

Preventing the Spread of Invasive Plants: Best Management Practices for Land Managers



**Missouri Department
of Conservation**



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Introduction

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Best management practices (BMPs) are methods or techniques found to be the most effective and practical in achieving an objective, such as preventing or reducing invasive plant spread, while making optimal use of resources.

Purpose Statement

The goal of this guide is to present voluntary guidelines that help those managing natural resources in Missouri to prevent the accidental spread of invasive plants.

Invasive Plants

Federal Executive Order 13112 defines an invasive species as an alien (non-native) species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. While the majority of non-native plants do not pose a threat to natural or human systems, the Missouri Invasive Plant Council identifies over 140 species as invasive in Missouri. These plants have the capacity to alter ecosystems, with potential detrimental implications for wildlife communities, fire regimes, water flow, and nutrient cycling.

Background

Invasive plants can degrade the ecological integrity of wildlands, and land managers employ a range of tactics to prevent or reduce this damage.

Controlling already established invasive plant infestations is important. However, stopping the introduction and spread of new invasive plant infestations is the most cost-effective approach to reducing this damage. Prevention is a key aspect of invasive plant management that deserves more attention.



Land and aquatic managers must have a good understanding of ways to avoid accidentally spreading invasive species through their work. Such work often involves travel from one work site to another. Tools, equipment, vehicles, animals, clothing, boots, and project materials moved between worksites can become potential vectors for the spread of invasive plants. Soil and vegetation disturbance, including construction and maintenance activities, can also create suitable conditions for the establishment of invasive plants.

Prevention BMPs that reduce invasive plant spread can help:

- Reduce future maintenance needs and costs
- Reduce fire hazards

- Reduce herbicide use
- Enhance access and safety
- Limit liability for the governing agency or lessee
- Maintain good public relations
- Protect existing wildlife habitat, native plant populations, beneficial insects, and threatened and endangered species.

Overall Prevention Principles

Take time to plan. Proper planning can reduce future maintenance costs by reducing the potential for invasive plant introduction and spread. A good first step is to conduct a pre-activity assessment of the work area to determine which activities could spread weeds and which BMPs are applicable.

Stop movement of invasive plant materials and seeds. The movement of workers, materials and equipment can carry weeds between sites. This guide identifies potential vectors of spread and how to eliminate them or reduce their effects.

Reduce soil and vegetation disturbance. Disturbance can allow invasive plants to colonize a new area. When disturbance is unavoidable, managers should conduct follow-up monitoring to ensure early detection and treatment of any invasive plants that may have been introduced.

Maintain desired plant communities. A healthy plant community with native and desirable species provides resistance to invasive plant establishment.

Practice early detection and rapid response (EDRR). Early detection and eradication of small populations helps prevent the spread of invasive plants and significantly reduces management costs. Regular monitoring increases the chances of success.



Prioritizing BMP Implementation

The prevention BMPs in this guide are developed with the understanding that each situation and entity has different needs and resources. This outline can help you select which areas and species to prioritize when integrating BMPs into management activities.

Management costs

Prioritize:

- Areas where future control costs will be high if invasive plants become established
- Areas where multiple management actions take place (i.e., prescribed fire, timber management, road maintenance, etc.)
- BMPs with approaches that are measurable in cost and effectiveness



Ecological value of habitats

Prioritize:

- Areas with threatened or endangered species and habitat
- Areas of high ecological or conservation value (e.g., Missouri Natural Areas)
- Areas where invasive plants have not invaded

Context of the area being managed

Prioritize:

- The tiered natural communities/habitats of the Comprehensive Conservation Strategy
- Areas with new construction or disturbance
- Areas containing water bodies
- Areas with important scenic or recreational resources
- Areas where adjacent landowners have cooperative management buy-in
- Areas where wildland borders with urban areas
- Conservation areas frequented by vehicles, equipment, and foot traffic

Treatment of invasive species

Prioritize:

- Species known or suspected to be invasive but still in small numbers
- Species that can alter ecosystem processes
- Species with the potential to alter fire regimes
- Species that occur in areas of high conservation value
- Species with the potential to require high management costs
- Species that are likely to be controlled successfully
- Species determined to be of regional concern as identified

List of Best Management Practices

Planning BMPs (PL)

Programmatic Planning

- PL1 – Adopt official policy to prevent invasive plant introduction and spread.
- PL2 – Include invasive plant risk evaluation as a component of initial project planning.
- PL3 – Integrate invasive plant prevention BMPs into design, construction, vegetation management, and maintenance planning activities.
- PL4 – Coordinate invasive plant prevention efforts with adjacent property owners and local agencies.
- PL5 – Develop monitoring plans for BMP implementation and effectiveness.

