

Invasive Plant Species Workshop

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Abstract

Invasive plant species are a matter of growing concern on electric utility rights-of-way. As state governments begin to regulate invasive species, utilities may need to alter work practices consistent with new regulations. The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) initiated a workshop to help identify the issues and obstacles associated with practices that could be adopted to reduce the spread of invasive plant species.

Objective

Exotic, invasive plant species pose ongoing challenges for ROW managers. With fast growth rates and highly effective propagation these species can drive up maintenance costs, diminish recreational values, and can even pose health and safety concerns.

Approach

This workshop attempted to identify and prioritize the needs and challenges associated with work practice development associated with invasive plant species reduction. This was accomplished through guided large and small group discussions between the experts and stakeholders attending the workshop.

Results

During a two-day conference, held June 29-3, 2010 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, workshop members identified four areas that present pertinent challenges to invasive plant species management. These are stakeholder relationships, research/information gathering, public policy, and implementation. Within these areas, participants identified a list of more specific questions of importance. These questions include: What are the costs and effectiveness of best management practices (BMPs) and integrated vegetation management? How can BMPs be accomplished with current funding levels? And how can management practices be kept simple for utility field staff and contractors? Workshop attendees also discussed more specific topics related to costs and effectiveness of BMPs.

Application, Value and Use

This document was designed to provide guidance to utilities in the area of invasive plant species planning. It will assist companies in thinking about the issues related to invasive plant species,

aid them in moving forward, and additionally suggest topics for future EPRI research.

EPRI Perspective

Prior to the invasive plant species workshop, EPRI published *Electric Transmission Right-of-Way Invasive Non-Native Woody Plant Species Control*, 2006 (EPRI report 1010127). Since that time, interest in the control of invasive plants species has grown, and there have been developments on the regulatory front at the state level. It was determined through utility discussions that it would be beneficial to hold a workshop to inform utilities of developments and to identify beneficial research topics that EPRI may undertake in the near-term.

Keywords:

Best Management Practices (BMPs), Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM), Invasive plant species, Invasive species, Transmission rights-of-way

EPRI

3420 Hillview Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94304
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