



OREGON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For release: January 4, 2012

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PRESS RELEASE

OREGON'S INVASIVE SPECIES REPORT CARD

SALEM, Oregon—Oregon charted a steady course in its battle against invasive species in 2011, maintaining an overall grade of a B+ on its annual report card, similar to 2010.

The report card from the Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC) is intended to assess how Oregon is doing in the battle against unwanted invasive species. The report card includes assessments on the state's success at:

- keeping the 100 worst invaders from creating a home in Oregon;
- maintaining a reporting system for invasive species;
- outreach and education initiatives;
- the statewide action plan; and
- administering the council's trust account.

In addition, the report card offers recommendations on how grades can be improved in each category.

Rick Boatner, Chair of the Oregon Invasive Species Council in 2012 and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, emphasized the importance of monitoring Oregon's success at preventing the introduction of and managing invasive species in Oregon. "We can't let our guard down in the fight against invasive species," said Boatner. "Every new litter of feral swine, every introduction of an aquatic invasive species via ballast water, and every noxious weed that becomes established is a threat to Oregon's economy and natural resources. We must be vigilant to protect Oregon's water quality and native fish and wildlife habitat to maintain the quality of life that Oregonians cherish."

Success at preventing the establishment of invasive species in Oregon

Oregon slipped in its grade that measures success at preventing the establishment of invasive species in Oregon, earning a B- because two plants and one disease on the 100 Worst List became established during 2011. Oregon lost the battle against Sudden Oak Death because of lack of secure and consistent funding. Sudden Oak Death is a tree disease caused by the plant

pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*—The disease kills some oak species and has had devastating effects on forests in California and Oregon. During years of stable funding, Oregon was able to contain Sudden Oak Death and prevent its spread, but years of poor funding allowed the disease to spread. The size of the current infestation makes eradication impossible so the official strategy now focuses on slowing disease spread.

Two species of hawkweed are now firmly established in Oregon. Land managers have moved from eradication to containment mode on meadow hawkweed in eastern Oregon and orange hawkweed in Deschutes County.

To improve the grade in 2012, the state must prevent all species on the OISC 100 Worst List from becoming established by 2012, document that target established invaders are decreasing or holding steady, continue to identify policy gaps and steps needed to close those gaps, ensure early detection/rapid response plans are in place, and support federal legislation aimed at invasive species.

A reporting system for invasive species

In the category that assesses a reporting system for invasive species, Oregon received an A- grade for its website hotline (www.oregoninvasiveshotline.org), a website for people to report a potential invasive species in Oregon. In 2011, there were 190 reports to the website hotline. In addition, the Oregon Department of Agriculture maintains a 1-866-INVADER phone line for the public to report suspected invasives. IN 2011, the Council also contracted with the Oregon Biodiversity Information Center to manage a statewide database for invasives, iMapInvasives, for the State of Oregon.

To improve the grade in 2012, the Oregon Department of Agriculture should integrate its phone line with the website hotline to ensure each report of an invasive species is documented, at least to the category level. This action will provide excellent trend information and data by which future decisions about managing reports can be made.

Outreach and Education

For its education and outreach efforts, Oregon scored an A for its success in implementing a tri-state outreach campaign, participating in state, regional, and national outreach events, playing a key role in the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Summit, implementing watercraft inspection stations, launching a project to address regulatory and outreach strategies for aquatic invasive species, and using outreach to address invasive tunicates in two bays along the coast.

Oregon led a campaign with Idaho and Washington to improve awareness of firewood as a pathway for the introduction of invasive pests and diseases. The campaign included pre- and post-awareness surveys, billboards, posters, backlit displays at all but one Oregon highway rest stop, giveaways at State Parks, and other activities. Presentations on the Pacific Northwest approach to firewood were given at both the National Invasive Species Council and Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meetings. Oregon developed a Smartphone application for firewood that every state in the nation can use.

Oregon was represented at National Invasive Species Awareness Week in Washington, DC, and hosted an Invasive Species Awareness Day was hosted at the Capitol during the legislative session.

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region Summit hosted its first invasive species conference in Portland, Oregon and set the stage for future annual invasive species conferences.

The Oregon State Marine Board and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife implemented the 2nd year of the Aquatic Invasive Species permit program, which included watercraft inspection stations and decontamination washes in locations throughout Oregon. Inspection teams conducted 3,600 inspections and intercepted six boats with zebra/quagga mussels; three were from Lake Michigan, one was from Lake Mead, one was from Lake Havasu, and one was a sailboat from the East Coast.

A National Sea Grant-funded project was launched to explore regulatory and outreach strategies for aquatic invasive species in Oregon.

Washington's protocols for aquatic invasive species were reviewed and revised, and Oregon Sea Grant developed outreach materials to convey important elements of those protocols.

Winchester and Coos Bay communities began to address management of invasive tunicates in their bays through outreach and education activities and other actions.

To maintain the grade in 2012, Oregon needs to develop a regional action plan through PNWER, ensure that all natural resource agencies in Oregon will use and implement aquatic invasive species protocols, and finalize rulemaking for the new firewood regulation and the Adopt-A-River legislation.

Statewide action plan

Oregon earned a grade of A- in the statewide action plan category. Oregon launched an effort to develop a statewide strategic plan, and the Oregon Legislature passed the following pieces of legislation in 2011:

- House Bill 2122 prohibits importation into Oregon of firewood harvested from outside the Pacific Northwest unless the wood has been treated and is pest free.
- House Bill 3157 permits removal of invasive species under the Oregon Adopt-a-River Program.
- Senate Bill 81 requires DEQ to collect fees for trips by vessels regulated under ballast water statutes. Establishes Ballast Water Fund.
- House Bill 3358 requires State Department of Agriculture to establish a program for issuing grants to counties for noxious weed control.
- House Bill 3399 authorizes the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Marine Board and State Department of Agriculture to require person to stop and submit recreational or commercial watercraft to inspection for aquatic invasive species at roadside inspection stations.

To improve the grade in 2012, Oregon needs to finalize and begin implementation of its statewide invasive species strategic plan for Oregon and support invasive species legislative priorities for the 2012 legislative session.

Emergency fund for invasives

Oregon improved its grade from a D in 2010 to a B in 2011 in the trust account category. The state maintaining a small amount of funding in its Invasive Species Control Account to respond to a statewide invasive species emergency, and the Council raised \$326,888 for projects ranging from Council operations and coordinator support to funds for a regional Report-A-Pig project to address feral swine eradication on private land. In addition, numerous entities throughout Oregon spent millions of dollars on all elements of invasive species management, control, surveillance, and outreach.

To improve the grade in 2012, Oregon needs to develop ways to secure \$5 million for the Invasive Species Control Account, follow through on existing grant applications, seek opportunities to leverage additional funds, and leverage funding to raise \$250,000 for feral swine eradication.

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The Oregon Invasive Species Council was established by the Oregon Legislature in 2002. Its mission is to conduct a coordinated and comprehensive effort to keep invasive species out of Oregon and to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate the impacts of invasive species already established in Oregon. Current members of the council hail from the Northwest Weed Management Partnership, Turf Merchants, Inc., the Native Plant Society of Oregon, City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, Wallowa Resources, USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, US Forest Service, Oregon Marine Board, and Bureau of Land Management. In addition, agency representatives include Portland State University, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon State University, and Oregon Department of Agriculture.