



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Headquarters

2901 West Truman Boulevard, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0180
Telephone: 573-751-4115 ▲ www.MissouriConservation.org

JASON A. SUMNERS, Director

James Anthony
28 Ellington Oaks Ct.
St. Peters, MO 63376
Janthony636@outlook.com

James,

As I promised during our phone conversation last week, I am attaching my standard guidelines on invasive species and erosion.

Woody invasive shrubs such as bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, privet, and others are among the worst plants for erosion control. Two main factors contribute to this.

1. The root structure of these plants is fibrous and very compact. They do not run deep or wide so only a small area of soil is stabilized under them.
2. They grow so dense that they block out enough sunlight to prohibit anything from growing under them. This includes herbaceous plants. Herbaceous vegetation is one of the most overlooked factors in erosion control and soil infiltration. Over a three-year period, the entire root system of most herbaceous perennials die and are replaced. This adds large amounts of organic matter and soil structure and provides tiny paths for water to infiltrate deep into the soil. The more lush and dense the vegetation the more structure, stabilization and infiltration there is. Furthermore, the stems help to slow waterflow.

By removing the invasives you are promoting a more diverse suite of plants to take its place. You will get some new trees, some shrubs and some herbaceous vegetation. Each plant will have slightly different root systems and the more diverse you are able to get the better the overall health and stability of the soil (and wildlife health).

Additional management (fire, tree planting, tree species modification) will ultimately determine what the area looks like. The more open the tree canopy is, the thicker the herbaceous layer will be. The thicker the canopy layer will also aid in slowing the reinfestation of invasives. Basically, there are pros and cons for everything but no matter what the end is, if you get rid of invasive species and promote as diverse of a group of native plants as you can, you will be helping to fight erosion.

Tony Peper
Forester

COMMISSION

EDWARD C. CLAUSEN
Centertown

MARGARET F. ECKELKAMP
Washington

FRANK H.B. KRUSE
Smithville

RAYMOND T. WAGNER JR.
Town and Country