

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION ON INVASIVE SPECIES

January 31, 2012

Mr. Tom Tidwell
Chief
USDA Forest Service
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Tidwell,

Environmental Law Institute, Great Lakes United, Lady Bird Johnson National Wildflower Center, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, and Wildlife Society – members of the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species -- are writing to thank you for the recent adoption of the National Forest System Invasive Species Management Policy. By adopting the Policy, the U.S. Forest Service has demonstrated its leadership in addressing the manifold and serious threats posed to our natural resources by invasive species.

As you know, such invasive species range from wild pigs to earthworms, from emerald ash borers to New Zealand mudsnails, from cheatgrass to didymo algae.

The new Policy provides a framework and guidance under which each National Forest and Grassland can work with partners to

- (1) design management practices to reduce or mitigate the risk that invasives might be introduced to the unit through various pathways and vectors;
- (2) ensure that forest management practices are adjusted to minimize the risk that actions might facilitate invasion;
- (3) ensure that activities of contractors & permittees are so conducted as to prevent and control invasive species introduction, establishment, and spread; and
- (4) enhance and expand efforts to eradicate or control invasive species that have already been introduced to the unit.

The Policy also points to a subsequent Handbook to be developed soon, which will provide more specific details for how the Policy can be implemented on the ground. This will be invaluable in helping each Forest Service unit move forward quickly to comply with the Policy. The members of the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species look forward to working with the professional staff of the USFS to strengthen invasive species prevention and management across the country.

We thank you again for your leadership on addressing invasive species that threaten our natural heritage. We hope that adoption of the USFS Policy will inspire other federal resource-management agencies to consider adoption of similar policies.

Signed

Read Porter, Environmental Law Institute
Jen Nalbone, Great Lakes United
Damon E. Waitt, Lady Bird Johnson National Wildflower Center
Bruce A. Stein, National Wildlife Federation
Robert L. Bendick, The Nature Conservancy
Laura Bies, Wildlife Society

for further information, contact:

Robert L. Bendick,
The Nature Conservancy,
4245 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203;
703-841-4582