



Invasive Species Program

National Wildlife Refuge System

Fiscal Year 2007 Update

Invasive Species Management in the National Wildlife Refuge System

Invasive species continue to be one of the greatest challenges for managers in the National Wildlife Refuge System. At the 2001 Conservation In Action Summit, invasive species received twice as many votes as any other issue in the wildlife and habitat challenges section. When the Refuge System's Threats and Conflicts database was filled out by managers in 2003, invasive species was the most frequently cited threat to the Refuge System. According to the 2007 Refuge Annual Performance Planning database (RAPP), 2.4 million acres of refuge lands are infested with invasive plants. In addition, there are 4,423 invasive animal populations on refuge lands. While the Refuge System is committed to controlling and eradicating these invaders, we have only been able to treat an average of 14% of acres infested with invasive plants each year for the past four fiscal years.

Costs Associated with Invasive Species Management

Using the refuge system's Activity Based Costing (ABC) accounting system, we estimate that refuges spent \$11.3 million from base funding to combat invasive species in Fiscal Year 2007. Although we recognize that ABC codes are not an exact estimate of costs, we believe that they do accurately represent a trend in costs to the refuge system. For example, FY 2007 spending shows an 88% increase from Fiscal Year 2004 when only \$6 million were spent by refuges.

Invasive Species Strike Team Update

The Invasive Species Strike Teams (ISST) are mobile response units designed to rapidly respond to the detection of new infestations and eradicate them. There are currently five Strike Teams in the following geographic regions: Arizona and New Mexico (R2); the upper Missouri/Yellowstone/upper Columbia River basins (R6); south

Florida (R4); North Dakota (R6) and Hawaii and the Pacific Islands (R1).

Region	Acres Treated	Acres Surveyed	FY07 Allocation
1	270	252	\$490,036
2	398	Not Applicable	\$520,759
4	13,751	Not Applicable	\$409,257
6 (ND)	25,228	55,140	\$490,036
6 (MOYOCO)	10,310	27,000	\$409,257

Summary of ISST activities for FY 2007.

Working with Volunteers

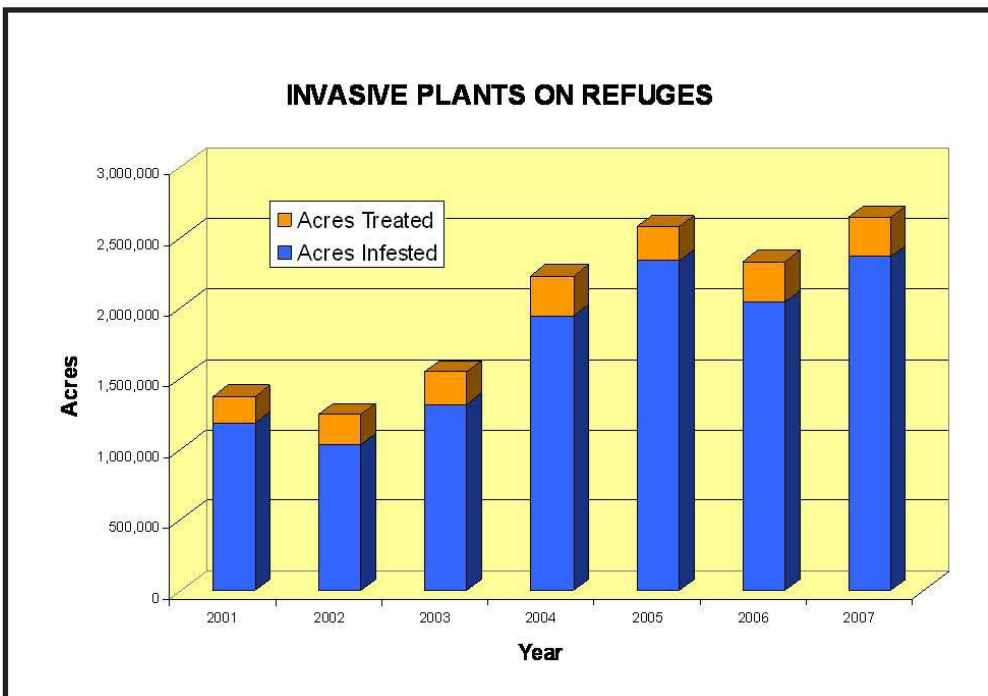
The volunteer and invasives program is funded by a special Congressional appropriation received on an annual basis. Our partners include the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and USGS's National Institute of Invasive Species Science.