Activity Planning

- PL6 – Provide prevention training to staff, contractors, and volunteers prior to starting work.
- PL7 – Conduct a site assessment for invasive plant infestations before carrying out field activities.
- PL8 – Schedule activities to minimize potential for introduction and spread of invasive plants.
- PL9 – Integrate cleaning BMPs into planning for land management activities.
- PL10 – Prepare worksite to limit the introduction and spread of invasive plants.
- PL11 – Monitor the site for invasive plants after land management activities.

Project Material BMPs (PM)

- PM1 – Use a weed-free source for project materials – could include seeds, mulch, rock/gravel, etc. (visit source locations beforehand if needed for verification).
- PM2 – Prevent invasive plant contamination of project materials when stockpiling and during transport.

Travel BMPs (TR)

- TR1 – Plan travel to reduce the risk of invasive plant spread.
- TR2 – Integrate cleaning activities into travel planning.

Tool, Equipment, and Vehicle Cleaning BMPs (TE)

- TE1 – Designate cleaning areas for tools, equipment, and vehicles.
- TE2 – Inspect tools, equipment, and vehicles before entering and leaving the worksite.
- TE3 – Clean soils and plant materials from tools, equipment, and vehicles before entering and leaving the worksite.
- TE4 – Clean grazing, pack, and support animals.

Clothing, Boots, and Gear Cleaning BMPs (CB)

- CB1 – Wear clothing, boots, and gear that do not retain soil and plant material.
- CB2 – Designate cleaning areas for clothing, boots and gear.
- CB3 – Clean clothing, footwear, and gear before entering and leaving the worksite.

Waste Disposal BMPs (WD)

- WD1 – Designate waste disposal areas for invasive plant materials.
- WD2 – Render invasive plant material nonviable when keeping it on-site.
- WD3 – When disposing of invasive plant material off-site, contain it during transport.

Soil Disturbance BMPs (SD)

- SD1 – Minimize soil disturbance.
- SD2 – Implement erosion control practices.
- SD3 – Manage existing topsoil and duff material to reduce contamination by invasive plants.

Vegetation Management BMPs (VM)

- VM1 – Schedule vegetation management activities to maximize the effectiveness of control efforts and minimize introduction and spread of invasive plants.
- VM2 – Manage vegetation with methods favorable to desirable vegetation.
- VM3 – Retain existing desirable vegetation and canopy.

Revegetation and Landscaping BMPs (RL)

- RL1 – Develop revegetation and landscaping plans that optimize resistance to invasive plant establishment.
- RL2 – Acquire plant materials locally. Verify that species used are not invasive.
- RL3 – Revegetate and/or mulch disturbed soils as soon as possible to reduce likelihood of invasive plant establishment.

Prescribed Fire Management and Wildfire Suppression BMPs

Fire Management Planning BMPs (FP)

- FP1 – Consider prescribed (Rx) and wildfire implications when setting overall priorities for invasive plant management programs.
- FP2 – Integrate invasive plant prevention into fire management plans.
- FP3 – Provide training in preventing the spread of invasive plants.
- FP4 – Plan to use weed-free materials for post-fire activities.

Prescribed Fire Management BMPs (FM)

- FM1 – Incorporate invasive plant considerations when developing prescribed fire plans.
- FM2 – Maintain active management of invasive plants on Rx fire units.
- FM3 – Reduce disturbance when implementing Rx fire activities.
- FM4 – Incorporate invasive plant considerations when using prescribed fire.

Fire Suppression BMPs (FS)

- FS1 – Develop operational procedures related to fire suppression to reduce the spread of invasive plants.
- FS2 – Locate indirect fire lines to reduce additional disturbance and invasive plant spread where feasible.
- FS3 – Locate fire activity areas in locations free of invasive plants where feasible.
- FS4 – Clean vehicles, equipment, clothing, and gear before arriving and leaving fire activity areas.
- FS5 – Use water sources free of invasive plants for fire suppression when feasible.

