

Noxious weed reporting system now available in 11 western states

May 19 2011, By Evelyn Boswell

Spring has finally arrived and many of us are once again heading back into the fields and rangelands, into the rivers, and into the backcountry for work and for play. As our surroundings are greening up, we must remember that not all plant species are native to our region. Some are noxious weed invaders that restrict access to irrigation, degrade wildlife habitat, reduce water quality and quantity, and decrease productivity of croplands and grazing lands.

Early detection of new invasive plant infestations and rapid, coordinated responses are needed to eradicate or contain invasions before they become too widespread and control becomes technically and financially impossible. Early detection and rapid response programs are based on two simple concepts: 1. Even the best prevention efforts cannot stop all invasive plant introductions; and 2. Quick action to control an invasive plant infestation before it becomes widespread will greatly reduce control costs and damage to surrounding natural resources.

Entering and tracking locations of invasives within and between states can identify the "leading edge" of [invasive plants](#) heading our way. This knowledge allows [land managers](#) and agencies to prioritize control needs and management strategies while populations are still small. Each new sighting of an invader is crucial information that should be shared as quickly as possible with your local county weed district, state [department of agriculture](#), university Extension agent, or federal agency field office.

An even easier way to report noxious weed sightings is using the Web-

based, Missouri [River Watershed](#) Coalition-Early Detection and Distribution [Mapping System](#). Developed by the Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health at the University of Georgia and launched in September, the MRWC-EDDMapS is fast, easy to use, and is freely available to anyone in the headwater states of Montana, Colorado, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. The system allows for reporting new sightings of select invasive species, automatically alerts state weed coordinators of those reports, automatically alerts EDDMapS users of verified reports, and generates distribution maps for reported species. Now, because of additional support from the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund and the U.S. Forest Service, State and Private Forestry Program, this system has been expanded to five additional western states: Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

More information:

To sign up and use the EDDMapS tool to report sighting of new plant invaders, go to www.eddmaps.org/mrwc

For more information about the MRWC, visit www.weedcenter.org/mrwc/index.html

Provided by Montana State University

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