



NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA

USDA FOREST SERVICE, 160A ZILICOA STREET, ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

NEWS • RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

National Forests in North Carolina Approves Non-Native Invasive Species Control Project.

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – Forest Supervisor, Marisue Hilliard, has approved a strategy to control non-native invasive plants on the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests. Native plants can be overrun by invading non-native plants. It is this group of plants land managers are attempting to control with the approval of this project.

The project will annually treat up to 1,100 acres of non-native invasive plants using a variety of methods. Manual or mechanical methods may include the use of shovels, loppers and saws. Where appropriate, herbicides will be directly applied to target plants using spot treatment methods. Areas to be targeted will include legally designated rare species, rare plant communities, and/or areas including unique habitats. “It is estimated there are over 25,000 infested acres across the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests” stated Gary Kauffman, Forest Botanist.

The decision to implement this project provides managers with the flexibility to quickly respond to non-native plant infestations that pose a direct threat to the Forest’s native ecosystems. Though the rate of spread is not yet known for these relatively new species to our forests, they spread several times faster than the species they are out-competing, and infest a variety of habitats.

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Some of the species of particular concern on the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests include Oriental bittersweet, princess tree, privet, and Japanese honeysuckle. These species have all been imported from other countries either intentionally as ornamentals or accidentally thru shipments of other cargo. They are uniquely able to thrive in Western North Carolina and other regions as they overtake native vegetation. The Oriental bittersweet vine, for example, is able to grow in the shaded, dense areas of the forest thereby having a potentially greater impact than the more familiar non-native invasive kudzu vine which thrives in the direct sunlight available along roadways and other open areas. It is also important to recognize there are species with similar names, such as the American bittersweet, which is native to this region and should not be pulled or otherwise treated.

Cooperators play a critical role in addressing private and other non-federal lands, recognizing plants do not stop their migration at a property boundary. Private land owners are encouraged to learn more about non-native invasive plants on their property. More information on invasives can be found at www.invasive.org, www.bugwood.org, and www.eddmaps.org.

For more information regarding the project decision and environmental assessment refer to the Forest website: <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc>.

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