Competitive Grants with Volunteers

Overall, the results of the competitive grants projects funded in FY 2007 are impressive given the fact that funding wasn't made available until late in the season. Over the past three years, funding awarded to refuges through this program for engaging volunteers in invasive species management has enabled 2,750 volunteers to contribute more than 49,000 hours to the treatment, inventory, and restoration of over 211,000 acres of refuge land.

Reports Available online

The National Wildlife Refuge Association has designed a user-friendly website that enables easy access to reports and maps produced by refuges participating in the volunteers and invasives program. A map of the U.S. provided on the website has clickable states that lead the viewer to a list of projects taking place with volunteers on refuges in each state.



Numbers of Acres Treated and Infested on NWR's, 2001 – 2007.
Data sources: RMIS and RAPP.

Each project on the list has an attached report, map, or article to provide further information. This website is available at: www.refugeassociation.org/New-invasives/vimp.html



Engaging Volunteers Online

In collaboration with the Center for Invasive Plant Management, the volunteer and invasives program recently announced the availability of a new online training tool designed especially for Refuge System volunteers and Friends groups. The web-based training provides science-based, introductory information that is suitable for anyone interested in learning about invasive plants. The five self-study modules address topics ranging from the organization and history of the Refuge System, to how volunteers help with management, to invasive plant ecology, to tips for community presentations. Each module contains a quiz and web-based resources that enable learners to explore topics more thoroughly.



<http://www.fws.gov/invasives/volunteersTrainingModule/>

Online Training Modules for Refuge Staff – Available Soon

A series of online training modules will soon be available to assist staff members in their efforts to manage invasive plants on refuge lands. These modules created in collaboration with the Center for Invasive Plant Management, are designed to provide a general overview of planning and policy as well as integrated pest management based control methods, such as chemical, physical, biocontrol, prescribed burning and grazing. They are intended to complement the hands-on approach presented in our Field Techniques for Managing Invasive Plants course offered at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) (WLD1328).

Updates from Around the Refuge System

Weed Wash in Montana

The Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, in partnership the South Phillips County Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, used funding provided through a volunteers and invasives grant to wash vehicles during the 2007 hunting season. A portable wash system was rented and then manned by volunteers to wash vehicles of hunters entering and leaving the refuge. Over 40 vehicles were washed in two days by volunteers who contributed more than 100 hours of their time. In addition, 100 free car wash certificates were given away to hunters in the nearby town of Malta. Recreational vehicles can be one of the most significant vectors for spreading invasive plants on public lands. This project deserves special recognition because it emphasizes prevention; stopping the problem before it starts. Contact: Lindy Garner (406) 727- 7400 ext. 213.



Volunteers help to remove invasive plant seeds from a truck in Montana.

Trempeleau NWR Identified as Endangered

Invasive species are pushing some refuges into the endangered category. A report released in October of 2007 by the nonprofit group, Defenders of Wildlife, identifies 10 national wildlife refuges as endangered due to the serious threats they face. Invasive species are listed among these threats. Trempeleau NWR in Wisconsin is cited as plagued by invasive plants such as leafy spurge, purple loosestrife, quackgrass, smooth brome grass and black locust trees. The report is available online at www.defenders.org. Trempeleau is one of the refuges participating in the NWRS Smart Surveys project carried out with USGS in 2007 to assess, map and monitor infested areas.

CWMA's Grow in Florida

Refuges in Florida, including Ten Thousand Islands, Florida Panther, Loxahatchee, Hobe Sound and Pelican Island, have been working with their partners to establish Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA) throughout their state. Partners with the Florida refuges include The Nature Conservancy, National Park Service, Florida Water Management Districts, local county governments and municipalities and private landowners. Although CWMA's have been used widely in the western United States for many years, they are a fairly recent phenomenon in the east. Interested in forming a CWMA in your area? You can find a practical, hands-on "cookbook" at www.mipn.org.

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