

# INVASIVE PLANTS



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Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Meeting September 12, 2013

#### WHAT WE WILL COVER...

- Impacts of invasive plants on sage-grouse and the sagebrush ecosystem
- Why cheatgrass is a primary threat
- Cheatgrass and similar invasive plants
- NDA regulatory authority
- NDA sage-grouse related actions
- NDA mapping projects
- SETT proposed actions

# IMPACTS OF INVASIVE PLANTS ON SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEMS

Out-compete native vegetation; decrease biodiversity

Decrease desirable and palatable forage

Alter soil water availability

May alter soil characteristics and/or increase erosion

 Many contain toxins or are injurious to wildlife, livestock and/or humans

May increase the probability of additional disturbance and/or invasion

Changes in historic fire regimes

 May require expensive or extreme control measures and re-vegetation efforts



Cheatgrass

Tamarisk/Salt Cedar



#### **CHEATGRASS**

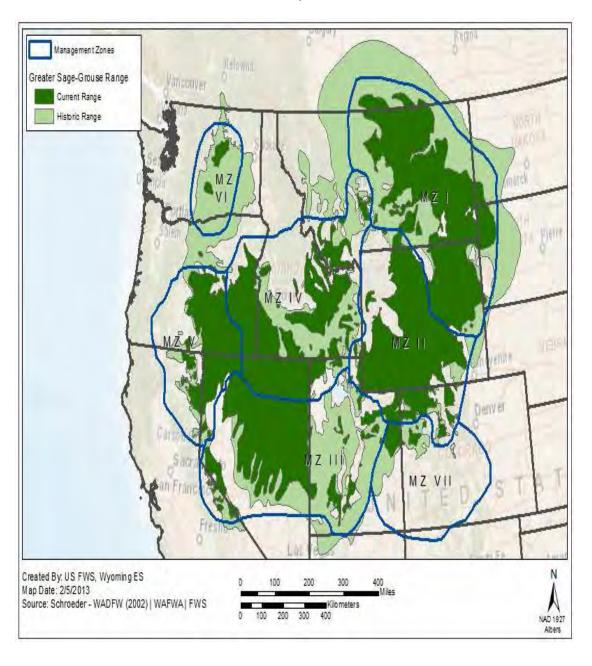
#### Bromus tectorum

- Fall and/or Spring germination.
- Utilizes shallow soil moisture rapidly and underutilizes deeper soil water profiles.
- Can increase soil temperatures by 10°
- Prolific seed producer 5,000-15,000 seeds per square meter.
- Highly adaptable to various soil types, precipitation, and elevation zones.
- Usually dry and highly flammable by mid-July.
- Significantly alters fire regimes on native ecosystems.



## PRIMARY THREAT

Annual grasses (primarily cheatgrass) are listed in the Conservation **Objectives Team** (COT) report as one of the most significant threats in each of the three regions (Southern Great Basin, Western Great Basin, and Northern Great Basin).



"Post fire rehabilitation efforts often don't result in long-term success in re-establishing sagebrush and native grasses and forbs where there is competition with cheatgrass in fire-disturbed areas. In the worst cases, burned sites cross a threshold to a new state dominated by annual grasslands. Repeated fires in subsequent years result in expansion of annual grasslands into adjacent sagebrush ecosystems. Over time, this self-perpetuating cheatgrass-wildfire cycle results in large-scale loss of sagebrush landscapes that previously provided many ecosystem functions, such as habitat for sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent species." (Society for Rangeland Management – "Trial by Fire")

#### **MEDUSAHEAD**

#### Taeniatherum caput-medusae

- Winter annual with a similar germination pattern as cheatgrass
- Grows 6" 2' tall
- Seadhead has barbed awns that are up to 3" long and twist
- Prolific seed producer with an average of 98% germination rate
- High silica levels slow decomposition and deter grazing
- Grows in thick stands with 1,500 2,000 plants per square foot



### MEDUSAHEAD THREAT

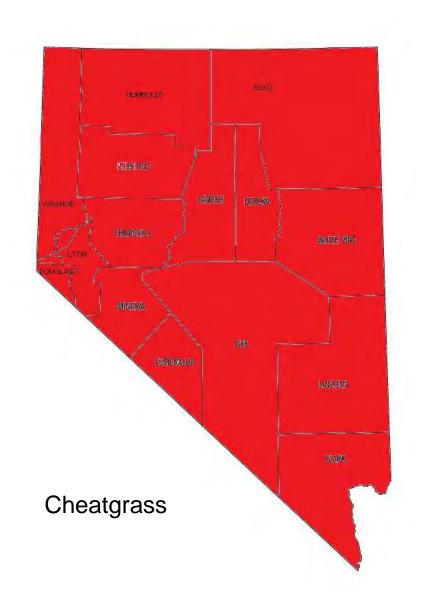
- Behaves similar to cheatgrass and even shows potential to outcompete cheatgrass
- Adaptable to soil type, precipitation and elevation
- Creates thick mats of dry thatch that suppress other plant growth and raise soil temperatures.
- Thatch layers drastically increase fire fuel load



Medusahead

Cheatgrass

# CHEATGRASS VS. MEDUSAHEAD DISTRIBUTION





# CHEATGRASS VS. MEDUSAHEAD CLASSIFICATIONS

#### Cheatgrass

#### **Nuisance Weed**



#### **Invasive**

nonnative plant
that causes
negative impacts
on ecosystem;
Can rapidly
multiply and be
difficult to control

#### Medusahead

#### **Noxious Weed**



#### NEVADA NOXIOUS WEED LAWS

Found in Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) chapter 555

#### NRS 555.130

### **Designation of noxious weeds**

"The State Quarantine Officer declares the weeds of the state that are noxious weeds, but a weed must not be designated as noxious which is already introduced and established in the State to such an extent as to make its control or eradication impracticable"

#### NEVADA NOXIOUS WEED LAWS

#### **Outline of NDA Regulatory Process**

NRS 555.150 - Every landowner or occupier, whether private, city, county, or federal shall cut, destroy, or eradicate all noxious weeds as required by the State Quarantine Officer.

NRS 555.160 - The State Quarantine Officer may serve notice in writing upon the owner or occupant to cut, destroy or eradicate the weeds within such a time and in such a manner as described in the notice.

NRS 555.170 - Should the owner/occupant fail, neglect, or refuse to comply, the State Quarantine Officer may notify the board of county commissioners for the county in which the property is situated. The county board of commissioners shall proceed to have weeds controlled in accordance with the initial notice.

NRS 555.180 - Control costs not paid by the owner shall be a lien against the property and shall be collected as provided by the law for the collection of other liens.

