



OREGON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

INVASIVE SPECIES REPORT CARD CHALLENGES OREGON TO THINK AND ACT STRATEGICALLY

SALEM, Oregon—There is nothing like a new system to get people to think differently. Such is the case with Oregon's annual report card on invasive species. Oregon's overall grade for invasive species efforts in 2007 was a B, which indicates room for improvement and stimulated some new thinking on how to improve Oregon's grade in 2008.

The report card from the Oregon Invasive Species Council is intended to assess how Oregon is doing in the battle against unwanted invasive species. The report card was expanded in 2007 to include the familiar grade that is based on the state's success at keeping the 100 worst invaders from creating a home in Oregon, and an additional four grades that assess success in implementing the statutory mandates of the council—a reporting system for invasive species, outreach and education initiatives, the statewide action plan, and administering the council's trust account.

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

Oregon again scored very high in holding the 100 worst invaders at bay in 2007, bringing home a solid A in that category. None of the organisms on the 100 worst list became established in Oregon in 2007. To maintain or improve that grade, Oregon must prevent all species on the OISC 100 Worst List from becoming established by 2009, 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 to deal with state-specific issues.

In the category that assesses a reporting system for invasive species, Oregon received a B grade for its 1-866-INVADER hotline, a telephone line available for people to report a potential invasive species in Oregon. To boost that grade in 2008, the council must make improvements to its website and outreach materials and help in launching and then managing a new online version of the hotline in development in collaboration with Oregon Public Broadcasting.

For its education and outreach efforts, Oregon scored a B+, primarily because of a statewide awareness and engagement campaign developed in 2007 that will launch on Earth Day in 2008. The council, Oregon Public Broadcasting, SOLV, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon State University, Portland State University, and federal and state partners are collaborating on a long-term public awareness campaign to curtail invasive species. To improve this grade in 2008, the state must fully implement both the initial and long-term strategies of the campaign.

An average grade of C was given in the statewide action plan category. The council took its first step in implementing an action plan by obtaining the funding to contract with a coordinator part-time. The coordinator will facilitate efforts to lead the council in the development of a statewide strategic plan with measurable outcomes and objectives. To improve the grade in this category, the council must conduct a statewide assessment of invasive species in Oregon and develop a strategic plan.

Oregon didn't fare so well in the trust account category, earning a D for failing to raise funds for a trust account to fund invasive species work that was established by the Legislature in 2002. To improve this grade in 2008, the council must articulate and achieve fundraising goals tied to its strategic plan.

Dan Hilburn, Chair of the Oregon Invasive Species Council in 2007 and Oregon Department of Agriculture Plant Division Administrator, was pleased with the overall grade, but commented there was a great deal of work to do. "Collaboration and coordination are critical to achieving success with invasive species efforts in Oregon," said Hilburn. "We can only be successful if we think and act strategically, maximize efficient use of human and financial resources, and engage the public in the importance of keeping their eyes open to invasive species that can enter our state in so many ways. Many states have lost or are losing the battle against invasive species. Oregon is poised to stay ahead of the pack and maintain the quality of its natural resources for native fish and wildlife and people if we think and act strategically."

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 Association of Nurseries, Oregon Marine Board, Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDA Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, Gilliam County Weed Department, Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery, and Port of Portland. In addition, agency representatives include Portland State University, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon State University, and Oregon Department of Agriculture.

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