Post-Fire Activities BMPs (PF)

- PF1 – Manage access to burned areas.
- PF2 – Use weed-free materials for post-fire activities.
- PF3 – Cover and rehabilitate soil disturbed by suppression activity.
- PF4 – Develop and implement post-fire integrated invasive plant management prescriptions.
- PF5 – Revegetate burned areas to reduce the spread of invasive plants.

Aquatic Management BMPs

Aquatic Invasives BMPs (AI)

- AI1 – Clean, Drain, and Dry all vessels, equipment, and gear between water bodies.
- AI2 – Plan to work in non-infested waters before infested waters if working in multiple bodies of water in the same day, while incorporating Clean Drain Dry at each.
- AI3 – Follow approved cleaning/decontamination methods (hot water or vinegar) for watercraft and gear identified in the [Zebra Mussel Prevention Policy](#)

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) Plans identify the tasks, hazards, control measures and critical control points associated with specific operations. MDC has [HACCP Plans](#) established for Fisheries and Aquatics operations including:

- Aquatic plants (bare root, tuber, and seed)
 - Boat Electrofishing
 - Broodstock
 - Channel Catfish Harvest
 - Hellbender Culture
 - Mussel
 - Netting
 - Stickleback
 - Stream Survey
 - Trout Transfer
- HP1 – Know which operations have HACCP plans in place; review and follow accordingly.



Checklist Introduction

The following checklists contain only the BMP statements to provide a quick and portable reference for field activities. Checklists A, B, C and D are organized by management activities, and Checklist E is organized by items to inspect and clean. These checklists can be attached to a field notebook, clipboard, or corkboard in an office for easy reference. BMP selection depends on the particular nature of the project or conditions. Managers are encouraged to modify and develop their own invasive plant prevention checklists according to their specific needs.

Checklist A: Site Assessment, Field Mapping & Monitoring

This checklist is designed for those who perform site assessments, field mapping and monitoring.

Checklist B: Routine Vegetation Management

This checklist is designed for those who perform routine vegetation management.

Checklist C: New Project - Planning

This checklist is designed for those who perform planning tasks for new projects.

Checklist D: New Project - Implementation

This checklist is designed for those who perform pre-activity and implementation tasks for new projects. Some of these tasks include pre-work training, scheduling, and revegetation and landscaping.

Checklist E: Inspection & Cleaning

This checklist is designed for use before entering and leaving worksites and should be used when acquiring inspection and cleaning equipment.

Additional Guidance for Aquatic Decontamination

Table 1 – Zebra mussel decontamination protocols and usage guidelines for boats and equipment.

Table 2 – Disinfectant amounts to make needed concentrations.

Guide to BMP Acronyms on Checklists

CB – Clothing, Boots and Gear Cleaning

PL – Planning

PM – Project Materials

RL – Revegetation and Landscaping

SD – Soil Disturbance

TE – Tools, Equipment and Vehicle Cleaning

TR – Travel

VM – Vegetation Management

WD – Waste Disposal

Checklist A: Site Assessment, Field Mapping & Monitoring

BMP#	Best Management Practice	Project Manager	Field Supervisor	Crew	Contractor	Completed	Comments
BEFORE YOU START							
Planning							
PL6	Provide prevention training and appropriate invasive plant identification resources for staff and contractors prior to starting work.						
PL7	Review internal documentation and consult local groups and online resources for information on existing invasive plant infestations on and near worksite.						
PL8	Schedule activities to minimize potential for introduction and spread of invasive plants.						
PL9	Integrate cleaning BMPs into planning for management activities.						
PL10	Prepare worksite to limit the introduction of invasive plants. Treat invasives at access roads and staging areas before using them.						
CB1	Plan to wear clothing, boots, and gear that do not retain soil and plant material.						
Travel							
TR1	Plan travel to reduce the risk of invasive plant spread. (Avoid travel through infested areas and travel from clean to infested worksites.)						
TR2	Integrate cleaning activities into travel planning.						
Inspection and Cleaning							
TE1 & CB2	Designate cleaning areas for tools, equipment, vehicles, clothing, boots, and gear.						
TE2 & TE3	Inspect and clean soil and plant materials from tools, equipment and vehicles before entering the worksite.						
DURING							
Inspection and Cleaning							
TE2& TE3	Inspect and clean soil and plant materials from tools, equipment and vehicles before leaving the worksite.						
CB3	Clean clothing, footwear, and gear before leaving the worksite.						
TE4	Clean grazing, pack, and support animals.						
Soil Disturbance							
SD1	Minimize soil disturbance.						