# NDA Noxious WEED PROGRAM SAGE-GROUSE RELATED ACTIONS

- ✓ Increase funding available to support sage-grouse related efforts
- ✓ Participate in collaborative planning and information collection efforts
- ✓ Identify noxious weed control grant projects in sage-grouse sensitive areas
- ✓ Use noxious weed regulatory authority when necessary to benefit sage-grouse habitat

- ✓ Collect noxious weed data within sage-grouse habitat
- ✓ Develop/Improve statewide noxious weed maps
- ✓ Identify priority areas for on-the-ground treatment
- ✓ Identity sage-grouse areas most threatened by noxious weed/invasive plant infestation

## STATEWIDE WEED MAPPING

- 2008 2009: Natural Heritage Program compiled data for statewide weed maps
- 2010: NDA assumes role for statewide weed mapping
- 2011: EDDMaps created to include western states
- 2012-2013: NDA turns to use EDDMaps for statewide level mapping



# EDDMAPS = EARLY DETECTION & DISTRIBUTION MAPPING SYSTEM

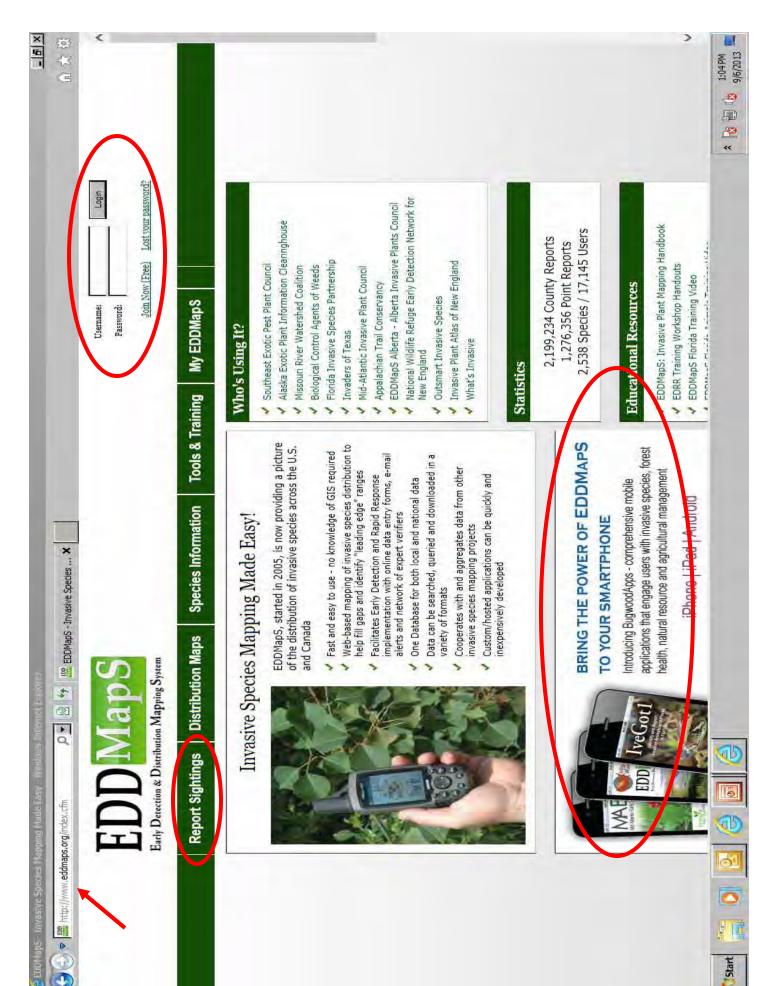
#### What is it?

- Web-based mapping of invasive species distribution open to everyone to use and view
- Early Detection and Rapid Response tool with network of expert verifiers

#### **Useful Capabilities:**

- Look up current distribution of invasive plants
- Download data in a variety of formats
- Research information on a species
- Report a sighting online
- Map using smart phone APPs
- Create email alert when report is in an area of concern

www.eddmaps.org

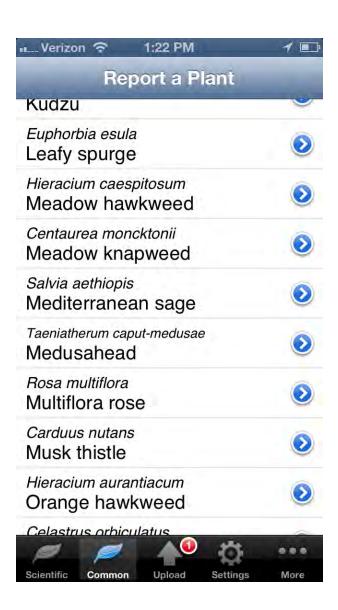


Start

## **SMART PHONE APPLICATION**

- Search Apps for EddMapsWest
- FREE to download
- Fast & Easy!





## **SMART PHONE APPLICATION**

1:22 PM

Verizon 🤝



Known As / Medusahead rye

General Description / Medusahead is a winter annual grass that can form dense stands on rangelands, displacing wildlife and increasing the risk of wildfires. Its spiky head and seeds can injure the eyes, nostrils, and mouths of grazing animals. Medusahead is native to Europe and the Mediterranean region, and can be distinguished from other annual grasses by its awns, which twist as they dry. It reproduces by seed.

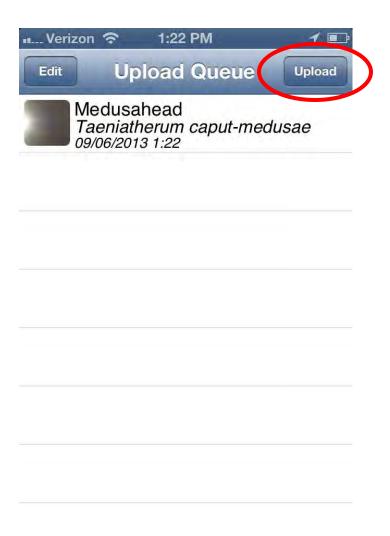


treated, ect.)





### **SMART PHONE APPLICATION**

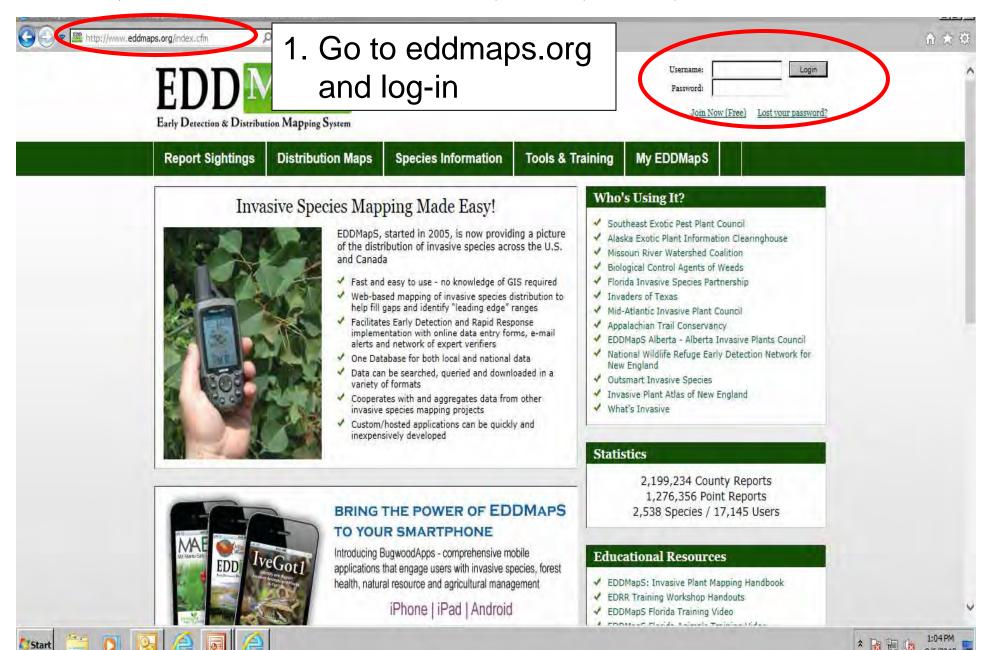


Reports can be made and stored in queue whether you have service or not. Upload to actual EDDMaps requires that you have service.

