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Department of
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Forest-wide Nonnative Invasive Plant Management Project

Environmental Assessment

Forest
Service

Monongahela National Forest
Supervisor's Office

Eastern
Region

Barbour, Grant, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pendleton,
Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Tucker, and Webster
Counties, West Virginia

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The photo on the cover is of garlic mustard, a non-native invasive plant on the Forest.

Preface

Non-native invasive plants continue to spread on the Forest. Several rare plant communities are imminently threatened by expanding infestations. Many other high-interest ecosystems and large areas of contiguous federal ownership remain largely uninvaded, but threats to these ecosystems are increasing due to new spot infestations and continued spread along transportation corridors. Control of invasive species continues to be a national and regional priority. The Forest-wide Nonnative Invasive Plant Management Project is being proposed to expand the Forest's existing NNIS plant management strategy to include treatment of existing and emerging infestations. Such treatments would better implement the NNIS goals and objectives in the Forest Plan.

The Monongahela National Forest (MNF) is preparing this Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This EA discloses direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the Forest-wide Nonnative Invasive Plant Management Project proposed action and alternatives. This document is organized into 4 chapters and 2 appendices.

Chapter 1 - Purpose of and Need for Action: This Chapter summarizes the proposed action, describes the project area, discusses Forest Plan Direction related to this project, discloses the existing vegetative condition of the area, explains why action is needed (referred to as the "purpose and need for action"), defines the scope of the analysis, identifies the decisions to be made with this project, and lists the applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders related to this project. This chapter details how the Forest Service informed the public of the proposal, how the public responded, and what issues or concerns were identified through comments.

Chapter 2 - Alternatives Considered: This chapter provides a more detailed description of the agency's proposed action, as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. All alternatives were developed based on issues raised internally or externally. Summary tables of the proposed activities, potential effects, monitoring, design features, implementation strategies, and mitigation measures associated with the action alternative are also provided.

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment and Environmental Effects: This chapter describes the existing conditions and the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and No Action alternatives. Environmental effects include direct, indirect, and cumulative effects, unavoidable adverse impacts, and irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources.

Chapter 4 - Project Consultation and Coordination: This chapter provides a list of preparers or contributors to this assessment. It also lists the Federal and State agencies that were consulted during the development of the EA, along with organizations, businesses, and individuals.

Appendix A and Appendix B provide detailed maps and tables of the areas proposed for treatment under the Proposed Action. Additional documentation, including detailed analyses of the project area resources, is located in the project planning file at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Elkins, West Virginia.

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