

**Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests  
Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant  
Management Plan for Wilderness**

DRAFT



## BACKGROUND

On the MBR, Noxious weed and invasive plant management is guided by the Rocky Mountain Region Invasive Species Management Strategy, the unit-wide Environmental Assessment for Management of Noxious Weeds (1996) and Implementation Plan (2000), and the Invasive Species Action Plan for the Medicine Bow/Routt NFs & Thunder Basin NG: 2006-2008. These documents do not deal with wilderness specific issues, inventory, monitoring, process or education. Wilderness Managers recognize the need for a plan that will emphasize preserving the biological integrity of wilderness.

This plan applies to the 10 wilderness areas that are located on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests.

- Flat Tops Wilderness
- Sarvis Creek Wilderness
- Mt. Zirkel Wilderness
- Savage Run Wilderness
- Huston Park Wilderness
- Encampment River Wilderness
- Platte River Wilderness
- Rawah Wilderness
- Never Summer Wilderness
- Neota Wilderness

## POLICY AND DIRECTION

### The Wilderness Act:

- "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man."
- "...which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions"
- "...appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature"

### Forest Plan Direction:

#### **Routt Land and Resource Management Plan**

Control nonnative and noxious plants throughout the Forest, with priority given to designated wilderness (RNF-LRMP 1-16).

Use genetically local (at the sub-section level), native plant species for revegetation efforts where technically and economically feasible. Use weed-free seed mixtures. While native perennials are becoming established, nonnative annuals or sterile perennial species may be used to prevent soil erosion (RNF-LRMP 1-8).

Use only certified noxious weed free hay, seed, straw or other materials for feed or revegetation projects on the Forest (RNF-LRMP 1-16).

Vegetative restoration projects may be needed where human activities have altered natural ecosystems, and there is no reasonable expectation of natural revegetation. Use native species in restoration efforts. Where nonnative species must be used, select plants based on the likelihood that they will not persist beyond the rehabilitation period (RNF-LRMP 1-22).

### **Medicine Bow Land and Resource Management Plan:**

Prioritize treatments and potential invasion of noxious weeds in Wilderness, Recommended Wilderness, and RNAs when setting priorities for treatment. (MBNF-LRMP 1-50)

For all proposed projects or activities, determine the risk of noxious weed introduction or spread and implement appropriate mitigation measures. (MBNF-LRMP 1-50)

Use only certified weed-free hay, seed, straw, or other materials for revegetation projects on the Forest. (MBNF-LRMP 1-50)

Include provisions necessary to prevent the introduction or spread of noxious weeds in contracts and permits for use of National Forest System lands and resources. (MBNF-LRMP 1-50)

Vegetative restoration projects may be needed where human activities have altered natural ecosystems, and there is no reasonable expectation of natural revegetation. Use native species in restoration efforts. Where non-native species must be used, select plants based on the likelihood that they will not persist beyond the rehabilitation period. (MBNF-LRMP 1-57)

### CFR's

#### **Flat Tops Special Order:**

*Possessing, storing or transporting any plant material, such as hay or straw.*

***NOTE:*** *Exceptions are allowed for livestock feed that has been processed through chemical or mechanical means in a manner that will destroy viable*

seeds. Examples of allowed material include: **pelletized feed and rolled grains**. 36 CFR 261.58(t)

**Sarvis Creek, Mount Zirkel and Never Summer Special Order:**

*Possessing, or transporting unprocessed plant material, such as hay, straw, or other unprocessed livestock feed for bedding, feeding or other uses. 36 CFR 261.58(t)*

**Huston Park, Encampment River, Platte River, and Savage Run Special Order:**

*Possessing or transporting other than certified weed-free hay or supplemental feed (e.g. alfalfa pellets or treated grain) for livestock feeding, bedding and other uses. 36 CFR 261.58(t)*

**Neota and Rawah Special Orders:**

*Not addressed in Order.*

The 10-year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (10YWSC):

The 10-year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge was developed by the Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG) as a quantifiable measurement of the Forest Service's success in wilderness stewardship. It identifies noxious/invasive plant management as a primary output for managing wilderness to a minimum stewardship level.

Element #2: "This wilderness was successfully treated for non-native plants"

**Outcome:** Identification and treatment of invasive plants threatening the natural appearance and biological processes of each wilderness will allow native species to thrive and will restore the natural landscape. See appendix A and B

Chiefs Four Threats:

Chief Dale Bosworth cited invasive species as one of the four threats to National Forest Lands. Dealing with these threats has become a priority with FS land managers.

Forest Service National Weed Management Strategy

Four primary goals of Integrated Weed Management are:

- 1) increase the understanding and awareness,
- 2) develop and implement integrated weed management at all levels,
- 3) institutionalize consideration of noxious weeds during the planning phase of projects,
- 4) develop strong partnerships.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Training: Each field going person with responsibilities in wilderness will be trained in the following areas.

- Threats posed by non-natives
- Identification/ Mapping/ Reporting

Education/ Prevention: Most of these tasks will be tiered to specific education plans for each wilderness.

- Public Contacts
- Trailhead Information
- User Groups
- Law Enforcement
- Outfitter/ Guides
- MBNF Weed-Free Hay Order Change

Inventory: Established NRIS/TERRA protocols for documentation need to be adhered to.

