

How to Write the BMP for Invasive Species Prescription

Let's start with a few examples of narratives that are considered unacceptable, including statements such as:

- "N/A"
- "No concerns"

Why are these considered unacceptable? This level of information doesn't tell the reviewer anything about the site conditions.

Are there invasives present?

If there are, stating there is no issue or concern is unacceptable. You will need to identify the species and location and explain why their presence does not pose a threat.

If there are no invasives present, how will accidental or unintended introduction of invasives be prevented on site?

Bottom line, you must explain WHY there are no BMP concerns whether invasives are present on the site or not! Here are a few more examples of narratives considered unacceptable:

- "No invasives noted on site"
- "Nothing found on the property"
- "NA-No invasive species identified in the proposed cutting area"

These narratives explain that there are no invasive species present on the site, but do not state how this is known (i.e. did they do a site inspection?).

Further, these narratives should include an explanation of what site-specific BMPs will be utilized to prevent invasives from being introduced on the site as a result of the timber harvesting activities.

Another example of an unacceptable narrative is: "Wisconsin BMPs for invasive species will be followed."

This is unacceptable for several reasons.

First, it's expected that all applicable BMPs for invasive species will be followed on all MFL timber sales.

Second, "BMPs will be followed" does not provide the reviewer enough specific information about the specific site to be harvested.

Third, a statement indicating that "All BMPs for invasive species will be followed" has already been made in the landowner's MFL management plan.

The purpose of the Cutting Notice is to describe in detail what specific types of practices will occur to mitigate the impacts of invasive plants, pests, pathogens and diseases when a timber harvest occurs.

Some final examples of unacceptable narratives include:

- "Inspect equipment and clean prior to entering the site."
- "Equipment, fans, radiators, etc. power washed prior to arrival at job site."
- "Recommend all equipment that comes from off site be cleaned prior to entry to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species."
- "To reduce the spread of invasives – machinery will be cleaned prior to entering the property."

- “Logging equipment will be cleaned prior to moving onto the property and prior to leaving.”
- “Watch for and address invasive plants. Harvesting will be done during frozen ground and snow covered conditions.”

While these are important BMPs and should be listed if they apply to the site, they could apply to most timber sales, so simply listing the BMP and nothing else doesn't provide the reviewer with enough substantial information to help them approve the Cutting Notice.

In addition, these narratives should include information about:

- Whether invasive species are present or not?
- How and when the person completing the Cutting Notice reviewed the site (through a site inspection for example)
- Any additional site-specific BMPs that will be implemented.

Now let's move on to a few examples that are a good start but could use improvement.

“Buckthorn and honeysuckle were both identified on the property. Landowners will be conducting buckthorn control efforts focused on the clearcut area initially and then expanding to other parts of the property. Garlic mustard was also identified in small patches. Where identified, garlic mustard patches were flagged by marking an adjacent tree with blue/green paint so that the patch can be found and returned to later for future monitoring efforts.”

“Manual control of Common Buckthorn is recommended.”

“Landowner is actively treating invasives on property.”

These narratives provide a basic explanation of what invasive plants are present on the property and/or efforts the landowners are using or could use to control those plants. However, there is no explanation of what site-specific BMPs will be utilized to limit the spread of these species during the course of the timber harvesting activities.

Here's another example of a narrative that could be improved.

“Look for and identify invasives prior to road construction. Backhoe used to build roads will be cleaned before moving to activity area and before leaving. Road will be gated near property boundary. The borrow pit from which gravel is acquired will be checked for invasive species.”

This narrative is positive in that it addresses a number of ways that the spread of invasives will be minimized including cleaning equipment, gating roads, and inspecting borrow pits. However, rather than stating that field scouting will occur prior to road construction, this narrative should be improved by the person scouting the site prior to submitting the cutting notice so that they can indicate on the form whether invasives are present at this time or not.

A few final examples of narratives that could use improvement:

“Multiflora rose is present in the stand and is recommended to control. Logging equipment should be cleaned of soil and other debris prior to entering the property, and when moving from this harvest.”

“Buckthorn, honeysuckle, black locust, multi-flora rose, and garlic mustard are present. It is recommended for forest health and regeneration that these invasive species are controlled. Equipment should be washed before entering and after leaving the site.”

“There are no invasives currently found on this property, all machines will be power washed prior to entry for this harvest.”

These narratives are positive in that they:

- Explain whether invasive plants are found on the property or not.
- Indicate that BMPs such as washing machinery and/or harvesting during frozen ground conditions will be implemented to minimize the spread of invasives

But be thoughtful. These BMPs apply to most timber sales. Think to yourself, “are there other BMPs for invasive species that should be implemented?”

For example, think about the layout of roads and skid trails, how equipment will move throughout the property, and the general order in which certain areas of the property should be harvested.

Finally, here’s an example of an acceptable narrative for the BMPs for Invasive Species section.

“Garlic mustard, reed canary grass and buckthorn are present in Stand 1. The landowner has been educated on the impact these plants can have on the forest understory and has been given informational material regarding control. Equipment movement through the property will be tailored to harvest areas not infested with garlic mustard first, then move to infested areas. Generally the harvest will start on the west side and move east. Stand 2 has reed canary grass in the understory. Residual basal areas were left higher to continue to suppress the density of reed canary grass.”

This narrative explains what invasive species are present and in which stands. It explains at the site level how BMPs will be used to minimize the spread of invasives on the property. It also describes specific ways in which the harvest prescriptions were designed to help minimize invasive plants on the property.

Keep in mind these points when completing this section of the Cutting Notice form:

- Describe the site conditions in detail.
- Document whether or not invasive plants, pests, pathogens or diseases are present on site or on neighboring sites.
- Describe the level of infestation.
- Write a detailed description of how the introduction and spread of invasive species will be prevented and/or minimized during timber harvesting activities.

Providing these necessary details will help ensure that your invasive species section narratives are thorough and acceptable.