

The Impact of Invasive Plant Species

The Challenge

Invasive plants can outcompete native species, threaten wildlife habitat, and may worsen soil erosion, negatively affecting the health of an entire ecosystem. Dealing with invasive species costs billions of dollars each year for chemical and biological control, labor, restoration, research, and monitoring. Ecosystem changes brought about by invasive plants can reduce site productivity and limit forest management options. Until recently, most Federal programs focused on invasive insects or diseases on public lands. Private landowners need more information about how to identify invasive plant species problems and how to apply effective management practices.

The Solution

The Northeastern Area Forest Stewardship Program Leaders recommended that a Northeastern Area Forest Invasive Species Project be developed to train forestry personnel to identify, treat, and control invasive plant species that have the most detrimental effect on private forest land.

The Morgantown Field Office organized a planning team from the State forestry agencies in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia to develop a workshop that would highlight specific invasive species common to all six States, seek speakers specializing in those species, and demonstrate control methods. Herbicide safety was also identified as an important need.

Resulting Benefits

The 2-day workshop provided more than 170 attendees with the latest information on specific invasive plants, a network with others to achieve common goals, and an opportunity to learn about the latest techniques to mechanically and chemically control invasive plants.

Early detection of invasive plants and quick, coordinated responses to eradicate or contain them are needed before they become too widespread and control becomes technically and/or financially impossible.



A speaker prepares to demonstrate a broadcast foliar application for the control of invasive plants for a group of attendees.

At the workshop, participants learned about:

- Why they should be concerned about invasive plants;
- Which current and future invasive plants affect forest ecology, wildlife habitat, water quality, recreation, and other resources;
- The *National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management*;
- How to identify invasive trees, grasses, shrubs, vines, and forbs;
- How silvicultural practices can exacerbate or alleviate invasive plant problems; and
- How to use equipment safely to control invasive plants.

Sharing Success

Attendees returned to their respective States with the ability to develop strategies for controlling invasive plants. They can better identify invasive species and propose to landowners that control measures be incorporated into Forest Stewardship Plans. Foresters also now have a pool of experienced technical experts they can rely on for assistance and advice.



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