



Finger Lakes National Forest



Invasive Plant Control Project Newsletter

June 2007

FLNF Invasive Plants

Invasive plants such as multiflora rose, buckthorn, leafy spurge, knapweed, and garlic mustard are a forest and grassland health problem on the FLNF, directly threatening the health of native ecosystems. Problems caused by invasive plants include loss of biological diversity, loss of natural wildlife habitat, changes in water or fire regimes, and degradation of soil structure. Solid stands of invasive plants can replace and possibly lead to local extirpation of native plant species, including threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.

Forest Service surveys have identified over 4,215 acres of land on the FLNF known to be infested with non-native invasive plants, in addition to over 5,000 grassland acres known to be infested with native invasive goldenrod species. Goldenrod poses a threat to livestock forage and grassland habitat for birds.

Links to interesting and informative websites:

U.S. Forest Service Invasive Species website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/invasivespecies/index.shtml>

US Forest Service Eastern Invasive Plants Field and Reference Guide:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/ip/ip_field_guide.pdf

Invasive Plant Control Project Update

On March 22, 2007, the Forest Service released the Scoping Letter notifying the public of the Finger Lakes National Forest (FLNF) proposed Invasive Plant Control (IPC) Project. The proposal outlined an invasive plant management strategy to control the spread of invasive plant species within the FLNF.

The IPC Project proposes to authorize a variety of tools to treat invasive plant infestations, including: hand and mechanical removal, herbicide application, release of biological control agents, and prescribed fire. Sites proposed for treatment include: pastures and grasslands; ponds; trailheads; parking lots; developed recreation sites; Special Areas and Research and Candidate Natural Areas; sites where there are sensitive plant or animal species that may be threatened by the presence of invasive plants; and other sites of known infestations.

Following release of the Scoping Letter, interested publics had a chance to review and provide feedback on the IPC Project. The purpose of the comment period was to: 1) compile public concerns and comments regarding the proposed IPC Project; 2) gather issues the public felt had been left out or inadequately addressed in the Scoping Letter and should be included in the draft Environmental Assessment; and/or 3) confirm that the Forest Service had effectively addressed all the issues currently facing the FLNF related to invasive plants.

Public response provided ten letters and/or communications. A sample of the issues raised include: prohibit early-season (May 15-August 15) mowing and/or prescribed fire and consider alternative mowing approaches; specify which treatments will be used in which locations; reconsider the use of biological control agents and herbicides on the FLNF; address non-native invasive species (NNNIS) and native invasive species separately.

Revised Schedule:

In an effort to best refine the project proposal and incorporate public feedback, the Forest Service has revised the IPC Project timeline to allow for a decision date in 2008. During the extended analysis, we will continue to dialogue with the public and the scientific community and investigate the tools and alternatives available to most effectively treat invasive plants. In addition, we are: working with local universities to consider a study on the effectiveness of goat/sheep grazing to control invasive plants; using aerial photographs to assess goldenrod concentrations in pastures; and considering conducting research with a limited use of herbicides that are considered highly effective for knapweed and goldenrod control but have registration pending with the NYS DEC. Further, we are: working with volunteers to gather goldenrod population data in grasslands; verifying existing knapweed data; surveying NNIS along trails; and holding a workshop for town road crews.

