

Communicating Effectively About Woody Plant Encroachment

A guide for effectively communicating with agriculture producers
about invasive woody plants and their impact on grasslands



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Introduction

Background

Invasive trees and shrubs are encroaching into grasslands at a rapid rate throughout the Great Plains. This threat leads to decreased forage availability, expensive removal costs, and decreased habitat suitability for grassland wildlife, to name a few. Understanding producer motivations and barriers to conducting invasive species removal will assist conservation delivery staff in communicating more effectively.

This guide offers communication strategies, based on social science results, to help conservation delivery staff, who may have expertise on the technical side of invasive woody plant management, to communicate that information to producers more effectively. Some conservation delivery staff may already be implementing some of the strategies listed in the guide.

The purpose of this guide is to offer additional strategies for experienced staff, and be a great resource for new staff as they begin developing their skill of communicating with producers. A communication toolkit has also been developed to allow staff to utilize different communication products and customize them to fit their needs. A link to the toolkit can be found at the end of this guide.

Project Overview

This guide is part of a larger project, funded by a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Innovation Grant, that integrated social science and communications to drive earlier and more effective invasive woody plant removal practices in Kansas and Oklahoma. The goal was to understand producers' attitudes regarding invasive woody plant management to better inform and support grassland conservation and to create communications messages, products, and tools that increase earlier and more effective woody plant removal.

As part of the project, focus groups and interviews were held with ranchers and landowners within six counties in Kansas and Oklahoma to understand producers' motivations and barriers around woody plant removal and various management practices. The social science results then informed the development of communication strategies and messages. The key messages were then tested and validated by ranchers and landowners within our project area and among a larger population of agricultural producers in Kansas and Oklahoma.

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Best Practices for Communicating with Producers

Knowing how to build working relationships with producers is a great skill to develop and, if done correctly, positively impacts both conservation and operational outcomes. Building trust with a producer is key to developing a successful working relationship. Producers are more likely to participate in programs and work with your organization if they trust you and value your opinion.

Utilizing the communication strategies listed below will assist you in developing effective relationships. While reading through these strategies, consider how you can make them your own; this will help your interactions feel genuine and honest.

Ask Questions

Ask questions to better understand producers' short-term objectives, long-term goals, and definition of success. First get to know producers, their operation, and their history. Listen and learn before making suggestions or telling them what they should do on their land. Discuss their conservation goals, and how they fit with their operation. Many conservation practices take time to fully implement, so understanding the producers' short term objectives and long term goals is important.

As you begin to truly understand producers and their operations, when it comes time to discuss conservation practices, your suggestions will be better informed and more relevant. For example, you may find that while a producer runs cows, some of the grassland is also leased for bird hunting. By knowing more about the operation as a whole, you have a better understanding of how it functions and can better help the producer.

Find Common Ground

As you're learning about producers and their goals, if you find common interests and passions, let it be known. This is a great way to share a little about yourself and your experiences.

For example, if you're passionate about grazing management or wildlife habitat, and it comes up in conversation, share your passion! Doing so creates connection, and relays some of your expertise, while simply getting to know the producer. When producers know a bit about you and your areas of expertise, they are more likely to reach out to you when they have questions in those fields of knowledge.



Be a Team Player

Convey you are on the producer's team and want them to be successful. Producers' goals and interests may be different from yours, but ultimately, if you can convey that you want to aid them in their success, whatever that looks like to them, it will help foster a positive relationship. They may not be adopting all the conservation practices you would recommend or hope for, but by starting the relationship on a positive note they are more likely to continue their conservation journey with you.

Sometimes the easiest way to convey that you're on their team is by simply saying it. Letting producers know you respect their decisions and you're here to support them along the way, will build trust and open the door for more collaboration in the future.

Show Respect

Realize and respect that producers and conservation staff have different experiences, knowledge, and skill sets. While you may have extensive education on a subject, appreciate that producers have generational, real-world experience – often for many years. When you're on their land, they are the experts and should be treated as such.

Many times respect can be shown in the smallest of gestures. Making eye contact and giving a firm handshake is a great way to start. Another way is to listen more than you talk, at least in the beginning. Make sure you're listening to what producers are saying, not interrupting them, and later reference something they said earlier in the conversation. This shows you were paying attention and were attentive to what they were sharing. These simple strategies will demonstrate how much you value the producers' time and experience.

