



# Youth volunteers down in the weeds



*Erik Broeder with Blake Davidson, Shaine Gates and Mickey Figueroa*

*Photos and story submitted by the Dillon Field Office*

Five Montana Youth Challenge Cadets recently chipped in to fight the war on weeds on the Madison River in southwest Montana.

The teens joined 32 other people, including employees from the Madison and Gallatin County Weed Crews and BLM Dillon Field Office, for the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Bear Trap Backpack Spray Day. The goal of the spray day is to control noxious and invasive plants species within the Bear Trap Wilderness Area along the Madison River.

BLM Weed Specialist Mike Mooney has coordinated this effort twice each summer since 2002, resulting in a substantial reduction in noxious weeds in this area. The Dillon Field Office estimates the noxious weed infestation in this area has been reduced by as much as 90 percent in the last 13 years.

MYCA cadets have volunteered for the past several years, donning backpacks and spraying weeds in the pristine wilderness area. The “at risk” youth are required to complete at least 40 hours of service to the community as part of their curriculum in the MYCA.

“It is a lot of fun to work with these youth,” said Pat Fosse, assistant field manager. “They are great kids who are happy to come out and contribute to the success of this project. It’s a win/win situation, where these cadets can fulfill their requirements while learning, having fun and contributing to a very worthwhile project.”

Once everyone has finished spraying for the day and hikes out from their assigned area, they’re treated to a barbecue at Trapper Springs Picnic area.



*Brothers -- Karlton Madplume and Isiah Littleplume*



*Blake Davidson, Isiah Littleplume, Karlton Madplume, Shaine Gates, Tyren Landwehr*