H.R. 1462, TO CONTROL OR ERADICATE HARMFUL, NON-NATIVE WEEDS ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND

LEGISLATIVE HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION, AND PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

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C O N T E N T S

	Page
Hearing held on June 19, 2001	1
Statement of Members:	
Craig, Hon. Larry E., a United States Senator from the State of Idaho	3
Prepared statement of	5
Christensen, Hon. Donna, a Delegate to Congress from the Virgin Islands	2
Hefley, Hon. Joel, a Representative in Congress from the State of Colorado	1
Prepared statement of	2
Statement of Witnesses:	
Beck, Dr. K. George, Professor of Weed Science, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, Colorado	26
Prepared statement of	27
Carroll, Michael, Vice President, North American Weed Management Association, Ft. Collins, Colorado	50
Prepared statement of	51
Rains, Michael T., Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC	18
Prepared statement of	19
Randall, Dr. John, Director, Wildland Invasive Species Program, The Nature Conservancy, Washington, DC	34
Prepared statement of	36
Riley, Dr. Terry Z., Director of Conservation, Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, DC	54
Prepared statement of	55
Skinner, Bob, Rancher, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Jordan Valley, Oregon	29
Prepared statement of	30
Tate, Dr. James, Jr., Science Advisor, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC	9
Prepared statement of	11
Additional materials supplied:	
American Farm Bureau Federation, Statement submitted for the record	63
Colorado Department of Agriculture, Letter submitted for the record by Hon. Joel Hefley	65
Florida Farm Bureau Federation, Letter submitted for the record by Hon. Joel Hefley	68
Montana Department of Agriculture, Letter submitted for the record by Hon. Joel Hefley	70
Weed Science Society of America, Letter submitted for the record by Hon. Joel Hefley	72
Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Letter submitted for the record by Hon. Barbara Cubin	75

H.R. 1462, TO REQUIRE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE THROUGH STATES ELIGIBLE WEED MANAGEMENT ENTITIES TO CONTROL OR ERADICATE HARMFUL, NONNATIVE WEEDS ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

U.S. House of Representatives

Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands

Committee on Resources

Washington, DC

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to other business, at 10:07 a.m., in room 1334, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Joel Hefley [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOEL HEFLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO

Mr. HEFLEY. The Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands will now hear testimony on H.R. 1462. This important legislation, which I introduced, represents my attempt to assist thousands of increasingly desperate ranchers, farmers and Federal land managers throughout the country who have been and continue to be under siege from noxious, non-native weeds. The goal of H.R. 1462 is clear, to get the money directly to the folks at the local level who are on the front lines combating these weeds. I think it is clear from reading the testimony of today's witnesses that this is a major problem and one that requires vigilance and a comprehensive approach from all levels of government.

To illustrate the seriousness of this national weed epidemic, I need only to turn to some of our witness' testimony. According to Dr. Tate's testimony, invasive plant species are estimated to cost more than $20 billion per year in economic damage and affect millions of acres of private and public land. Other estimates put it as high as $130 billion annually. Moreover, according to Dr. Riley's testimony, some exotic weed populations increase about 14 percent per year, and left unchecked can easily overtake the land, and dis-

place native plant populations rendering the land useless for ranchers and farmers.

Specifically, H.R. 1462 would require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a grant program to provide assistance through States to eligible weed management entities to control or eradicate harmful, non-native weeds on public and private land. I realize to most folks in the audience or to those listening to this hearing that noxious weeds may not seem as important as some issues, but to those of us who have seen the devastation caused by these insidious weeds of pastures that were once productive, it is indeed a major problem that requires greater attention from Congress.

Mr. HEFLEY. I would like to thank Senator Craig and all of our witnesses for being here today. I look forward to your suggestions on how the Federal Government might be a more effective player in the fight against these unwanted pests. I now turn to our Ranking Member, Mrs. Christensen.

[The prepared staement of Chairman Hefley follows:]

Statement of The Honorable Joel Hefley, Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands

Good morning and welcome to the hearing today. This morning, the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands will hear testimony on H.R. 1462.

This important legislation, which I introduced, represents my attempt to assist thousands of increasingly desperate ranchers, farmers, and Federal land managers throughout the country who have been, and continue to be, under siege from noxious, non-native weeds. The goal of H.R. 1462 is clear - get the money directly to the folks at the local level who are on the front lines combating these weeds. I think it is clear from reading the testimony of today's witnesses that this is a major problem, and one that requires vigilance and a comprehensive approach from all levels of government.

To illustrate the seriousness of this national weed epidemic, I need only to turn to some of our witnesses testimony. According to Dr. Tate's testimony, invasive plant species are estimated to cause more than $20 BILLION per year in economic damage and affect millions of acres of private and public land - though other estimates put it as high as $130 billion annually. Moreover, according to Dr. Riley's testimony, some exotic weed populations increase about 14% per year and left unchecked, can easily over take the land and displace native plant populations rendering the land useless for ranchers and farmers.