Be Professional

When working with producers, remember they are our customers, and maintain a professional attitude throughout all interactions. Word of mouth is one of the best ways to engage other producers in the area, and what is said will depend on their experience. According to the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, a dissatisfied customer will tell 9 to 15 people about their experience, and around 13% tell more than 20 people. Happy customers who have a positive experience, or get their issue resolved, tell on average 4 to 6 people about their experience.

Using the aforementioned communication strategies will help you build positive experiences and relationships with landowners. As with the statistic above, producers are more likely to talk to others about a negative experience with conservation staff, rather than a positive one. Remaining professional no matter what direction the conversation goes, or choosing not to engage in a heated conversation, will help foster good relationships.

For example, when working on a prescribed burn and stress levels are elevated, remember to continue to speak with professionalism and integrity despite heightened emotions. Landowners talk about their experiences within their community, and unprofessional behavior is likely to be discussed and may discourage some landowners from working with you or your organization.

Communication Strategies for Invasive Woody Plant Removal

A vital first step in outreach and communications efforts is understanding why producers are interested in managing their invasive woody plants. Their reasons for removing invasive woody plants may include the desire to increase forage production, grow healthier grasslands, increase habitat for specific wildlife, land aesthetics, and other reasons. Understanding their reasons for removal will help you tailor your communication strategies to be more specific and effective.

The communication strategies below were developed using the social science results from the [NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant](#). They include tips on how to discuss the threat posed by invasive woody plants to grasslands and the best ways to share information about removal practices and assistance programs.

Use Preferred Words and Terminology

As part of this project, producers were asked their preferred terminology for discussing invasive woody plants. The participants shared that when they are discussing trees and shrubs, they often refer to shrub treatment as brush management and use woody or tree encroachment when they are talking about trees in rangeland. They also tend to use the particular species name when discussing trees, shrubs, or grass. Knowing the names of plants, and specifically what local producers call them in the area where you're working, is a great skill to develop.



Gather Background Information

The best practices listed in the previous section are a good place to start. In addition, when communicating about invasive woody plant removal and management, gathering some specific background information will help you communicate more effectively. This will also allow you to understand better what assistance may be required. Consider asking some of the following questions to gather information about invasive woody plant removal. The questions below do not need to be asked in a particular order, but pick and choose the ones that are right for what you know about the specific producer. Remember to listen to understand, not just to reply. Be ready to reiterate what you heard to clarify and show you were listening.

Goals and Objectives

- What do you want your land to look like?
- Why do you want to remove invasive woody plants?
- What does success look like to you?

Opinions About Woody Plants

- Which woody plant species are encroaching on your land?
- What are your thoughts on woody plants?
- How do woody plants affect your operation?

Investment Availability

- What do you estimate you could contribute to woody plant removal in hours per year and dollars per acre? *(Note: The answer will differ for each landowner and can completely change the recommendation. Some landowners will have more time, some more money, and some will prefer to take things on little by little or intensely manage during a shorter time frame. Knowing this information will be helpful as you begin discussing program options.)*

Previous Management Practices

- What management practices have you done in the past?
- Was it successful or not, and why?

Participation in Assistance Programs

- Was the past management conducted as a part of a program?
- What other programs have you participated in?
- What was your experience participating in those programs?

Future Practices of Interest

- Are there management practices you would like to explore using in the future?
- What barriers stop you from trying these practices?
- What type of help or support would you need to do these practices in the future?

Collaborating With Neighbors

- Is there a possibility to collaborate with your neighbors to remove or manage invasive plants along your operations' borders?
- Is there something we can do to help facilitate that?

Discover Motivations and Barriers

As you gather background information and start to build a working relationship with the producer, you will begin to understand their motivations for and potential barriers to removing or managing invasive woody plants. This will help you communicate more effectively and provide suggestions that are more likely to resonate with the producer.

While every producer is different, it's helpful to understand some of the most common motivations and barriers to invasive woody plant management. The Invasive Woody Plant Social Science Report, a part of the Conservation Innovation Grant, covers those details.

