

National Fire Plan

The War on Weeds in the Wilderness

Idaho 2002



“The amount of progress made on weeds in the wilderness could not have happened without the National Fire Plan funding,” said Tommy Gionet, wilderness weed coordinator on the Middle Fork Ranger District. **Because of the funding, the district was able to treat 90% of the known infestations in 2001 and expects similar results for 2002.**

Idaho’s Salmon-Challis National Forest is using monies allocated by the National Fire Plan (NFP) to minimize impacts of invasive weeds in the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness. The NFP funds have enabled the Forest to check the spread of weeds in the wilderness through inventory, treatment, and public education.

NFP funds were used to hire a weed crew, to award weed treatment contracts, and to purchase educational materials. The weed crew logged 4,000 hours of monitoring, inventorying and treating weeds in the wilderness.



Rush skeletonweed spray line illustrating where treatment ended after the growing season. The left side of the photo was treated while the right was not treated

The Middle Fork Ranger District has been actively involved with Integrated Pest Management associated with noxious weed infestations since 1996. The District manages 900,000 acres of the 2.3 million acre Frank Church River of No Return wilderness area. Approximately 556,000 acres of the wilderness burned in the 2000 fire season and 30,000 acres burned in the 2001 fire season. The

increase in funds from the National Fire Plan is allowing the district to focus on the high-risk areas created by the 2000 and 2001 fire seasons.

As part of an integrated system, the District provides education about weeds through the posting of information at wilderness trailheads, making public contacts and providing educational materials on the ecological and social impacts associated with noxious weeds. The objective is to prevent or reduce the amount of new infestations introduced into the Wilderness.



Weed crew members spraying adjacent to the burned area after the fires of 2000