



Integrated Vegetation Management

Integrated Vegetation Management, or IVM, is utilized as a practical approach to manage vegetation along county rights-of-way. IVM is defined as the practice of promoting desirable, stable, low-growing plant communities that will resist invasion of noxious weeds and tall growing vegetation. It's composed of five control methods: manual, mechanical, biological, cultural, and chemical. The combination of these control methods is used to manage vegetation by balancing cost-effective strategies with environmentally sound treatments.

Control Methods

Manual and/or Mechanical Control: These methods physically damage or remove vegetation on a site. This can include, but is not limited to: mowing, cutting, grubbing, hand-pulling, girdling, tilling, and thermal control (i.e., prescribed burns).

Cultural Control: This method involves the introduction of specific plants or mulches to control vegetation growth or promote a desirable plant community. Examples include reintroduction of native species, use of weed barriers or mulch.

Biological Control: this involves using living organisms to control and manage unwanted vegetation - often through destruction or competition. Examples of biological control include animals, fish, insects, and disease organisms (e.g., bacteria, viruses, parasites, fungi, etc.). Biological control agents and practices are approved, utilized, and implemented by federal and state agencies to ensure environmental safety and effectiveness. There are two primary biological control methods:

- ❖ Living systems - Grazing sheep, goats, and cattle can be used to control weed growth.
- ❖ Beneficial predators - Predatory species are introduced to a site to destroy and/or out-compete unwanted vegetation.

Chemical Control: Herbicides are selected and applied in a focused manner. This control method is more efficient and cost-effective than others for large areas. When

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used correctly by pairing the proper chemical(s) for the target species and applying during appropriate time of year and weather conditions.