

Pennington CWMA Weed Management Cost-Share Policy

From the Pennington Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)

Approved by the Pennington Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors

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1.0 Purpose

The Pennington CWMA Weed Management Cost-Share Program was created to provide funds for landowners managing invasive or noxious plants on their property and promote the long-term commitment to effectively deal with invasive and noxious weeds. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines for the implementation of funds appropriated to the Pennington Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

Funds are allocated to the Pennington SWCD by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The Pennington Soil and Water Conservation District serves as the fiscal agent for the CWMA Grant.

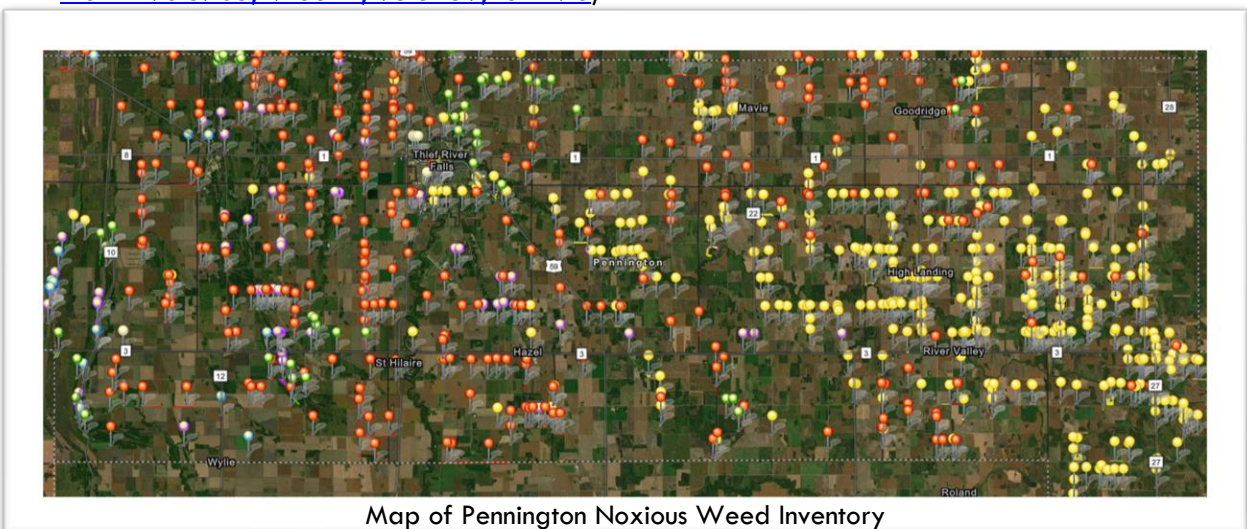
2.0 Eligible Activities

The primary purpose of activities funded with the Weed Management Cost-Share Program is to assist landowners in management and eradication of noxious or invasive plants on their property.

2.1 Priority Species. Pennington CWMA identified priority species for management in their Strategic Weed Management Plan. These priority species include Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), European Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), and Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*). The priority species were identified based on an inventory of Minnesota Noxious Weeds in Pennington County. The Pennington CWMA also identified a watch list, which include species that may not be established in Pennington County but are of importance based on known nearby locations, aggressiveness, and level of difficulty to control. Specific species on the Pennington CWMA watch list are Palmer Amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*), Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*), Crown Vetch (*Securigera varia*), Common Baby's-Breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites verna*) and Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*). Cost-share will only be available for the identified priority species, watch list species, and species considered a concern by the Pennington CWMA partners.

2.2 Treatment. Treatment shall be proven science based. When chemicals or soil amendments applications are used, rates must meet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) label requirements. Biological control options must be consulted with and organized through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). If planned, post treatment seeding must include an approved seed mix for competing with invasive or noxious plants. Only approved treatment methods will be cost-shared. Weed spray work must not be mixed with other lawn care or landscaping activities.

2.3 Areas of Concern. The core focus areas vary for each priority species. Common Tansy is abundant in the eastern half of the county while Spotted Knapweed and Leafy Spurge are found in the western half of the county. Purple loosestrife is being observed along the Red Lake River. Other general areas of concern for noxious weeds are gravel pits, roadsides, private lands, areas surrounding Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), native prairie points, pasture/grassland, and areas of recent construction or soil disturbance. (See Pennington Noxious Weed Inventory online at <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=32e4b223af914173a620fa98e8c709b4&extent=-96.5705,47.8812,-95.5159,48.2273>).



3.0 Cost-Share Rates

The cost-share rates were decided by the Pennington CWMA and approved by the Pennington Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors (The Board).