Specifically, H.R. 1462 would require the Secretary of Interior to establish a grant program to provide assistance through States to eligible weed management entities to control or eradicate harmful, nonnative weeds on public and private land.

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I would like to thank Senator Craig and all of our witnesses for being here today. I look forward to your suggestions on how the Federal Government might be a more effective player in the fight against these unwanted pests.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DONNA CHRISTENSEN, A DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to welcome our panelists and extend a special welcome to Senator Craig, who is with us here this morning. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your interest in invasive species, as evidenced by the introduction of H.R. 1462, the Harmful, Non-Native Weed Control Act of 2001.

Invasive species, which include non-native weeds, are a serious and growing problem in the United States. I do not believe there

is an area of the country that has not had some problem with invasive species. They have caused problems in the Virgin Islands and I am sure many other members could tell stories, as well. In fact, with several Committee members, invasive species are an extremely serious environmental issue in their districts. Much of the testimony that has been provided for today's hearing outlines a number of concerns and problems with H.R. 1462.

I am also aware that other legislative proposals dealing with invasive species are being developed. However, it is my hope that today's hearing and other work being done on invasive species will provide us with a sound foundation on which to address this issue of invasive species on a consensus basis. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the presence of all of our witnesses here today, and I look forward to their testimony on this important issue. Thank you.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much, and, Senator Craig, welcome home. We are glad to have you back, and after the activities of the Senate in recent times, this must seem like a respite to you, to come back to your roots. We appreciate your being here and we will turn the time over to you.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LARRY CRAIG, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF IDAHO

Senator CRAIG. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Let me also thank Congresswoman Christensen. It is great to see Congressman Kildee again. It is always important that I be here to support my congressmen, and I appreciate them being here this morning, both Congressman Simpson and Congressman Otter. They, too, understand, as I think as you do, Mr. Chairman, the kind of situation that we have as it relates to weeds and our public lands.

Earlier this year, I was joined by several colleagues in the Senate in introducing the Harmful, Non-Native Weeds Control Act of 2001. This legislation is similar to your legislation, H.R. 1462. Ours is S 198. I have enjoyed working with you, Mr. Chairman and your staff, on this issue, and I look forward to working with you on others. We worked successfully together last year in the passage of S 910, which I called A Stop The Weeds At The Border Law, and now, of course, we are going inside to look at how we manage the problem.

I have stood before Congress for the past 3 years, pushing legislation and speaking out on the noxious weed issue. I know some members, at least on my side, are growing tired of hearing about the issue, Mr. Chairman. As westerners, we have seen firsthand the destruction caused when non-native weeds are not treated and are left to take over native species. Because of this, we understand the need for the Federal Government to be a partner in addressing this problem.

Non-Native weeds are a very serious problem on both public and private lands across the nation. They are particularly troublesome in the West, where much of our land is entrusted to the management of the Federal Government. Like a slow burning wildfire, in my opinion, noxious weeds take land out of production, force native species off the land, and interrupt the commerce and the activity

of all those who rely on the land for their livelihood. You have mentioned farmers and ranchers and recreationalists and others.

Non-Native weeds threatened fully two-thirds of all of the endangered species, and are now considered by some experts to be second in importance to the threat to biodiversity on our public lands. In some areas, Spotted Knapweed grows so thick that big game, like deer, simply cannot move through it and cannot use that area for foraging purposes. Noxious weeds also increase soil erosion and prevent recreationalists from accessing the land that is infested with these kinds of weeds.

Because of these problems, I am committed to stopping the spread of non-native weeds. For the last few years, I have worked with the State of Idaho in finding funding for the Idaho Strategic Plan for the Managing of Noxious Weeds. This program has been very successful in Idaho, and was the basis for the Harmful, Non-Native Weeds Control Act. Let me tell you briefly how the program works in Idaho. The Department of Agriculture in Idaho administers the Strategic Plan for Managing Noxious Weeds through a collaborative effort involving private landowners, State and Federal land managers, State and local governmental entities, and other interested parties.

Cooperative weed management areas are the centerpiece of the strategic plan. Cooperative weed management areas cross jurisdictional boundaries and to bring together all of the landowners, land managers and interested parties to identify and prioritize noxious weeds in a strategy within the cooperative management, weed management area, in a collaborative manner.

The primary responsibility for the State Department of Agriculture is to provide the coordinated administrative support, facilitation and project cost share funding for these collaborative efforts. Idaho already has a record of working in a collaborative way on this issue. The Harmful, Non-Native Weeds Control Act will build on the progress that we have made in Idaho and other States, and establish the same formula for success in States who wish to use it.

This is how the program works in Idaho. Other States have programs that are not exactly the same as Idaho's, but equally effective. When developing this legislation, we wanted to create a Federal program that worked with existing State weed control programs, created incentives for more States to develop weed control plans, and to foster greater community collaborative processes in identifying this problem. I think we have achieved just that. The Harmful, Non-Native Weeds Control Act provides a mechanism to get funding to the local level, where weeds can be fought in a cooperative way and a collaborative way with all of the different entities involved.

