



OREGON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

WILDLIFE PROFESSIONALS RECOGNIZE OREGON FERAL SWINE ACTION PLAN EFFORTS

SALEM, Oregon—Pigs belong behind fences, according to Oregon’s wildlife biologists.

At the annual meeting of the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TWS) in Gleneden Beach February 13-15, 2008, wildlife professionals from Oregon and neighboring states convened to discuss strategies for managing wildlife populations in the face of increasing human population and development. One of the greatest threats to native fish and wildlife habitats is feral swine.

To address that threat, Dr. Mark Sytsma, Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC) Chair and Director for The Center for Lakes and Reservoirs at Portland State University (PSU), and Arick Rouhe, Master of Science candidate at PSU, were given the Outstanding Service Award by TWS for developing a feral swine action plan in 2007 to eradicate this invasive species in Oregon. The award is a “professional recognition award” granted in recognition for outstanding contributions in wildlife management in the past year. Individuals may be recognized for contributions in research, management, conservation, public involvement, education, or law enforcement.

A feral swine pest risk assessment for Oregon, released in 2004, designated feral swine 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 feral swine rooting have been documented in Oregon.

“Feral swine 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 feral swine 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 feral swine and prevent them from establishing if we act now.”

The feral swine population in Oregon is currently small and dispersed, but in states such as California, failure to act quickly has resulted in large populations of feral swine that are unmanageable and uncontrollable.

Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society President Bruce Campbell commented on the thoroughness of the feral swine action plan and its importance to Oregon’s conservation strategy.

“The plan calls for four years of actions that include recommended legislative changes to facilitate eradication, outreach and education, population assessment, rapid response, and eradication elements,” said Campbell. “It’s a comprehensive and thorough plan that addresses several components of the state’s conservation strategy.”

Eradication of feral swine 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 feral swine in Oregon will require a long-term commitment that will include annual domestic swine marking, education, and monitoring.

The mission of The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society is to promote wise conservation and management of wildlife resources in Oregon.

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.

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