committee is to provide general advice and direction to the Institute on matters of rural concern. On a semi-annual basis the Committee meets to share information about issues of mutual interest in rural Manitoba and foster linkages with the constituencies they represent.