Noxious weeds do not recognize property boundaries. Mr. Chairman, as you know, in the West over the last several decades, property boundaries were the problem. We had come to a point where we were not managing the weeds on public lands, and literally, they had taken off like the wildfires I had referenced. So those on private lands adjacent to the public lands found themselves in almost a defenseless posture. They could treat their lands and treat

their weeds, only to have them immediately affected again by the movement of a bird or the movement of wind.

So, to win the war on weeds, clearly all parties have to be involved, private, State and Federal. Counties have had weed control programs in most States for the last good number of years, and yet, struggle as they might, they simply have lost the battle and the weeds really have become the dominant force. As a result of that, Idaho looked toward building this cooperative, collaborative model, and in so doing it, they have found that it works. I have worked over the last good number of years to help them fund it and to sensitize the Forest Service and the BLM and other Federal land management agencies to their responsibility.

Now, by creating a new template of the kind that you are proposing in your legislation and we are proposing in ours, we bring all of these entities together under the law without wiping out State authority, but in fact, incorporating State authority and giving them a primary responsibility and role in working with our Federal agencies. I think this is a model that can work. It is supported across the Nation by most all who are involved in the battle against non-native species of weeds, and we will work with you to make this happen.

We appreciate the hearing you are holding. We would hope that you could expedite, as we will try to do in the Senate. This is an issue that really does deserve some Federal direction and some Federal responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Craig follows:]

Statement of the Honorable Larry E. Craig, a United States Senator from the State of Idaho

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today to raise awareness on the issue of invasive weeds and to discuss a solution we are both working on. Earlier this year I was joined by several colleagues in the Senate in introducing Harmful Non–Native Weed Control Act of 2001, legislation similar to your bill. I have enjoyed working with you and your staff on the Harmful Non–Native Weed Control Act and I look forward to working together to pass this legislation into law.

I have stood before Congress for the past three years pushing legislation and speaking on the issue of noxious weeds. I know some members tire of hearing me bring up this issue, but Mr.. Chairman, as Westerners, we have seen first hand the destruction caused when non-native weeds are not treated and are left to over take native species. Because of this we understand the need for the Federal government to be a partner in addressing this problem.

Non-native weeds are a serious problem on both public and private lands across the nation. They are particularly troublesome in the West where much of our land is entrusted to the management of the federal government. Like a "slow burning wildfire," noxious weeds take land out of production, force native species off the land, and interrupt the commerce and activities of all those who rely on the land for their livelihoods—including farmers, ranchers, recreationists, and others.

Non-native weeds threaten fully two-thirds of all endangered species and are now considered by some experts to be the second most important threat to bio-diversity. In some areas, spotted knapweed grows so thick that big game like deer will move out of the area to find edible plants. Noxious weeds also increase soil erosion, and prevent recreationists from accessing land that is infested with poisonous plants.

Because of these problems I am committed to stopping the spread of non-native weeds. For the last few years, I have worked with the State of Idaho to find funding for the Idaho Strategic Plan for Managing Noxious Weeds. This program has been very successful in Idaho and was tile basis for the Harmful Non–Native Weed Control Act.

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Weed Management Areas are the centerpiece of the strategic plan. Cooperative Weed Management Areas cross jurisdictional boundaries to bring together all landowners, land managers, and interested parties to identify and prioritize noxious weed strategies within the Cooperative Weed Management Areas in a collaborative manner. The primary responsibilities of the State Department of Agriculture are to provide coordination, administrative support, facilitation, and project cost-share funding for this collaborative effort. Idaho already has a record of working in a collaborative way on this issue—The Harmful Non–Native Weed Control Act will build on the progress we have had in Idaho and other states, and establish the same formula for success in other states.

This is how the program works in Idaho. Other states have programs that are not exactly the same as Idaho's, but equally effective. When developing this legislation we wanted to create a federal program that worked with existing state weed control plans, created incentive for more status to develop weed control plans, and fostered greater community collaboration to address this problem. I think we have achieved just that. The Harmful Non–Native Weed Control Act provides a mechanism to get funding to the local level where weeds can be fought in a collaborative way.

Noxious weeds do not recognize property boundaries, so if we want to win this war on weeds, we must be fighting at the federal, state, local, and individual levels. The Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act is an important step to ensure we are diligent in stopping the spread of these weeds. If we work together at all levels of government and throughout our communities, we can protect our land, livelihood, and environment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today, and as I said before, I look forward to working with you to pass this legislation into law.

Mr. HEFLEY. Larry, thank you and you have really been the leader in this. We thank you for your diligence, your leadership, the way you have tenaciously stayed after this issue. It is a serious issue. We know it in the West but it is also a serious issue in the East, as well, and I think we are on to the right approach. I appreciate your efforts and appreciate your being here this morning.

Mrs. Christensen?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I do not have any questions of the Senator.

Mr. HEFLEY. Any questions for the Senator?

Mr. SOUDER. Senator, I am from the Midwest, Indiana, where we have very few public lands, and yet every spring when we watch the television news it seems like there is a war going on because it seems like there are 20 different kinds of weed killers every commercial break, trying to get it for the farmers and their soybeans and corn and other types of things.

