

# Administrative Change to The 2005 Chequamegon-Nicolet Invasive Plant Control Project

## Background

In 2005 an environmental analysis was conducted and an environmental assessment (EA) was prepared documenting the effects of the spread of non-native invasive plant species (NNIP) on the health of native ecosystems on the Forest, and the effects of various control methods including herbicides. On July 1, 2005, then Forest Supervisor Anne F. Archie signed the Decision Notice for the Chequamegon-Nicolet Invasive Plant Control Project. Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) staff have been implementing this project and controlling invasive plants on the Forest for about 10 years.

## New Approach

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest proposes to take a new approach to the way we inform the public about our annual treatment of non-native invasive species on the forest. One of the central pillars of our strategy to manage invasive species is “rapid response” to new detections, but our current approach does not allow for this. We would like our process of evaluating NNIP sites to be more efficient, and to be able to treat infestations in a timelier manner.

Currently we add new invasive sites discovered during annual surveys to our CNNF Invasive Plant Control Project, and inform the public by amending the Environmental Assessment Decision Notice every two years. Since the signing of the 2005 EA, three supplemental EAs have been completed. Each supplemental EA addressed the addition of new NNIP sites to the original approved treatments. The 2009 supplement also added new herbicides, biological control, and added invasive species to the A-list (see table below). Past monitoring of control efforts have shown how effective our methods will be. Over the last 9 years, weeds have been treated according to methods analyzed in the 2005 EA and the environmental effects are as expected in the original analysis for each species on their respective sites. There hasn't been any 'surprise' effects to the treatment of weeds across the Forest since the beginning of our control efforts, almost a decade ago (see Table 1 for details).

Past public comments on the original EA and supplemental EAs have shown that there is general support for the NNIP Control Project. Extensive public involvement was conducted for the original proposal (EA 2005, Sec 1.5). There were nine parties that provided comments in support of the action and one that opposed the use of herbicide and bio-control. Tribal, state, and county scoping indicated support for the action. Only supportive comments were received during the 30-day notice and comment period for all three Supplemental Environmental Assessments.

Based on our experience with the treatment of NNIP species and past public involvement, we will no longer write the bi-annual Supplemental Environmental Assessment. Instead, treatment plans for newly discovered sites will be given to CNNF resource specialists who will review planned treatments for significant and adverse impacts from the proposed NNIP treatments. For example, a hydrologist will consider whether there will be impacts to groundwater. After resource specialists have either found no extraordinary circumstances (as described in FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, section 30.4 1 thru 7) present in the affected area, or are satisfied that Forest Plan standards and guidelines and other project design measures will mitigate significant and/or adverse impacts, we will begin treatment of sites immediately.

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The time-consuming protocol we have been using delayed treatment, resulting in invasive species spread. This more timely method will help us respond more rapidly to newly documented infestations,

<b>Table 1</b> Summary of Supplemental Environmental Assessment since the 2005 EA		
<b>2007 SEA Highlights</b>	<b>2009 SEA Highlights</b>	<b>2011 SEA Highlights</b>
<b>466</b> additional sites (191 ac)	<b>1117</b> additional sites (340 ac)	<b>807</b> additional sites (393 ac)
Issues affected by additional proposed treatments: 1. Aquatic systems, soils, hydrology 2. TES species, especially plants	Issues affected by additional proposed treatments: 1. Aquatic systems, soils, hydrology 2. TES species, especially plants	Issues affected by additional proposed treatments: 1. Aquatic systems, soils, hydrology 2. TES species, especially plants
No changes to all other issues analyzed in the 2005 decision (Human Health & Safety, Cultural/Heritage Resources, Native Plant Communities - non-target plants).	No changes to all other issues analyzed in the 2005 decision (Human Health & Safety, Cultural/Heritage Resources, Native Plant Communities - non-target plants).	No changes to all other issues analyzed in the 2005 decision (Human Health & Safety, Cultural/Heritage Resources, Native Plant Communities - non-target plants).
	Two new herbicides added: 1. aminopyralid 2. metsulfuron-methyl	
	Four biological control insects for spotted knapweed control	
	Addition of new A-list invasive plant species: 1. brittle-stem hemp-nettle 2. forget-me-not 3. common mullein	

