

Idaho's Invasive Species Plan...



Invasive Species

*Idaho's Strategic Action Plan
To Meet
This Growing Challenge*

Thank you for joining us today to talk about Idaho's newly completed strategic action plan for invasive species.

Idaho's Invasive Species Plan...



Many Non-Native Species Are Desirable

- Potatoes
- Chukar partridges, pheasants
- Apples
- Wheat
- Forage crops
- Livestock



Let's start by discussing what aren't invasive species. In fact, most non-native species brought to Idaho were purposeful introductions of plant or animals that serve valuable purposes.



What is an Invasive Species?



- **Plant, animal or pathogen**
- **Non-native, introduced species**
- **Aquatic or terrestrial**
- **Cause harm to human or animal health**
- **Cause economic or environmental harm**

But others, often arriving here by accident, escape to the wild and grow uncontrollably. Medusahead rye, yellow starthistle, white pine blister rust, gypsy moths, New Zealand mudsnails, starlings and pigeons, various plant blights and diseases, apple maggots...these are all invasive species that are here now and we wish they could have been prevented.

Idaho's Invasive Species Plan...



A Prelude to Action...

- **Idaho's weed summit and weed management plan**
- **Creation of the Invasive Species Council**
- **Completion of a Statewide Assessment**
- **Increasing National Attention**
- **The Invasive Species Summit**

Over the years, there have been some events that have helped recognize the problem and paved the way for the strategic action plan that we are discussing today.



All Point to a Growing Problem...



- **A mobile society**
- **Growing ease of commerce and trade**



- **Multiple, individual efforts that are not well coordinated**



- **A state that is particularly vulnerable**

Part of our concern is that society and commerce is changing in a way that virtually assures an increasing threat of arrival and spread of unwanted species. We travel freely and Idaho is the destination of many who bring with them ATV's, animals and boats. We share an international border and welcome many workers from other countries. The Internet and express delivery services make transport of plants and animals fast and anonymous. We have access to saltwater shipping and many backcountry areas where new infestations can grow undetected. Finally, although we do have effective programs currently in place, they are often not well coordinated in their ability to detect and respond to new threats. In short, Idaho faces numerous challenges in keeping unwanted species from arriving and spreading.

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...With Serious Implications

- **“Hitchhiking” insects threaten our forests and shade trees**
- **West Nile Virus is a threat to animal and human health**
- **Yellow starthistle threatens to spread**
- **Zebra mussels threaten power and irrigation**

The stakes are high. Those examples on the screen represent new species that arrived in our state in just the past several years or that threaten to spread to areas where they are not now found. As we drafted this plan, for example, we found a new species, the Asian gypsy moth, in north Idaho, where we suspect it was brought here on shipping containers from the Orient.

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**The Answer is Prevention,
Coupled with Early
Detection and Eradication**

The answer is obvious—we must do a better job of detecting and responding to new or spreading invasions.



The Question is “How?”

- **The results of the statewide Assessment**
- **The results of the Invasive Species Summit**
- **Four working groups that included over 30 invasive species professionals**

The question is how best to do this. Fortunately, we have a reservoir of talent and experience that provided a foundation upon which to build the state's plan.

Idaho's Invasive Species Plan...



Over 20 Proposals in 7 Broad Categories



- **Categories**
 - Early Intervention
 - Containment, Control, Restoration
 - Education and Training
 - Research and Technology Transfer
 - Funding
 - Effective Legal Structure
 - Program Coordination
- **Goal Statement** (A condition we want in 10 years)
- **Tasks** (What we need to do to achieve a desired condition)
- **Objective** (Progress we should see within 5 years of initiating the task)

You have before you the executive summary of the plan with each of the proposals within it in the table at the end. Proposals are arrayed in 7 major categories. Each category has a separate goal statement. The tasks represent specific actions toward meeting the goal, with a short term objective associated with each task that generally identifies a way to measure progress within 1-5 years.

In developing the proposals, there is not a lot that is particularly profound. Not a lot of "Eureka!" moments. Most of what we need to do represent common sense actions that are "doable" within the fiscal and political context of the state. For that reason you will not see suggestions for a significant tax on ATV's, farm and ranch supplies, pets, nursery stock or landscaping services, or suggested that all incoming trucks be stopped at the border and inspected. We did not, simply because such measures, even if they were accepted by the Council, would never pass the Legislature or be implemented. So, we included only proposals that seem possible in the current political and fiscal climate.

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How Does the Plan Relate to Existing Programs?