For those who are using public land for ranching or for other agricultural reasons; are they allowed to do any attacking of the weeds themselves and are they participants in the program?

Senator CRAIG. In many instances, they are not. The reason they are not is we have largely had a ban on the use of herbicides on public lands for the last good number of years, some for justifiable reasons because of the residual effect, others largely with no basis. It had just become the policy of the Forest Service and the BLM. A lot of experiments have been tried. There are biological efforts underway now that are working in some instances that we ought to incorporate, along with now some certified and licensed herbicides that can be effectively used, but the program really broke down over the last 20 years.

There was a period of time when I would suggest that almost every Federal land management agency had no program, and weeds were allowed, literally, to run rampant. When you have these adjacent private lands or State lands, they become instantly

infected. We have seen massive spread of weeds, literally, tens of thousands of acres of public land in Idaho are now dominated by non-native weed species today, that have turned those lands into totally nonproductive areas for any purpose, including wildlife or environmental reasons.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. HEFLEY. Yes?

Mr. OTTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your leadership on this issue. Larry, in Idaho, we obviously have the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture with the Forest Service, but I am also aware that we have got a lot of other departments, like the Department of Energy, the Department of Defense, the Corps of Engineers, the EPA and U.S. Fish and Wildlife that all have management responsibilities over some public lands or some element of the public lands. Are we addressing those folks, as well? So, the entire 35 million acres in Idaho, of Federal land, the noxious weed problem, is going to come under control of the Secretary of Interior; is that right?

Senator CRAIG. Well, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture in Idaho. The strategic plan, Congressman Otter, that Idaho created over the last several years, and you were there as Lieutenant Governor and there is a former Speaker of the House who deserve credit for this, really looks at a targeted area and says who are the landlords? They all become involved. It is not just for the Forest Service and BLM. They are the dominant landowners in Idaho, but you are right. We have other large Federal establishments, like the INEEL, DOE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and all of those—all of those become a part of the total plan, as you break out and devise these strategic areas.

Then, through a collaborative effort, you coordinate the resources. You identify the problems—in this case, the weeds—and you begin to coordinate the resources to bring that together. That way, you can develop a variety of things, and we offer flexibility within the law to develop cost sharings, all of those types of things. Maybe DOE does not have a division within them that can actually go out and control the weeds through whatever method. They could partnership with Bonneville County, and the county weed control authority would then gain access to, under a devised plan, the properties of DOE for the purposes of weed management. Those boundaries get broken down through this legislation by the development of the strategic plan or some cooperative mechanism in a collaborative way, if other States have other mechanisms that seemed to be working.

Mr. OTTER. All other lands in Idaho, Senator, as you well know and I have experienced myself, are under the county. The county, if they notice a noxious weed population on my property, they come in and spray it, then they put a lien against my property until I pay the bill. It is like a tax lien. My question would be is this going to authorize the State to do that? Is this going to authorize the counties to demand some action against noxious weeds on Federal land?

Senator CRAIG. It does not, not in that authority, because the State does not, nor does the county, have that authority at this time. My guess is we are not going to get a Congress to grant that

authority to State or local governments over the Federal Government. What I am hoping, and what is working now in Idaho, is the idea of bringing them all together. We have progressed a long way in the last decade as to understanding the problem, and most importantly, how you apply the chemical or the biologic agent, and/or in some instances, I would suggest that in certain areas, the business of raising goats will become a profitable business. We literately have goat herding going on now in these large weed areas, that goats can consume and control weeds, because of their particular appetites. I have been out watching them and found it very interesting. We have Navajo tribespeople up in Idaho with their goat herds on some experimental plots down in Bennett County, and we are getting some results on Knapweed and Leafy Spurge.

Mr. OTTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. HEFLEY. The other gentlemen from Idaho?

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Chairman, I do not have a question. I just wanted to thank Senator Craig for his leadership on this issue. In Idaho, he is known as the Weed Eater. He has been very active and really has been the leader in this area. It is a very severe problem in Idaho. Just to demonstrate, one of the problems is that last year, when forest fires ravaged something like 1.2 million acres in Idaho, I spent a couple days up there toward the end of—I guess they burned for 3 months or 4 months or something like that—one of the forest rangers had come back from on of the areas where the fire had started and it cooled down and stuff. He had been out there examining it, and he said, "There is good news and there is bad news." I said, "What is that?" He said, "Well, it is cool there now and it is starting to green up." I said, "That's good." He said, "Yes, the bad news is it is weeds, and they come back faster than the native species in those areas."

We have a real problem when we have forest fires in those areas, trying to control the weeds, particularly if they are in wilderness areas and so forth. So we have got a problem, not only on the public lands we all have access to, but getting weeds controlled in the wilderness areas is becoming more and more of a problem than it has in the past, but I thank the Senator for his leadership on this.

