



## OREGON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For release: August 12, 2009

Contact: Lisa A. DeBruyckere  
Telephone: (503) 704-2884  
Email: lisad@createstrat.com

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### OREGON FIGHTS “HOG WILD”

SALEM, Oregon—There’s a reason people refer to total chaos as “hog wild,” especially when you consider the effects that wild hogs have when they roam in Oregon’s fields and along our pristine river corridors. They literally denude the landscape, creating large muddy wallows, digging up native plants, and creating the perfect environment for invasive plants to establish.

Wild hogs, also called feral swine, are so “bad” for Oregon, that the Oregon Invasive Species Council lists it on their 100 Worst List of invasive species. As if that distinction isn’t enough, wild hogs are also listed on the 100 of the World’s Worst Alien Invasive Species list. This is clearly not a species Oregon wants running rampant. The Oregon Invasive Species Council has featured it as their August Invasive Species of the Month at <http://www.oregon.gov/OISC/>.

In 2004, Bruce Coblenz at Oregon State University produced a risk assessment for wild hogs in Oregon. Then Dr. Mark Sytsma, Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC) member and Director for The Center for Lakes and Reservoirs at Portland State University (PSU), and Arick Rouhe, Master of Science candidate at PSU, developed a wild hog management plan for Oregon. Coblenz’s assessment designated wild hogs as a “very high-risk species” due to great potential for establishment, environmental and economic impacts, and disease transmission to wildlife, livestock, and humans. Restoration of ecosystems and losses to agriculture and livestock have been estimated to exceed \$800 million in the United States each year. Environmental impacts include facilitation of noxious weed invasions, shifts in dominant plant species, reduction of forest regeneration, and soil erosion. Facilitation of noxious weeds and erosion due to wild hogs rooting has been documented in Oregon.

“Wild hogs pose a tremendous threat to native Oregon fish and wildlife species and their habitats, and they are capable of transmitting serious diseases to humans and other livestock such as sheep,” said Sytsma. “Other states have lost the fight to control wild hogs because they waited until populations became widespread and established. The key to controlling non-native species

is early detection and rapid response. Oregon has time to eradicate wild hogs and prevent them from establishing if we act now.”

Oregon legislators rose to the occasion during the 2009 legislative session, passing House Bill 2221, which makes it a crime to knowingly allow wild hogs to roam on private land or to sell or purchase hunts for wild hogs. The goal is eradication of these large, dangerous mammals – not creation of hunting opportunities. Other states that permit wild hog hunting learned the hard way, as people began releasing hogs to create additional hunt opportunities. Many of these states and land managers from Australia advised Oregon to create legislation that places a stiff penalty on releasing and hunting wild hogs.

What is the true definition of a “wild hog?” In Oregon, wild hogs can be escaped domestic pigs, wild European boars, and/or a combination of both - hybrids. In other words, a wild hog is any pig that isn’t in an enclosure. Although recently escaped or released domestic hogs look and behave like farm pigs, with each generation, their domestic characteristics diminish and they develop characteristics that make them more capable of surviving in the wild.

The wild hog population in Oregon is believed to be small and dispersed, although lack of funding to monitor these species has invasive species experts concerned, particularly when you consider how quickly this species multiplies. In states such as California, failure to act quickly has resulted in large populations of wild hogs that are unmanageable and uncontrollable.

Eradication of wild hogs in Oregon is estimated to require a four-year, \$1.29 million effort. Follow-up control of new releases and escapes will require a maintenance effort estimated at less than \$50,000 per year (excluding contingency funds for emergency response). These costs are small relative to the value of the \$3.6 billion Oregon agriculture and livestock industries and the investment Oregon has made in riparian restoration efforts. Sustained control of wild hogs in Oregon will require a long-term commitment that will include annual domestic hog marking, education, and monitoring.

*The mission of the Oregon Invasive Species Council 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.*

###