Noxious weeds infest about 100 million acres of North America. They conquer more than 3 million acres each year, invading an estimated 6 square miles of Forest Service, and BLM lands every day. They’ve already claimed 7 million acres of National Parks. When noxious weeds invade elk country, they eliminate a diversity of grasses and forbs on which elk and other wildlife depend.

Deteriorating habitat also threatens ranchers and farmers and the private lands that sustain cattle and, quite often, wintering elk herds. On one ranch, after knapweed was controlled with herbicide, the grass increased from 48 pounds per acre to 1,620 pounds, improving the land’s carrying capacity for cattle twentyfold and boosting the value of the property.

Retired weed program manager of the Forest Service’s Northern Region, Jim Olivarez says, “We can’t fight this alone. It takes everybody, working together - state and federal agencies, ranchers, conservations groups. We need everybody.”
What All Sportsmen Should Know About Noxious Weeds!

How do noxious weeds impact wildlife habitat?
• They significantly reduce desirable forage
• They alter thermal and escape cover
• They change water flow and availability to wildlife
• They reduce vegetation biodiversity necessary for wildlife survival

Quick Facts
• Invasive species, both plants and animals, together are the second leading cause of animal decline and extinction worldwide!
• Noxious weeds are plants that often come from other continents, and because of their aggressive nature and lack of natural “controls” on this continent cause major wildlife habitat destruction in North America.
• Areas dominated by leafy spurge receive three times less use by deer compared with similar uninfested areas.
• On native bunchgrass sites in Montana, dense spotted knapweed infestations reduce available winter forage for elk by 50 to 90%. Elk use increased almost four times after the spotted knapweed was controlled on these sites.
• On wetlands, invasions of purple loosestrife and saltcedar degrade habitat by: limiting human and wildlife access, exasperating drought, and modifying natural water cycles.
Theme Page

You have a lot in common with the great people pictured here. You’re a hunter….so were they. You are committed to preserving and conserving our wildlife and its habitat. So were they.

These men, and others, were instrumental in helping to develop the system of wildlife conservation and habitat preservation that we have today.

They could not have done this great work without American sportsmen.

Indeed, the American sportsmen, have been the driving force behind conservation issues. The ideals of fair chase, habitat preservation, and wildlife conservation were adopted by the legislators because of constant prodding from American sportsmen.

Wildlife habitat is now under increasing attack from invasive species. You, as a sportsman, are being asked once again, to help save the day.
What You Can Do!

1. Learn to identify noxious weeds.
2. When recreating, do not camp in, drive, walk, or ride through weed infested areas!
3. Do not pick or transport any unknown flowers for enjoyment, they may be weeds disguised as pretty flowers.
4. If you find a weed patch, record its location and report it the appropriate authorities.
5. If you find a suspicious plant, collect it in a plastic bag or plant press and bring it to your local weed control office.
6. If you find seeds attached to your clothing or shoes, remove them in the infested area or dispose of them in the trash.

How Weeds Spread!

Soil on vehicles, attached to clothing, shoes, or fur, contaminated seed or hay, and transport of live plants.
Weed Identification 101

Leafy Spurge

- Perennial, creeping roots
- Narrow leaves
- Yellowish-green flowers with heart shaped bracts
- Milky sap seeps from all parts of the plant when broken. Sap is a skin irritant.

Spotted Knapweed

- Biennial, tap root
- Deeply lobed leaves
- Single, purple flowers at end of each branch
- Flower head has black tipped bracts
If you find any of these noxious weeds, note their location and contact your local Weed Control Office.

**Diffuse Knapweed**
- Biennial, or short lived perennial, taproot
- Rosette leaves are divided, stem leaves are entire and smaller
- White to rose flowers that appear mid-summer to fall
- Bracts are yellowish and spiny with teeth resembling a comb.

