



Invasive Plant Issues and the Wilderness Resource
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Adapted for the wilderness.net toolbox by Tom Carlson
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- The 1964 Wilderness Act presents managers with direction that creates a dilemma regarding what to do about invasive plants:
 - Section 2 (a) provides direction to preserve natural conditions in wilderness; natural conditions are interpreted to mean what would have existed in the absence of at least historic, European human activities
 - Section 2 (c) defines wilderness as an area where earth and its community of life are “untrammelled”; untrammelled is interpreted to mean uncontrolled, unconfined, not restrained by people—protected from modern human control or at least intentional manipulation
- The dilemma that this direction creates regarding what to do about invasive plants is that managers must choose either:
 - to preserve natural conditions by actively manipulating wilderness to reduce or eliminate invasive plants, or
 - to keep wilderness free from intentional modern human manipulation, but loose natural conditions due to the changes caused by invasive plants
- A regional, forest or wilderness invasive plant EIS should explicitly decide:
 - if treatment of invasive plants (manipulation of wilderness) is appropriate in order to reduce or eliminate unnatural conditions, and
 - if treatment of invasive plants is appropriate in wilderness, is it appropriate everywhere or just under certain circumstances:
 - Does the appropriateness of invasive plant treatment vary with spatial scale, intensity, or periodicity of the treatment (if so which spatial scales, intensities, and periodicities are appropriate?)
 - Should invasive plant treatment be considered more appropriate in some wildernesses than in others (if so, what criteria distinguish wildernesses where treatments are or are not appropriate?)
- Wherever invasive plant treatment in wilderness is considered, the regional, forest or wilderness invasive plant EIS must specifically address these issues:
 - Quantity and quality of information on reference conditions
 - Quantity and quality of information on the consequences of both no treatment and treatment
 - Monitoring—for both pre and post treatment by any method
 - Vectors—what is being done to prevent the spread of invasive weeds into wilderness
 - Rehabilitation—what type of work needs to be done after treatment to mitigate treatment effects
 - Restoration—what is being done to restore natural plant communities
 - Under what conditions or treatment prescriptions is use of motorized equipment or mechanized transport appropriate