

INVASIVE SPECIES AND THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION. Lia Bollmann, Wildlife Biologist, Missouri Department of Conservation, St. Charles, MO. 63304

The Missouri Department of Conservation is responsible for the management of approximately 890,000 acres on nearly 1,000 conservation areas across the state. Due to past land use, varying degrees of natural integrity remain within the habitats and natural communities found on these conservation areas. The introduction and spread of exotic plant species is one factor which continues to negatively impact the quality of our natural habitats and poses a serious threat to the sustainability of healthy and viable wildlife populations. There are approximately 850 naturalized exotic plant species in Missouri. Deciding which habitats are most worthy of protection and/or restoration is a challenging and on-going process. This presentation will examine some of the most serious invaders of Missouri's natural communities and the factors which guide invasive species management on Department lands.