

Section III

Awareness, Education and Training



Awareness of what noxious weeds are and the problems they cause will help the general public to understand why a long-term weed management program is important. Education on the impacts of noxious weeds to critical flora and fauna of the area is an important facet of any long-term weed management plan developed.

All federal, state, local agency personnel, and private landowners involved in the management programs must have proper training, licenses, and certification in the correct use of weed control techniques. The primary groups to be targeted by an awareness, education and training campaign are: WMA residents, visitors, and federal, state, and local land management agency staff, including permanent and seasonal.

Invasive plants pose a serious threat to native vegetation. The invasive and competitive nature of plants that define noxious weeds make it imperative that personnel working in the area are familiar with the most important noxious weed species and the damage they cause.

Education Awareness & Objectives

Informational brochures, educational and public awareness materials, and training materials may be available at the state level or through the cooperative extension service.

Each Weed Management Area steering committee should obtain all information on the weed management and awareness program available. Information can be distributed through various cooperators within the WMA such as:

- Local Weed Districts
- Public Park Entrances and Visitor Centers
- Forest Service and BLM Offices
- Campfire and Trail Programs
- County Cooperative Extension Offices
- Area Chambers of Commerce
- Local Tours
- Local Environmental Organizations
- Local Wildlife Organizations
- Schools and Service Organizations
- County Fairs and Trade Shows

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I. Awareness and Education Objectives

- A. Develop general public awareness programs outlining problems caused by noxious weeds, including:
 1. Damage to wildlife habitat and crop and forage production.
 2. Health problems associated with weeds, including skin irritations and allergies.
 3. Impacts on scenic and recreational values.
- B. Utilize local, state and federal resources and materials. (*See Appendix 14.*)
- C. Develop and maintain demonstration plots which would:
 1. Be in areas frequented by visitors.
 2. Illustrate the impact of different management techniques and the level of control obtained in infested areas.
 3. Include information on:
 - a. The effectiveness of biological weed control (the establishment of an insectary would be beneficial).
 - b. The impact of pulling and mowing noxious weeds.
 - c. Herbicide treatments showing grass and forb response, including information on safe handling of herbicides, actual amount of herbicide applied to the area, and other environmental concerns.
 - d. Benefits of revegetation with competitive desired species.
 - e. Explanation of why each method of control is an acceptable choice for that specific area.
 - f. Benefits of cultural control methods (use of domestic animals, etc.).
- D. Develop annual tours to:
 1. Update local area residents on the progress of noxious weed management within the WMA.
 2. Update agency personnel on the results of management programs.
- E. Develop and maintain displays and programs on selected noxious weeds.
- F. Public entities should:
 1. Assign at least one staff person to administer weed management plans for that agency and for the WMA. This person should have specific training in weed biology and integrated control systems, with formal education (such as a weed management short course) or specific training from qualified experts.

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2. Establish local staff programs to identify all important weed species and to report infestations discovered to the lead staff member. Special incentives (such as extra compensatory time) to individuals who submit this information could be used to encourage participation by general staff members.
3. Involve the media and press.

II. Training Objectives

- A. Develop cooperative training programs to educate and inform all participants in the WMA about the latest Integrated Weed Management options and technologies. These programs should include all land managers within the WMA, including state and federal agency land managers, as well as private landowners.
- B. Develop a training program in cooperation with the Cooperative Extension Service and other agencies that ensures that all weed management techniques follow approved procedures, including proper use of all herbicides and calibration of application equipment.
- C. Implement a regular education and training program to ensure that all cooperators maintain proper pesticide applicator certification throughout the life of the project.
- D. Sponsor regular training and update programs for all WMA cooperators. Resources to provide training can include: weed district personnel, county extension agents, and university and agency personnel. Training should include:
 1. Weed identification.
 2. Integrated weed management concepts. (*See Section VI.*)
 3. Proper selection of the most effective weed control techniques.
 4. Implementation of control techniques.
 5. Effective monitoring techniques. (*See Section VII.*)
 6. Personal protective equipment.
 7. Proper pesticide storage.
 8. Application equipment calibration.
 9. How to develop a weed management area. (*See Section II.*)
 10. How to develop a Management Plan and Annual Operating Plan. (*See Section IX.*)