



NPSO Interim Invasive and Exotic Vegetation Management Policy Statement

Approved by NPSO Board 1/26/2008

Table of Contents

Introduction
Interim Policy

Introduction:

NPSO has several policy statements (on topics such as forest management, rare plants, etc.). These are posted at NPSOregon.org. At the January 26th, 2008 NPSO State Board meeting, it was brought to the Board's attention that NPSO has no policy position regarding the management of invasive exotic plants. The spread of invasive plant species poses a significant threat to native plant species in a wide range of habitats. The spread of invasive exotic species also causes economic losses associated with habitat and rangeland degradation, not to mention the high costs of controlling invasive plants.

Recently, NPSO's Emerald Chapter was approached to comment on a Lane County proposal for roadside weed management. In the absence of a statewide NPSO policy, the Emerald Chapter felt uncomfortable making a policy statement that could be inconsistent with state-level NPSO policy, or committing NPSO to policy positions without Board approval. The Emerald Chapter requested that the NPSO Board address this issue by: 1) adopting a temporary policy statement regarding the management of invasive exotic plants, and 2) forming a committee to develop a long-term policy on invasive/exotic vegetation management.

At the January 26th meeting, the NPSO Board approved an interim invasive plant policy statement, and requested that Bruce Newhouse serve as the chairperson for a newly formed committee whose mission is to craft a long-term policy statement regarding the management of invasive plants.

The Board realizes the management of invasive species can be a sensitive issue, and within the NPSO Board there is not complete agreement regarding all of the guidelines within the interim policy

statement. In particular, the acknowledgement that herbicides may have a role in vegetation management is a contentious issue.

The Board understands that not all NPSO members may agree with the guidelines presented in the interim policy statement. However, we hope people will take the time to review the interim statement, and will feel encouraged to comment and propose suggestions for the longer term policy statement.

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The Native Plant Society of Oregon currently is developing a policy for addressing the complicated issue of invasive vegetation impacts on native plants and habitats. During this interim, we urge that the comparison of effects of not managing invasive vegetation be considered in addition to the effects of managing it. Unfortunately, all alternatives, including taking no action, have some negative impacts. Because invasive vegetation has the second largest negative impact on native habitats (after conversion to other uses, such as development and agriculture), we ask land managers to consider these guidelines.

Invasive, Exotic Vegetation Management Guidelines:

- 1) Practice Prevention as the most important method of reducing infestation of invasive exotic species [definition needed].
- 2) Practice Early Detection and Rapid Response as the second-most important method of reducing infestation.
- 3) Conduct risk assessments of the potential effects of specific invasive exotics on native habitats.
- 4) Determine why invasive exotic plants are present in a treatment area, and address causes to prevent repeated invasion.
- 5) Where risk and impact threat is significant or high, consider and assess impacts of using any/all feasible tools to control invasions.
- 6) Assess all feasible control methods before considering herbicide use.
- 7) Anticipate which follow-up measures will be needed after any control method is applied.
- 8) Consider herbicide use where high-quality native habitats and/or rare plant and invertebrate species are or could become threatened.
- 9) Consider herbicide use for invasive exotic species only.
- 10) Limit herbicide use to the species, area and time where potentially most effective, and with the least potential ecological or other negative impacts.

- 11) Develop familiarity with documented effects of any herbicide proposed for use.
- 12) Follow agency protocols for minimizing impacts and maximizing safety.