Weed Management Plans

Although the steps required to develop a long-term weed management plan can require considerable time and money, the long-term payback will more than compensate for the initial and ongoing investments. Seven common steps to follow when developing a weed management plan are:

1. **Describe the resources of the Weed Management Area (WMA)**
   Before a management plan can be developed, it is important to have a knowledge of the resource base within the WMA. This knowledge provides justification for management costs, and also helps ensure that management activities will not damage the resources.

2. **Map and inventory the WMA for weeds**
   Successful weed management depends on knowledge of the size and locations of infestations of all weed species of concern within a WMA. With an understanding of what species are present, the size of the infestations, and their locations, the species and infestations can be prioritized to maximize the impact of control efforts. In essence, the weed map and inventory becomes a strategic planning tool from which to plan and prioritize management activities that will maximize the impact of the available resources.

3. **Establish weed management objectives**
   Establishing goals and objectives help ensure that management activities are targeted and will protect the specific resources within the WMA. Other benefits of establishing goals and objectives are that:
   - Limited management resources are focused on priority weed species and natural resources
   - Management resources are used more efficiently
   - Criteria are established against which treatment efficacy can be measured
   - Public accountability is increased
   While the goals typically focus on human values, natural resources, and financial resources, objectives involve the specific, measurable actions that are to be carried out to achieve the goals.

4. **Set weed management priorities**
   Keeping established goals and objectives in mind, the various weed species and infestations should be ranked to determine which will have the greatest negative impact on the natural resources and which will be most difficult to control if left unchecked. Based on the rankings, priority species and infestations can be identified. Targeting management actions at these species and infestations will maximize the benefit of available funds and resources.

5. **Select weed management techniques**
   A variety of management techniques can be used to control weeds. These range from hand pulling to herbicide applications. It is important to understand the biology and ecology of priority weed species in order to select effective management techniques.
6. **Develop an integrated weed management plan**
   In general, weeds cannot be controlled using a single management technique. The process of selecting and integrating different weed management techniques to efficiently and effectively control weeds, with minimal adverse environmental effects, is known as integrated weed management (IWM). The strategies selected will depend on the species, location, and desired outcome. IWM requires knowledge of a weed’s biology and ecology in order to target the weed’s weaknesses.

7. **Develop a monitoring plan**
   Monitoring is a critical component of any weed management plan. The effectiveness of management efforts can only be determined through monitoring. Using the feedback provided by monitoring, management techniques can be modified to improve effectiveness. Although monitoring requires monies and resources that could otherwise be used to treat more acreage, the payoffs of monitoring can be great (Colorado Natural Areas Program 2000)

**Reference**