Checklist B: Routine Vegetation Management

BMP#	Best Management Practice	Project Manager	Field Supervisor	Crew	Contractor	Completed	Comments
BEFORE YOU START							
Planning							
PL6	Provide prevention training and appropriate invasive plant identification resources for staff and contractors prior to starting work.						
PL7	Conduct a site assessment for invasive plant infestations before carrying out field activities.						
VM1	Schedule vegetation management activities to maximize the effectiveness of control efforts and minimize introduction and spread of invasive plants.						
PL9	Integrate cleaning BMPs into planning for management activities.						
PL10	Prepare worksite to limit the introduction of invasive plants. Treat invasives at access roads and staging areas before using them.						
CB1	Plan to wear clothing, boots and gear that do not retain soil and plant material.						
Travel							
TR1	Plan travel to reduce the risk of invasive plant spread. (Avoid travel through infested areas and travel from clean to infested worksites.)						
TR2	Integrate cleaning activities into travel planning.						
Inspection and Cleaning							
TE1 & CB2	Designate cleaning areas for tools, equipment, vehicles, clothing, boots, and gear.						
TE2 & TE3	Inspect and clean soil and plant materials from tools, equipment, and vehicles before entering the worksite.						
Waste Disposal							
WD1	Designate waste disposal areas for invasive plant materials.						

Checklist B: Routine Vegetation Management (continued)

BMP#	Best Management Practice	Project Manager	Field Supervisor	Crew	Contractor	Completed	Comments
DURING							
Inspection and Cleaning							
TE1 & TE3	Inspect and clean soil and plant materials from tools, equipment, and vehicles before leaving the worksite.						
CB3	Clean clothing, footwear, and gear before leaving worksite.						
TE4	Clean livestock and support animals.						
Vegetation Management							
VM2	Manage vegetation with methods favorable to desirable vegetation.						
VM3	Retain existing desirable vegetation and canopy.						
Soil Disturbance							
SD1	Minimize soil disturbance.						
SD2	Implement erosion control practices.						
Waste Disposal							
WD2	Render invasive plant material nonviable when keeping it on-site.						
WD3	When disposing of invasive plant material off-site, contain it during transport.						
Monitoring							
PL11	Monitor the site for invasive plants after land management activities.						

Checklist C: New Project - Planning

BMP#	Best Management Practice	Project Manager	Field Supervisor	Crew	Contractor	Completed	Comments
PL2	Include invasive plant risk evaluation as a component of initial project planning and environmental analysis.						
PL3	Integrate invasive plant prevention BMPs into design, construction, vegetation management, and maintenance planning activities.						
PL4	Coordinate invasive plant prevention efforts with adjacent property owners and local agencies.						
PL5	Develop monitoring plans for BMP implementation and effectiveness.						
PL9	Integrate cleaning BMPs into planning for land management activities.						
PL11	Designate staff to monitor the worksite for invasive plants after land management activities.						
RL1	Develop revegetation and landscaping plans that optimize resistance to invasive plant establishment.						
PM1	Plan to use a weed-free source for project materials. (Visit source locations beforehand for verification if possible.)						

