**Natural Areas Association**

**Invasive Exotic Species Policy**

**Background**

**In recent years national and international attention has focused on the issue of**

**invasive exotic species and their impact on biological diversity. The Natural Areas**

**Association (NAA) recognizes that this issue has ecological, economic and social**

**facets at global, national, regional and local scales. Such topics as the protection**

**of biological diversity, international relations, world trade and local economic**

**development may all be affected by invasive exotic species.**

**Individuals and organizations working to protect and restore natural areas and**

**other wildland habitats are directly affected by policies and on-the-ground**

**decisions to manage invasive exotic species. NAA members identified invasive**

**exotics as their number one management concern within natural areas during the**

**1999 Natural Areas Techniques Forum. As a leading professional organization**

**whose mission is to “...advance the preservation of biological diversity....” it is**

**essential that the NAA define a position on the role of invasive exotic species in**

**natural areas and other wildland ecosystems and couple it with a cautionary note**

**regarding the selection process employed to categorize and subsequently take**

**management action against invasive exotic species.**

**NAA recognizes the impacts that invasive exotic species are having on the**

**structure, function and composition of natural areas and wildlands all over the**

**world. NAA understands that the rate of undesirable change promoted by these**

**species in wildland systems is increasing and in many areas control and**

**prevention is often difficult or impractical. The specific issues are as complex and**

**as varied as natural areas themselves, linked to both ecological objectives and**

**social values that may or may not be compatible. NAA promotes through the**

**appropriate application of scientifically derived technologies, the maintenance of**

**biological diversity represented within natural areas. This includes the preservation**

**of the adaptive capacity of these areas for the organisms that depend on them and**

**future generations. These goals can only be accomplished within a social network**

**of common understanding and desire as well as mutual trust and respect.**

**Criteria For Defining Invasive Exotic Species in Natural Areas Management**

**Not all exotic (non-native) species pose current or potential risks to natural areas**

**or wildland ecosystems. Only those species that substantially affect (or could**

**affect in the future) natural area or wildland ecosystem function, structure or**

**composition in the short- or long-term should be targeted for management or**

**monitoring activities within these respective settings.**

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**Guidance and Direction**

**1. The NAA supports the exclusion and control of invasive exotic species as identified**

**by the criteria above and encourages restoration of natural areas and other**

**wildland habitats. NAA supports research and control efforts that lead to the**

**identification and elimination of pathways through which invasive exotics enter the**

**natural areas. NAA endorses the concept of adaptive management where the**

**effectiveness of management techniques are evaluated through research and**

**monitoring and modified where necessary. The NAA endorses a comprehensive**

**integrated control strategy combining techniques that are determined to be**

**effective.**

**2. The NAA supports legislation and policy development on invasive exotic species**

**exclusion and control where these mechanisms are consistent with the NAA**

**mission and criteria listed above.**

**3. NAA provide information and/or resources directed towards filling information gaps**

**for invasive exotic species management programs through a variety of means. NAA**

**is committed to presenting the best science available through NAA journal articles,**

**conferences, workshops and other venues on a wide range of topic areas involving**

**invasive species management.**

**4. The NAA recognizes that managers, researchers and other people are actively**

**engaged in the study and management of invasive exotic species and that there**

**may be a wide spectrum of views and experiences on this topic. NAA seeks to**

**provide a forum for the sharing of results of invasive species management**

**programs and encourages open dialogue on the management of invasive exotic**

**species in natural areas and wildlands. NAA promotes discussion and information**

**exchange via *Natural Areas Journal* articles, *Natural Areas News*, NAA website,**

**NAA sponsored conferences and workshops, and other venues.**

**5. The NAA seeks partnership studies and coordination opportunities with others**

**conducting management of invasive exotic species. NAA recognizes that many**

**land managers and institutions are engaged in management programs for invasive**

**species and that partnerships are essential to overall exclusion, tracking,**

**monitoring, control and restoration. Partnerships provide an opportunity to: (1)**

**work collaboratively on varying geographical scales; (2) work across ownership**

**and/or management boundaries; (3) share costs; (4) identify, coordinate and**

**implement mutually agreed upon goals and objectives, thereby increasing the**

**likelihood of effective exclusion and control of invasive exotics; and, restoration of**

**natural resources and ecological processes adversely affected by such species and;**

**(5) increase public awareness of the issues associated with invasive exotics.**