Motivations for Producers to Start Managing

When asked what initially motivated them to begin managing against invasive woody plant encroachment, several participants reported an important motivator was visually seeing the tree and shrub encroachment on their rangeland. This was followed by the availability of assistance programs to offer financial or technical help with the management, or speaking with other producers and seeing their neighbor's improved rangeland as a result of effective management. Others noted that their land stewardship ethic led to a desire to leave the land better than they found it, while some producers were motivated to increase the production value of their range.



Motivations for Producers to Continue Managing

Some producers had previously completed initial removal treatments and wanted to continue management efforts. Many producers reported visually seeing the improvements to the rangeland as a motivation to keep managing after initial treatment. Others again referenced their land stewardship ethic as a reason to continue managing. Some participants also desired to increase their production value and earn a return on investment, while others understood that long-term maintenance is required to keep trees and shrubs off their property.

Barriers to Using Specific Practices

Participants shared several barriers that prevented them from effectively conducting management. Prescribed burning had the most barriers reported, with the most common reasons being a fear of unknown outcomes, weather or ecological conditions preventing an effective burn, and lack of external support to conduct a prescribed burn. With mechanical removal, producers were primarily concerned with the expense of fuel and cost of certain pieces of equipment, as well as equipment maintenance. Others mentioned chemical spraying could contaminate the watershed or negatively impact desirable tree/shrub species, and that spraying could sometimes be ineffective at managing the trees/shrubs.

Provide Information

After you've spoken with the producer and have a deeper understanding of their operation, their goals, and their motivations and barriers for removing woody plants, you can help them explore options for their specific situation. By having a more well-rounded understanding of their operation, you can utilize tailored communication strategies and address specific concerns more accurately. Because you've taken the time to understand the producer at a deeper level, you are better able to share relevant information and resources and discuss the most suitable assistance programs.

When sharing information and resources or discussing assistance programs, integrate and highlight their motivations as much as possible. Producers value learning from one another, so talk about other producers' experiences. Highlight success stories within the local community and how removing woody encroachment has benefitted other producers. If another producer has had success removing woody plants – especially while participating in a program or utilizing a technology you're discussing – tell that story and possibly offer to connect them.

When discussing assistance programs, share the information in a thoughtful way. Introducing the programs to the landowners as a potential solution to their concern rather than speaking from a place of “knowing what's best” can make suggestions more appealing. The programs may be great options to consider, but being too forceful or condescending when presenting them can be off-putting for producers.

As much as possible, be aware of all the relevant assistance programs offered by conservation partners. If a producer's situation is better suited for an assistance program that you don't oversee, it is important to know the person to contact within your area and facilitate an introduction. That extra effort will be appreciated and show that you're aware of the producer's goals and are suggesting the best program to fit their needs. That also helps build trust and strengthens the relationship.

Follow Through

An important step in building a good working relationship with landowners is follow through, especially if they have decided to participate in an assistance program. Producers may or may not have had previous experiences with assistance programs, and most programs have different criteria and application processes. If this is one of their first encounters with a program, supporting them through the experience is critical. First-time participants may feel overwhelmed by program guidelines or paperwork. Take the time to go through the process with them, answer their questions, and make them feel comfortable. Ways that you can help a producer feel at ease with a program is to communicate throughout the process. For example you can let them know how long each step in the process may take, what those steps are, and keep them updated with the progress.

Throughout these interactions, leave the door open to continue working with and supporting the producer. Communicating that you're available, if they ever need to discuss conservation or grassland issues, will go a long way to maintaining a long-term relationship.

Strategies for Specific Audiences

Intact Grassland Managers

During the social science study, producers shared the importance of managing invasive woody plants, even when it appears woody plants have not yet encroached into an area. The easiest time to remove invasive woody plants is when they are saplings. To prevent encroachment, it is critical that land managers take the time to scout pastures, looking for and removing saplings that are starting to grow.

Some producers also suggested conducting periodic prescribed burns to prevent the growth of saplings. Producers shared the importance of making intact grassland owners aware that not having a woody encroachment problem provides multiple benefits to the individual and their operation.