**Russian Knapweed**
- Perennial, creeping root system
- Roots have a black coating and can grow to 23 feet long
- Deeply-lobed lower leaves and entire upper leaves
- Pink to purple single flowers

Weed GPS/Location: ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
**Oxeye Daisy**

- Perennial, creeping roots
- Lobed leaves along stem, reduce in size upward on stem
- Solitary white flower with yellow center, daisy.
- Displaces native forage

Weed GPS/Location: ________________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________

**Houndstongue**

- Biennial, tap root
- Large alternate, hairy leaves
- reddish-purple flower heads
- Corn kernel shaped, Velcro seeds
- Toxic to livestock and wildlife

Weed GPS/Location: ________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________

Yellow Toadflax
- Perennial, creeping root system
- Narrow leaves are pointed at both ends
- Snapdragon-like flower has an orange throat
- Rapidly displaces native grasses in rangelands

Dalmatian Toadflax
- Perennial, creeping root system
- Blue/green, waxy, clasping leaves
- Yellow snapdragon-like flowers
- Also displaces forage in rangelands
**Saltcedar**
- Woody shrub, reaching 20 feet tall
- Feathery green cedar-like leaves that turn yellow in the fall
- Branches are red
- Pink to white, 5 petaled flowers

Weed GPS/Location: _______________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

**Perennial Pepperweed**
- Perennial, creeping roots
- Tall, 6-8 feet
- Spear head shaped, gray-green leaves
- Clusters of small white flowers that bloom in June

Weed GPS/Location: _______________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
**Purple Loosestrife**
- Perennial, creeping roots
- Tall, 6-8 feet
- Leaves are bluish-green with a white mid-vein
- Rose-purple flower with 5-7 petals
- Found in aquatic sites

**Dyers Woad**
- Winter annual, biennial, or short lived perennial, taproot
- Leaves are bluish-green with a white mid-vein
- Yellow flower cluster with a flat top
- Fruit pods turn purplish-brown and hang beneath the flowers
**Common Burdock**
- Biennial, tap root
- First year it has rhubarb-like leaves
- Grows 3 to 10 feet tall the second year
- Large purple flower clusters with many hooked spines.

**Absinth Wormwood**
- Perennial, with a strong sage scent
- Grows 3 to 5 feet tall
- Leaves are covered with fine silky hairs giving the plant a grayish look
- Flower stalks produce numerous flower heads
- Will taint the milk of cattle
**Musk Thistle**
- Biennial, tap root
- Grows 3-7 feet tall
- Dark green leaves have silver edges with spines
- Single, deep rose-purple, nodding flower heads

**Scotch Thistle**
- Biennial, tap root
- Grows to 12 feet tall
- Grayish, hairy, large leaves
- Stems have spine-tipped wings or ridges
- Numerous, violet to red flower heads

Weed GPS/Location: ________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Noxious Weed Crossword Puzzle

Please mail completed crossword puzzle to:

For a chance to win:

**ACROSS**
2  This knapweed is a perennial that spreads by creeping roots
4  This kind of weed competes with our native plants and reduces diversity
7  Forester, ecologist, conservationist and hunter Aldo ______
11  All parts of this noxious weed contain a milky sap (2 words)
14  This noxious weed has large flowers that look like they are "nodding" (2 words)
15  This thistle has spine-tipped wings on the stem
17  These are the second leading cause of extinction worldwide (2 words)
18  This knapweed has spiny bracts and white flowers

**DOWN**
1  A noxious weed with rhubarb-like leaves is called Common ______
3  This knapweed has black-tipped bracts
5  The flowers of this type of toadflax resemble snap dragons
6  Report weed infestations to your county ______ and ______
8  This noxious weed has velcro-like seeds that stick to clothing and fur
9  This noxious weed has purplish-brown fruit pods (2 words)
10  A noxious weed with spearhead-shaped leaves is called Perennial ______
12  The white flower with a yellow center gave this noxious weed its name (2 words)
13  This noxious weed is a shrub with red branches
16  If you walk or drive through noxious weed patches you can spread these
Conclusion

“The bottom line,” says Roger Andrascick, a resource management specialist for the National Park Service, “is that the environment, the ecosystem, is losing habitat for wildlife and livestock. And the weed invasion doubles every 10 years. You can try cutting it, burning it and spraying it. But unless you have an integral program, you can’t stop it.”

“People need to be knowledgeable and aware of what the problem plants are, and let us know when they spot these plants,” Olivarez says. “If you’re hunting in your favorite spot and you see a noxious weed, let us know. It will help. The biggest bang for our dollar is in prevention. Once weeds get out of control, they are difficult and expensive to contain.”

Introduction and Conclusion taken from “An Exotic Invasion of Elk Country Weeds” by David Stalling

A successful grouse hunt with a skilled young hunter and a healthy habitat.
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