Senator CRAIG. Well, the congressman makes an extremely valuable point. Last year in our country we lost more acres to wildfire, both forested and non-forested acres, than ever in our history, I believe nearly 6 million. In most instances, weeds will replace the native species that were on those acres. Now, sometimes native species come back and ultimately, if they are the dominant species, they will knock out the weeds, but some of the weeds we now have become the dominant species and you totally change the landscape and the ecosystems of those fire areas.

It is absolutely true in our State of Idaho—we lost one million acres last year or more. We could well do that again this year. As you know, there is a fire burning out of control in California as we speak, right on the breaks between California and Nevada. That land ought to be covered with snow still today, but because of the drought in the Great Basin Region of the West, we are going to lose millions of acres again to fire this year probably. We will hope not.

The tragedy is exactly what the Congressman has just said. The weeds beat the native species back and they become the dominant

species in those fire zones, and that is something that we have really not controlled very well. In some instances, in timbered areas, they are so dominant, they will actually choke out the recovery of trees.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you, Senator, for coming over. You are so convincing that there is not a raft of questions. I am sure, with your testimony, this will move very well. We appreciate you being here.

Senator CRAIG. Well, Joel, it is good to see you again and thank you all very much for your time.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Kildee?

Mr. KILDEE. I just briefly wanted to welcome Larry back over here. He and I have worked together on many issues before and I look forward to working together with you on this issue.

Senator CRAIG. Dale, thank you. It is good to see you.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much. The second panel will be composed of Dr. Jim Tate, Science Advisor to Secretary of Interior; and Michael Raines, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture. Dr. Tate will be accompanied by Gina Ramos, Senior Weed Specialist, Bureau of Land Management; Gary Johnston, Invasive Species Specialist, National Park Service and Michael Ielmini, Refuge Program Specialist, the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dr. Tate, we would ask that you, if you would, keep your testimony to around 5 minutes. You will see the little lights there in front of you. Then we will have an opportunity for questions.

Dr. Tate?

STATEMENT OF JIM TATE, SCIENCE ADVISOR TO THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. TATE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I am Jim Tate, Science Advisor to Interior Secretary Gail Norton, and on behalf of the Secretary, we want to thank you for bringing attention to this very important problem. As you stated, this is one that is costing our Nation more than $20 billion per year. In addition, we have looked at the study by David Pimatell, et al; and he looks at invasive species costs in general, not just the plants, and comes up with a figure of $130.2 billion per year, introduced weeds in agriculture being $13 billion. With your permission, I would like to share this chart that Dr. Pimatell has provided.

Mr. HEFLEY. Without objection.

Mr. TATE. Thank you. Three bureaus in our Department of Interior are most affected by H.R. 1462; the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management. At your invitation, that is why I am accompanied today by Gina Ramos, Mike Ielmini, and Gary Johnston. Secretary Norton has stated, very early in the time she has been here, her support for the concept of Federal agencies as partners in developing coordinated efforts to manage invasive species. She wants to be inclusive; States, tribes, private landowners.

Foremost among our efforts is the National Invasive Species Council, co-chaired by Interior, Agriculture, Commerce. The council

provides Federal coordination in invasive species issues and encourages partnership efforts to control invasive species. The council, we think, can also help to ensure a coordinated Federal, State, tribal approach. In the next couple of minutes, I want to leave you with one message above all others. We are eager to work with you on any of the issues that are before you today.

I would like to just summarize very quickly selected portions of the written testimony. We note that some States, especially in the West, have existing infrastructures that are likely under your bill to qualify as weed management entities, but other States have not yet established such infrastructure. Since invasive species cross State boundaries and there are many existing regional weed management programs, we recommend a multistate inclusion—those efforts that are multistate to be included. We encourage you to consider extending the bill to include other kinds of weeds, namely the submerged and floating aquatic weeds and animal pests, weeds in their assets.

We recommend the bill allow for funding that maximizes the flexibility to States, tribes, and local entities. We want to bring your attention today to some of the ongoing, highly successful partnership efforts, the prime example is the Pulling Together initiative. Pulling Together is a partnership between Federal agencies and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Since 1997, through cost-sharing efforts, the partners have supported more than 175 weed management projects in 32 States and one territory. Each project in Pulling Together requires a one-to-one match of non-Federal funds. To date, $5 million in Federal dollars have been matched with almost $10 million in non-Federal dollars under this program. We recommend that language be included in the bill to clarify how this legislation would relate to existing Federal initiatives, like Pulling Together.

On another note, we note that the bill creates a new advisory Committee within the department to oversee the allocation of funds to States and tribes. We believe that this need is already covered through the Invasive Species Advisory Committee, which already exists to provide advice to the National Invasive Species Council, in accordance with Executive Order 13112. It is administered by the Department of Interior. We recommend the existing advisory Committee be used to make recommendations to the secretaries for the allocations of funds to States and tribes, rather than establishing a new advisory Committee.

We recommend H.R. 1462 include an authorization of appropriations section to help these funds, specifically now, the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife, and BLM. The Park Service's Five-year Natural Resource Challenge Program identified non-native species as a significant component of the threat to our heritage on national park units. That is 80 million acres of U.S. land under Park Service control. They have established a new management strategy—teams, called Exotic Plant Management Teams. Four of these teams were fielded to identify, treat, control, restore and monitor park areas that were invested with exotic plants.

