



# Invasive Vegetation Management Plan and Environmental Assessment Scoping

May 2018



Park staff spraying invasive plants in abandoned agricultural fields with the Teton Range in the background.

Greetings,

The National Park Service is developing a parkwide invasive vegetation management plan for Grand Teton National Park and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. The plan presents an opportunity to improve current invasive plant management efforts into a more integrated approach. This approach looks at a combination of actions to be implemented together, or in stages, to control the spread of invasive weeds. It also looks toward a comprehensive program that includes prevention of new introductions as well as restoration of disturbed lands.

The National Park Service manages invasive nonnative plant species that have, or potentially could have, a substantial impact on park resources using an integrated pest management approach. This approach includes multiple strategies including the use of pesticides that must be approved and reported annually. Invasive plant management is a necessary part of each park's responsibility to protect natural resources and to help retain the integrity of ecological communities and park landscapes.

An environmental assessment (EA) will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide the decision-making framework that 1) explores a reasonable range of alternatives to meet the

project objectives; 2) evaluates potential issues and impacts to park resources and values; and 3) identifies mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts.

The National Park Service encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process. The public has two opportunities to formally comment on the project, once during initial project scoping and again following release of the Plan/EA. The National Park Service is currently in the scoping phase of this project, and invites you to voice your ideas, comments, and concerns in this effort. These comments will be considered during preparation of the environmental assessment. Your interest and participation is appreciated.

Sincerely,

David Vela, Superintendent  
Grand Teton National Park  
John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway

# Proposal

The purpose of this planning effort is to implement a successful parkwide strategy to prevent additional establishment and spread of invasive plant species, and to restore native plant communities. To achieve this, the park will prepare an integrated management plan to preserve and restore native plant communities in Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. The plan would include three fundamental approaches: prevention, control, and restoration.

The proposed plan is needed to achieve the following objectives:

- Prevent further spread of nonnative plant species such as spotted knapweed, houndstongue, and musk thistle already present in the park, and prevent establishment of new invasive plant introductions.
- Control existing populations of invasive plants by eradicating them, reducing their size and density, or containing their spread.
- Restore native plant communities when they have been disrupted or replaced by nonnative plant populations.



Staff use backpack sprayers to treat invasive weeds in the backcountry.

Actions to be considered in this integrated management plan could include development of:

- A prevention and education program focused on reducing the risk of new introductions.
- An inventory and monitoring and early detection/rapid response protocol.
- A suite of treatment methods including manual, mechanical, chemical, biological control, and cultural techniques such as revegetation.
- Decision tools for choosing the appropriate combination of treatments and how to prioritize areas for treatment and restoration.
- Safe practices for treatment applications.
- Additional interpretation on the importance of native vegetation communities.
- Restore disturbed areas to native plant communities.

## Issues and Impact Topics

Potential issues and impacts that may be analyzed in the plan/EA include:

- Vegetation
- Fish and Wildlife
- Visitor Use and Experience
- Cultural Resources
- Water Quality
- Wilderness



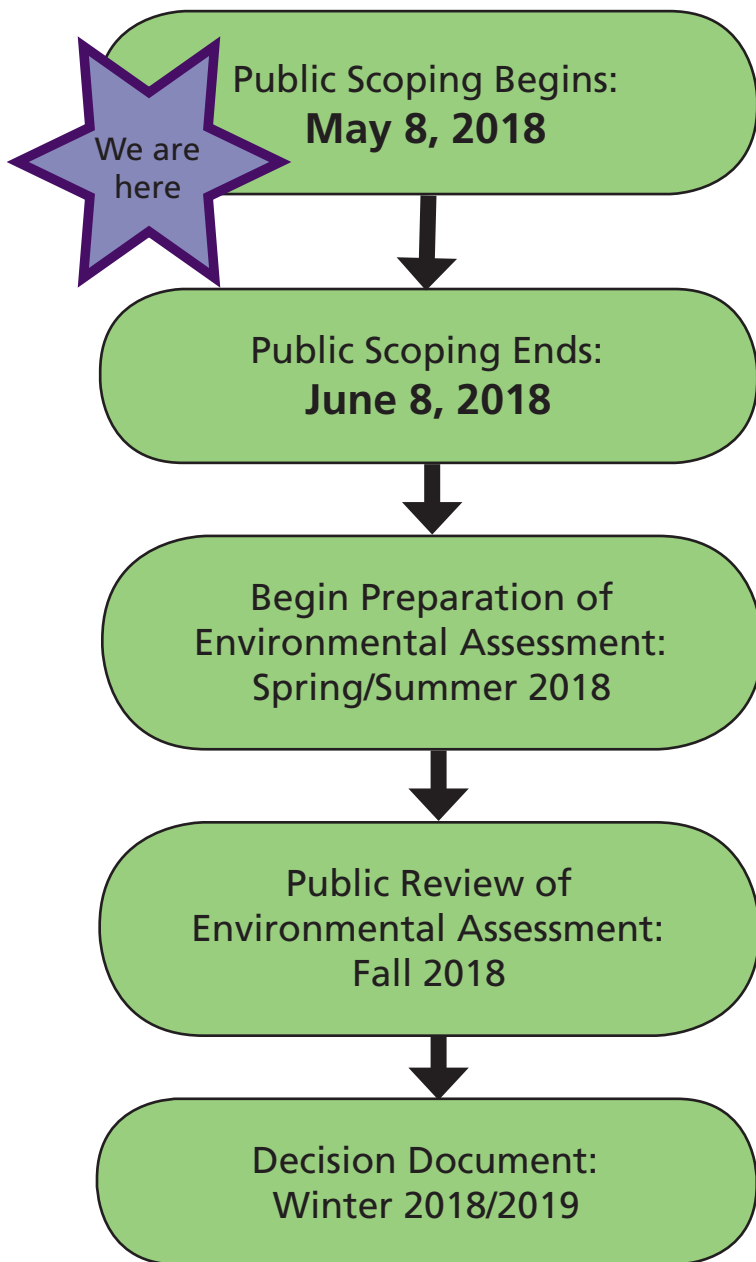
Park staff use a variety of treatments to address invasive plants. In the Cottonwood Creek riparian area they clip musk thistle heads to prevent further spread of this invasive species. Other treatments may include pulling, spraying herbicide, and/or seeding with native grass, forb, and shrub species.



Weed treatment tools- backpack sprayers and roadside tank sprayer.



# Steps in the Planning Process



## Public Scoping Comment Period

Public comments will help the National Park Service identify issues, develop alternatives, and guide the analysis during preparation of the EA.

Comments may be submitted on-line to:  
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grte-ivmp>

This link provides access to the website for the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) database. Comments may also be hand-delivered to the park's headquarters in Moose, Wyoming, or mailed to:

**Invasive Vegetation Management Plan  
Grand Teton National Park  
P.O. Box 170  
Moose, WY 83012**

Comments must be received by **June 8, 2018**.

*Before including your address, telephone number, electronic mail address, or other personally identifiable information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment (including your personally identifiable information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold your personally identifiable information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

## Ideas to Consider

Following are a few ideas to keep in mind as you develop your comments on this proposal:

- Do you have any issues/concerns about the proposed plan that you think we should consider?
- Are there other actions that you think should be considered to address this need?



The barbed seeds of invasive houndstongue increase unwanted plant distribution.