



Arizona State Forestry Division
Bureau of Indian Affairs: Southwest, Navajo, Western Regions
Bureau of Land Management: Arizona, New Mexico
National Park Service, Intermountain Region
New Mexico State Forestry Division
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
U. S. Forest Service



Date: 01/29/2009

To: Southwest Fire Agencies and Incident Management Teams

From: Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

Topic/Issue: Preventing Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species in the Southwest - Guidance for Fire Operations

The attached technical and operational guidelines were developed by an interagency group of biologists, fire managers, and invasive species specialists to assist fire personnel in reducing the potential for the spread of aquatic invasive species during fire management and suppression activities. The technical guidelines are intended for use by resource advisors, biologists, and other resource specialists and supplement the two-page “Operational Guidelines for Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Equipment Cleaning” prepared for fire managers in the southwestern U.S. These recommendations were patterned after guidance developed by the Forest Service’s Intermountain Region, but have been modified to address aquatic invasive species of the Southwest. Because of the large expanses over which fire crews and their equipment travel, the potential for firefighters to serve as vectors for invasive species is significant. These guidelines are based on what we know about prevention methods for common species at this time and will be refined and revised over time as needed.

Invasive species are organisms that are introduced into a non-native ecosystem and that cause, or are likely to cause, harm to the economy, environment, or human health. The Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Control and Prevention Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-646) highlights the concern for adverse impacts to native aquatic species from nonindigenous species. Executive Order 13112 (February 3, 1999) directs all Federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not promote the introduction or spread of invasive species.

Invasive plants and animals have many impacts on fish and wildlife resources and native environments. Invasive species degrade, change, or displace habitats and compete with our native fish, wildlife, and plant resources. In addition, many of these aquatic invasive organisms can damage or destroy fire suppression equipment by clogging valves, pumps, motors, etc. The prevention and sanitation guidelines presented here can help prevent the spread of these organisms to other environments and help to ensure that fire suppression equipment remains operational.

The guidelines were designed to be as practical and yet as effective as possible. They are specifically tailored for the Southwest and are intended to be utilized by all federal land management agencies as well as state agencies involved in fire management.

/S/ Donald Griego

Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group