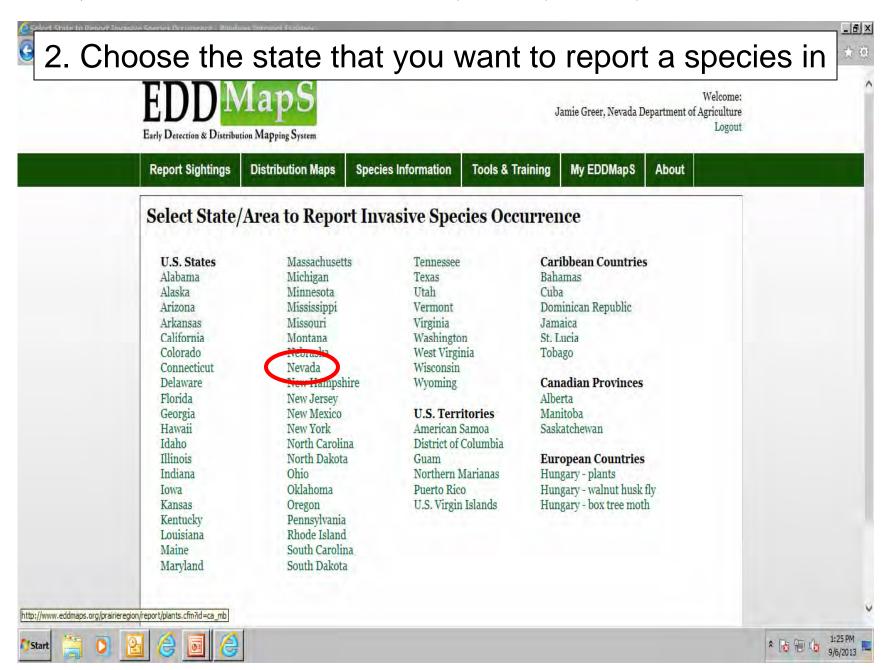
ALL REPORTS
ENTERED CREATE
AN EMAIL
NOTIFICATION TO
NDA NOXIOUS
WEED PROGRAM



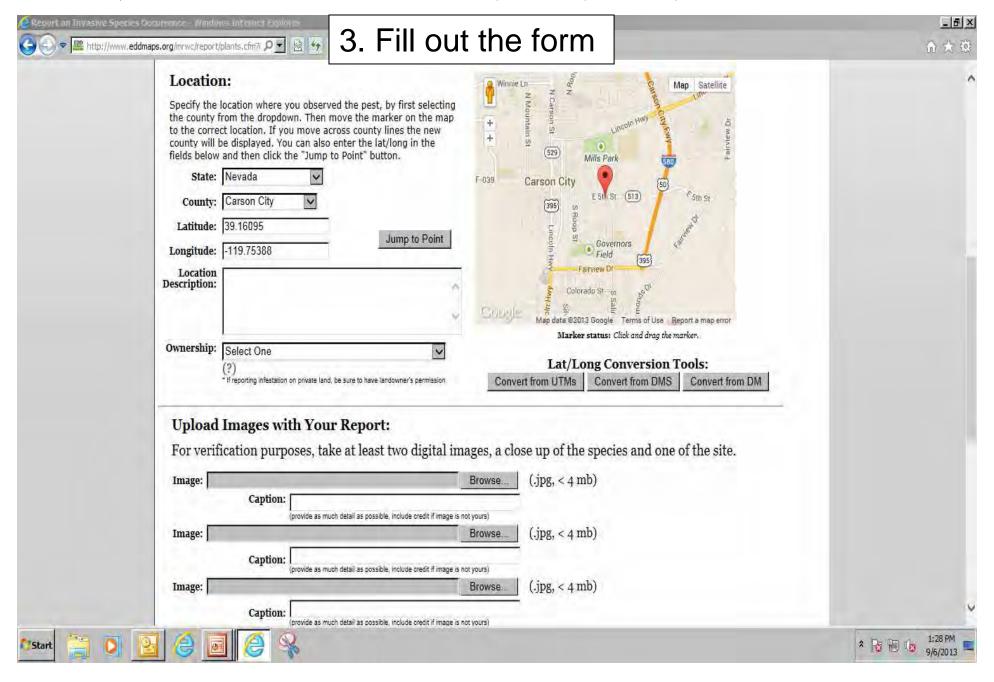
## **EDDMAPS ONLINE REPORTING**

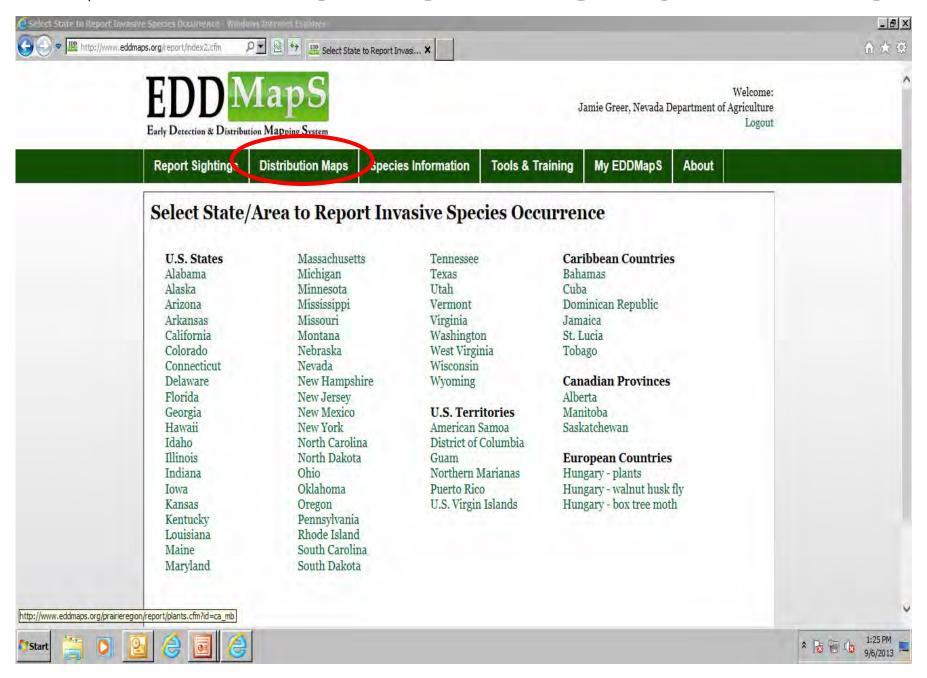


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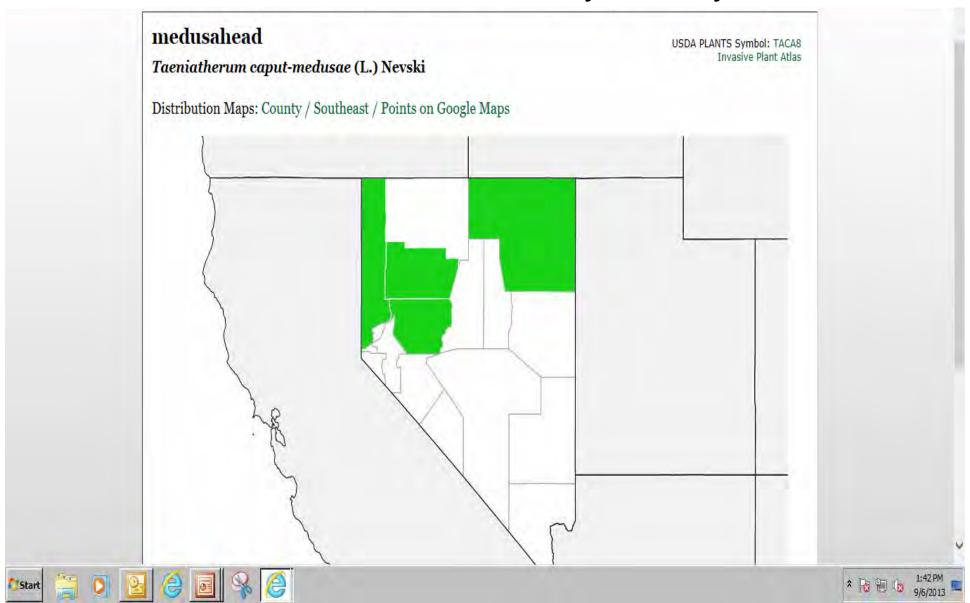
## **EDDMAPS ONLINE REPORTING**







Presence/Absence by County

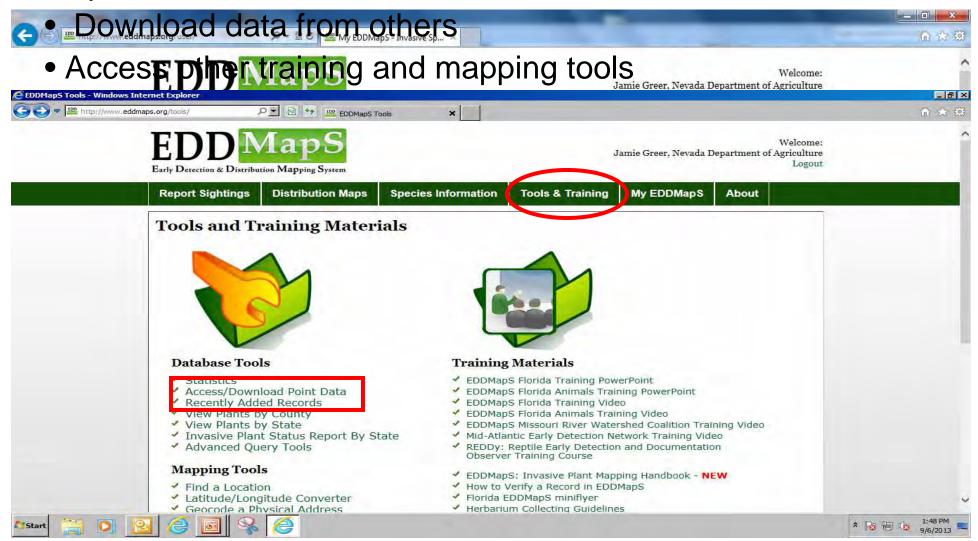


