

# News Release

**USDA Forest Service  
Pacific Northwest Region**



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## **USDA Forest Service takes on invasive weed challenge**

PORTLAND, Nov. 9, 2005 – With about 420,000 acres of national forests and grasslands in the Pacific Northwest infested to some degree by 95 species of invasive, non-native plants, the USDA Forest Service has developed a systematic, integrated way to prevent future infestations, manage existing problems, and restore affected sites. Regional Forester Linda Goodman signed a Record of Decision (ROD) that will guide the invasive plant management program for the national forests and national grassland in Oregon and Washington. A legal notice will be published next week opening a 45-day appeal period.

Her decision amends national forest land and resource management plans in the region by changing management direction related to invasive plants, increasing the emphasis on prevention, and expanding treatment tools available to deal with them.

“Invasive plant species can cause loss of wildlife habitat, loss of rare or endangered plants, decreased biodiversity, degradation of water quality, and loss of recreation opportunities,” Doug Daoust, Forest Health Protection team leader, explains. “They are spreading rapidly -- around 8 to 12 percent a year.”

To address that harm, the Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest completed an environmental impact statement earlier this year on managing invasive plants that provides clearer and more comprehensive set of standards and guidelines for national forests. Goodman chose the Proposed Action alternative with modifications described in the ROD.

“Prevention, early detection, early treatment and restoration are cost-effective tools for combating invasive plants, and those strategies focus the agencies strategies for dealing with the situation,” says Daoust.

## **Sidebar 1**

### **Where to find out more...**

Additional information about the Record of Decision, the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the invasive plant problem can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/invasiveplant-eis/>.

## **Sidebar 2**

### **What are invasive plants... and what's the big deal?**

Most invasive plant species are introduced to North America from Europe or Asia. They may come accidentally, or they may have been brought in on purpose. Examples of accidental introduction include the transport of seeds or plants in the ballast of ships, in the fleece and hair of livestock, in clothing, and as contaminants in seed lots. Intentional introductions are made for reasons including erosion control, ornamental plants, forage, medicine and dyes, to name a few.

- Invasive plants are distinguished from other unwanted plants by their ability to spread (invade) into native ecosystems.
- In the western United States, invasive species have been spreading at a rate of about 4,600 acres per day on federal lands.
- Oregon State Department of Agriculture estimates indicate that existing and potential invasive plants are costing Oregon citizens a total of about \$100 million per year.
- Invasive plants are typically non-native, however, not all non-native plants are invasive. The terms alien and exotic are used interchangeably to describe an unwanted plant that has been introduced to an environment.

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