



2022 Noxious Weed Monitoring Report

FERC Project No. 11563

Upper Utica Project

August 2022

Introduction

This Noxious Weed Monitoring Report is submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by the Northern California Power Agency (Licensee) in compliance with the approved Noxious Weed Management Plan Article 409 and USFS Section 4(e), Condition No. 14. In accordance with the approved plan, NCPA conducted an extensive survey of the project area in August 2009, 2014, and again in July 2019 (required every 5 years) to document new species of noxious weeds present. No new species were found in 2019. On August 11, 2022 NCPA conducted annual noxious plant monitoring of the project area to document new species of noxious weeds present. No new species were found.

Methods

Noxious weed monitoring for this reporting period was completed on August 11, 2022 for Lake Alpine, Utica Reservoir, and Union Reservoir. Monitoring was conducted by Scott Oneto (Farm Advisor/County Director, UC Cooperative Extension – Central Sierra), Steven Popish (NCPA Hydro Tech/Operator), Trevor Simpson (NCPA Hydro Technician), and Thomas Wimple (NCPA Hydro Intern). The new growth populations were counted, pulled, and properly disposed of by NCPA personnel.

Note: Reservoir levels below 25.6ft (staff) at Union generally make boat access to the easterly part of the reservoir difficult.

Results

Two species of concern, Common Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*) and Bull Thistle (*Cirsium Vulgare*) reside within the project area. Currently, Bull Thistle (*Cirsium Vulgare*) is rated “C” on the California Department of Food and Agriculture Noxious Weed List¹. There is no state enforced action required. Suppression is at the discretion of the individual county agricultural commissioner. Common Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*) currently is “not rated” as a noxious weed on the California Department of

¹ California Department of Food and Agriculture Noxious Weed List from their web page: http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/plant/IPC/encycloveedia/weedinfo/wininfo_table-scname.html

Food and Agriculture Noxious Weed List. Currently both species are “not rated” as a noxious weeds on the Federal Noxious Weed List².

Lake Alpine: The only species of concern found at Lake Alpine was Bull Thistle (*Cirsium Vulgare*). Three (3) of these plants were found along the path on the northwest side of the lake: All of which were found along or near walking paths where seeds can be spread by foot traffic. Six (6) plants were found on the southwest side of the lake.

