

Healthy Habitats

Invasive Species Management: Green Jobs for the Nation

The Global invasive species threat has reached immense proportions and our nation as been weakened environmentally and economically across all landscapes and ownerships.

The rapid spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species is directly tied to the global economy, and our ability to confront and reverse the spread nationwide. Invasions of exotic pathogens, plants, vertebrates, and invertebrates are sweeping across our borders and weakening our economic stability.

Private landowners are some of the hardest hit by invasive species, and with the rapid decline in our national economy few citizens have the capacity to effectively address the threat to their property.

The county, state, and federal land network also has significantly diminished capability to repel the invasion of these harmful exotic species, and our precious natural and cultural resources hang in the balance.

The invasive species threat is a bi-partisan issue with a history of strong support from Democratic and Republican legislators, as well as diverse interest groups.

We must rally the nation to build an economically driven engine which can provide the resources needed to engage in battle against these invaders. Invasive species have broken through the gates and the resulting degradation of our native ecosystems is further undermining our great nation's economy.

Health Habitats Leadership

We must focus on action, not rhetoric or bureaucracy-building. We must change our approach and bring swift and effective solutions to the front of the march against invasive species. We must lower the hurdles to speed our pace against the invasive species threat.

Wasting time building complicated bureaucracies and squabbling over jurisdictional issues is undermining our ability to focus on the invasive enemy and meet the challenge swiftly.

Some in this country think we need more policy, legislation, paperwork, and re-organization. Some say we don't have the proper authorities or enforcement ability. Some say we need more planning and research, and that we really don't understand how to slow the spread of invasive species.

Although these people have the best intentions, these ideas will be slow to respond and offer very limited "on-the-ground" action in the immediate future. Now is the time for a "Get-R-Done" Perspective that focuses on practical, swift, effective, and economically stimulating work in those places where the infestations exist.

America can do this, we've proved our capability to make a difference when the chips are down. Our American work ethic and tenacity must shine brighter than ever before if we are to win the battle against invasives. Now is the time to stop the whining and start rolling!

We Can Create Jobs (IN FACT -WE MUST) in the public and private sectors to capitalize on the American workforce's ability to solve monumental problems. Stimulating the economy through job creation is critical to stop the bleeding of the global and national economy. The environmental and economic needs must be met.

We need to Mobilize a national workforce to stop the spread of invasive species through:

- Inventory and monitoring of lands and waters
- Prevention programs to protect healthy habitats
- Early detection and rapid response utilizing "citizen scientists"
- Managing and containing invasive species
- Restoring degraded parks, trails, campgrounds, prairies, and rangeland
- Building healthy fish and wildlife habitats
- Developing techniques and technologies to win the battle against invasives

We need to Encourage entrepreneurship by stimulating innovation and start-up businesses, and creating a stable market for native plant seed, weed-free hay and mulch, gravel, and land and water restoration services.

We need to Support invasive species management businesses in the private sector, including:

- land management organizations and consultants
- community- and watershed-based natural resource groups
- manufacturers and suppliers of management tools and materials
- conservation, recreation, and sportsmen nonprofits
- land and water restoration specialists
- energy conservation and development groups

We need to Support invasive species management efforts of public entities such as state and local governments, universities/extension, Federal land management agencies, wildlife agencies, regional invasive species science centers.

We need to Support invasive species management in rural and urban communities.

This is a win-win direction. Winners:

- The public – healthier environment, stronger economy
- Fish and wildlife – healthier habitats and more productivity
- Endangered species – less likely to be listed and easier recovery.
- Private sector businesses – new jobs
- Federal land-management agencies – strong partners in the private sector for land and water management

OUR NATION NEEDS TO ACT NOW AGAINST INVASIVES!!!