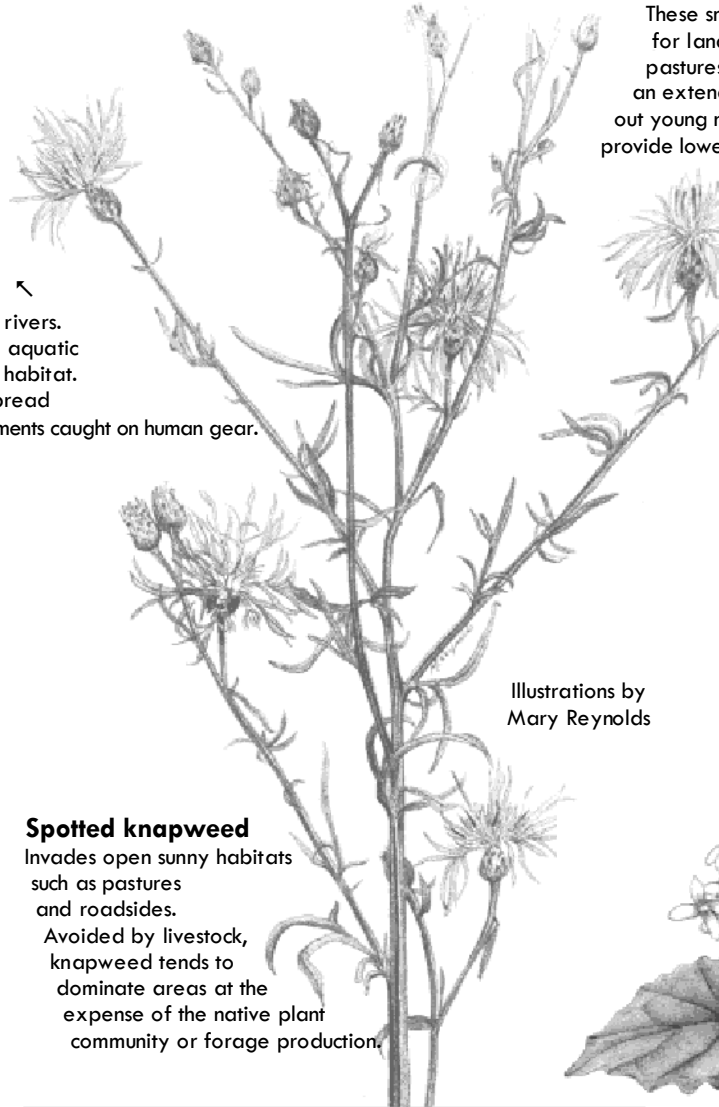
If you would like to receive a copy of the Scoping Letter or would like to be added to our mailing list, please email hknox@fs.fed.us or write: FLNF Attn: Holly Knox, 231 N. Main St. Rutland, VT 05701, or call (607) 546-4470.

Invasive plants on the FLNF



Eurasian water milfoil ↖

Infests our lakes, ponds, and rivers. Dense mats shade out native aquatic plants and degrade wildlife habitat. Water milfoil is commonly spread by waterfowl and plant fragments caught on human gear.



Illustrations by
Mary Reynolds

Spotted knapweed

Invades open sunny habitats such as pastures and roadsides. Avoided by livestock, knapweed tends to dominate areas at the expense of the native plant community or forage production.



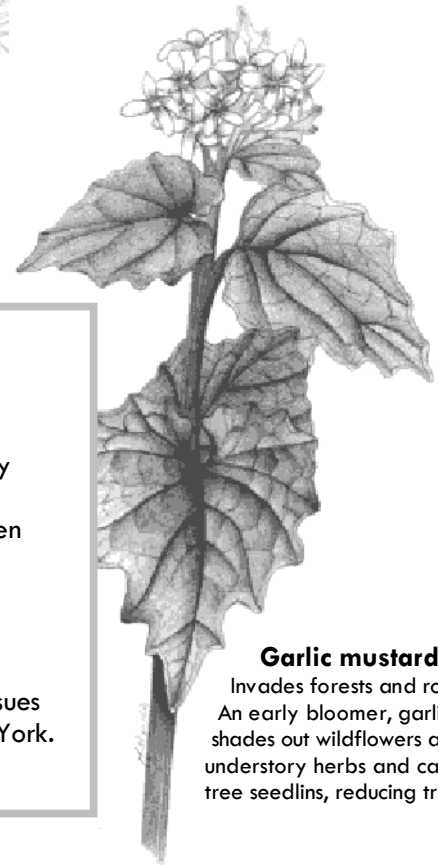
Buckthorns/bush honeysuckles ↓

These small trees and bushes, commonly planted for landscape purposes, now invade forests, pastures, and wetlands. They utilize an extended growing season, and therefore shade out young native trees and wildflowers. These plants provide lower quality wildlife forage than native shrubs.



Purple loosestrife

Infests wetlands, shorelines, wet meadows, and roadsides. Dense stands of purple loosestrife replace native plants that provide food and cover for wildlife.



Garlic mustard

Invades forests and roadsides. An early bloomer, garlic mustard shades out wildflowers and other native understory herbs and can outcompete tree seedlings, reducing tree regeneration.

What can you do?

- Learn to identify invasive species
- Avoid spreading invasives
- Control invasives on your own property
- Encourage and educate others
- Plant non-invasive plants in your garden
- Support local groups working on invasive plant issues

Local groups working on invasive plant issues currently exist in several counties in New York.