

Nonnative Invasive Weed Monitoring in the Koyukuk Mining District

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We will present results from the first phase of surveying for nonnative invasive plants (NIP) at mining sites in the Koyukuk Mining District (KMD). The purpose of the first phase of this project is to inventory occurrences of NIP species at mine related disturbances (access roads and trails, gravel pits, camps, mine cuts, reclaimed areas and abandoned mine lands) in and adjacent to the KMD. A simplified form is used to collect data so that specialists without vegetation survey experience are able to inventory the presence/absence of species and estimate population size (estimated stem count, percent canopy cover per area) to provide a gross index of infestations. Size of small populations is determined by direct stem counts. Photo plots and photo points are also part of the survey methodology.

BLM provides for multiple uses on lands we manage. There are many potential vectors for weed introduction and spread associated with human activity as a result of multiple use management. BLM's weed management policy is to prevent introduction and spread. Conducting inventory to detect infestations early and respond rapidly to eradicate populations of NIP is a direct part of implementing our policy and the most cost effective means of control. Monitoring infested sites and conducting follow up control is essential for effective weed management and mine reclamation. Because federal agencies manage such large areas in Alaska, it is difficult for vegetation specialists to visit all possible locations. With minimum training, field staff can collect data on invasive plants in minimal time during routine inspections. This project will help provide information to develop effective vegetation management protocols for mining reclamation in the KMD.