



OREGON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

STATE MADE POSITIVE GAINS ON INVASIVE SPECIES ISSUES IN 2009

SALEM, Oregon—According to Oregon’s 2009 report card on invasive species, the state made forward progress in 2009 by enacting important legislation, expanding outreach and education efforts, conducting a statewide management assessment, and creating an emergency fund.

The report card, an assessment of Oregon’s activities in five areas—reporting invasive species, outreach and education, planning, funding, and success at excluding invasive species—was released this week by the Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC). The state was given an overall grade of A-.

“It was a banner year for invasive species issues in 2009,” said OISC Chair Sam Chan. “We set in motion some proactive priorities that will help Oregon deal with invasive species in the future.”

Oregon again scored very high in holding the 100 worst invaders at bay in 2009, bringing home a solid A in that category. None of the organisms on the 100 Worst List became established in Oregon in 2009. To maintain or improve that grade, Oregon must prevent all species on the OISC 100 Worst List from becoming established by 2011, document that target established invaders are decreasing or holding steady, identify policy gaps and steps needed to close those gaps, ensure early detection/rapid response plans are in place, support federal legislation aimed at invasive species, and develop and promote Oregon legislation in 2011 to deal with state-specific issues.

In the category that assesses a reporting system for invasive species, Oregon received an A-grade for its 1-866-INVADER hotline, a telephone line available for people to report a potential invasive species in Oregon as well as management of www.oregoninvasiveshotline.org, an online invasive species reporting system. To maintain/boost that grade in 2010, the council could integrate the phone line at the Oregon Department of Agriculture with the website hotline to

ensure each report of invasive species is documented. In addition, the Council should move forward to develop tools that allow people to better access and use invasive species databases.

For its education and outreach efforts, Oregon scored a B+ for hosting an Invasive Species Awareness Day at the Capitol, participating in Governor's Natural Resource Cabinet meetings, initiating conference calls with Washington and Idaho to address regional issues, and applying for a federal grant to conduct a tri-state outreach campaign on firewood transport and its role as a vector of invasive species. To improve this grade in 2010, the state can implement the firewood outreach campaign and host statewide and regional invasive species summits.

Oregon received an A in the planning category for conducting a statewide management assessment of invasive species. The results of the assessment will inform the development of an invasive species strategic plan for Oregon. To maintain the grade in this category in 2010, the Council can develop the strategic plan.

Oregon fared well in the funding category, earning a B for the establishment of an Invasive Species Control Account for the state with \$350,000 of seed money to start the fund. To improve this grade in 2010, the Council should work toward the goal of ensuring a total of \$5,000,000 exists in the fund as well as continue to apply for grants to fund new initiatives.

Sam Chan noted it was important for Oregon to maintain its momentum and focus on invasive species issues. "Oregon made some positive gains in 2009 by taking a hard look at our infrastructure and ability to respond to invasive species," said Chan. "But we must remain vigilant as invasive species find new ways to enter our state and threaten our natural resources and economy. We must build on the positive gains in 2009 and continue to challenge ourselves to be proactive in this uphill battle."

Tackling invasive species issues is an uphill battle, but in 2009, Oregon can say it gained some ground.

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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 Oregon Marine Board, USDA Forest Service, USDA-APHIS, The Nature Conservancy, Dow Agrosiences, DLF International, Wallowa Resources, Port of Portland, and SOLV. In addition, agency representatives include Portland State University, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon State University, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.