Figure 1: Lake Alpine Survey Areas

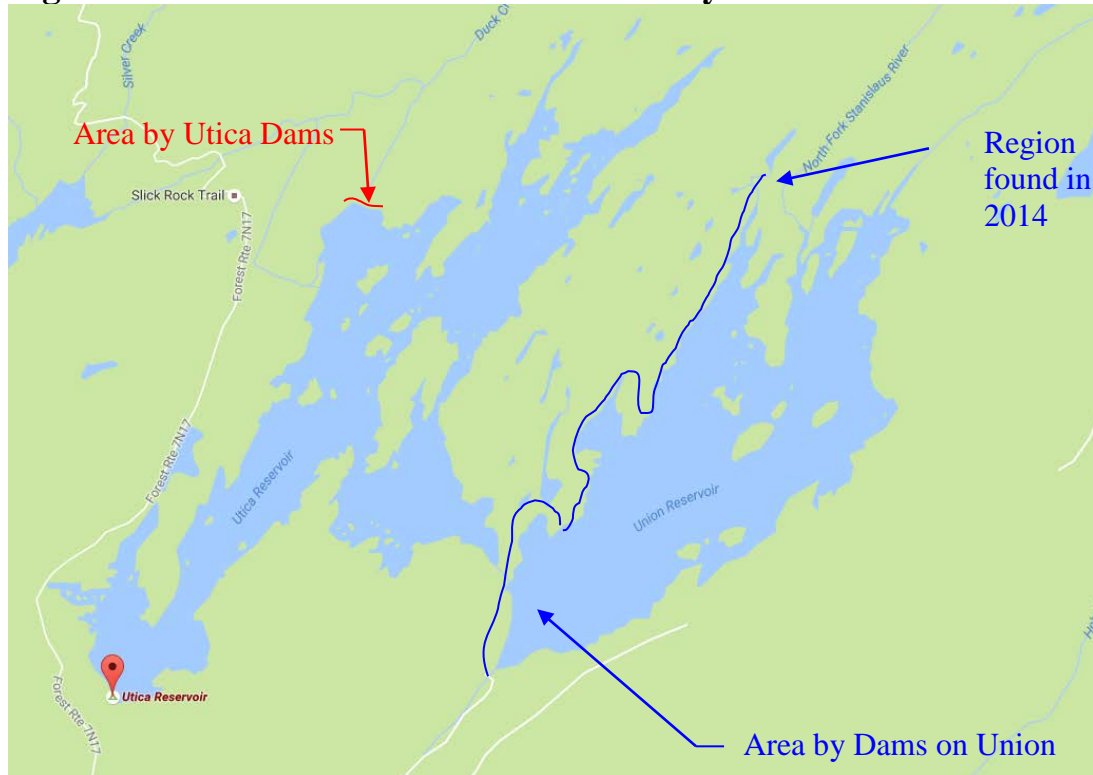


Union Reservoir: Common Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*) and Bull Thistle (*Cirsium Vulgare*), both species of concern, were found at Union Reservoir. Eight (8) Common Mullein plants were counted during the survey. Three (3) Bull Thistle (*Cirsium Vulgare*) plants were found at Union Reservoir along the area typically inspected by the Union dams.

Utica Reservoir: The only species of concern found at Utica Reservoir was Common Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*). Two (2) plant was found in the region near the gaging station and by the main dam (Dam No. 1). Zero (0) Bull Thistle were found at Utica Reservoir in the area typically inspected by Dam No. 1 during this monitoring period.

² Federal Noxious Weed List from the United States Department of Agriculture from their web page: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxious>

Figure 2: Union and Utica Reservoir Survey Areas



Analysis

For the 2022 monitoring period, most of the location/species counts declined from the previous year. The exceptions were an increase in Bull Thistle in the Southwest region of Alpine and the Common Mullein in the area by the Union dams. At all locations plant numbers during the 2022 monitoring period are within historical trends of this area.

Notable locations outside of NCPA's responsibility and the program area:

Bull Thistle (29) were found along the access road to Union Reservoir *outside* of NCPA's FERC boundary -not attributable to NCPA activities. Although not mandated, these noxious Bull Thistle plants were pulled and properly disposed of in order to discourage further contamination of the reservoir and surrounding areas.

Bull Thistle (1800) were found along on the road near the Sandy Flat Campground at Utica Reservoir outside of NCPA's FERC boundary -not attributable to NCPA activities. These plants were pulled and properly disposed of in order to discourage further contamination of the reservoir and surrounding areas.

The Noxious Weed Management Plan states that *"if the populations for the species of concern spread to a size that the Forest Service deems unacceptable, eradication by manual methods will occur."* NCPA will continue to monitor and remove these populations on a yearly basis unless directed to initiate further action.

Historical survey results (2004 – 2022) are presented in the attached table and chart.

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Noxious Weeds and Species of Concern

2004-2022

Location	Species of Concern	Qty 2004	Qty 2005	Qty 2006	Qty 2007	Qty 2008	Qty 2009	Qty 2010	Qty 2011	Qty 2012	Qty 2013	Qty 2014	Qty 2015	Qty 2016	Qty 2017	Qty 2018	Qty 2019	Qty 2020	Qty 2021	Qty 2022
Lake Alpine	Bull Thistle - SW	8	11	36	100	78	0	0	0	0	58	20	65	16	38	14	6	7	3	6
	Bull Thistle - NW	10	0	0	42	21	5	10	1	12	3	17	18	7	4	84	12	9	10	3
Union Reservoir	Common Mullein	15	230	212	284	250	185	96	75	99	185	169	40	117	55	47	23	103	14	8
	Bull Thistle	0	1	2	4	15	11	0	3	6	13	143	83	96	9	10	9	1	16	3
Utica Reservoir	Common Mullein	2	5	24	35	30	43	3	30	61	59	58	40	33	5	6	8	0	0	2
	Bull Thistle	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	7	6	5	14	16	0	0	0	8	1	0
Annual Total	Combined	35	247	275	465	395	246	109	109	185	324	412	260	285	111	161	58	128	44	22

2022 Weed Monitoring 2004-2022