One example used by the NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife is to think of intact grasslands as needing preventative care. The risk of woody encroachment in intact grassland starts with exposure to seed. Therefore, action needs to occur before seedlings take root in core areas. Prevention includes prescribed burns or removing small saplings like landowners in this project suggested. Such care is proactive, cost-effective, and efficient. Taking the opportunity to share the benefits of intact grasslands (and this message of preventative care) and showcase success stories locally is a great strategy, either in newspapers, newsletters, or in workshops.

Communication Tips for Intact Grassland Managers

- Help land managers understand the need for proactive management. If they see new trees or shrubs in the sapling stage, removing them at first sight will save time and money in the long run.
- Educate land managers on the negative impact that trees and shrubs have on water availability and grass health, especially as size and density increase. By having an intact grassland, rainwater directly supports the grass, not invasive woody plants that provide little benefit to livestock or wildlife.
- Help land managers understand the long-term maintenance needs to combat trees and shrubs. If woody plants are allowed to encroach on intact grassland, removal of these invasive species is costly and only increases over time. Encourage land managers to be vigilant in their search for saplings and to remove them at the smallest stage of growth, which is also the least costly.

Indigenous Land Managers

The research team also interviewed an Indigenous land manager from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Oklahoma who works with Indigenous producers on fire management in an effort to understand their perspectives on invasive trees and shrubs, and how those perspectives influence Tribal management decision-making processes. Given that this individual is a member of the fire program, they referred to tree and shrub management simply as fuels management. They stated that any individual interested in learning more about this type of management typically turned to the fire program as their primary information source.

Members of the Tribes preferred print material to find additional information, such as pamphlets and booklets. For an individual just getting started with their tree and shrub management, the interviewee would point them toward sources where they can acquire funding and receive whatever technical information was needed. The Indigenous land manager who was interviewed shared that hazardous fuels reduction for community protection along the wildland-urban interface was the primary motivation for the fire program to begin its prescribed burning efforts. Caution should be taken with extrapolating this information to broader tribal audiences, as this individual does not represent the entire population of Indigenous producers.

Communication Tips for Indigenous Land Managers

- Provide printed materials, such as pamphlets and booklets, which this audience prefers over digital information.
- Match land managers with a mentor or technical expert in the field who could give them information about the necessity of woody plant management.
- Provide information and resources about where they can acquire funding and receive tailored technical information as needed.

Recreational Landowners

Some of the challenges participants experience with recreational landowners include the perception that these individuals don't fully understand the problem with tree and shrub encroachment and how not removing woody plants can affect neighboring operations who focus on forage production. Participants said that many of the properties owned by recreational landowners were used for hunting purposes and that hunters prefer more trees for deer habitat. Participants believed these properties are responsible for tree and shrub seeds spreading onto their lands, and that recreational landowners don't want to spend any money on tree removal. Likewise, renters often prefer not to spend their time and financial resources to manage trees and shrubs on someone else's land, given the lack of return on investment if their lease contract were to end. Knowing this information and what conflicts may arise between recreational landowners and other folks within the community (lessees renting their pastures, neighbors, etc.), allows us some ability to communicate and educate.

We interviewed a recreational land manager who shared that many of his recreational landowners have chosen to participate in removal of invasive woody species after education on how woody encroachment can negatively affect deer habitat, especially at higher densities. The land manager shared a story of seeing quail and pheasant populations rebounding after a non-managed tract of land was cleared of invasive trees and shrubs, citing wildlife habitat conservation as an additional motivation for proper management.



Miruh Hamend

Communication Tips for Recreational Landowners

- Provide facts and information that demonstrate trees aren't required to harvest large deer.
- Show pictures of a treeless landscape from several decades ago when hunting was abundant in the region, providing evidence that encroached areas are not necessary for good hunting opportunities.
- Just as producers value hearing from other producers about their experience, this can also equate to the recreational audience. For example, if a recreational hunter can speak to the value of removing woody encroachment and the positive impact that had on their hunting enterprise, that will speak volumes to another hunter.

