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STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

March 18, 2008

**Topic #21:** Washington Invasive Species Council Update

**Prepared and Presented By:** Bridget Moran, Chair  
Washington Invasive Species Council

**Approved by the Director:**

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**Proposed Action:** Briefing

**Summary**

The Invasive Species Council (council) appreciates the opportunity to provide an update to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) and to request assistance from members of the board with review of the invasive species draft strategic plan.

**Background**

In 2006, the Legislature and Governor Gregoire established the Invasive Species Council, directing it to develop a strategic approach to prevent and control invasive species – non-native organisms that threaten Washington’s environment and economy. The council is charged with facilitating statewide coordination of public and private efforts and to develop a strategic plan by June 6, 2008.

The council’s first action was to conduct a survey of known entities working on invasive species issues throughout the state to gain knowledge of existing programs, funding, and barriers to success. It also developed a statutorily mandated report on noxious weed funding in the state. The results of the survey and the report demonstrated that information on invasive species in the state is seriously lacking in either completeness or accessibility. Consequently, developing a statewide, comprehensive, and strategic approach to invasive species prevention and control based on limited information presented a challenge.

The council addressed the information challenge by forming five work groups to assist in the development of the strategic plan. The work groups consist of experts with diverse fields of interests from around the state. Their work focused on the priority



concerns of public/private coordination, technical (prevention, early detection and rapid response, control, eradication, and restoration), funding, regulation, and education.

Over the last few months the council's primary focus has been on strategic plan development through the collaborative process of the work groups. The council is committed to keeping the plan concise, useable, and action oriented. The action agenda includes a three phased implementation process – short term (0-18 months; mid-term (18 months to 5 years); and long-term (5 years to 20 years). The draft plan was released on March 14, 2008 for public comment which will close on April 3, 2008. Each member of the RCFB was sent a copy and the council is hopeful that if you haven't, you will take a look at it from your organization's perspective and send your comments to staff – [Clover.Lockard@rco.wa.gov](mailto:Clover.Lockard@rco.wa.gov) or 360-902-3088 .

### **Next Steps**

Once the plan has been submitted to Governor Gregoire and the Legislature, the council is prepared to move forward with implementation. The plan will be introduced to key decision-makers through a series of individual meetings and tours that will focus on actions that can be taken immediately as well as in the future. A working session for managers, technical experts, and stakeholders to further develop the details of implementation is being planned for late September or early October 2008. In addition, a project for coordinated action by the council member entities will be selected from the strategic plan.

As one of RCO's team of councils and boards, the Washington Invasive Species Council is committed to a strong working relationship with the RCFB and looks forward to productive communication, collaboration, and coordination.