Exotic Plant Management Teams

The Exotic Plant Management Program was created in 2000.
It now funds 16 teams that work throughout the National Park Service (NPS). The teams have worked in 189 park units and have treated over 49,000 acres.

Modeled after the approach used to fight wildfires, Exotic Plant Management Teams are designed to provide a highly trained, mobile strike force of plant management specialist to assist parks in the control of non-native invasive plants.

Invasive non-native species are changing natural ecosystems throughout the world including our national parks. These biological invasions contribute to ecosystem change and instability. The National Park Service estimates that non-native invasive plant species dominate more than 2.6 million acres (between 3-5 percent) of park lands with reports of non-native invasive plant species from virtually all units.

To mitigate the threat of non-native invasive plant species the National Park Service created the Exotic Plant Management Program. It is the goal of invasive plant programs within the National Park Service to manage the sources of new infestations, reduce the effects of existing infestations, and to restore native plant communities and ecosystem functions.

The Exotic Plant Management Teams (Teams) were formed to assist parks, and have become an integral part of the NPS response to a growing invasive species threat. The Teams have the flexibility to respond swiftly and decisively increasing NPS ability to protect its lands from invasive plants.

The Teams are staffed by highly trained individuals with specialized knowledge and experience in invasive plant management. The Teams are headquartered in a park or field unit. They operate over a wide geographic area, serving multiple park units. The activities and priorities for each Team generally are coordinated through a steering committee made up of representatives from the parks the team serves.

The Teams focus on plant control but operate in all aspects of invasive species management. The Teams expand the parks ability to manage invasive plants by concentrating on the treatment of the large, difficult, and often remote invasive plant infestations.

The Teams play an important role in all aspects of managing invasive species, including prevention, inventory, monitoring, treatment, restoration and research within National Parks. Over the last six years, they have inventoried more than 2.5 million acres for invasive plants.

The Teams provide a focal point for managing invasive plants. They provide technical assistance both in the parks and to local partners. They are often leaders in local and regional cooperative weed management organizations.

Photos left to right: Purple loosestrife treatment at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (left), crew treating kudzu at Vicksburg National Military Park (center), rapid response treatment of crested floatingheart at Big Cypress National Preserve (right).

For more information, visit our website at:
www.nature.nps.gov/biology/invasivespecies

Team Locations

North Cascades

Great Lakes

Northeast

Northern Rocky Mountain

Northern Great Plains

National Capital Region

California

Lake Mead

Mid Atlantic

Colorado Plateau

Southeast

Chihuahuan Desert/ Southern Shortgrass Prairie

Gulf Coast

Florida/Caribbean Partnership

Not to Scale

Florida/Caribbean Partnership Virgin Islands

Alaska

Pacific Islands

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