Non-residential (Absentee) Landowners

Many of the study participants shared challenges of working with landowners who do not reside in the area. Some referred to these individuals as absentee landowners, but other participants shared that there is a negative connotation toward using that name. An alternative and potentially less offensive label for this group is “non-residential landowners”. Working with non-residential landowners can be complex, similar to recreational landowners. There is an added complexity of also working with the land lessee (or operator) who manages the land for the non-residential landowner. Just like working with any other landowner, begin by learning about the operation and the owner's goals for the property. If the non-residential landowner does not have a background in agriculture, further explanation may be needed when discussing different practices or programs. Some education around grassland ecology may also be needed. For instance, they may not understand how trees can actually harm a grassland ecosystem. Explaining the ecological and societal benefits of intact grasslands may be helpful.

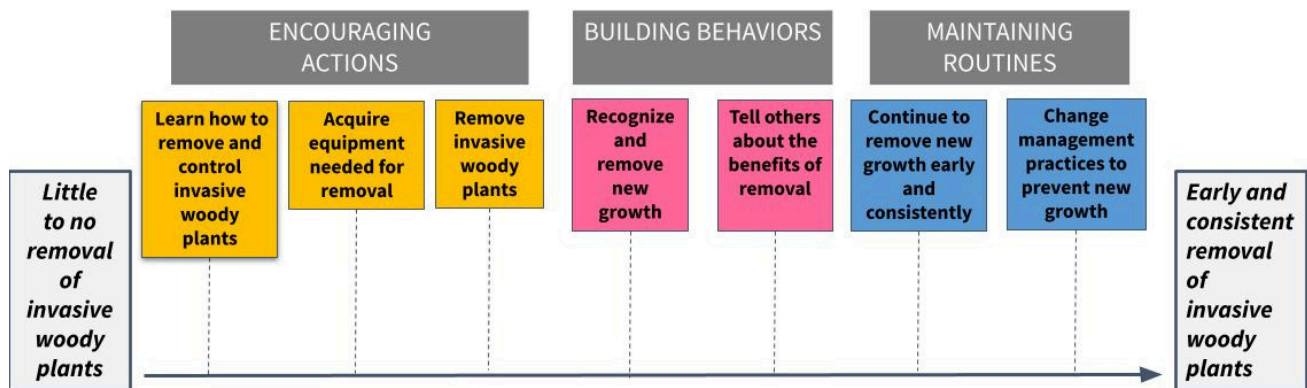
Communication Tips for Non-residential (Absentee) Landowners

- These situations may be unique as you might be working with a landowner and a lessee. If there is a good relationship already established between the landowner and lessee, work collaboratively with both parties to offer assistance and resources when needed.
- If you're working solely with a non-residential landowner, educate them about the negative impacts of encroachment, including visually demonstrating the results of poor management.
- Listen to non-managing individuals to understand their perspectives and uses for the land itself and adapt tree and shrub management information to appeal to their needs. They may have different goals or financial means to manage the land.

Behavior Journey

Often, conservation outreach involves messages that encourage behavior change, which can be difficult. The Behavior Journey tool, which was developed by [Brooke Tully](#), helps by illustrating the steps we want people to take when moving toward a desired behavior. On the next page, the illustration shows steps a producer can take to move from “inconsistent invasive woody plant removal” on the left to “consistent and early invasive woody plant removal” on the right.

Producers will fall along the spectrum, some near the beginning (left) and others further along in the journey (closer to the right). After you've worked with producers and have a better understanding of their goals (using some of the questions or strategies above), you'll understand where they are along the management spectrum. That will help you choose a message that is likely to resonate.



Encouraging Actions

Actions are something done once (or maybe once a year) at the start of a management journey. The following **actions** are part of the behavior journey developed for this project and are related to invasive woody plant management.

- Learn how to remove invasive woody plants.
- Acquire additional equipment needed for removal.
- Remove invasive woody plants (doing the initial work, in a specific area).

Building Behaviors

This part of the journey is about developing routines. Producers will do these things more often than actions. The following **routines** are part of the behavior journey developed for this project and are related to invasive woody plant management.

- Recognize and remove new invasive woody plants (constantly looking for new saplings).
- Tell others about the benefit of removal (if the community recognized the threat invasive woody plants play, and were all removing them early, the seed source would decline).