- Methodology
- Site form (Appendix C)
- Storing Spatial data

Treatment: As per Forest Service Manual Direction (2323.04c,) Regional Forester approval is required to treat non-natives in wilderness. The following criteria must be met submitted to the Regional Office before proceeding.

- NEPA requirements must be met
- The project must go through the Minimum Requirement Decision Guide (MRDG) <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=MRDGA>
- Pesticide Use Proposal (FS 2100-2) must be completed
- Maps illustrating the number, size and location of infestations
- Forest Supervisor letter requesting herbicide use
- Monitoring for success of treatments

*Note – The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act of 1947 definition of ‘pesticide’ includes ‘herbicides.’*

Monitoring:

- Spread of existing infestations
- Effectiveness of treatments
- Burned areas
- Special Use inspections
- Yearly Monitoring Report (Appendix D)

Restoration: Follow Forest Plan direction listed above.

## Appendix A

This wilderness was successfully treated for non-native, invasive plants.<sup>1</sup>

### Key Definitions:

- “non-native, invasive plants”: a plant, including its seeds, spores or other biological material that is non-native to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm.
- “non-native, invasive species management plan”: an integrated plan developed to address the control or eradication of non-native, invasive plants and/or animals on a national forest or other land unit.
- “successfully treated”: the treatment was part of an Non-Native, Invasive Species (NNIS) management plan and the treatment met the objectives in the plan, whether it be eradication or control. This includes direct management actions in the field.

### Counting Instructions:

Score	Accomplishment Level
2	A non-native, invasive species survey <sup>2</sup> is completed in wilderness and/or a prevention program and targeted management actions have been implemented without a non-native, invasive species management plan
3	A non-native, invasive species management plan has been prepared, or direction is provided in the forest plan or supplemental direction, and includes direction for addressing non-native, invasive plants in wilderness
5	Management actions have been implemented (e.g., treatments, regulations, education, etc.) in highest priority areas
6	Management actions taken in highest priority areas have been evaluated and determined to be successful
10	Management actions for all non-native, invasive plants inventoried in wilderness have been implemented and these actions have been evaluated for effectiveness and treatments adjusted as necessary.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> This element specifically addresses non-native, invasive plants. However, if non-native, invasive plants are not of issue in this wilderness, and other non-native, invasive species are (wildlife, insects, disease, etc.), you may substitute efforts to address these concerns under this element.

<sup>2</sup> If the survey is current and no non-native, invasive plants are found, count 10.

**Element # 2** This wilderness was successfully treated for non-native plants.

Outcome: Identification and removal of invasive plants threatening the natural appearance and biological processes of each Wilderness will allow native species to thrive and will restore the natural landscape.

**What if I have non-native species that are not “invasive” per-se?**

Non-native, invasive plants as defined by Executive Order 13112 (Feb. 3, 1999) is a species is considered nonnative to the ecosystem under consideration and that its introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. This element only focuses on those species which have been determined to be invasive.

**What type of analysis or plan do I need to have?**

You need an interdisciplinary plan at a level or scope that fits your wilderness needs. The level of analysis will vary for each forest or wilderness. It is ok to have a forest level EIS that addresses wilderness. It is also ok to have a wilderness level analysis; this may be a CE, EA or EIS.

**What is successful treatment?**

Successful treatment of a non-native, invasive species is defined as activities identified (and implemented) in a plan that meet the objective of your plan, whether it be eradication or control.

**How do you establish your monitoring cycle?**

The monitoring cycle should be outlined in your plan and is dependent on the threat posed by your particular species. A highly invasive species may need to be monitored more often than a less invasive species.

**I have a non-native wildlife species which is of greater concern in my wilderness than non-native, invasive plant species. Can I report on this species instead?**

No, this element is focused on non-native, invasive plants. You may only substitute reporting for a non-plant species (wildlife, insects, disease, etc.) if non-native, invasive plants are not an issue in your wilderness.

**Appendix C**

**Noxious Weed Inventory  
Field Record**

Ranger District: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Infestation

Drainage: \_\_\_\_\_ Specific Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
(eg. Blacktail campground)

Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Range: \_\_\_\_\_ Section(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
(include map if possible)

Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_  
(from GPS unit)

Location narrative (associated vegetation, habitat type, general observations, etc.)

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Photo taken? Y or N

Weed ID and Stand info.

Common name: \_\_\_\_\_.

Genus / Species (if known): \_\_\_\_\_.

Stage of growth: Bud \_\_\_ Flowering \_\_\_ Seedling \_\_\_  
(check one)

Area infested (acres within perimeter drawn around contiguous population): \_\_\_\_\_.

Canopy coverage within infested area (percent or Daubenmire category): \_\_\_\_\_.

Proximity to pond, stream, trail or other potential vector of transport  
(narrative): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D

Medicine Bow-Routt  
Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant  
Yearly Wilderness Monitoring Report

Wilderness Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

# of personnel trained	
# of information contacts	
% of trailheads signed with weed message	
# of noxious/invasive plant Special Order Violations issued	
# of acres inventoried	
RO Approval	Y or N Year _____
# of acres treated	
# of acres re-treated	
Species Treated	
# of plants or clumps sprayed	
# of previously treated areas monitored	