

# Non-Native Species Control Plan Guidelines



## Introduction

Some Restrictions held by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) ask that landowners develop Non-Native Species Control Plans before treating and controlling invasive plants on their land. Other Restrictions only require landowners to request DCR's permission when using herbicides. However, if managing invasive plants on the property is a primary goal, we encourage you to consider creating a Non-Native Species Control Plan even if it is not required by the Restriction.

The purpose of the following guidelines is to provide a framework for these plans. A Non-Native Species Control Plan (Plan) is a document that describes what goals and objectives the landowner wants to accomplish on their property and how these goals and objectives will be reached, consistent with the purposes and terms of the Restriction. It includes the long-term vision for the property and specific actions that the landowner would like to take to achieve that vision for the time horizon of the Plan and should be designed to guide future activities in a way that ensures the continued protection of the conservation values of a particular property. While the Plan must meet the Restriction requirements for approval of any proposed invasive plant management projects, it should also be viewed as a useful tool for stewarding the property.

Some key objectives to consider when developing a Non-Native Species Control Plan are to:

- Determine long and short-term goals to maintain and/or improve the ecological integrity of the property.
- Describe and assess current invasive plant infestations and their conditions particularly as they relate to the conservation values of the Restriction.
- Identify current management practices and capabilities.
- Develop specific, implementable recommendations to address the highest priority needs while reducing impacts to the conservation values of the Restriction.

It is important to note that the landowner is not obligated to complete/implement the actions proposed in the Plan. Once the Plan is approved, the landowner may carry out the proposed actions but is not required to do so. Rather, the development and approval of a Non-Native Species Control Plan ensures that when a landowner is ready/able to move forward with their vision for the property, there is a clear path available to achieve that vision, consistent with the purposes and terms of the Restriction. Note that some Restrictions require separate DCR

approval for certain activities and landowners should check their Restriction language and reach out to Stewardship staff with any questions.

#### *Reasons for Controlling Invasive Plants:*

Invasive plants are a significant threat to our natural habitats and a stewardship challenge for landowners. Invasive plants grow and reproduce faster than native species in the same growing conditions and can take over areas very quickly. They monopolize light, water, and other nutrients, outcompeting native species and reducing biodiversity. Because they are not native, they lack natural predators and diseases to keep them in check. Invasives are very opportunistic, often being the first plants to show up on disturbed sites. Native plants provide abundant resources to the wildlife with which they coevolved, while quite the opposite is true of invasive plants.

Many Restriction landowners are finding invasive species on their properties. They're taking over road frontages, fields, and the understory of forests, negatively affecting the habitat for native flora and fauna and often making traversing the land more difficult. It can be overwhelming to think about removing them and where to begin. While it's not an easy task, there are effective methods for controlling and eradicating invasive plants. But before you start to pull plants or spray chemicals, stop, and make a plan. Having a good plan in place will help make the most out of your efforts and set you up for success.

### **Non-Native Species Control Plan Contents**

While each Plan is tailored to a specific property and Restriction, typically they include the following sections:

#### **1. Introduction:**

General description of property, ownership, location, current & historical land use. This section should be brief but highlight what makes this property unique.

#### **2. Primary Objectives:**

A concise statement explaining the big-picture goal(s) or vision for the desired condition of the property and/or the Plan. For example, this may be to restore native habitats and maximize biodiversity. This section should also include a statement of how often the objectives and/or Plan should be reviewed and updated. Plans should be updated a minimum of once every 10 years but check your Restriction to determine whether there is a pre-determined plan period that must be met.

#### **3. Land Management Goals and Objectives:**

Description of specific invasive species management goals and objectives for the property that will ultimately help achieve the overall vision for the property. Goals may be separated into short and long-term goals. For example:

##### **Short-term Goals:**

- Identify and map invasive species on entire property.
- Prioritize management,
- Treat various species of invasives in field and along field edges according to Plan.

- Treat Japanese knotweed along road frontage according to Plan.

#### Long-term Goals:

- Monitor property for new invasives and retreat areas as needed.
- Eradicate invasive plants from entire field.

#### 4. Invasive Plant Inventory & Assessment:

All invasive plant infestations should be identified and described here. Include information on the density of the infestations and a description of any related issues and challenges (affecting forestry plans, proximity to water features, obvious threats to native vegetation). Locations of these infestations should be marked on an attached site plan.

Note that this section can reference other publications or works in which resource inventories or assessments have been completed.

#### 5. Management Strategy and Implementation:

Description of strategy(ies) that will be used to combat the invasive plants, what areas/species will be prioritized, and what treatment method(s) will be used and approximate timing of treatment(s). If applicable include how any invasive plant material will be disposed of. Be as detailed as possible when describing. Include why a particular method was chosen, any permits that must be obtained prior to beginning the project, and the location which should also be shown on a map (see Section 7).

If using herbicide: Please also include details of application (type of herbicide, planned amount, type of application, where will herbicide be mixed and stored, who will do application, frequency of application, planned approximate date(s) of application, location and area of control (including proximity to a stream or wetland)).

**Always check your Restriction language to determine whether proposed activities are permitted before developing plans.**

#### 6. Planned follow up surveys/monitoring, repeat treatments, restoration

Description of how often the property and treatment sites will be monitored for new invasives and plans for retreatment of areas. Also describe if any restoration or native plantings are needed.

#### 7. Maps and Data:

Include the following maps and attachments:

- a) Locus to show the property in context of surrounding landscapes and features.
- b) Site Plan to show invasive plant infestations and general property features (boundaries, roads, overhead power lines, water features etc.)
- c) Conceptual future site plan (if applicable): any proposed management activities that would alter the existing property conditions should be included here.

### Resources

- Grants
  - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Invasive species info resources

- [EDD Maps used to find, map and track invasives](#)
- [State website about invasive plants](#)
- [Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List](#)
- [Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group \(MIPAG\)](#)
- Management Guidance Resources
  - [Guidance for the Effective Management of Invasive Plants \(MA Invasive Plants Advisory Group\)](#)
  - [DCR Best Management Practices for Managing Terrestrial Invasive Plants](#)
  - [DCR Best Management Practices for Managing Aquatic Invasive Plants](#)
  - [Invasive Plant Management Decision Analysis Tool \(The Nature Conservancy-NY\)](#)
  - [The Trustees Invasive Plant Management Guidelines](#)
  - [A landowner's guide to managing and controlling Invasive Plants](#)
  - [Picking Our Battles A Guide to Planning Successful Invasive Plant Management Projects](#)
  - [Massachusetts Pesticide law info](#)