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Reply To  
Attn Of: ECO-083

**Subject:** Regional Invasive Species Update #8: November 2004 - December, 2004

**From:** Joan Cabreza  
Regional Invasive Species Coordinator

**To:** R10 ETPA Management Team

**ecc:** Internal EPA mail group, & interested outside parties

This memo summarizes some of the recent national, regional and R10 state Invasive Species (IS) Program activity. I will happily include updates or activities from any reader who submits them. Credit for any errors is entirely mine. Although things slowed down a bit in December, we still had a lot going on!

### **EPA Projects & Initiatives**

Regional Invasion Pathways Project. The regional research proposal for genetic screening tool development has been funded. It will be used to investigate the hypotheses that (1) San Francisco Bay (not Asia) is the source of most of the Pacific Northwest invasive organisms, and (2) that these species arrive in the Northwest via ballast water. Results will have significant implications for coastal ballast water regulation and enforcement. Research is being primarily conducted by ORD in Cincinnati, but a variety of west coast groups are involved. On December 9, ORD, EPA Regions 9 and 10, UW, and WDFW held a conference call to insure the project complements, not overlaps, with other ongoing work, and to discuss developing a reference archive so the molecular diagnostic tool can be broadly used.

Environmental Indicators: EPA's Report on Environment will include the first Regional invasive species indicator, thanks to Mike Rylko and Gretchen Hayslip. This should help raise IS visibility. Henry Lee (Newport lab) will use the PCEIS database to generate data for the indicator.

NISWG\* During the December workgroup call, we discussed the idea of creating a NISWG ballast water subgroup to serve as a forum for discussing international, national, and State/local programmatic, regulatory and technical developments in ballast water management. Treaty guidelines and USCG ballast water regulations will also be actively developed over the course of the next few years, and the knowledge and expertise of such a core intra-agency group would be a substantial help in reviewing, commenting, and developing EPA positions on those items. The group would have a monthly call, preferably the week before the NISWG call, so it could report out to the larger group. Other EPA staff, please let me know if you want to participate.

NISWG is still finalizing materials from the national conference at Research Triangle Park. Proceedings will be available in early 2005 in hard copy and on CD. They will include a copy of the dozens of action items identified at the conference and the revised OWOW national strategy (*\*EPA national Non Indigenous Species Workgroup, chaired by Henry Lee*)

NEPA Comments. We provided relatively lengthy comments on the USFS Invasive Species Management Plan EIS. The plan covers 17 national forests and scenic areas in WA and OR, and should significantly help improve management of invasive species in those areas.

Presentations: I continue to receive requests for invasive species presentations.

November - December included:

11/01/04 Garden club - Bellevue WA (invasive plants & gardening)

Total for 2004: 13

Future Scheduled Presentations:

02/09/05 AK Forum - Anchorage, AK (national/regional update)

03/10/05 Garden club - Seattle, WA (invasive plants and gardening)

03/29/05 Puget Sound - Georgia Basin Research Conference - Seattle WA (genetic tool)

04/04/05 Soc. for Ecological Restoration conference - Seattle (national/regional update)

Volunteer "Thank You's". Cubicle-wall "certificates" were provided to the 80 or so people who helped with regionally-sponsored ivy pulls, *Spartina* flagging, and knotweed injection testing projects during 2004. (Many of whom were repeat volunteers!) Thanks to Christopher Moffett for preparing the special certificates, and to ORC and ECO, the two particularly active offices this year! Next year's activities will resume about April.

### **State and Local Projects Within Region 10**

New WA Invasive Species Council. Movement is underway to establish a Washington Invasive Species Council. The Bullitt Foundation has been instrumental in pushing for this, but responsibility for beginning this dialog currently lies with the Governor's office. Interested agencies have met twice to discuss possible structure, membership and focus, and we will have a third meeting on January 5. We have also been drafting legislation to establish the council. EPA

will be a member of the Council, in some as-yet undetermined capacity. It is currently unclear how the currently existing WA ANS Committee will relate to the Council.

WA Rapid Response Plan: The consultant has produced yet another draft plan for the WA ANS Executive Committee. We hope to have a final plan to share with the entire committee at the April meeting. As the new co-chair for the ANS Committee, my goals for 2005 include completing the action items listed in the ERR plan and insuring revision of the 2001 state ANS Management Plan, which is several years out of date.

AK Forum on the Environment. In September, I met with USDOJ to help plan the invasives session for Alaska Forum On The Environment, to be held February 7-11, 2005, in Anchorage. For the first time, the forum will include invasive species sessions, with particular focus on marine organisms, fresh-water fishes, rats, and noxious weeds. The Forum is sponsored by a coalition of State, Federal, Tribal and private organizers, and includes presentations and panels, a session on environmental career opportunities, a variety of organizational meetings, training classes, social events, vendor displays/information booths, and a "talking circle" with community leaders and Tribal elders. Last year's Forum attracted nearly 1,200 participants.  
(<http://www.akforum.com/>)

Idaho Strategic Plan Development. The statewide strategic plan was sent out for public review at the end of October. The comment period ended November 20, and plan revision is now underway. Plan finalization is expected in early 2005. This is a product of last February's Governor's Summit on Invasive Species. (A draft is available at [www.agri.idaho.gov](http://www.agri.idaho.gov).)

