

Project: The 2018 Yellowstone River Salt Cedar Project kicked off on August 28, 2018. We started off by revisiting prior year's project areas and surveying and spraying any Salt Cedar trees that were missed or new trees that established due to seed sources that were missed in prior years. Mason Industries supplied 2 applicators, 1 atv, 1 utv, and 1 jet boat. Yellowstone County Weed District provided one full time applicator and the Centaur for the 2018 project. During the 2018 Salt Cedar Project approximately 900,000 Salt Cedar trees were sprayed within the project area. We treated approximately 846 acres out 1189 acres surveyed for salt cedar trees. The 2018 Yellowstone River Salt Cedar commenced on October 24, 2018.

Conclusions: The 2018 Yellowstone River Salt Cedar Project in Yellowstone County covered 9.14 river miles with 1189 acres surveyed with 846 acres of infested acreage being treated with an estimated treated tree population of 900,000. Tree density definitely increased exponentially over the 2017 project. The drastic increase in tree density has increased the amount of herbicide used in order to obtain a 98-99 % mortality rate. The project commenced around Road 11 North in the Huntley Project Area and the Cabin Creek Ranch on the North side of the Yellowstone River. We do have one island in the project area that still needs a little attention at the beginning of the next project.

As we head eastward into the old oxbow areas of the Yellowstone River we are finding that these areas are becoming more concentrated with Salt Cedar trees. These old oxbow areas are a very important part of the floodplain of the Yellowstone River. If these concentrations of Salt Cedar trees continue to increase without any control efforts we are going to see an increase in flooding in areas downriver where the high-water is pushed due to choked off floodplain areas. We will also experience a river channel that will be cut deeper and deeper. These old oxbow areas act as relief valve during the high-water season. The number of Salt Cedar trees that we are finding in these areas is incredibly astronomic and require a large amount of herbicide and man hours to control. The island sizes are going to vary as we continue downriver but one thing for sure is that the density on the smaller islands is a lot larger compared to some of the bigger islands from past years. With this type of density starting to occur it really slows down the project and the amount of herbicide used increases drastically on these areas. Without this project and the funding that we receive through the trust fund grant we would be looking at some very detrimental effects from not controlling salt cedar along the Yellowstone River.

Opportunities for project continuation of expansion:

All cooperating agencies agree that this project needs to be continued for several years to insure eradication of the Salt Cedar infestation. Future treatment areas have been visited and the Salt Cedar population is growing at an alarming rate. With that kind of population increases and densities that we are encountering this project will continue to become more challenging in future years. Upstream and downstream counties are intending to use Yellowstone County's model for additional Salt Cedar Treatments.



LARGE MATURE SALT CEDAR TREES



FLOOD CHANNEL AREA BECOMING HOME TO A NEW STAND OF SALT CEDAR



SALT CEDAR TREES STARTING TO POPULATE EDGES OF ISLANDS



OLD FLOOD CHANNEL STARTING TO SHOW SIGNS OF A MASSIVE INFESTATION



EDGE OF SHORELINE SHOWING SALT CEDAR SEEDLINGS AFTER THEIR SEED WAS DEPOSITED DURING HIGH WATER



UPLAND AREA ABOVE THE YELLOWSTONE WITH MATURE SALT CEDAR



CARPET OF SALT CEDAR SEEDLINGS ALONG NORTH SHORELINE



SALT CEDAR TREES GROWING AROUND IRRIGATION INTAKE - NE - SHEPHERD