

**December 15, 2007**

**A Message from the Chair:**

For the past year it has been my privilege to serve as the first chair of the Washington Invasive Species Council. I am excited to be involved in the challenging work of the Council and to serve with Council members whose dedication and expertise are a tremendous asset for accomplishing the Council's mission.

The Council is working to sustain Washington's human, plant, and animal communities and our thriving economy by preventing the introduction and spread of harmful invasive species. The Council is developing policy level direction, planning, and coordination that will:

- empower those engaged in the prevention, detection, and eradication of invasive species,
- include a strategic plan designed to build upon local, state, and regional efforts,
- serve as a forum for invasive species education and communication.

This year the Council formed five work groups to develop the components of our strategic plan. Each work group is focused on identifying and eliminating gaps and overlaps in statewide efforts. The goals of the strategic plan are to:

- increase coordination of invasive species management and control programs,
- increase our prevention capabilities,
- increase coordinated involvement and expertise from private and academic sectors, and
- implement a state-wide invasive species public education and outreach program.

The first year of the Council's work presented an unexpected challenge. Through a series of Council interviews with state and federal agency representatives and from the results of a survey, we learned that statewide invasive species information is both incomplete and largely unavailable to assess the scope of the problem. This lack of information not only makes it difficult to assess the problem, but also challenges the Council's ability to evaluate whether efforts underway are successfully combating the problem. The Council will continue to work with its partners, stakeholders and the public to pursue multiple approaches to obtaining and evaluating this necessary information.

Despite the challenges, the Council has had a productive year. It developed its organizational framework, made important connections with all levels of government, reached out to industry and non-governmental organizations, coalesced as a working unit,

and formed areas of expertise in the development of the strategic plan. We are looking forward to the completion of the initial strategic plan by June 2008 and beginning the important first steps toward implementation in the coming year.

As we progress toward fulfillment of our statutory mandate we will need your help and anticipate working with you and keeping you informed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Moran", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bridget Moran, Chair  
Washington Invasive Species Council



# ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 15, 2007



WASHINGTON STATE  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

Washington Invasive  
Species Council

# Did you know?

Washington's incredible beauty, diverse resources, and economic vitality are at risk every day from invasive non-native species. A plant, animal or other organism is considered invasive when it spreads at such a rate that it causes damage or harm to other species. Some invasive species were brought to Washington for their beneficial uses but later escaped their intended niche. Others have "hitch-hiked" their way to our state on trains, planes, cars, and boats, causing either economic or ecological harm. Here are a few examples of existing invasive species threats to Washington's biodiversity, natural resources and economic engine.

## Invasive Aquatic Animal:

Club tunicates (*Styela clava*) pose a serious threat to shellfish beds and marine habitats. Boaters can unknowingly spread the invasive species to various locations with their boats and equipment.

*(Puget Sound Partnership)*



*Janna Nichols*



## Invasive Insect:

Asian Longhorned Beetle threatens many hardwoods like maples, elms and willows. In Washington there have been incidences of adult beetles arriving in shipping pallets.

*(Department of Agriculture)*

## Aquatic Invasive Plant:

In just under ten years, between 1998 and 2007, we have spent over \$14 million to keep *Spartina* marsh grass from overtaking our inter-tidal ecosystems.

*(Washington Department of Agriculture)*

The Washington Invasive Species Council is working to protect our states' resources from these harmful invaders.

## Terrestrial Invasive Plant:

Cheatgrass is a major weed pest in winter wheat in the Pacific Northwest. In the Palouse Region of Idaho and Washington, Cheatgrass reduces wheat yields by 27%.

*(U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural resources Conservation Service)*

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#### **COORDINATION**

The key to success for the prevention and control of invasive species is statewide coordination of both public and private efforts and active participation in regional and national initiatives.

#### **Critical Connections**

##### **Council Member Additions**

Environmental representation: The addition of a representative from the Invasive Species Coalition to the Washington Invasive Species Council (Council) has provided a strong link with the major environmental organizations in the state.

Tribal representation: While each tribe is an individual, sovereign entity, the addition of a tribal representative to the Council has helped to make the important connection with tribal governments.

##### **Partners**

Steps have been taken to build partnerships with other groups such as the Biodiversity Council, Puget Sound Partnership, Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee, Ballast Water Work Group, 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian Initiative, State Noxious Weed Control Board, the United States Department of Agriculture-APHIS, United States Forest Service, and others. The Council also hosted representatives from the National Invasive Species Council and the Idaho and Oregon Invasive Species Councils at the August 20, 2007 Council meeting.

Each council meeting has time set aside for reports from our partners. These relationships will enhance statewide coordination on invasive species issues and projects.

##### **Survey**

The Council designed a questionnaire to send out to key organization working the invasive species arena. The purpose of the survey was: to identify and analyze current projects that are being conducted within the state; to determine who is involved in the wide array of invasive species issues; and to identify any gaps and overlaps in programs. The questionnaire was sent to 124 recipients, representing state, federal, tribal, non-governmental organizations, and private industries or interests.

##### **Summary of Survey Results**

The Council received 68 responses to the questionnaire with a total of 100 project entries. Summary results provided the Council with a sense of where the majority of project locations were (by County), the top five invasive species by project, and whether or not educational materials exist. Fourteen percent of respondents represented city and county organizations, and 16 percent of the respondents represented federal agencies. Forty-

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seven percent of the 100 projects were mandated in statute, and most had an estimated annual budget of under \$50,000. The most reported funding source listed was the federal government. Lastly, the questionnaire asked respondents to explain what they needed most from the Invasive Species Council.