## Future Public Contact

In the future, our methods of communicating with the public about our planned NNIS treatments will be:

1. Newspaper /announcement/
  - a. Medford-Park Falls District: The Star News, Medford, WI; and The Park Falls Herald, Park Falls, WI
  - b. Eagle River-Florence District: The Northwoods River News, Rhinelander, WI
  - c. Great Divide District: The Daily Press, Ashland, WI
  - d. Washburn District: The Daily Press, Ashland, WI
  - e. Lakewood-Laona District: The Northwoods River News, Rhinelander, WI
2. Chequamegon-Nicolet website, [www.fs.usda.gov/main/cnnf/maps-pubs](http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/cnnf/maps-pubs)
3. Notification at the treatment site

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## Suggestion/Concerns

Although this is not a formal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document, we have received comments from you in the past regarding The 2005 Chequamegon-Nicolet Invasive Plant Control Project. Therefore, we would like to provide you with the opportunity to make suggestions, or voice any concerns about this administrative change. Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic communications concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days.

Suggestions and/or concerns can be submitted to: Leesha Howard-McCauley, Project Leader, 850 N. 8th St., Medford, WI 54451 (715-748-4875 x37 phone, 715-748-5675 fax). The office business hours are: 8:00 am-4:30 pm Wednesday through Fridays, excluding holidays.

Electronic communications can be submitted to: [comments-eastern-chequamegon-nicolet-medford-falls@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-chequamegon-nicolet-medford-falls@fs.fed.us). You may also submit emails to: [lmhowardmccauley@fs.fed.us](mailto:lmhowardmccauley@fs.fed.us). Acceptable formats are text or html email, Adobe portable document format, and formats viewable in Microsoft Office applications. For email, please enter "**CNNF NNIP Admin Change**" in the subject line.

## Partnerships and Volunteer Opportunities

The CNNF works with several invasive species cooperatives that welcome individuals as well as representatives of community organizations to join the effort to combat invasive species problems in northern Wisconsin. Volunteers are always welcome. For further information or to volunteer, please contact a cooperative nearest you:

- ❖ Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, and Iron counties:
  - Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area (NCWMA), [www.northwoodscwma.org](http://www.northwoodscwma.org)
    - Pam Roberts, NCWMA Coordinator, (715) 373-6167 or [info@northwoodscwma.org](mailto:info@northwoodscwma.org).
- ❖ Florence, Forest, and Marinette counties:
  - Wild Rivers Invasives Species Coalition (WRISC), [www.wrisc.org](http://www.wrisc.org)
    - Ann Hruska, Administrator/Project Manager at (906) 774-8441 or [wildriverscwma@gmail.com](mailto:wildriverscwma@gmail.com)
- ❖ Oneida and Vilas counties:
  - Wisconsin Headwaters Invasive Partnership (WHIP), [www.whipinvasives.org](http://www.whipinvasives.org)
    - Jean Hansen, Oneida County (715) 365-2750 or [Jean Hansen, Oneida County](mailto:Jean.Hansen@oneida.gov)
    - Ted Ritter, Vilas County (715) 479-3738 or [Ted Ritter, Vilas County](mailto:Ted.Ritter@vilas.gov)
- ❖ Price, Rusk, Sawyer and Taylor Counties:
  - Upper Chippewa Invasive Species Cooperative
    - Ann Dassow, (715) 748-4875 or [ahdassow@fs.fed.us](mailto:ahdassow@fs.fed.us)

The Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) is another partner and source for invasive plant species information. GLIFWC maintains a website with known invasive plant sites at <http://www.glifwc.org/>.

Thank you for your interest in management of the Forest.