#### Google Earth Points Map



## **EDDMAPS ADDITIONAL TOOLS**

- Manage and update your own reports
- Create Email Alerts
- Upload bulk data sets



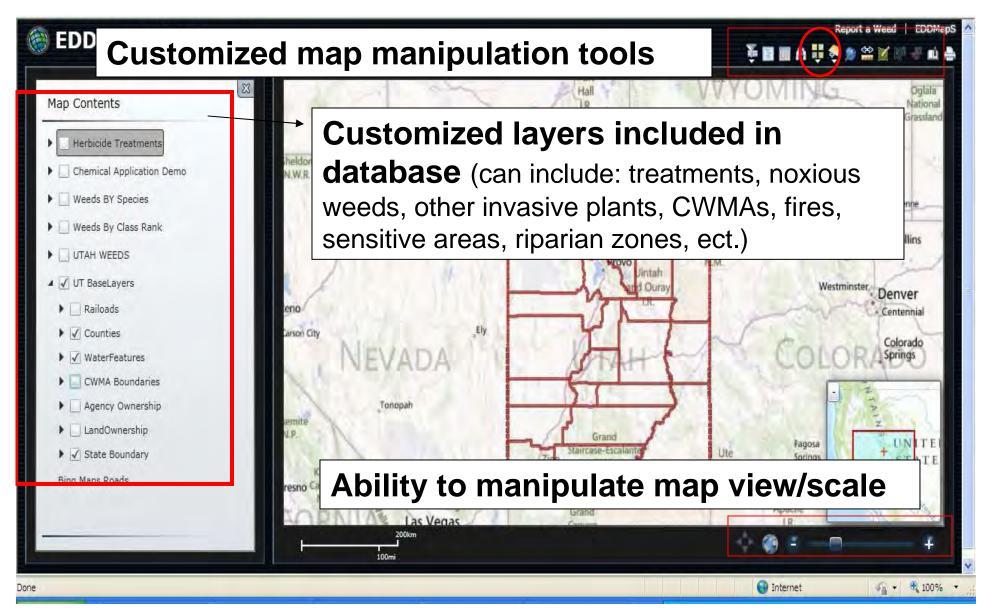
# NEVADA EDDMAPS: BACK END IMPLEMENTATION (CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT)

## What is it?

- An online GIS database that is in sync with current public EDDMaps without needing GIS license/expertise
- Open to only those given access with specific log in
- Specific to Nevada needs and desires

