



Prevent the Spread of Forest Health Threats

Equipment that is used in forestry operations poses a threat in spreading of unwanted threats to the health of our forests if not properly cleaned before being moved to a new location. These threats include the transport of invasive plants, insects, pathogens and other undesirable critters that can impact the health of our forests. These threats can be transported in various life stages in or on the debris that has accumulated on the equipment. This facilitates the spread of these threats into previously infested/infected areas. Examples of this are fire ants, cogongrass and other invasive organisms that are threats to our forests, forest workers and the public. This transport is accomplished on equipment that has not cleaned and sanitized before movement to another site in or out of state.

Preventing the spread of invasive species from one state to another is a concern for the forestry commissions of the south. A solution was outlined in a Memo distributed to employees of the South Carolina Forestry Commission and that solution is applicable in Mississippi. We do not want to spread forest threats to other states. Likewise, we do not want to bring other threats that are not in Mississippi (or not very common) to our state. Often these plants, pathogens, or animals can be found in the soil at-

tached to tractors, plows, or the transport trucks. To prevent the spread of these threats, the recommended solution is to wash the equipment with water from a high-pressure pump.

It is recommended, before any equipment leaves Mississippi the equipment should be washed with a high-pressure pump such as the supervisor's truck or a fire department pumper. All soil should be removed from the tractor cleats, undercarriage, and belly pan. Soil should be removed from the plow. On the transport, all soil should be removed from the bed and the tires and rims (both sides). When washing the transport and tractor, care should be taken to not spray water on a hot engine or injector pump.

Once the equipment has been released from an assignment in a given location, the equipment should be washed as outlined above before leaving the incident.

Again the basic steps are to: 1) clean before going or returning, 2) all states clean all equipment & vehicles, 3) high pressure spray exteriors, 4) high pressure spray clean undercarriage, tires, rims, 5) air blow or spray radiators, pickup beds, and 6) inspect the equipment that all areas have been cleaned.

For additional information contact:

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For more information on the Mississippi Forestry Commission Forest Health Program, contact:

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Figure 1: Cogongrass in George County. Photo by Lisa A. Harris.



Figure 2: MFC Fire Unit. Photo by Bill Kitchings.