

Natural method wins in thistle battle

By **BILL CRAIG**
The Glenwood Post

CARBONDALE — A River Valley Ranch manager said Friday that the community is so pleased with the war a New Castle business owner is waging against thistles that he will continue with his work.

RVR first hired John Buerger, owner of Alpha Natural Pest Control, last September to rid 12 acres on the ranch's Crystal River corridor of Musk and Canadian thistles. The Carbondale Environmental Board requested that Buerger be hired as it had wanted to see the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides decrease in town.

Buerger uses a natural spray of nitrogen, biological composting bacteria, vitamins, minerals, enzymes and kelp juices. The application composts the weeds over the winter months and encourages grasses to grow in the sprayed area. Buerger said his all-natural weed composting service costs as much or less than traditional chemical-based serv-

ices.

While last year's application got rid of all the Musk Thistle, it only composted three-quarters of the Canadian Thistle. Buerger has provided a second applica-

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tion for free to RVR to get rid of this year's crop of thistles. To get rid of the hardier Canadian Thistle, Buerger has applied the same formula again, but this time with added liquid calcium, which he said will initiate composting.

Buerger's follow-up service earned him praise from Assistant

Project Manager Chris Kelsey, who said RVR hired him to spray another 12 acres.

"He's dependable. He stands by his products," Kelsey said. "We basically turned him loose in the river corridor."

Kelsey added that Buerger's product is better for the environment of the ranch.

"We want to be very careful to protect the ecology," Kelsey said. "Short of removing them by hand, we think this is the best solution for the river corridor."

Kelsey said he expected Buerger

to have the spraying completed by this weekend.

"It's very promising," Buerger said of the application.

The town of Basalt has hired Buerger for natural weed control and Buerger said the Carbondale government is thinking of doing the same.