NEP\* Estuary Exotic Species Detection Programs. Exotic Species monitoring programs for Puget Sound, Tillamook Bay and the Lower Columbia River Estuary have been completed. The plans include suggested criteria for determining the presence and status of exotic organisms; environments and species to monitor; sampling methods; sampling station locations and numbers, sampling frequency and timing; a system to facilitate recognition of new organisms discovered in the Sound; and also estimate monitoring plan implementation costs.  
(\* National Estuary Program . Contact Teresa Kubo for more info at 503/326-2859. )

Pacific Northwest Invasive Species Book. The UW book, tentatively titled "Unwanted: Invasive species of the Pacific Northwest" will hopefully go to press this month. It contains both aquatic and terrestrial species, and contains a map, picture, and description of each species and range, and a summary of impacts, control and management methods, life history, and invasiveness history. It is co-edited by Sarah Reichard and Amy Van Buren, with multiple authors. I contributed the sections on carp (silver, bighead, grass, black, and common carp) and the marine algae Dead-Man's Fingers (*Codium fragile* ssp. *Tomentosoides*).

Lower Columbia River ANS study. Last month PSU, UW, and OSU scientists completed a \$275K three-year ANS study of the Lower Columbia River. The literature search and fieldwork added additional species to the existing list, bringing the number of known invasive species in this river reach to 81 (and includes an aquatic worm that is new to the entire West Coast!). At this rate, a new species is entering approximately every 5 months. PSU will start a similar study

of the Lower Snake and mid reaches of the Columbia soon. (*Contact Robyn Draheim 503/725-4994 for more information.*)

Alaska Website. The ADF&G invasive website will be up in February, and will have a link to the Prince William Sound Advisory Council. The IS database will be available on the website in March.

AK Initiatives: Ongoing initiatives were funded at same level again this year; \$10K to analyze susceptibility to zebra mussel invasion, and \$15k for risk assessment of colonizing by Atlantic salmon.

OR/ID Boat Inspection Program. A draft boat inspection work plan was developed for CA, OR and ID. Over the next nine months, work is hoped to include compilation of a listing of all agencies, organizations and groups having access to trailered boats; development of a training/education curriculum for portable inspection training programs; and completion of two training workshops that will produce 50-100 trainers able to then train others in their work units (*For more information, contact Paul Heimowitz, 503/872-2763*)

AK Invasives and Fire. An audio presentation was given on December 10 at the Cooperative Extension Service in Fairbanks to discuss concerns, plans, projects, partnerships etc. relating to invasive plants moving into burned areas. (*For more information, contact Michelle Hebert at 907/474-2423.*)

Columbia River Basin Research Plan. A number of introduced and exotic species including shad, channel catfish, yellow perch, bluegill/other sunfish, crappies, Eurasian milfoil, and Asiatic clams, are potentially impacting anadromous fish stocks in the Columbia River Basin Ecosystem. These species all impact juvenile salmonids either directly (as predators) or indirectly (by altering the food base), and as these exotic species become more dominant in the ecosystem, their impact on salmon populations will increase. The plan, now under development, contains 7 research recommendations for invasive species:

- Determine the impact of non-indigenous (exotic) aquatic and terrestrial species on salmonid recovery.
- Determine the environmental constraints on abundance and distribution of currently established or eminently threatening species.
- Determine the ecological consequences of invasions (competition, predation, and cascading trophic effects on native species, nutrient cycling, effect of management activities).
- Determine how low-density populations of invasive species can be detected (new monitoring techniques and optimized search protocols).
- Develop rapid response methodologies to eliminate newly introduced species at the source of introduction before they spread and become unmanageable in the environment.
- Determine how presently accepted non-indigenous species (warm-water fish) can be managed to minimize ecological effects.
- Develop and research effective biological control agents to treat exotic invasive infestations.

## **National and International Activity**

**USFS Weed Work.** In November, Congress passed an omnibus appropriations bill to fund most programs in FY05. The total for forest health protection, including "fire" money and money for both National forests and non-federal forests, is \$128 million. This is \$5 million more than in FY04. However, USDA APHIS, which is responsible for eradicating recently introduced species, (sparing the USFS from having to manage them over the long term), is poorly funded for this task. The Asian longhorned beetle funding was kept steady at \$29.2 million, and funding to APHIS to combat the emerald ash borer (\$5 million) and sudden oak death (\$3 million); both reportedly fall far short of what is needed.

