

## Invasive Weeds - Overview Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests

### Forest Plan Revision Collaborative Group Meeting, February 2013

#### What is an invasive or noxious weed?

- An invasive weed is a plant species that is non-native to the ecosystem and its presence causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.
- Noxious weeds are those plant species that have been designated by federal, State, or County officials as particularly injurious to local economies or to the environment.

#### Why are invasive weeds a concern?

- Invasive weeds present the most immediate and disruptive threat to ecosystem function and integrity nationally, regionally, and on the Forest. Invasive species are considered one of four major threats to the national forests (FS Chief Dale Bosworth 2006).
- Invasive weeds can change biological diversity by displacing native vegetation and their presence can alter ecosystem function (erosion, fire interval/severity, wildlife forage). Wilderness values and “sense of place” can be diminished.
- Invasive weed infestations are difficult to control and will flourish in the absence of natural checks and balances (herbivory, predation, pathogens).

#### What is the extent of the invasive weed problem on the Forests?

- Invasive weed inventories for the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests record 80 different invasive weed species, occupying 425,080 acres within or immediately adjacent to the Forests.
- Managers estimate about 500,000 acres within the Forests to be “weed free.”
- The following invasive plant species are of particular concern:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Infested Acres Clearwater	Infested Acres Nez Perce
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea biebersteinii</i>	53,830	145,991
Rush skeletonweed	<i>Chondrilla juncea</i>	414	14,033
Yellow star-thistle	<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	303	96,382
Meadow hawkweed	<i>Hieracium caespitosum</i>	21,762	292
Orange hawkweed	<i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i>	2,421	1,222
Common curpina	<i>Crupina vulgaris</i>	0	11,550
Dalmatian toadflax	<i>Linaria dalmatica</i>	183	2,128
Scotch thistle	<i>Onopordum acanthium</i>	17	6,678

#### What is being done to address invasive weeds?

- Forest Service management emphasis (Forest Service manual direction, Dec 2011, and Best Management Practices for invasive species – R1 and R4)
- The Forests are an active participant in four Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA). Members include County officials, landowners and forest users.
- The Forests implement Integrated Pest Management, involving prevention, education, inventory, treatment (hand pulling, herbicide, and bio-control), monitoring, and restoration, emphasizing early detection and rapid response.
- Recent environmental impact statements for weed treatments in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and Frank Church—River of No Return Wilderness consider alternatives and potential effects of treatments.
- The Forests encourage partnerships and volunteers to assist with all aspects of invasive weed program.