#### **What We Learned from the Survey**

Although the questionnaire results provided the Council with a glimpse of the overall picture of invasive species work in the state, it also left the Council with many questions. It did not provide the Council with enough data or information to draw conclusions or to make a comprehensive analysis. The results clarified the Council's need for a more complete baseline assessment in order to determine the most effective coordinated approach for invasive species work in the state. A more detailed review of state invasive species efforts would also provide information on the worst invaders in the state, their location, their most frequently used pathways, and which valuable state resources are most at risk.

#### **Industry**

In July, the Council sent over 100 letters and Fact Sheets, describing the work of the Council, to key industry contacts from the agricultural, forestry, aquaculture, shipping, and nursery industries. The purpose of the letter was to introduce the Council, to build a network of involved interested parties, to establish better communication, and to encourage the participation of various stakeholder groups in the work of the Council. Representatives from the shellfish industry and nursery growers are participating in Council work groups.

#### **Involvement in the Biodiversity Conservation Plan**

A report on the work of the Council and invasive species issues in Washington State was submitted to the Biodiversity Council for inclusion in the Biodiversity Conservation Plan. The Council will use the biodiversity plan in the development of the invasive species strategic plan.

#### **Web-page Development**

The Council has established a web-page as part of the Recreation and Conservation Office web-site. At this time, it provides information on the Council and its work, access to reports and meeting materials, and links to other invasive species information. Invasive species information made available by the Council can also be accessed through the Natural Resources Information Portal.

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## **WASHINGTON NOXIOUS WEED FUNDING REPORT**

The Council prepared a mandated report on state funding for noxious weeds, which is being submitted separately. The noxious weed funding report addresses noxious weed spending by state agencies and research universities. It lists detailed information on grants awarded and projects conducted by state agencies during fiscal years 2006 and 2007. It reviews funding allocations spent on research, staff time, and direct invasive species control work. While the report is detailed, it is not complete, as many agencies do not have tracking systems in place to separate project work and funding devoted to invasive species, nor to track their spending at that level of detail.

## **STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the strategic plan is to provide the framework for a coordinated statewide invasive species prevention, control, and public outreach effort. The plan will describe the Council's efforts to understand the many impacts of invasive species, new threats and the status of current invasions. Additionally, the plan will provide direction and recommendations for planning invasive species efforts in the state.

### **Work Groups**

Six work groups were formed consisting of council members and other experts from around the state. The goal of each work group is to collaboratively achieve the mandate to reduce the harmful effects of invasive non-native species and to develop the statewide strategic plan. Non-council members include representatives of affected industries, non-profits, federal and state agencies, and the academic community. The work groups are addressing the coordination, technical, education, legal, and funding aspects of the plan. The leads from each work group meet monthly to ensure good communication and coordination between the groups.

### **Timeline for Implementation**

The strategic plan is due to Governor Gregoire and the Legislature on June 6, 2008. The Council then has until 2011 to facilitate implementation of the plan which includes the selection of projects for coordination by council member entities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Council's first year has been productive and challenging. The effort to make important connections and build relationships has been successful. The work groups are

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producing quality work and are serving as a means for broad collaboration in developing the strategic plan. The challenge has been and will continue to be gathering critical information on invasive species in Washington in order to make recommendations based on a sound, scientific foundation.

For additional information:

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Appendix:

- A. Council Members
- B. Council Alternates Roster
- C. Work Group Membership
- D. 2008 Council Meeting Schedule

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## A. Washington Invasive Species Council Roster

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## **B. Washington Invasive Species Council Alternates**

Mary Mahaffy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pene Speaks, Department of Natural Resources

Clinton Campbell, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Rick Miller, Franklin County

Alison Halpern, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board

Allen Pleus, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Nina Carter, Audubon Washington

Kathy Hamel, Washington Department of Ecology

Jeff Dickison, Squaxin Island Tribe

Brad White, Washington Department of Agriculture

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## **C. Washington Invasive Species Council Work Groups**

### Coordination Work Group

Gene Little, Washington Noxious Weed Control Board - Lead  
Allen Pleus, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Joan Cabreza, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Pat Stevenson, Stillaguamish Tribe  
Nancy Phelps, U.S. Forest Service

### Technical Work Group

Mary Toohey, Washington Department of Agriculture – Lead  
Barbara Chambers, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Brid Nowlan, Washington Invasive Species Coalition  
Jennifer Vanderhoof, King County Department of Natural Resources  
Brad White, Washington Department of Agriculture  
Herb Curl, Seattle Audubon  
Kathy Hamel, Washington Department of Ecology  
Wendy Brown, Washington Department of Natural Resources  
Randy Marshall, Washington Department of Ecology

### Regulation Work Group

Melodie Selby, Washington Department of Ecology – Lead  
Robert Koch, Franklin County Commissioner  
Jeanne McNeil, Washington Nursery Association  
Bridget Moran, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Diane Cooper, Taylor Shellfish  
Eric Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Kathy Hamel, Washington Department of Ecology

### Education Work Group

Dana Coggon, Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control – Lead  
Jeff Adams, Washington Sea Grant  
Kate Benkert, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Laurel Baldwin, Whatcom Noxious Weed Control  
Jennifer Andreas, Washington State University  
Ray Willard, Washington Department of Transportation  
Todd Murray, Washington State University  
Doug Zimmer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Richard Zack, Washington State University  
Alison Halpern, Washington Noxious Weed Control Board

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## Funding Work Group

Wendy Brown, Washington Department of Natural Resources – Lead

Bill Brookreson, Washington Native Plant Society

Bill Robinson, Nature Conservancy

Dana Coggon, Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control

Dave Baumgartner, Washington State University Extension

Deborah Feinstein, Office of Financial Management

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## **D. Washington Invasive Species Council 2008 Meeting Dates**

January 23, 2008

March 13, 2008

May 7, 2008

August 20, 2008

November 19, 2008