The four teams that exist serve 38 regionally grouped parks, not 41, as in our testimony. I am sorry. The success of these derives from their ability to adapt to local conditions, something is dif-

ferent in Florida than it is in the D.C. area and so forth. The President's budget for Fiscal Year 2002 includes a funding request for six more of these teams. This will raise the Park Service's capacity to control invasive plants at 152 parks or 40 percent of our parks in the lower 48.

The Park Service has specifically asked if we could consider a definitions section of terms used in the bill, just for consistency's sake among the various terms used by the various agencies already working with these things.

Moving on to the Fish and Wildlife Service, over 6 million acres of National Wildlife Refuge System are infested with exotic plants alone. So, there are critical wildlife management objectives on over 50 percent of all of our refuges. The refuge system is identified over 300 projects and an estimated cost of $120 million just for invasive species. The refuge system already works with private landowners to help restore degraded fish and wildlife habitats on properties adjacent to and within our refuges. In the case of the Fish and Wildlife Service, it is especially important that terrestrial plants and non-native animals be considered as a part of the weed problem that we have. I draw your attention especially to the nutria issue that is discussed in our testimony.

Finally, the BLM has been working with States, other Federal agencies and tribes, especially with private landowners and industries. They have numerous ongoing programs. For example, today the BLM in New Mexico will be taking part in the signing of a memorandum of understanding with tribes, State and Federal agencies to manage invasive and noxious weeds in that State.

The Department of Interior considers public education a key to winning the war on weeds. BLM's Partners Against Weeds strategy focuses on education and outreach. We note that the bill encourages weed management entities solely for education. We believe education is an important part of the invasive species program and one that is covered at the Department of Interior and in the council. Using the existing authorization would release other dollars to reach management entities outside of the Federal Government. BLM manages over 264 million acres of public lands, and their cooperative weed management program has been established in those areas.

One item not mentioned in our testimony is we support the comment of the USDA, that documentation and monitoring should be addressed, both within and outside of NEPA compliance. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. We certainly applaud the bill's recognition of partnership as keys to success, and this concludes my prepared remarks and I am happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Tate follows:]

Statement of Dr. James Tate, Jr., Science Advisor, U.S. Department of the Interior, on H.R. 1462

Mr. Chairman, my name is Jim Tate, and I am the Science Advisor at the Department of the Interior. I am accompanied today by Gina Ramos, Senior Weed Specialist, Bureau of Land Management; Michael Lelmini, Refuge Program Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Gary Johnston, Invasive Species Specialist, National Park Service. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before your Committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1462, the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001.

The Department commends Congress for bringing attention to this important issue that has significant impacts on both public and private landowners and managers across the country. Invasive plant species are estimated to cause more than $20 billion per year in economic damage and affect millions of acres of private and public lands. We concur with the basic principles embodied in the legislation; specifically, the recognition that a concerted and coordinated effort by the public and private sectors with requisite accountability is critical to the successful prevention, control, and management of invasive species. However, we need to identify more clearly the possible costs of this proposal and how it would be funded within the context of a balanced budget. We view this legislation as an important step toward greater engagement between Federal and non–Federal partners to counter the harmful impacts of invasive species.

The Department has identified three primary areas of concern with H.R. 1462 where textual changes could clarify the intent of the bill. I will outline these areas of concern briefly in this statement. This statement also addresses certain concerns that are specific to the three bureaus affected by H.R. 1462, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. In addition, we are advised by the Department of Justice that language contained in Section 9(a) of the bill requiring the consent of property owners may be problematic as it pertains to weed management activities on Indian lands, especially when such lands are held in trust for multiple beneficiaries, thereby making the process of obtaining consent extremely burdensome. We are eager to work with the Committee to develop amendatory language to address these concerns. We also hope the bill will include Federal agencies as partners in developing these coordinated efforts to manage invasive species. The National Invasive Species Council, which is co-chaired by the Departments of the Interior, Commerce and Agriculture, provides Federal coordination on invasive species issues, including invasive plants, and encourages partnership efforts to prevent and control invasive species. The Council can provide assistance with efforts to ensure a coordinated Federal/State approach. Finally, this statement will also touch upon the bureaus' programs in the areas of invasive species prevention, management, and eradication.

The first area of concern is the scope of the bill: what is covered by and excluded from the bill, both in terms of geography and the types of activities that are eligible for funding. Although the bill technically applies to the entire nation, we think it would be difficult for most of the eastern and southeastern states to compete with western states that have existing infrastructures that are likely to qualify as "weed management entities." Also, since invasive species cross state boundaries and there are many existing regional weed management programs, the exclusion of multi-state efforts in the bill could eliminate flexibility and hamper comprehensive control and management programs.

