# Polatin Ecological Services

*Habitat Restoration, Conservation Planning & Land Stewardship*

## *Judicious Use of Herbicides for Invasive Plant Management*

The following information is meant to provide information to the public, our project partners and permitting agencies about our practices and procedures regarding the use of herbicides in natural areas. I have observed in my career that herbicide use in natural areas can be highly controversial and many people are perplexed when we prescribe an herbicide application as part of a habitat restoration plan. In the spirit of full disclosure I appreciate the opportunity to provide some background information in order to help interested parties make informed decisions.

We have several methods in our toolbox. Herbicides are one of those tools and natural lands managers frequently integrate judicious herbicide use with other techniques such as cutting, mowing, pulling, grazing and burning. For more information I recommend reading portions of The Nature Conservancy's Weed Methods Control Handbook (http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/handbook.html). I also highly recommend reading the herbicide chapters in the handbook specific to the prescribed herbicide's active ingredient (glyphosate, triclopyr, imazapyr, etc.). We strive to use techniques that minimize the amount of herbicide used and reduce non-target damage particularly in sensitive areas such as adjacent to wetlands and within endangered/rare species habitats.

We use only "general use" herbicides in natural areas and we voluntarily follow the Massachusetts Sensitive Areas materials List (http://www.mass.gov/agr/pesticides/rightofway/index.htm). This website has information that evaluates the herbicides we typically use. We believe that these herbicides are appropriate and safe for use in natural areas and pose a low risk to humans and wildlife if used appropriately and in accordance with the specimen label.

I also recommend that you read the Specimen Label and Material Safety Data Sheet for the specific herbicide we propose using on your project. The following website will help you locate this information: http://www.greenbook.net/.

Each New England state has different regulations governing who may be licensed to apply herbicides for hire. All applicators must study materials developed through Cornell University and pass a written test. Applicators must obtain educational credits each year through attending workshops in order to maintain their licenses. Each applicator is required to show proof of liability insurance each year in order to remain licensed. Our crew is licensed to work in Massachusetts and Vermont so far and we plan to become licensed in New Hampshire and Connecticut in 2008.

We always post warning signs in all public entry ways to the property before work begins and for 48 hours after work has ceased. We strategize with our partners to locate the best places to post these signs. We can create customized signs to provide the public with

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additional information about the habitat restoration and management objectives for the project area. We have portable temporary kiosks available to for sites that would benefit from more comprehensive public outreach information. We are also available to assist our partners with developing materials, press releases, and organizing public meetings/presentations in order to talk about the project in advance. I have found that the most successful and rewarding projects involve stakeholders early on in the planning process and welcome their comments and involvement throughout.

We adhere to several company policies that will assure a safe and targeted herbicide application at the project site: 1) we monitor weather conditions carefully and do not apply herbicide unless we have at least a 1 day window of dry weather. We pay close attention to wind speeds and direction and will not spray the site if the wind speeds are out of the optimum range of 2-10 mph which could risk non-target damage or applicator safety; 2) we use a drift control agent whenever we foliar spray; 3) we do our herbicide mixing over a secondary containment system, only use 2.5 gallon containers, and always have a spill kit in our work vehicles just in case; and 4) each herbicide applicator follows the personal protective equipment guidelines on the particular herbicide label.