

USDA Forest Service Update

May 2011



SUBJECT: NFS Invasive Species Management Program

Summary - The Forest Service works extensively with public and private partners (both on and off National Forests), and the member agencies of the National Invasive Species Council to address invasive species problems within our purview and jurisdiction. The long-term vision for the invasive species program is to interrupt the increasing trend, and begin to reduce the impacts and spread of invasive species across the National Forest System and other public and private lands and waters using a number of integrated techniques. Invasive species management activities across the National Forest System address a wide range of plant, pathogen, vertebrate, and invertebrate invasive species which threaten our agency mission and the health of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and associated native fish and wildlife.

Program Overview - National Forest System invasive species management activities utilize collaborative and integrated approaches against a broad spectrum of invasive plants, pathogens, vertebrates, and invertebrates; capitalizing on our research and management capabilities, diverse partnership opportunities, and significant amount of public lands and waters across the U.S. The program is structured around four elements: 1) Prevention, 2) Early Detection and Rapid Response, 3) Control and Management, and 4) Restoration and Rehabilitation. In addition, the National Forest System is expanding its partnership activities to work in multiple jurisdictions and address problems in a holistic, ecosystem-based manner across the landscape, including the building of stronger partnerships between, re organizations, forestry organizations, and fish and wildlife management organizations, as well as with volunteer organizations and the private sector. In FY 2010, National Forests and Grasslands treated nearly 420,000 acres of high priority invasive species across aquatic and terrestrial areas, with almost 80% effectiveness. From these integrated efforts in FY 2010, National Forests and Grasslands restored approximately 319,000 acres of lands and waters which had been invaded by these harmful exotic species.

Highlights of the NFS Invasive Species Management Program - FY2011

- ✓ Publishing the proposed new directive (policy) on **National Forest System Invasive Species Management** (Forest Service Manual 2900) in 2011.
 - Pending OMB approval, the Forest Service plans to publish this proposed new directive (policy) in the Federal Register for public comment. When finalized, this new policy will provide foundational, comprehensive guidance for the management of invasive species on aquatic and terrestrial areas of the National Forest System, and will increase our effectiveness when planning and implementing invasive species management activities against invasive plants, pathogens, vertebrates, and invertebrates.
 - In April 2011, OMB provided a draft of the Federal Register notice with key components of the proposed new policy to other federal agencies for review and comment.
- ✓ The program continues to address eleven (11) recommendations made by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in the recently completed Invasive Species Program Audit (Audit Number 08601-7-AT)
 - Among the OIG recommendations was the call for a revision of the Forest Service "*National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management*", and a call for the development of a new invasive species management handbook to accompany the new NFS Invasive Species Management policy (FSM 2900). The new handbook will provide the tactical guidance for management of invasive species across National Forests and Grasslands, and will tier directly from the requirements in the proposed new policy (FSM 2900). Development of the handbook began in late 2010, and a draft of the proposed handbook will be available for public comment within the next year.
- ✓ The NFS program is increasing cooperation and coordination with other Federal, State, Tribal, and private organizations to prevent and control aquatic invasive species across the landscape, including implementation of priority actions identified in the national **Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan (QZAP)** developed by the Western Regional Panel of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. USFS personnel are participating in ANSTF efforts at the national, regional, and local levels. These efforts support the Secretary of Agriculture's commitment to the States and Congress on QZAP implementation.

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