



File Code: 1950/2080

Date: September 18, 2002

Dear Interested Citizen

We have a serious problem with the establishment and spread of invasive plants (AKA noxious weeds and exotics) on National Forests and Grasslands in the Pacific Northwest Region. We need your help as we look for ways to more effectively prevent the establishment of invasive plants, and to control and restore areas that are currently infested.

In recent years invasive plant populations have skyrocketed all over the country. The problem has been particularly bad throughout the West. Public lands here in the Pacific Northwest Region are no exception. Approximately 400,000 acres of National Forests and Grasslands are currently infested with invasive, non-native plants. These infestations have the potential to expand at the rate of 8-12 percent per year.

Invasive plants threaten to permanently degrade hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat, eliminate rare and endangered plants, impair water quality and watershed health, and adversely affect a wide variety of other resource values. Invasive plants spread across landscapes, unimpeded by ownership boundaries. These infested areas represent potential seed sources for continuation of the invasion on neighboring lands. Infestations can be prevented, eliminated, controlled or made worse by the use of specific management practices.

Our management direction addressing invasive plant prevention, early detection, treatment, inventory and monitoring, and subsequent site restoration needs to be expanded and clarified. There is a critical need for the development of clear, and comprehensive Forest Plan standards and guidelines that allow for more effective prevention and timely management.

I have assigned an interdisciplinary team to conduct an environmental analysis to evaluate invasive plant prevention practices and management strategies relating to invasive plants in our Region. The team's analysis will be documented in a Region-wide environmental impact statement.

Our question to you is: **How can we improve our management of the Region's forests and grasslands to 1) prevent the establishment of invasive plants; 2) detect and respond rapidly to control populations of invasive plants in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner; 3) restore native plant communities and habitat conditions in ecosystems that have been invaded.**

Your issues and concerns will be important to us as we develop the scope of the project, analyze the situation and the data, develop alternatives and select a preferred alternative. We welcome your comments anytime during the project. However, your comments would be most helpful if received within the next 60 days. A comment form is attached for your use. A draft document will be published in mid summer 2003, followed by a 45-day public comment period.



The interdisciplinary team will be conducting a series of “Invasive Plant Forums” this fall as part of our project scoping. The purpose of the forums is to encourage a dialogue about the prevention and control of invasive plants, and the restoration of native plant communities that have been invaded. We encourage your participation at the forums.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Host Forest</b>	<b>Date</b>
Wenatchee, Washington Wenatchee Conference Center, North Ballroom	Wenatchee/Okanogan National Forest	November 13, 2002 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Baker City, Oregon Best Western Sunridge Inn	Wallowa-Whitman National Forest	November 16, 2002 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Roseburg, Oregon Douglas County Public Library	Umpqua National Forest	November 20, 2002 6:20 pm – 9:20 pm

We have developed a website for your convenience, which contains information about our project, as well as updates on the time and location of our forums and other events. The website address is: [www.fs.fed.us/r6/invasiveplant-eis](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/invasiveplant-eis). Instructions for providing comments via email are available on the website.

To discuss the project or arrange for meetings please contact Eugene Skrine, Team Leader, at 503-326-4310 or by mail at the following address.

Invasive Plant Project  
USDA Forest Service  
PO Box 3623  
Portland, OR 97208

We look forward to your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Richard Sowa* (for)

LINDA GOODMAN  
Acting Regional Forester

Enclosure – COMMENT FORM

*k:\nr\services\correspondence\daoust\1950\_2580\_scopingletter.doc*  
*edit: canderson:NR332: 9/13/02*

