

NOXIOUS WEEDS MANAGEMENT ON THE WHITETAIL HAZARDOUS FUELS PROJECT

NOXIOUS WEEDS

The noxious weed populations in the Whitetail Hazardous Project area are few in numbers and small in size. The noxious weed populations are comprised of spotted knapweed, which are in proximity of road corridors and campgrounds. The three known weed infestations are located on road 44272, road 4133 and at the Holiday Campground. The weed infestations on road 4133 and at the campground are being monitored whereas the infestation on road 44272 is being actively controlled with chemical treatments, last treatment being in 2006.

The most likely cause of knapweed dispersal is from vehicles.

The Ashland District Weed Control Program is actively monitoring and treating noxious weeds annually in the analysis area. This activity will continue regardless of which alternative is chosen. The goal for noxious weed management in the project area portion of the Ashland Ranger District is to prevent noxious weeds from going to seed, maintain or reduce the number of acres infested, and to eradicate all new starts as soon as they are found.

NORTHERN REGION RISK ASSESSMENT RATING PROCEDURE FOR UNDESIRABLE PLANTS

Factor 1: *Likelihood of Undesirable Plant Species, Including Noxious Weeds Species, Spreading to Project Area:*

NONE (0): Undesirable plants, including noxious weed species not located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to result in the establishment of undesirable weed species on the project area.

LOW (1): Undesirable plant species present in areas adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of undesirable plants into the project area.

MODERATE (5): Undesirable plant species located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with undesirable plant species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of undesirable plants or noxious weeds within the project area.

HIGH (10): Heavy infestations of undesirable plants are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of undesirable plants on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area.

Factor 2: Consequence of Undesirable Plant Establishment in Project Area

LOW (1): None. No cumulative effects expected.

MODERATE (5): Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within project area. Cumulative effects on native plant community are likely, but limited.

HIGH (10): Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of undesirable plants, including noxious weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant community are probable.

RISK RATING PROCEDURE

Step 1. Identify level of likelihood and consequence of adverse effects and assign values according to the following:

None = 0, Low = 1, Moderate = 5, High = 10

Step 2. Multiply level of likelihood times consequences.

Step 3. Use the value resulting in step 2 to determine Risk Rating and action as follows:

Value	Risk Rating	Action
0	NONE	Proceed as planned.
1-10	LOW	Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatments on undesirable plant populations that get established in the area.
25	MODERATE	Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction or spread of undesirable plants into the area. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of new infestations.
50-100	HIGH	Modify project design and implement preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction or spread of undesirable plants into the area. Monitor the area for at least 5 consecutive years and provide for control of new infestations.

UNDESIRABLE PLANT RISK RATING FOR THE WHITETAIL HAZARDOUS FUELS PROJECT:

Step 1. Identify level of likelihood and consequence of adverse effects and assign values according to the above direction.

Likelihood rating is between low and moderate (2.5). Noxious weeds are present in very limited quantity within the project area, but are not likely to spread appreciatively with the current level of monitoring and treatment. The consequence of noxious weed establishment is between low and moderate (2.5). Cumulative effects on the native plant community are likely, but are very limited with continued monitoring and treatment and use of existing direction relative to required prevention measures (best management practices) per FSH 2080 and per 2006 Custer Weed Management EIS and Record of Decision. This includes use of required Timber Sale clauses for noxious weed provisions. Ensure District weed program and KV plans include provisions and priority for noxious weed control, especially at landings and burn pile areas.

Step 2. Multiply level of likelihood times consequences.

Likelihood (2.5) X Consequences (2.5) = Value (6.25)

Step 3. Use the value resulting in step 2 to determine Risk Rating.

A value of 6.25 gives a risk rating of low. The project may proceed as planned. Continue required and recommended best management practices. Initiate control treatments on undesirable plant populations that get established in the area.