



Valles Caldera National Preserve

Noxious Weed Eradication Program

Stewardship Register (60800)

Adaptive Management and NEPA Adequacy Review

Valles Caldera Trust
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I. Introduction

Adaptive Management as described in the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) procedures of the Trust (VCT 2003) require the Trust to review the outcomes selected for monitoring to determine if a stewardship action should be continued, modified or terminated; if a supplemental environmental document should be prepared; or if the existing Stewardship Register should be amended.

II. Review of Monitored Outcomes

The objective of the noxious weed eradication program was to reduce the occurrence of Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), and bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) by 70% during the first year and by 100% following three years.

The eradication of known populations has been successful or is nearing success (Iskra 2007) . New plants and populations have been detected. This is likely due to increased inventory and recognition by staff, and delayed germination of seeds.

Individual plants have been detected in the riparian area along San Antonio Creek. The existing eradication treatment is not recommended if herbicide would come in contact with open water. If herbicide has the potential of coming into contact with open water plants should be grubbed by hand.

Based on the monitored outcomes, the Stewardship Action can continue as described in the Stewardship Register. If continued monitoring indicate that hand grubbing is not effective in treating occurrences within the riparian area an alternative action will be proposed and a supplemental environmental document will be prepared.

III. NEPA Adequacy Review

To ensure compliance with NEPA over time the Trust has performed a review of the current analysis and documentation. Six criteria have been reviewed.

- 1) Proposed Action
- 2) Range of Alternatives
- 3) New Information
- 4) Method and analytical approach of the analysis
- 5) Analysis of Environmental Consequences
- 6) Public Involvement

1) Is the Proposed Action the same action (or part of that action) as previously analyzed?

Yes, including all performance requirements.

2) Was the range of alternatives sufficient with respect to current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes, hand pulling the weeds and use of biological controls were considered. While hand control is not effective in eliminating established populations, it will be used in an effort to control new populations. Its effectiveness in prevention will be monitored.

3) Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?

Yes, monitored information and the expert opinion of the Bureau of Land Management personnel implementing the project and botanist contracted for vegetation monitoring on the Trust independently concur that the action is effective and should continue (OHaver 2007, Iskra 2007, Barnes 2008, personal communication and email)

4) Do the methods and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for continuing the action?

Yes, the analysis was based on accepted published data using accepted interpretations and approaches.

5) Do the analysis and conclusions remain supported by current information?

Yes

6) Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with the existing NEPA documents adequate for the current proposed action?

Yes, the public and other interested parties have remained updated through annual reports to Congress (which are made available to the public) and the 2007 State of the Preserve. Implementation of the proposed action has been an interagency effort.

IV. Adaptive Management Recommendations

- 1) Continue the Noxious Weed Eradication Program to control varieties of noxious (invasive, non-native) thistle that occur on the Preserve.
- 2) Establish an efficient, consistent long-term monitoring program.
- 3) Monitor the effectiveness of removing new occurrences by hand, especially riparian areas.
- 4) Investigate options for treating occurrences in riparian areas; propose action if necessary.

V. Review and Approval

After reviewing the outcomes selected for monitoring it is my decision to continue the Stewardship Action.

Responsible Official: Dennis Trujillo, Preserve Manager

Signature: /s/Dennis Trujillo

Date: 5/8/2008