



How much of the riparian area is covered by weeds (invasive plant species)?

Weeds are alien species; they have been imported from elsewhere and their introduction causes both economic and environmental harm. Invasive plants include “noxious” or “restricted” weeds. Weeds invade riparian areas where disturbance has created bare soil. The presence of weeds can indicate a threat to health. No weeds indicate the riparian area is well vegetated, there is no bare soil and there is no seed source. Several weeds indicate space is available and there is a threat of quick invasion. Many weeds signal the system is degraded.

Invasive plants may contribute marginally to some riparian functions, but their negative impacts reduce overall health. They are not present in early spring to trap sediment or protect banks and shorelines from runoff. Their presence inhibits other important and beneficial species that contribute to bank and shore stability, biodiversity and primary productivity.



- Examples of Invasive Weeds*
- Nodding Thistle*
 - Canada Thistle*
 - Knapweed*
 - Hound's Tongue*
 - Leafy Spurge*
 - Toadflax*



How much of the riparian area is covered by disturbance-caused vegetation?



- Examples of Disturbance-caused plants*
- Common Dandelion*
 - Festool Barley*
 - Timothy*
 - Stinkweed*
 - Kentucky Bluegrass*
 - Clovers*
 - Plantains*

Disturbance-caused species are plants which are absent, or present in small amounts, in undisturbed areas, but invade reaches with high levels of use or disturbance. A large cover of these plants, either native or introduced, indicates an alteration of the normal plant community that would be expected to occur on the site. Like invasive plants, disturbance-caused species are well adapted to an environment of continual stress, where the competitive advantage of better riparian species has been diminished. These species have more value than invasive plants, but are usually;

- ◆ shallow-rooted and less productive;
- ◆ have limited value for bank binding and erosion prevention; and
- ◆ inhibit other preferred plants.