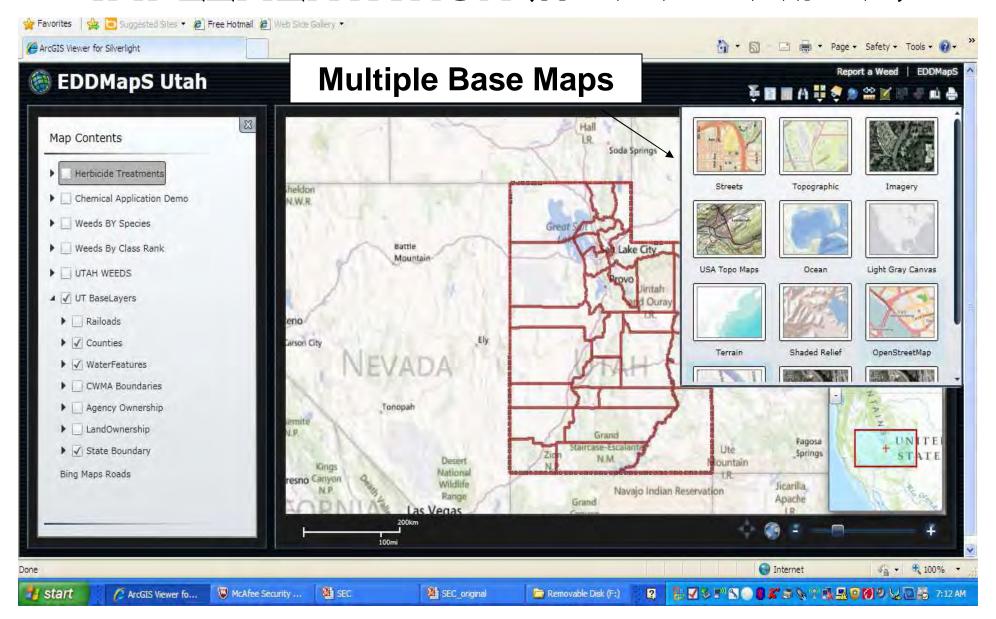
## NEVADA EDDMAPS: BACK END

#### IMPLEMENTATION (CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT)



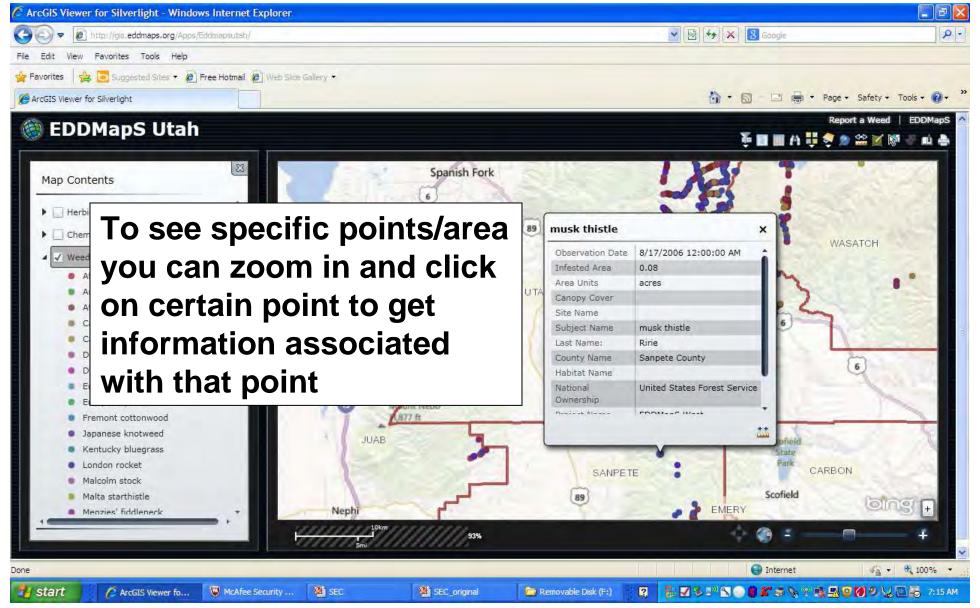
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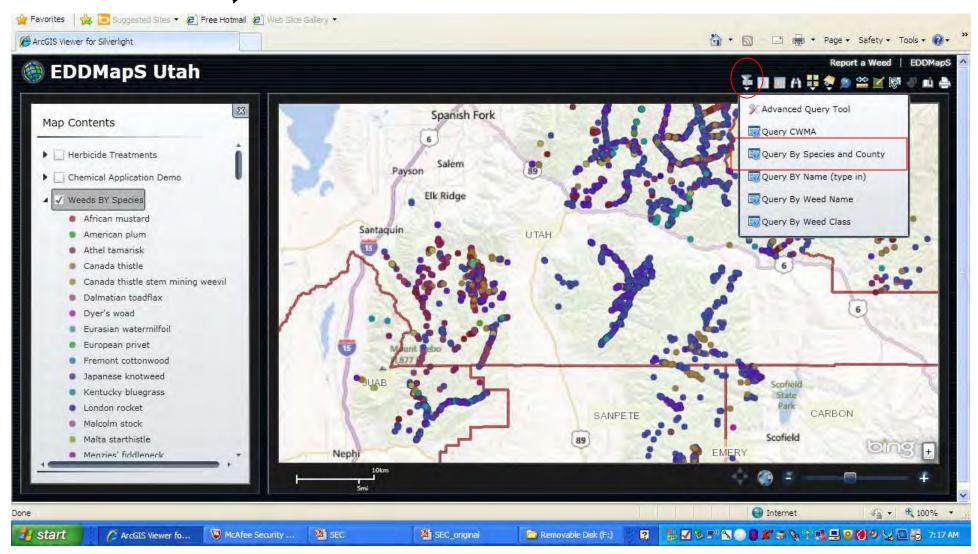
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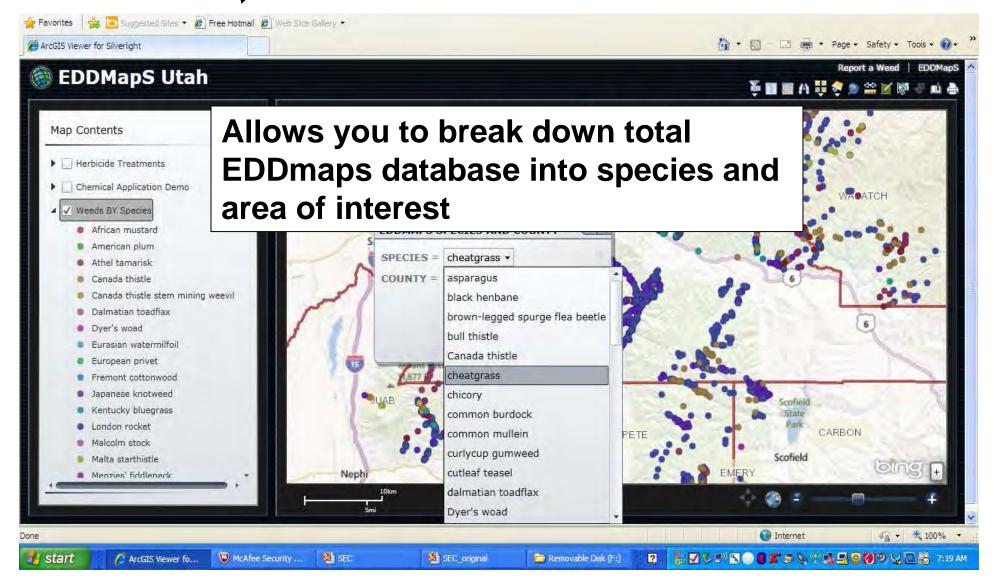