Maintaining Routines

This stage in the journey is where habits are developed through repetitive and regular actions. These new habits become second nature and a part of daily routine. The following **habits** are part of the behavior journey developed for this project and are related to invasive woody plant management.

- Remove new invasive woody plant growth early and consistently.
- Change rangeland management practices to prevent new growth.

Key Messages to Drive Behavior Change

As part of the NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant project, key messages were created based on the social science data collected during the interview and focus group discussions. After the creation of the initial messages, the messages were tested with focus group participants and a broader group of landowners and producers in Kansas and Oklahoma.

This diagram illustrates how those messages can be used in relation to the Behavior Journey shown in the previous section. Most messages are relevant across multiple steps. By identifying the action, behavior or routine you want to encourage, you can choose the most appropriate messages, ones that correspond to their current situation, which are more likely to encourage change.

Selecting the Message

Once you know where your intended audience falls along the management spectrum, you can choose a key message that is likely to resonate. The messages shown in the Behavior Journey illustration are listed below under the corresponding steps. Most of the messages can be utilized in a variety of ways, from informal communications with producers to publications and marketing.

ENCOURAGING ACTIONS			BUILDING BEHAVIORS		MAINTAINING ROUTINES	
Learn to remove and control invasive woody plants	Acquire equipment needed for removal	Remove invasive woody plants	Recognize and remove new growth	Tell others about benefits of removal	Continue early and consistent removal of new growth	Use practices that prevent new growth
Your grasslands won't improve without you! Find tools and programs to help remove brush and woody plants at URL.com .			Save time. Save money. Remove woody plants at first sight.	What increases your grass productivity and helps your neighbors? Controlling woody plants on your operation.	Keeping brush and woody plants away is much easier than removing them. Learn about proactive management practices at URL.com .	
Your land, your operation, and your family's future have one thing in common: YOU! Find tools and information to help you remove brush and woody plants at URL.com .			Which would you rather grow? (Visuals of intact grasslands vs. cedar trees and statistics on water intake for both)			
Pick the right tool for the job. Learn ways to remove brush and woody plants from your range at URL.com . (Visuals of problem species in the area along with tool options)						
In the blink of an eye, they are grown. Give them your attention now. (Visuals of seedlings vs. grown trees)						
You're not alone. Find the help you need to remove brush and woody plants at URL.com .						
What you do today matters to future generations. Learn how removing brush and woody plants now supports your future operation!			Managing early costs less. (Visual of small loppers cutting small trees, or a picture of a skid steer or mulcher with gas cans out front)			
			Many things belong in HEALTHY grasslands. Invasive woody plants are not one of them.			
			Which would you rather fight? Removing small saplings today costs less than removing large trees tomorrow. (Visual of small seedlings vs. woodlands)			
			Removing small saplings today costs less than removing large trees tomorrow.			
			Your choices affect those around you. Learn the most effective ways to manage brush and woody plants at URL.com .			

Learn How to Remove Invasive Woody Plants

- Your grasslands won't improve without you! Find tools and programs to help remove brush and woody plants at URL.com
- Your land, your operation, and your family's future have one thing in common: YOU! Find tools and information to help you remove brush and woody plants at URL.com
- Pick the right tool for the job. Learn ways to remove brush and woody plants from your range at URL.com (Visuals of problem species in the area along with tool options).
- What you do today matters to future generations. Learn how removing brush and woody plants now supports your future operation!
- In the blink of an eye, they are grown. Give them your attention now. (Visuals of seedlings vs. grown trees)
- You're not alone. Find the help you need to remove brush and woody plants at URL.com

Acquire Equipment Needed for Removal

- Using prescribed fire to remove woody plants reduces the risk of Mother Nature taking control.
- Using prescribed fire to remove woody plants reduces the fuel load, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires.
- Your grasslands won't improve without you! Find tools and programs to help remove brush and woody plants at URL.com
- Your land, your operation, and your family's future have one thing in common: YOU! Find tools and information to help you remove brush and woody plants at URL.com
- Pick the right tool for the job. Learn ways to remove brush and woody plants from your range at URL.com (Visuals of problem species in the area along with tool options).
- What you do today matters to future generations. Learn how removing brush and woody plants now supports your future operation!
- In the blink of an eye, they are grown. Give them your attention now. (Visuals of seedlings vs. grown trees)
- You're not alone. Find the help you need to remove brush and woody plants at URL.com



