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## Environmental Review for Volunteer Invasive Plant Management Projects

DR-15-11, September 2015

City of Austin  
Watershed Protection Department  
Environmental Resource Management Division

### General Requirements

All volunteer projects on City of Austin parkland require approval from Austin Parks and Recreation (PARC). The volunteer project proposal form must be submitted and approved prior to any work. This form, and others referenced in this guidance, can be found in the **Links** section below. If the project is near a waterway, the Grow Zone project proposal form should be used instead. If in doubt, please use the Grow Zone form.

A Public Tree Care Permit will be required for many types of invasive plant work. A site visit with the PARC Forester may be required prior to work on invasive trees 3" or greater in diameter. The PARC Forester may also require that a certified arborist be on-site for some or all of the tree work being performed.

### Requirements for Environmental Review

Volunteer invasive management projects on City land should be reviewed by Watershed Protection Department (WPD) Environmental Resource Management (ERM) staff if those projects have the potential to negatively impact Austin waterways. The determination for potential impact will be made by ERM staff based on the type and extent of proposed work and local site conditions. Additional information will be required for work that involves the use of herbicides on City land.

Invasive plant removal is often an essential component of natural area restoration. However, the improper management of invasive plants may fail to bring the target species under control, may slow or prevent the restoration process and can contribute to stream erosion, sediment runoff and other environmental impacts. The applicant shall provide a scope of work that includes:

1. A Grow Zone restoration plan or reference to a land management plan previously reviewed and approved by ERM staff.
2. Size of management area (in square feet or acres).
3. Percent canopy that the target species represent in the management area.
4. An estimate of the percentage of woody plants to be removed in each of three size classes (up to 2" diameter, 2"-6" diameter, 6" and greater diameter).
5. A description specifying removal methods for each size class included in the proposal

6. A plan for phased canopy reduction if invasives constitute more than 50% of the canopy
7. A plan for canopy replacement with woody seedlings if more than 50% of the canopy will be removed
8. A description specifying how the slash/debris produced will be managed/disposed of, including who are the responsible parties.

Plans for removing invasive vegetation from the banks of creeks or on steep slopes (more than 3:1) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. These plans should include erosion control practices and specific removal techniques that avoid extensive soil disturbance.

Note that the City of Austin Environmental Criteria Manual (ECM) requires WPD approval for removal of invasive vegetation within the setback of a Critical Environmental Feature (ECM 1.10.5.2.E).

#### If herbicide use is proposed

There are a number of restrictions to herbicide use on City property that an applicant must be aware of. Herbicide use has the potential to significantly impact both non-target vegetation and aquatic organisms. It also often triggers questions and concerns from citizens when performed in high visibility areas such as City parks. Applications that propose herbicide use on parkland should be reviewed by both PARD and ERM staff, whereas applications that propose herbicide use on any other City land should be reviewed by ERM staff. *The applicant shall provide a scope of work from a licensed pesticide applicator* that includes:

1. A statement that work will comply with all PARD/WPD herbicide application requirements (form available from PARD or WPD project coordinator)
2. Completed **PARD Third Party Pesticide Application Form** (available from PARD or WPD project coordinator)
3. Copy of current Texas Department of Agriculture applicator license

Note that herbicide application is not allowed in the Barton Springs Zone (ECM 1.6.9.2):

- a. within 100' feet of any waterway draining 1 acre or more or
- b. within the setback of any Critical Environmental Feature.

Please allow two weeks for review of any proposals submitted to ERM.

#### **Contacts**

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## Links

PARD Volunteer Project Proposal Form

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/volunteer-austin-parks-and-recreation>

Grow Zone Volunteer Project Proposal Form

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/riparian/VolunteerProjectProposalFormGrowZonesv3-1.pdf>

Public Tree Care Permit

<https://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/Forestry/publictreecarepermit.pdf>

Grow Zone Restoration Plan

<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/riparian/GZ-Restoration-Plan-form.pdf>