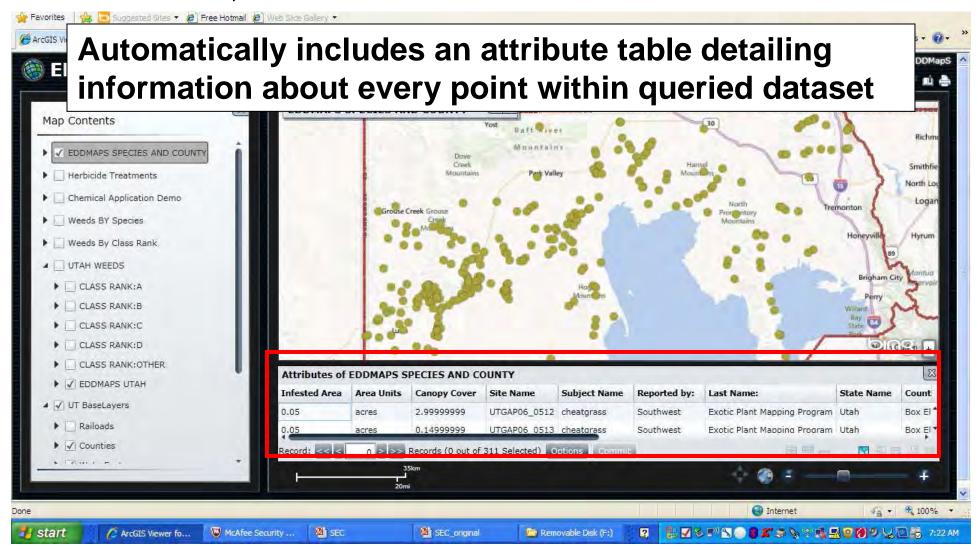
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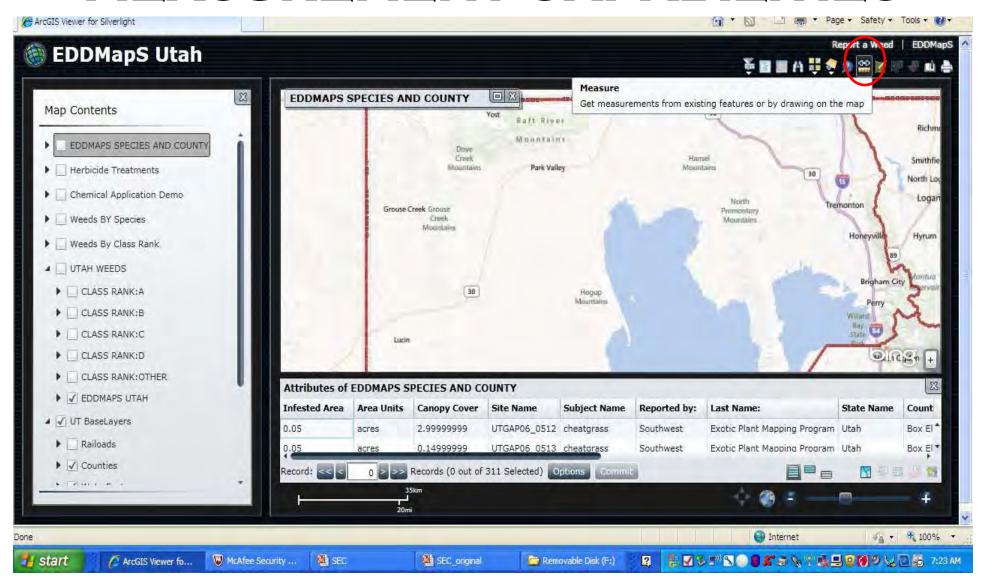
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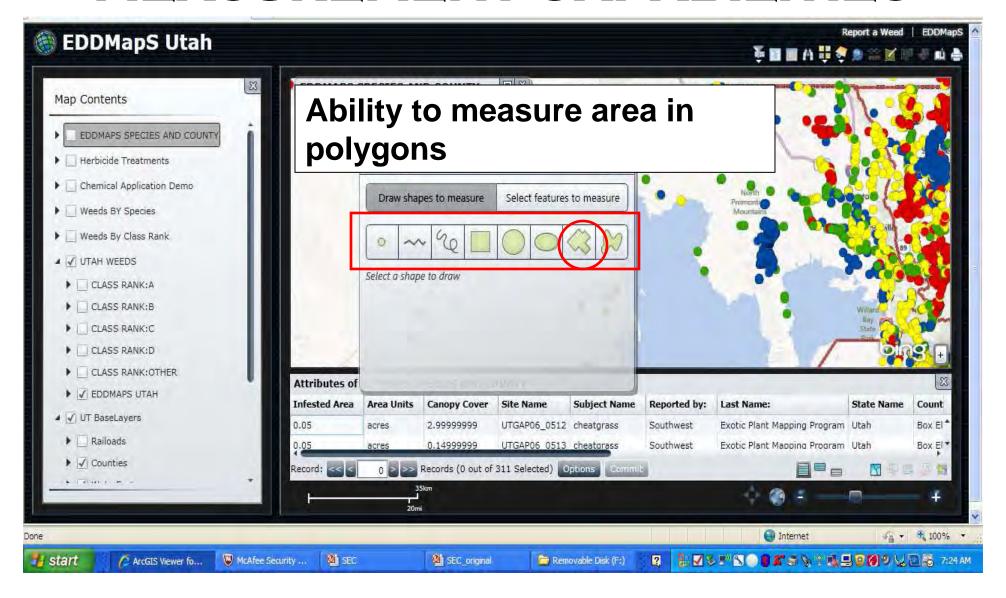