Checklist D: New Project Implementation

BMP#	Best Management Practice	Project Manager	Field Supervisor	Crew	Contractor	Completed	Comments
BEFORE YOU START							
Training and Scheduling							
PL6	Provide prevention training and appropriate invasive plant identification resources to staff and contractors prior to starting work.						
PL8	Schedule activities to minimize potential for introduction and spread of invasive plants.						
TR1	Plan travel routes to reduce the risk of invasive plant spread.						
TR2	Integrate cleaning activities into travel planning.						
Site Preparation							
PL7	Refer to site assessment for locations of invasive plant infestations before carrying out field activities.						
PL10	Prepare worksite to limit the introduction and spread of invasive plants. a. Protect likely invasive plant introduction sites such as pull-outs, trailheads, campgrounds and parking lots by mulching, planting, or paving. b. Treat invasive plants at access roads and staging areas before using them.						
Project Materials							
PM1	Acquire weed-free project materials. Visit source locations beforehand for verification if possible.						
PM2	Prevent invasive plant contamination of project materials during transport.						
RL2	Acquire plant materials locally. Verify that species used are not invasive.						
Inspection and Cleaning							
CB1	Select clothing, boots, and gear that do not retain soil and plant material.						
TE1 & CB2	Designate cleaning areas for tools, equipment, vehicles, clothing, boots, and gear.						
TE2 & TE3	Inspect and clean soil and plant materials from tools, equipment, and vehicles before entering the worksite.						
Waste Disposal							
WD1	Designate waste disposal areas for invasive plant materials.						

Checklist D: New Project Implementation (continued)

BMP#	Best Management Practice	Project Manager	Field Supervisor	Crew	Contractor	Completed	Comments
DURING							
Inspection and Cleaning							
TE2 & TE3	Inspect and clean soil and plant materials from tools, equipment, and vehicles before entering the worksite.						
TE4	Clean grazing, pack, and support animals.						
CB3	Clean clothing, footwear, and gear before leaving the worksite.						
Project Materials							
PM1	Use a weed-free source for project materials.						
PM2	Prevent invasive plant contamination of project materials when stockpiling and during transport.						
Vegetation Management							
VM2	Manage vegetation with methods favorable to desirable vegetation.						
VM3	Retain existing desirable vegetation and canopy.						
Soil Disturbance							
SD1	Minimize soil disturbance.						
SD2	Implement erosion control practices.						
SD3	Manage existing topsoil and duff material to reduce contamination by invasive plants.						
Revegetation and Landscaping							
RL3	Revegetate and/or mulch disturbed soils as soon as possible to reduce the likelihood of invasive plant establishment.						
Waste Disposal							
WD2	Render invasive plant material nonviable when keeping it on-site.						
WD3	When disposing of invasive plant material off-site, contain it during transport.						
Monitoring							
PL11	Monitor the site for invasive plants after land management activities.						

Checklist E: Inspection & Cleaning

Clothing and Gear

Check for soil, seeds and plant material	Inspected	Cleaned
1. Hats		
2. Hoods		
3. Collars and cuffs		
4. Clothing folds or flaps		
5. Ventilation openings		
6. Pockets		
7. Zippers		
8. Straps or Velcro grips		
9. Belts or buckles		
10. Buttons, fasteners and rivets		
11. Laces or ties		
12. Gloves		
13. Pant cuffs		
14. Socks		

Boots or Shoes

Check for soil, seeds and plant material	Inspected	Cleaned
1. Shoelaces or ties		
2. Straps or Velcro grips		
3. Shoe tongues		
4. Treads		

Hand and Power Tools

Check for soil, seeds and plant material	Inspected	Cleaned
1. Chainsaw chain and body		
2. Hand saw blades		
3. Mower deck, blades, and tail wheel		
4. Weed-eater blades and guard		
5. Crevices on all other tools		

Vehicles and Large Equipment (including trailers, ATVs, UTV's, motorcycles, and heavy equipment)

Check for soil, seeds and plant material	Inspected	Cleaned
1. Truck bed		
2. Exhaust systems		
3. Vent openings		
4. Grills (front and back)		
5. Tray under radiator		
6. Top of transmission		
7. Stabilizer bar		

8. Shock absorber joint with axles		
9. Front and rear axles		
10. Top of front suspension units		
11. Wheel well/quarter panels		
12. Ledges under bumper (front and rear)		
13. Tire rims and treads		
14. Between rear wheel brake drums and the rim of the wheel		
15. At the bend in the fuel inlet tube		
16. Spare tire and mounting area		
17. Under the floor mat (inside cab)		
18. Under the seat (inside cab)		
19. Upholstery (inside cab)		
20. Beneath foot pedals (inside cab)		
21. Gear shift cover folds (inside cab)		
22. Skid plates		
23. Trailer floor/decks		
24. Tracks and track frames (on dozers or other tracked machines)		
25. Buckets and other implements		

Aquatic Vessels and Equipment

Check for water, mud/sand, seeds, and plant materials	Inspected	Cleaned
1. Boat motor, propellor, impeller		
2. Boat floor and bulkheads		
3. Cargo holds		
4. Live wells		
5. Gear, including paddles, ropes, anchor, anchor line, personal floatation devices, and anything used in the water.		
6. Trailer bunks		
7. Trailer axels and frame		
8. Trailer wheels and tires.		

