



Healthy Habitats Coalition

Roger Batt, Executive Director, December 6, 2011

“HHC promotes conservation of the nation’s natural resources and economic interests by promoting efficient management of invasive species to curtail the associated harm. Through state and federal leadership, HHC seeks legislation and appropriations that improve private, local, state, and federal land managers on-the-ground control efforts.”

CRITICAL ASKs TO JUMP START CONTROL PROGRAMS

Goal: Improve control & management of invasive species on dispersal corridors.

ASK 1: *Over five years, Federal land managers shall increase on-the-ground control obligations by five-fold and decrease current infested acres by 25%.*

Many states have federally-owned lands within their respective borders. Noxious and invasive weeds have exploded within these borders. Weed control efforts and funding towards these efforts are going backwards instead of progressively forward. Since 2008, funding for noxious and invasive weed control from federal partners has reduced significantly or dropped off completely.

Weed control efforts on private and public lands are only as good as a neighbor’s weed control program on adjacent lands. It is difficult for landowners to control their noxious and invasive weeds, while others are not controlling noxious and invasive weeds on their lands. More on-the-ground control needs to be committed by Federal land managers to ensure the productivity of these lands and healthy populations of fish and wildlife, and to reduce the spread of noxious and invasive weeds to other lands, often resulting in burdensome weed control efforts by landowners.

ASK 2: *Federal agencies shall provide the states pass-through funds assessed at \$.25 on each federally managed acre.*

Federal lands are overrun with noxious and invasive weeds. In Idaho alone, about 4.88 million acres of federal lands are infested by noxious and invasive weeds. The amount of dollars spent on the ground to control noxious and invasive weeds on federal lands is minimal and being further reduced every year.

Many states have mechanisms already in place to put people on the ground to reduce populations of invasive species. Many states have County Weed Control authorities, boat check stations, Invasive Species Councils, and Cooperative Weed Management Areas to assist with on-the-ground efforts.

Ask #2 will ensure states which have federal lands within their respective borders shall have the necessary funding to increase on-the-ground control of invasive species to progressively move forward with control and eradication efforts. The funding will ensure that a significant reduction of invasive species will be seen on federal lands over the next decade.

The funding mechanism will be set in the President's Invasive Species budget and allocated to states which have federal lands within its borders. An allocation of \$.25/acre based on the total acreage of federal lands within those respective states will be given to the Governor's of those respective states. The Governor of the states who receive the funding will determine which pass-through agency will direct the funds to on-the-ground efforts to control invasive species.

ASK 3: *The FwHA should authorize \$300 per every center line mile of state highway annually.*

State highways are another corridor for invasive species to spread and proliferate. Funding to control efforts to stop the spread of invasive species along these corridors are ignored or funded with few dollars due to obligations of funding other projects and priorities.

ASK#3 will ensure monies will pass to state Department of Transportation's Road and Maintenance sections to improve and control invasive species through Early Detection and Rapid Response and prevention or education efforts. This authorization will allow for \$300.00 per every center line mile of state highways to be given to those respective DOT's on an annual-basis.

ASK 4: *Enforce the Federal Noxious Weed Act (Section 2814) amended in 1990.*

The Federal Noxious Weed Act was first enacted in 1974 to establish a federal program to control the spread of noxious weeds. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture was given the authority to declare plants as "Noxious Weeds," and limit the interstate spread of such plants without a permit. The Secretary has the authority to inspect, seize, and destroy products, and quarantine areas, if necessary to contain, or limit the spread of such weeds.

The Act was amended by the 1990 Farm Bill on November 28, 1990. The amendment requires each federal land-managing agency, including the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service to do the following:

- Designate an office or person adequately trained in managing undesirable plant species to develop and coordinate a program to control such plants on the agency's land;
- Establish and adequately fund this plant management program through the agency's budget process;
- Complete and implement cooperative agreements (requirements for which are provided) with the States regarding undesirable plants on agency land; and
- Establish integrated management systems (as defined in the Act) to control or contain undesirable plants targeted under the cooperative agreements.

ASK #4 will ensure the Noxious Weed Control Act as amended in 1990 is followed by those federal agencies tasked to control and eradicate noxious weeds within their respective federal lands.

ASK 5: *Each state should develop an invasive species plan with a solid law in collaboration with the appropriate federal agencies. See Idaho & Washington laws.*

States such as Idaho and Washington have incredible Invasive Species Plans and many organizations to collaborate with to ensure these Plans are followed and executed. While other states may have developed similar Plans or may be working on drafting these Plans, it is certain not all states across the U.S. have an Invasive Species Plan, or a collaborative effort to execute and follow an Invasive Species Plan.

ASK #5 will allow states to adopt specific Invasive Species Plans according to the geography; infestation, need and direction that state wishes to proceed. The Healthy Habitats Coalition will assist these states in drafting these Plans by utilizing Idaho and Washington as a blueprint.

ASK 6: *States should work in regional/national concert to educate the public via media tactics. Cooperation is essential to eliminate redundancy.*

Education and outreach are effective means to reach households with the message that Invasive Species are a serious threat to our lands, waters, and economy. A well-placed and funded media campaign utilizing television, radio, and print media will reach households five (5) or more times. Earned media (free media) is also an effective means to utilize television, radio, and print media without spending monies on paid advertising. Often times, news releases end up in television and radio interviews and news stories which air during prime times for the public to view and learn.

States such as Idaho and Montana have extremely effective outreach and education programs through the media and other outlets. Adopting these programs on a regional/national level is critical to educate U.S. citizens about the severe threats of invasive species, what control methods are available, how to reduce their spread, and a call to action.