3.1 Contracted Services. Noxious or invasive plant treatment completed by a professional contractor will be reimbursable up to **50%** not to exceed **\$500**. Professional or paid applicators must provide state pesticide applicators license number. Payment will not be made without documentation.

3.2 Landowner Treatment. Noxious or invasive plant treatment completed by the landowner will be reimbursable up to **75% of material costs** not to exceed **\$500**. The landowner must keep track of the number of hours spent completing treatment as described in their Weed Management Plan and the equipment used.

3.2.1 Material Costs. Eligible material costs include chemical herbicide, approved biological control agents, approved seed mixes, equipment rental for mechanical treatment as described in the landowners Weed Management Plan. Landowner can only be reimbursed the rental equipment cost for the time to complete the work described in their Weed Management Plan. Material costs do not include the purchase of any equipment.

3.2.2 Domestic Animals. Landowner use of domestic animals as biological control agents for invasive plant control may be eligible for a flat rate payment per acre treated. Flat rate payment per acre is based on NRCS payment rate, not to exceed \$500 per contract. Under this policy, there shall be no reimbursement on landowner expenses incurred for purchasing or renting domestic animals or the supplies required, such as fencing, watering systems, tanks, feed, etc.

3.3 Maximum Amount. The maximum reimbursable amount is \$500 per contract.

4.0 Technical Expertise

The Board and staff have the responsibility to ensure that the designated technical staff have the appropriate technical expertise, skills and training for their assigned role(s). The Pennington CWMA members can assist in providing technical expertise on weed management strategies that are effective in Pennington County.

5.0 Expenditure of Funds on Practices and Contracts

The Board has the authority and responsibility to approve expenditure of funds:

5.1 Cost-Share Program Contract. A contract between the Pennington Soil and Water Conservation District and landowner receiving state funds will be used to provide a legal standing to ensure management practices are utilized and maintained according to approved specifications (see attached contract template). Landowner means: a person, corporation, or legal entity that holds title to or is in possession of land as an owner.

a) **Contract Length.** The contract length is one (1) year or until grant expiration, whichever occurs first.

b) **Contract Amendments.** Changes to an executed contract are considered an amendment to the contract and subject to review and approval by the Pennington SWCD Board or Authorized Representative. Prior to approving an amendment, technical staff must attest that the amendment has merit. Amendments shall not be considered or approved after the end of the contract. Amendments are limited to changes in practice specifications, management dates, landowner information, practice components, or cost-share rates and amounts.

5.2 Contract Approval. The Authorized Representative will approve or deny the contract.

5.3 Combining Funding Sources. If the location identified in the Weed Management Plan is currently undergoing weed management funded by any other state funds, the landowner is ineligible for cost-share payments on that location.

5.4 Number of Contracts. A landowner is limited to one contract per year.

5.5 Contract Timeframe. The Board has the authority to adopt timely completion dates. Execution and completion of a contract with a landowner must be within the grant period. Contracts not completed within the period of the grant agreement will be cancelled unless the grant agreement with BWSR has been extended and the contract has been extended such that the contract timeframe is within the amended grant. Grant funds will be expended within the period of a valid grant agreement.

5.6 Canceled Projects. Funds from canceled projects may be re-encumbered to a new contract as provided in the grant agreement. Funds that are unexpended will be returned as provided in the BWSR grant agreement.

6.0 Practice Sign-off and Payment

Prior to payment, technical staff must attest that the weed management was completed according to the plans and specifications, including technically approved modifications, and that the voucher is accurate. The Pennington SWCD Board of Supervisors will approve or deny the payment based on completed weed management work and accuracy of payment voucher.

6.1 Payment. The contractor or landowner must complete the weed management according to plan. The landowner must provide paid receipts or invoice and submit an itemized request for payment before receiving reimbursement payment.

6.2 Project Review. After receiving a request for payment, technical staff must review the copies of paid receipts or invoices submitted by the landowner and the weed management plan for completion and technical approval. Before and after photo documentation of completed weed management must be documented. Professional or paid applicators must provide state pesticide applicators license number. Payment will not be made without documentation.

6.4 Final Plans. One copy of the final approved plan and property map showing weed species and location, physical address, north arrow, and other important features will be given to the landowner and one copy retained with the project file located in the district office.

7.0 Post-Construction and Follow-Up Activities

Maintenance specific to the landowner's Weed Management Plan is critical to ongoing success of weed suppression as well as planning and scheduling future treatments. Scheduled site inspections by qualified staff may be necessary to ensure maintenance is taking place.

7.1 Maintenance Plan. The landowner must identify their future maintenance plans in their Weed Management Plan. Successful weed management requires follow-up maintenance to reduce the noxious plant seed bank in the soil.