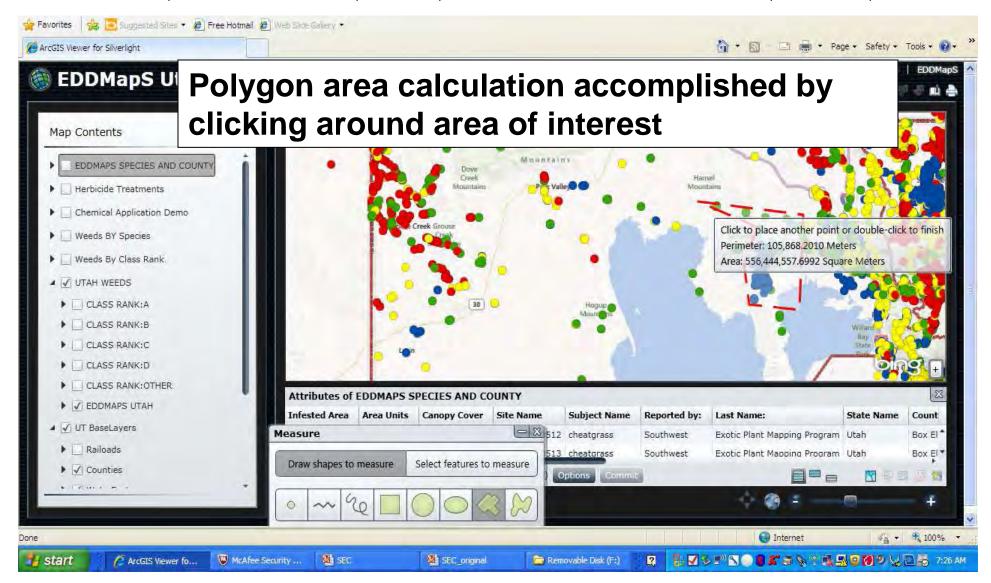


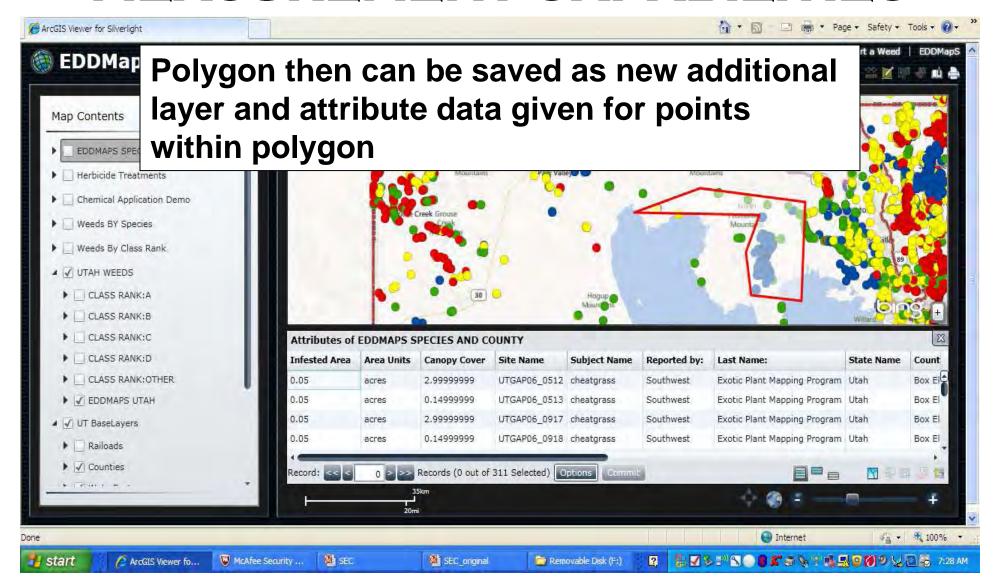


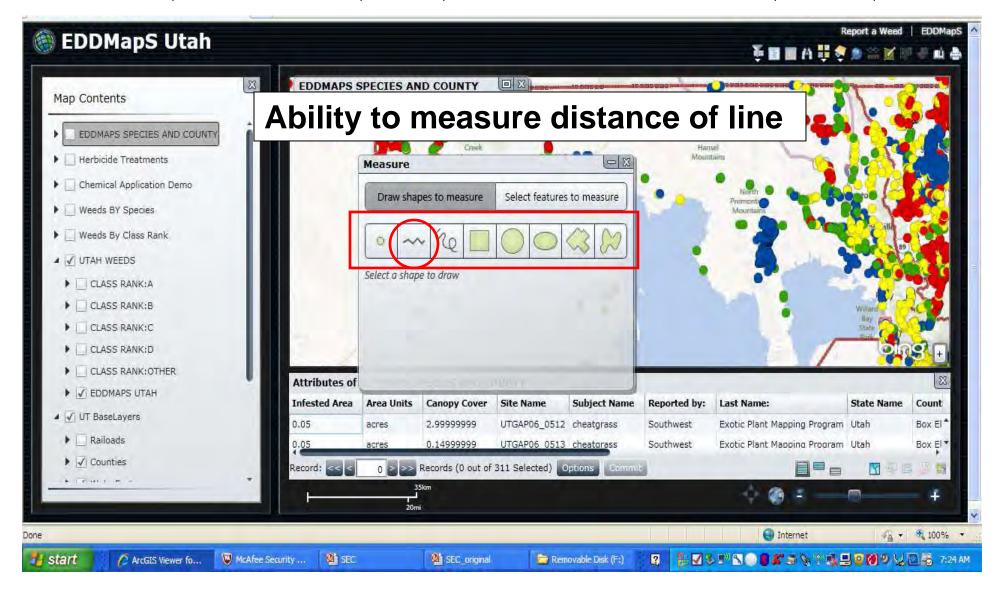


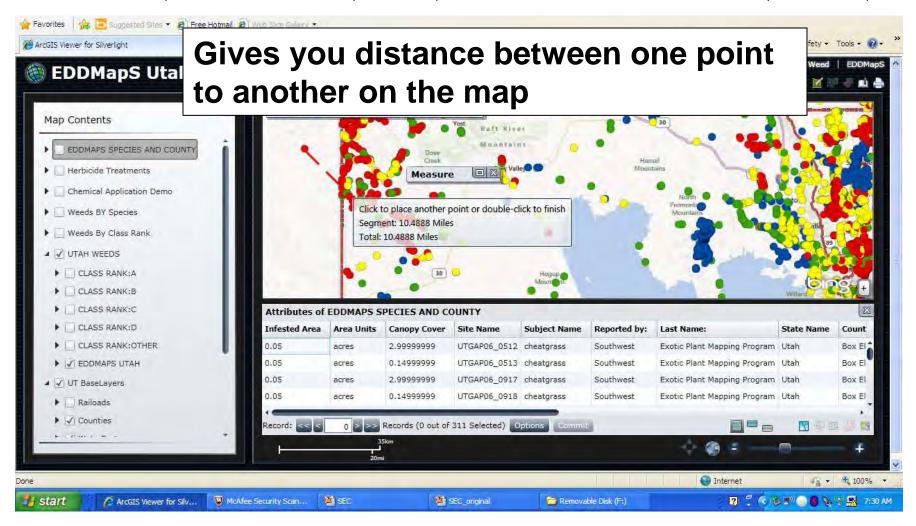




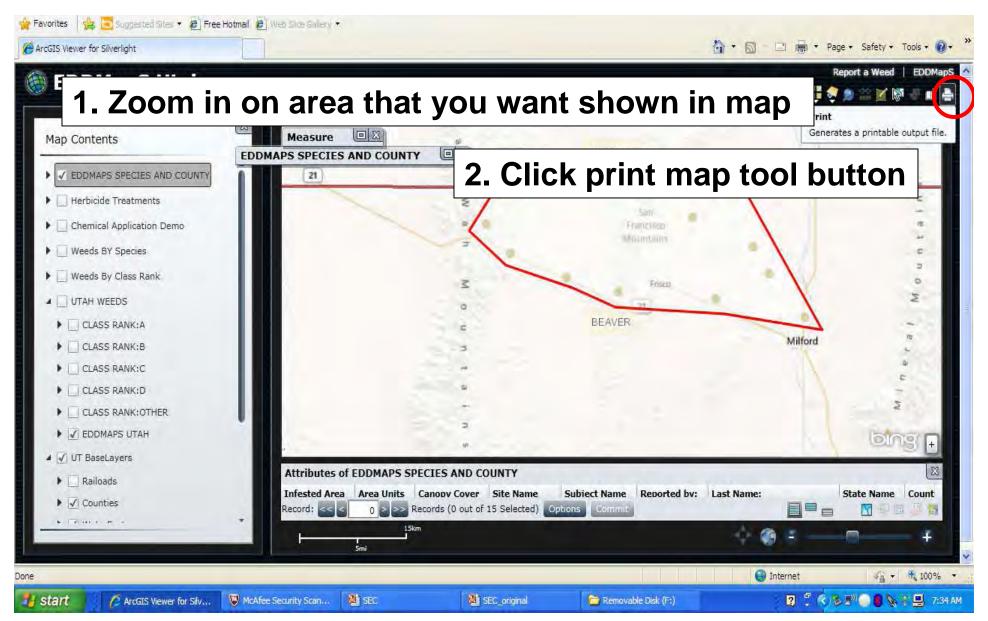




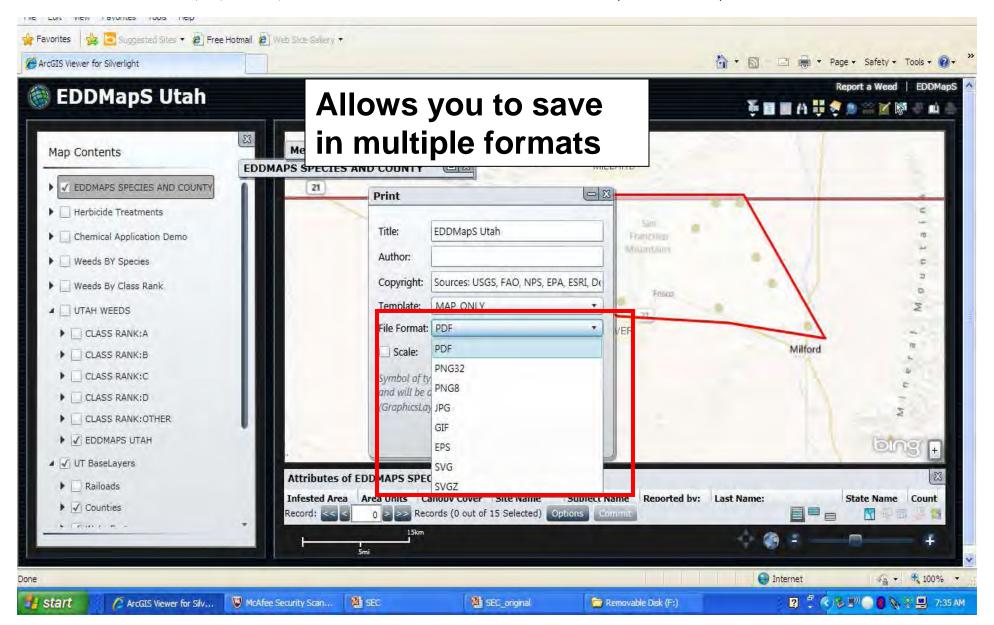




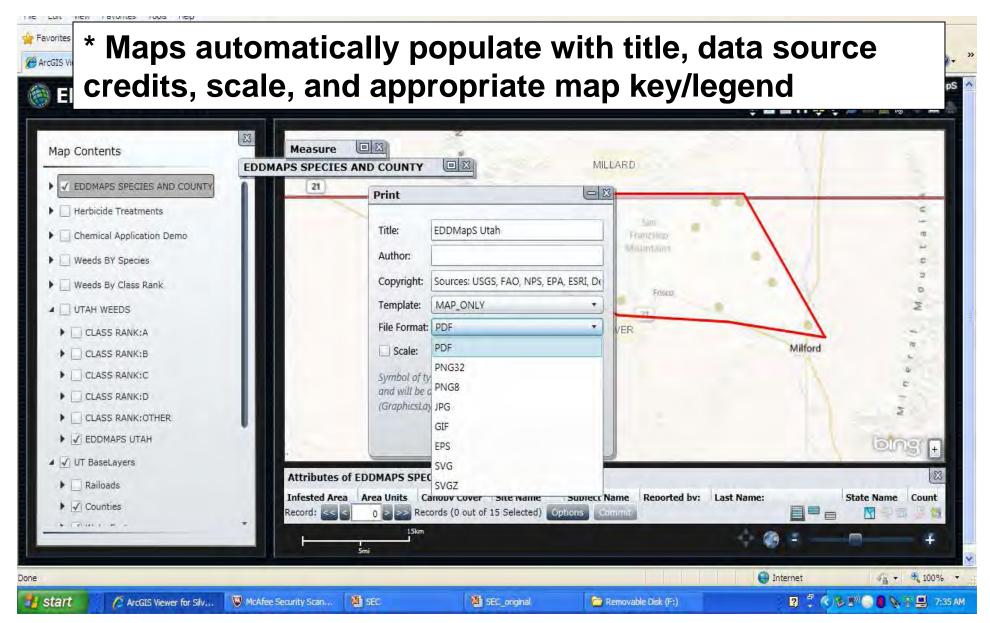
# NEVADA EDDMAPS: BACK END IMPLEMENTATION – CREATE MAPS



# NEVADA EDDMAPS: BACK END IMPLEMENTATION — CREATE MAPS



# NEVADA EDDMAPS: BACK END IMPLEMENTATION – CREATE MAPS



# NEVADA EDDMAPS: BACK END IMPLEMENTATION OVERALL USEFUL CAPABILITIES:

- Data is constantly updated with EDDMaps reports
- Multiple base maps and layers accessible at once
- Query data with ease
- Overlay data with other important information
- Create polygons
- Make relevant maps to prioritize work and convey the important message of the threat of invasive plants to sage grouse and Nevada ecosystems as a whole

# SAGEBRUSH ECOSYSTEM TEAM ACTIONS

- Identify primary habitat for the greater sage-grouse.
- Create multi-layered maps.
- Identify functioning habitats at the greatest risk for fire and subsequent domination by annual grasses.
- Prioritize the sites and work in close coordination with pre-suppression efforts (fire and invasive species).
- Utilize the cheatgrass action technical team and the science workgroup to make informed decisions based upon the best available science.
- Support efforts to secure financial and other resources to address the threats.

# **QUESTIONS?**

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#### THANK YOU!