Remove Invasive Woody Plants

- Save time. Save money. Remove woody plants at first sight.
- Which would you rather grow? (Visuals of intact grasslands vs. cedar trees)
- Pick the right tool for the job. Learn ways to remove brush and woody plants from your range at URL.com. (Visuals of problem species in the area along with tool options)
- In the blink of an eye, they are grown. Give them your attention now. (Visuals of seedlings vs. grown trees)
- You're not alone. Find the help you need to remove brush and woody plants at URL.com.
- Using prescribed fire to remove woody plants reduces the risk of Mother Nature taking control.
- Using prescribed fire to remove woody plants reduces the fuel load, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires.
- Managing early costs less.
- Many things belong in healthy grasslands. Invasive woody plants are not one of them.
- Removing small saplings today costs less than removing large trees tomorrow.
- Your choices affect those around you. Learn the most effective ways to manage brush and woody plants at URL.com.

Recognize and Remove New Growth

- Save time. Save money. Remove woody plants at first sight.
- Which would you rather grow? (Visuals of intact grasslands vs. cedar trees and statistics on water intake for both)
- A small investment to remove woody plants today will pay huge dividends to you, your community, and future generations.
- Your choices affect those around you. Learn the most effective ways to manage brush and woody plants at URL.com.
- Managing early costs less.
- Many things belong in healthy grasslands. Invasive woody plants are not one of them.
- Removing small saplings today costs less than removing large trees tomorrow.
- In the blink of an eye, they are grown. Give them your attention now. (Visuals of seedlings vs. grown trees)

Tell Others About the Benefits of Removal

- What increases your grass productivity and helps your neighbors? Controlling woody plants on your operation.
- A small investment to remove woody plants today will pay huge dividends to you, your community, and future generations.
- Your choices affect those around you. Learn the most effective ways to manage brush and woody plants at URL.com.
- Managing early costs less.
- Many things belong in healthy grasslands. Invasive woody plants are not one of them.
- Removing small saplings today costs less than removing large trees tomorrow.
- In the blink of an eye, they are grown. Give them your attention now.

Continue to Remove New Growth Early and Consistently

- Keeping brush and woody plants away is much easier than removing them. Learn about proactive management practices at URL.com.
- A small investment to remove woody plants today will pay huge dividends to you, your community, and future generations.
- Managing early costs less.
- Many things belong in healthy grasslands. Invasive woody plants are not one of them.
- Removing small saplings today costs less than removing large trees tomorrow.
- In the blink of an eye, they are grown. Give them your attention now. (Visuals of seedlings vs. grown trees)

Change Management Practices to Prevent New Growth

- Keeping brush and woody plants away is much easier than removing them. Learn about proactive management practices at URL.com.
- Managing early costs less.

Communication Examples

While the messages are important, they are often much more effective when combined with photos, graphics, and other visuals. The examples below are just a few ways to use the key messages in outreach communications materials (such as postcards, flyers, or even social media posts).

When creating outreach materials, choose visuals that illustrate the message and are specific to your audience, location and invasive species. Also, include contact information for the local conservation delivery staff members within the area or a website with that information.

Your grasslands won't improve without YOU!



Find tools and assistance programs to help you remove invasive woody plants.
URL.COM



Using prescribed
controlled burns reduces
the fuel load,
decreasing the risk of
catastrophic wildfires.



Good for me



**Good for my
community**

Communications Toolkit

A communications toolkit is available at pljv.org/IWP-toolkit to assist conservation delivery staff in incorporating the key messages into their outreach materials. The toolkit includes social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), articles, and outreach materials that can be printed. Most of the materials allow for customization (e.g., adding staff or partner's contact information). Over time, the content will continue to be expanded and updated.

If you need help customizing the materials or creating different materials, contact Lindsay Shorter, Playa Lakes Joint Venture Grassland Conservation Marketing Manager (see below).

The goal is to create a toolkit with shared resources, including materials developed by all partners working on invasive woody plants. If you would like to have your materials included, please contact Lindsay to discuss adding them to the toolkit.

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