Livestock and Support Animals

Check for soil, seeds and plant material	Inspected	Cleaned
1. Underbelly		
2. Legs		
3. Hooves		
4. Coat or wool		
5. Ears		
6. Tack (saddles, blankets, panniers)		

Table 1. Zebra Mussel Disinfectants and Usage Guidelines for Boats and Equipment

Additional details available in the [Zebra Mussel Prevention Policy](#) on MDC SharePoint.

Disinfectant	Concentration	Contact Time	Usage Guidelines, Safety Precautions, Drawbacks
Vinegar	100%	20 min	Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and caution. Stay upwind of the spray. It is corrosive to metal and toxic to fish at this concentration, so thoroughly rinse with tap water or water from the next lake or river after disinfection. Ensure that solution does not run off directly into waterways.
Chlorine	200 ppm	10 min	Use appropriate PPE and caution. Stay upwind of the spray. It is corrosive to metal and rubber and toxic to fish at this concentration, so neutralize with 800 ppm sodium thiosulfate and rinse thoroughly with tap water or water from the next lake or river. Ensure that solution does not run off directly into waterways.
Power wash with hot water	104° F	20 min	Use appropriate PPE and caution when using hot water due to possibility of burns/scalding. Temperature and contact times are crucial, as efficiency is dependent on weather. Most effective when used in conjunction with air drying (see below). Power wash with hot water, including thoroughly flushing lower motor unit.
Freezing	<32° F	24 hours	Boats, gear, and equipment should be thoroughly frozen. Ambient air temperature should remain below freezing for the entire contact time. No safety precautions.
Air drying	N/A	3-5 days in hot sun	Must dry completely to be effective. Most effective when used in conjunction with hot water (see above). To be used for small nets, gear, pumps, etc., <i>ONLY AFTER</i> power washing with hot (104°) water for appropriate contact time.
Salt bath	1%	24 hours	Due to the long contact time, it may only be used as a bath solution and not sprayed. To be used only for pieces of equipment, gear, and nets that can be completely immersed in the solution.

Table 2. Disinfectant Amounts to Make Needed Concentrations*Source: WI DNR (2007) Equipment Disinfection Protocol for Invasive Species and Viruses.*

Disinfectant	1 gallon	2 gallons	5 gallons	20 gallons	100 gallons
100% Vinegar	1 gal	2 gal	5 gal	20 gal	100 gal
200 ppm Chlorine (household bleach, 5.25% Chlorine)	0.5 ounce (15 ml)	1.0 ounce (30 ml)	2.5 ounces (75 ml)	11.0 ounces (300 ml)	6 1/3 cups (1.5 L)
200 ppm Chlorine (HTH granular)	0.04 ounce (1.2 g)	0.08 ounce (2.4 g)	0.2 ounce (6 g)	0.8 ounce (24 g)	4.2 ounces (120 g)
800 ppm Sodium Thiosulfate	0.1 ounce (3 g)	0.2 ounce (6 g)	0.5 ounce (15 g)	2.1 ounces (60 g)	10.6 ounces (300 g)
1% Salt Bath (as NaCl)	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	2/3 cup	2 2/3 cups	13 1/3 cups

Notes:

1. Air drying and hot water are most effective when used in conjunction with each other because their effectiveness is highly dependent upon ambient temperatures and contact times. As needed, hot water wash units should be made available at selected Department facilities.
2. Household bleach (5.25% chlorine) and vinegar can be purchased from grocery or convenience stores. HTH granular chlorine (70% calcium hypochlorite) and Sodium Thiosulfate can be purchased at pool supply stores or chemical companies.
3. All bilges and hidden areas under boat decks must be thoroughly treated as described above.