In addition to our concerns about the bill's scope, its prohibition on funding for control of submerged or floating aquatic noxious weeds and animal pests, operates against efforts to initiate a comprehensive approach to this growing threat. This prohibition could have a dampening effect on key coastal states with substantial aquatic invasive species, discouraging them from participating in the program. Feral pigs in Hawaii provide an example of an excluded animal pest. The National Park Service wanted to remove invasive plant species in national parks in Hawaii, but the pigs were serving as a mechanism for distributing the seeds of some of the invasive plants and disturbing the soil. Without removal of the pigs, any program to remove invasive plant species would fail. We recommend that the bill allow for funding that maximizes flexibility to the States, Tribes, and local entities to control invasive species.

There are many ongoing, highly successful partnership efforts between the public and private sectors to control invasive species. One example is the "Pulling Together Initiative," a partnership between Federal agencies and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Since 1997, through cost-sharing efforts, the partners have supported more than 175 weed management projects in 33 states and one territory. The purpose of the "Pulling Together Initiative" is to encourage the development of weed management areas, similar to the intent of this legislation. These projects bring together many stakeholders—Federal, State, Tribal, private, and non-governmental organizations—to coordinate management of weeds based on an integrated pest management approach. Each project funded through "Pulling Together" must have a minimum 1 to 1 match of non–Federal funds or in-kind contributions for every dollar of Federal funds requested. As a result, $5 million in Federal dollars have been matched with almost $10 million in non–Federal contributions. We recommend that language be included in this bill that would clarify how this legislation would relate to existing Federal initiatives so that significant, well-established, Federal-private partnership efforts will continue and flourish.

The second area of concern relates to the process established by the legislation and whether it provides for sufficient accountability, consultation, and coordination with Federal efforts and quality assurances. The bill creates a new advisory committee within the Department to oversee the allocation of funds to States and Tribes. Currently, the Invasive Species Advisory Committee already exists to provide advice to the National Invasive Species Council in accordance with Executive Order 13112, and is administered by the Department of the Interior. The Committee consists of members with similar expertise and representing many of the same interests in invasive species that are called for in H.R. 1462. We recommend that the existing advisory committee be used to make recommendations to the Secretary for the allocation of funds to States and Tribes, rather than establishing a new advisory committee.

While there is a reporting requirement for local weed management entities in H.R. 1462, the scope of the reporting requirement is unclear, as is how the results relate to the selection and renewal process. There is little specific guidance in the bill on how funds would be allocated to States and Tribes, or how they, in turn, are to allocate the funds to weed management entities. In addition, it is unclear whether these funds can be allocated to Federal agencies for coordination activities at the State and local levels. We recommend that language be added to the bill that establishes requirements for a standard reporting and review system that would ensure accountability and improve coordination and information exchange among Federal agencies, States and Tribes. We also recommend the bill be amended to specify which State agencies have the responsibility for allocating funds to weed management entities so it is consistent from state to state.

Except for the allocation of funds by the Secretary to States and Tribes, H.R. 1462 contains no requirement for consultation or coordination with Federal agencies. Given that invasive species cover Federal as well as State, Tribal, and private lands, we recommend that language be included that would require weed management entities to coordinate and consult with Federal agencies to promote comprehensive invasive species programs across all affected lands. This targeting, based upon existing capacity and resources, will help concentrate efforts to make a significant improvement in overall land health.

Our third area of concern surrounds the budgetary implications of the legislation and whether funding for this legislation would come at the expense of Federal control efforts and existing programs that provide matching funds for weed control. This program could involve significant new funding obligations that are not now assumed in the President's Budget. It is unclear how much funding is needed or how it will be paid for. Because this bill does not include an authorization of appropriations section that would provide a separate authorization of funds, we are concerned that there would be no authorization limit on funds or any assurance that this program would not impact existing agency and multi-agency programs (such as the "Pulling Together Initiative") that support local and regional weed prevention and control projects.

Finally, as our experiences have shown, having a matching funds requirement is critical to the success of these projects because it ensures that the Federal funds available are used for projects that have strong support and financial backing at the regional, State or local levels. We are concerned that H.R. 1462 might undermine that success by allowing the Governor of any State to change the percentage of the match required. Additionally, except in the case of Tribes, we are also concerned about allowing States to count Federal funds from other sources outside this legislation as a weed management entity's non–Federal match. It is important for Federal funds to be used to leverage non–Federal funds to maximize the impact of Federal monies available for invasive species control programs.

The following are bureau-specific comments concerning H.R. 1462 and the bureaus' ongoing programs:

National Park Service

The principles of coordination, targeted funding, and accountability are fundamental aspects of the nonnative invasive species management strategy pursued under the National Park Service's five-year Natural Resource Challenge program. In Fiscal Year 2000, the National Park Service (NPS) identified nonnative invasive species as a significant component of the threat to the natural and cultural heritage preserved in national park units across the country covering over 80 million acres of land.