- **Assumption is that existing programs will continue to operate as they do now**
- **There are commonalities to be strengthened**
- **There is a need for coordination**
- **There is a need to increase visibility, stature and priority within state government**

Neither are we suggesting that current programs should either be eliminated or restructured. Our track record has been good, but there are areas common to all the existing programs that can be strengthened. For example, each program could benefit from more funding and each would benefit from educational efforts that would foster greater public support and cooperation. Our objective is to make it easier for those who currently manage Idaho's invasive species programs to do their jobs and to make their efforts more effective.



Some Examples...

- **Nursery, utility workers and those with outdoor jobs should be trained to identify weeds or other species in “new” places**
- **There is a new “CRISSP” with \$1 million and their work needs to be coordinated with the statewide plan**
- **Ports of Entry employees may encounter species but have no authority to act**

These typify some of the tasks that need to be completed if we are to strengthen our ability to detect and respond to new or spreading invasions. Some of these may take future legislative action. Most will not and only one is proposed for this session.

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Coordinating Our Efforts

Goal: Create a statewide “invasive species coordinator” and to clarify the roles and actions of the Invasive Species Council in augmenting existing programs and coordinating statewide efforts.

There is one proposal upon which much of the success of the rests of the proposals lie and which should be addressed by the Legislature this session. Governor Kempthorne's budget includes \$82,000 to create the position of a statewide “invasive species coordinator”.

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The Role of the Coordinator

- **With the Council, set priorities and develop a work plan to implement the tasks;**
- **Represent the Governor on invasive species;**
- **Develop grants to implement the plan;**
- **Provide information to the Legislature, Congressional delegation and stakeholders;**
- **Identify key audiences and educational efforts;**
- **Work with the University of Idaho, USDA and other partners to identify invaders, assess risks;**
- **Establish a single statewide point of contact for reporting new or spreading invasive species.**

Basically, the coordinator will serve as the staff executive for the Invasive Species Council which represents the state and federal agencies plus the private groups and county governments that are involved in implementing the plan. The Council is the guiding force and coordinating body for all invasive species efforts in the state.

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Consider One Example...

- Locating funding for the training project,
- Working with specialists to identify target species,
- Working with communications and education specialists to design training materials,
- Finding graphic artists or other specialists to complete training/education materials,
- Arranging meetings of trainees, along with the proper specialists and presenters for the training sessions,
- Suggesting improvements and assuring that there are adequate replacement materials for providing training to new personnel, and,
- Reporting on the success of the effort to the Invasive Species Council.

Can the invasive species coordinator keep busy? No question. Let's look at the workload necessary to implement one relatively simple task in the plan—training DEQ's stream survey teams to recognize new invasions of weed or aquatic species. With probably a half day effort, we can put about 30 pairs of trained eyes in Idaho's streams, woods and rangelands over the course of a summer. But look at what's necessary to make that happen. Who's going to do this? This is why we need the coordinator. By completing these actions, that person can extend the effectiveness of both the weed and the aquatic nuisance programs and complete some of the tasks associated with our education goal.



What the Coordinator Won't Do

- **Assume management of existing programs**
- **Add another layer of oversight**
- **Bleed existing programs for money**
- **Be involved in day-to-day operations of current efforts**

There are legitimate concerns that an Invasive Species Coordinator might either add another layer of management and bureaucracy to existing programs or usurp existing program management. Obviously, it will be necessary to hire a person whose personality, people skills and ultimate performance will dispel those concerns. Beyond that, the Invasive Species Council will serve as a strong check on the coordinator's actions and performance.

Therefore, it is not the job of the coordinator to involve him or herself in the day-to-day management of those programs. Rather, the coordinator will work to strengthen the areas that all have in common—the need for additional resources, building public support through education, assessing the risks that various species will arrive and cause damage or strengthening our capability to detect new or spreading invasions, among others. The overall mission of the coordinator must be to build upon the strength of existing programs and help improve areas that are weaker, all under the general guidance of the Invasive Species Council.

Idaho's Invasive Species Plan...



We Can Meet the Challenge...



- **Plan represents the blueprint**
- **Based upon the input of professionals in the field**



- **It is achievable**
- **It will help**



With this plan, Idaho joins many other states, over 20 federal agencies and the Congress in recognizing the threats posed by invasive species and in taking the necessary steps to prevent their arrival and spread. It is a dynamic plan that can accommodate new knowledge and ideas. Its implementation is important to the state and our economy by helping us meet the growing challenge posed by unwanted invasive species.