**New Internet Sales Tracking Tool.** USDA has noted a link between growing internet sales and the spread of invasive plants. Next-day courier services make it possible to ship organisms coast-to-coast or even from abroad with little scrutiny. APHIS has now created a system to identify and track web pages and internet operators selling outlawed plants. The high-tech enforcement tool, called the Agricultural Internet Monitoring System (AIMS), will be unveiled in January. Already, its pilot test has identified 6,568 distinct websites pages belonging to US suppliers who may be selling banned plants (4,790 pages), mollusks (734 pages), and insects (1,044 pages). As soon as January, US sellers of regulated plants will begin to get APHIS e-mail notices warning them a federal permit is needed to sell such plants.

**IUCN Conference:** The State Department has requested that EPA's Office of International Activities help the International Union of Concerned Scientists (IUCN) to host an invasive species conference, with a specific reference to trade pathways. EPA/OIA is a member of IUCN, and IUCN has worked on invasives in the Caribbean and Central America. Both State and EPA are working to integrate discussions of invasives into the environmental reviews of trade agreements, and State hopes to include invasives as part of the environmental cooperation agreement being negotiated for the Central America Free Trade Agreement.

**ASTM Invasive Species Symposium:** The ASTM "Symposium on Invasive Species: Their Ecological Impacts and Alternatives for Control" will be held April 19-20, 2005, in Reno, Nevada. They are seeking international participation, and plan to focus on both terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species. (*Information is available at: <http://www.astm.org/>* )

**ITAP.** The new Federal Interagency Committee on Invasive Animals and Pathogens, was recently established to coordinate federal invasive species program planning and technical advice for terrestrial animals and pathogens not currently addressed by either FICMNEW\* or ANSTF\*\*. An MOU is now circulating to enlist Federal entities (USDA, USDOJ, DOD, DHS, CDC, State, EPA and the Smithsonian Institution) as partners. It is still assumed that several EPA offices will be signatories. (*\*Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds and \*\*the Invasive Species Council's Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force*).

**National Weed Awareness Week.** The Sixth Annual National Invasive Weed Awareness Week will be held in Washington, D.C., February 25-March 1. The purpose is to provide opportunities

for networking, brief key federal agencies, exchange information and research, and meet with Congressional representatives. The Oregon Invasive Species Council and the Oregon Noxious Weed Board are seeking to have the same week declared to be Oregon Invasive Weed Awareness Week. (More details are available at: <http://www.se-eppc.org/news/niwaw.html>.)

### **Species-Specific Updates**

Caulerpa. The USDA recently announced a comment period on two petitions requesting the addition of either the whole genus *Caulerpa* or the entire species *Caulerpa taxifolia* to the APHIS list of noxious weeds. *Caulerpa taxifolia* is a tropical, marine seaweed that can be exceptionally invasive when introduced into a new marine habitat. A group of invasive species scientists and resource managers, submitted these two petitions to APHIS in April, 2003. This comment period sets an important precedent, as it represents the first time a citizen noxious weed-listing petition has been put out for public comment in the Federal Register before USDA's decision. The comment period closes December 27, 2004.

Puget Sound Colonial Tunicate. In October, a small patch of new invasive colonial tunicate, *Didemnum lahillei*, was discovered growing on an underwater wreck in Edmonds Marine Park. A state Tunicate Response Advisory Group was formed in November, and the tunicate was ultimately covered with a chlorine-filled tarp. The colony is now believed to be dead, but other colonies have now been located elsewhere, and there is some question as to how long it has been quietly growing undiscovered. The EPA dive team will help DOH and other agencies conduct preliminary surveys to determine extent of the invasion. A website, with pictures, designed to help report sightings of this organism is available at: <http://www.pnwscuba.com/critterwatchers/invasive.htm>

Zebra Mussel Response Plan: The Western Regional Panel (WRP) is contracting for creation of a Rapid Response Plan for zebra mussels in the Columbia River Basin. This document is expected to summarize rapid response tools available; contain sections on tools that work in different types of water bodies; clearly list what agencies need to be involved and what their regulatory authorities are; give examples of successful early eradication; and give specific instructions to particular states, such as those affected by the Headwaters vs. Talent decision in the Ninth Circuit Court. This plan will assist any state wanting to create its own response plan.

Knotweed Symposium. Over 300 persons attended the Snohomish Knotweed symposium held in November, indicating the growing interest in this weed. I understand only about 30 people attended the first year's conference, so this shows the growth in interest is paralleling the growth of this horrible weed.

Bainbridge Island Knotweed Plan. I was asked to provide comment on a comprehensive knotweed control plan for on Bainbridge Island, WA, submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This weed is spreading fast, so early response is critical.

*Spartina* Conference: The Third International *Spartina* Conference was held Nov. 8-10 in San Francisco. (Learn more at <http://www.spartina.org/2004conference>)