

# NAVAJO NATION INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Project Information and FAQs

### Background

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Navajo Regional Office has published its Record of Decision (ROD) for the Navajo Nation Integrated Weed Management Plan on Navajo Nation tribal trust and allotment lands. The ROD was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA ensures that federal agencies, in this case the BIA, consider significant impacts of a proposed action on the human environment, and that the public is informed about potential environmental concerns through the agency's decision-making process.

The ROD was published on December 12, 2022 and is available for public viewing at the project website:

<https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/navajo/navajo-nation-integrated-weed-management-plan>

### What is an Integrated Weed Management Plan?

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An integrated weed management plan provides a variety of recommended techniques and approaches for managing and controlling exotic weed species. An integrated approach uses different weed control methods together to provide the greatest level of control. This could mean cutting a dense population with a mower and then applying herbicide immediately after to the cut part of the plant. It can also mean releasing a permitted biological control agent on a remote population for a season before returning to remove dead material and replanting open areas with native plant seeds. Using an integrated approach gives managers options for treating weeds based on various factors including community concerns, project location, weed species present, and avoidance or protection measures to prevent impacts to valuable resources and the environment while still providing effective control.

### What weeds will be treated under this plan?

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs will focus on treating 45 different weed species for management. These species are non-native plants that do not naturally occur in the region. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, as a federal agency, is required to manage non-native species as part of its trust responsibility. All the species identified for control are problematic. Some can cause serious injury to livestock or wildlife. Others displace more desirable native plants, lowering native plant cover and production. There are also some that increase the frequency and severity of fire in areas where they are overgrown. While a number of native weeds occur on the Navajo Nation, like silverleaf nightshade or cocklebur, these species will not be addressed under this plan but may be addressed through another natural resource plan.

### Where will weed treatments take place?

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The Plan prioritizes weed treatments in six key areas: designated rangeland, designated farmland, rights-of-way, roads, riparian habitats, and community development areas. Noxious weed populations currently occur in many of these areas and negatively impact them, either by increasing maintenance costs, harming production, or impacting important natural processes. However, weed management projects in other areas will still be considered based on their location, size, and the weed species being treated.

### What is the BIA's decision for the Plan?

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Based on the analysis presented in the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), the BIA has selected Alternative 2 for its integrated weed management plan (IWMP). This alternative provides guidance on controlling 45 noxious weed species using manual, mechanical, chemical, biological, and cultural control methods. Key features of this alternative are more robust requirements to coordinate with communities, Navajo Nation Programs, and neighboring federal agencies when planning and implementing projects. The other alternatives were not selected as their either did not adequately meet the purpose and need for the project or limited the BIA's ability to manage and monitor weed management needs.

## What resources were analyzed in the PEIS?

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As part of its decision-making process, the BIA analyzed the effects of each alternative considered in the PEIS on several resources on the Navajo Nation. These resources include paleontological resources, soil, water, and air, vegetation, wildlife, agriculture, public health, socioeconomics, cultural resources, environmental justice, and areas with special designation (National Parks, Navajo Tribal Parks, Biological Preserves, and Forest Management Units). Several resource topics were considered but removed from consideration because the impacts were determined to be non-existent or negligible. These resources include geologic features, climate change, National Parks, Monuments, and Recreation Areas, wilderness areas, and noise and light.

## How do I access the ROD and Integrated Weed Management Plan?

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You can find the ROD, Final PEIS, and IWMP at the project website:

<https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/navajo/navajo-nation-integrated-weed-management-plan>

## What if I have further questions about weed management?

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You can contact the BIA at [nniwmp@bia.gov](mailto:nniwmp@bia.gov) or mailing your questions to the address listed below.

Written comments and questions may be sent to:

Bureau of Indian Affairs – Navajo Regional Office  
Branch of Environmental Quality Act Compliance and Review  
C/O Leonard Notah, NEPA Compliance Specialist  
P.O. Box 1060  
Gallup, New Mexico 87301

## Next Steps

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The Record of Decision announces the BIA's official decision on how it will proceed with noxious weed management on the Navajo Nation. The BIA will begin planning, implementing, and monitoring various noxious weed programs based on the mitigations and guidance provided in the Navajo Nation Integrated Weed Management Plan. This will include educational sessions to inform the public about each of the noxious weed species being treated, how to plan and implement projects, and how to coordinate projects with other agencies and organizations.



Bureau of Indian Affairs  
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