



## Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Best Management Practices for Controlling the Spread of Invasive Plants

Propagules (seeds, cuttings, plant parts) of many invasive plants can potentially be spread by directly attaching to clothing and equipment or inadvertently carried in soil accumulated on equipment and footwear. Many silvicultural and land management activities occurring on Division land or on private lands where work is funded by the Division represent a risk for transmitting these species to uninfested areas or could become infested when workers and equipment containing unwanted propagules enter onto these uninfested properties. Once dispersed, the invasive plant species may become established in new areas, and the native ecosystem may be negatively affected. To reduce the opportunity for spreading invasive plants and their propagules within and between work sites, we propose that the following protocols be adopted when Division personnel are working on Division property, or working elsewhere in the field, when projects are funded by the Division on other public or private lands and as conditions to Scientific Collecting Permits issued by the Director.

Likewise aquatic invasives (not limited to plants, animals, viruses, bacteria, algae, fungi) may be carried from one body of water to another on the damp surface of equipment or in water inadvertently carried from watershed to watershed during the normal course of both fish and wildlife field sampling activities. The harmful effects of these aquatic invasives are well documented and require large amounts of money to manage once they have become established. We propose that the following protocols be adopted by the various field staff of the Division and their contractors whose jobs require them to work in aquatic environments, including the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Section and their contractors, Fisheries Section, Wildlife Section, all District staff and as conditions to Scientific Collecting Permits.

### Terrestrial:

#### **Contractors working on Wildlife Management Areas, other MDFW properties, or on a project funded through the MDFW shall:**

Certify that they have made efforts to assure that their off-road equipment and their field personnel who have been working within invasive plant infestations are reasonably free from invasive plant propagules prior to entering work sites within Wildlife Management Areas, other MDFW properties and private lands where the work is being funded by the Division, by signing the Division's Standard Contract and agree to the following conditions in the Scope of Services.

#### **Equipment:**

Thoroughly clean and remove all mud, dirt, debris and plant parts from the exterior, undercarriage, and tires/tracks of the equipment with a high pressure washer or similar method prior to bringing the equipment onto the work site

#### **Tools and Clothing:**

- Field personnel should wear gaiters, rubber boots or other clothing and footwear which reduce the likelihood for seed attachment when working in areas infested with invasive species.
- Field Personnel must inspect, remove, and properly dispose of weed seed and plant parts found on their clothing, footwear and equipment prior to entering the work site
- Field Personnel must remove all soil from their footwear and equipment prior to entering the work site

#### **Division Staff shall:**

Make the same efforts to assure that they and their equipment are reasonably free from invasive plant propagules prior to entering a work site as do contractors to MDFW.

**Aquatic:**

**Division Staff and Contractors Shall:**

Prior to and when leaving the water, visually inspect all surfaces that have come into contact with the water on all boats, canoes, kayaks, boat trailers and motors and all associated field equipment such as waders, boots, dip nets, gloves, buckets, collection gear and holding tanks and remove all plant and animal debris for disposal in the trash. Additionally, before using any equipment in another watershed, the equipment shall be cleaned of all plant and animal debris for disposal and the equipment shall be disinfected and/or dried before use.

**Conditions to be added to Scientific Collecting Permits:**

The same procedures which apply to the reducing the spread of invasives should be added to the terms and conditions of all applicable Scientific Collecting Permits.