

# Ecological Impacts

**Time:** ~120 minutes or 2 class periods

**Supplies:** Invasive plant species or noxious weed lists or links for country or state, Ecological Impacts Reading, Ecological Impacts Worksheet (per group), writing instrument (per group), library or internet access, poster board, colored pencils, other supplies available for presentations

## Introduction

You will work in groups to determine how an invasive plant or noxious weed in your area could affect local native species. <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/unitedstates/co.shtml#thr> is a site that has links to “State Specific Threats” to Colorado. <http://www.eddmaps.org/tools/choosecounty.cfm> is a link on the previously mentioned site from the University of Georgia that provides a list of invasive plant species documented in specific counties throughout the country. You will research one invasive plant in your area as well as and local native flora and fauna to come up with hypotheses on how the invasive plant affects other organisms in the local ecosystem.

## Background

Please refer to the Ecological Impacts Reading.

## Activity

1. Divide into groups of 3-4.
2. As a group, select a local invasive plant or noxious weed species from a list your teacher provides or from the internet links above.
3. Research your species online on local, state, or federal government sites, university websites (.edu sites), scientific articles, or other reputable sources. Learn the plant’s habitat, unique adaptations, and any changes it makes to the ecosystem.
4. Connect the effects of the invasive plant on the conditions of other organism populations in the area. You can brainstorm native plants and animals that you have seen or know of in the area, or you can research native species.
5. Fill out an Ecological Impacts worksheet as a group.
6. Create a 3-5 minute presentation with your group about your invasive plant species or noxious weed and how it could affect the local ecosystem. Base presentation content off of the Ecological Impacts worksheet. Presentations can be in the form of posters, skits, public service announcements, etc.
7. Groups will take turns giving their presentations to the class.