As part of the Natural Resource Challenge, a new management strategy for controlling harmful nonnative invasive plants was implemented, called the Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT). Four teams were fielded to identify, treat, control, restore, and monitor areas of parks that were infested with harmful exotic plants. The

four teams serve 41 parks, comprising 11% of national park units, in the Chihuahuan Desert–Shortgrass Prairie, Florida, Hawaii, and the National Capital Region. The success of each EPMT derives from its ability to adapt to local conditions and needs. Each team sets work priorities based on a number of factors including: severity of threat to high-quality natural areas and rare species; extent of targeted infestation; probability of successful control and potential for restoration; and opportunities for public involvement. In addition, the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2002 includes a funding request for six additional EPMTs. Funding of these teams will raise our capacity to control invasive plants at 152 parks or approximately 40% of the parks in the lower forty-eight states. The NPS hopes that H.R.1462 will improve the team's work in our park units by increasing collaborative efforts between public and private adjacent landowners.

The EPMT of Florida provides an excellent illustration of the effectiveness of local partnerships. The Florida EPMT formed a partnership with the Upland Invasive Plant Management Program of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and approximately 136 other groups in the program to control invasive plants. Together they fund removal of exotic species in 11 units of the National Park System in Florida with the State of Florida matching the NPS contribution dollar for dollar.

The NPS has many successful public and private partners in its efforts to control and manage invasive species, including tribal governments. The NPS recommends that H.R. 1462 clearly state that Tribal governments are to be included in all definitions of local stakeholders and weed management entities, and that they should be included in all sections of the bill relating to coordinated actions and distribution of financial assistance. Tribes should also be able to participate outside their own reservations when they belong to a larger weed management entity, without their funding being restricted. The NPS recognizes that effective management of invasive plants must be conducted on a coordinated basis involving all stakeholders. However, the authority for Interior agencies, including NPS, to work with cooperating land managers outside the Interior agencies' boundaries is not clear. We recommend that language be included in H.R. 1462 that would provide the Federal agencies greater flexibility in managing invasive plants in concert with willing adjoining landowners where Federal lands are threatened by invasions from adjoining lands.

The NPS is concerned about the lack of definitions for many of the terms used in the bill. Without terms being clearly defined, their use in the legislation may lead to confusion or disagreements over terminology. We note also that the bill as currently drafted permits the establishment of a weed management entity solely for the purpose of education. We believe that education, while an important part of any weed management entity's role, should not be it's only objective. Moreover, the NPS believes that substantial gains can be made through an education campaign at the national level so that individuals can learn about what efforts they can undertake to address this problem. We look forward to working with the Committee to address these and other issues.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Invasive species are one of the leading threats to fish and wildlife, with potential to degrade entire ecosystems. The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is working to develop and implement aggressive programs to enhance its capability and leadership to respond effectively to present and future invasive species problems. The Service works in cooperation with private groups, State agencies, other Federal agencies, and other countries to combat invasive plant and animal species. National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) from Alaska to the Caribbean are affected by this problem. Based on national interagency estimates, over 6 million acres of the National Wildlife Refuge System are infested with exotic plants alone, interfering with crucial wildlife management objectives on over 50% of all refuges. Refuge field managers have identified invasive species problems as one of the most serious threats affecting the Refuge System. Nationwide, the rate of spread of invasive plants is estimated to be 5,400 acres per year. The Refuge System has identified over 300 projects with an estimated cost of $120 million to combat invasive species.

Among the most insidious plant invaders to fish and wildlife resources are salt cedar, leafy spurge, whitetop, exotic thistles, Brazilian pepper, purple loosestrife, Australian pine, Chinese tallow trees, old world climbing fern, and melaleuca. At Loxahatchee Refuge in Florida's Everglades, for example, the exotic melaleuca tree and the Old World climbing fern have infested thousands of acres of the refuge, outcompeting native vegetation and effectively eliminating wildlife-dependent habitat. Sevilleta and Bosque del Apache NWRs in New Mexico continually invest large amounts of time and operational funds in eradication efforts on the salt cedar. Salt cedar disrupts the structure and stability of native plant communities, crowding out native plant species, altering existing water regimes, and increasing soil salinity.

In addition, the Refuge System works with private landowners to help them restore degraded fish and wildlife habitats on their property, which includes the control of invasive plants. Through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, which provides financial and technical assistance, the Service helps landowners benefit from improved productivity of their lands by minimizing the spread of invasive species and improving habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species. Activities included prescribed burning, integrated pest management techniques, physical removal, fence construction, and restoration of native plant communities.

Unfortunately, the invasive species negatively affecting fish and wildlife resources are not solely contained within terrestrial plant taxa. Many refuges have significant wetland components, making aquatic invasive species, such as phragmites, a serious threat to these ecosystems. Service programs support activities to prevent and control highly invasive plants and animal species such as zebra mussels, giant salvinia, Caulerpa taxifolia, Chinese mitten crabs, round gobies, Norway rats, Asian carp, nutria, Asian swamp eels, feral goats and pigs.

Nutria are an exotic invasive rodent, native to South America, that have been introduced in 22 states nationwide, and affect over 1,000,000 acres of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Among areas with high nutria populations is the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, including Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Blackwater has lost over 7,000 acres of marsh since 1933, and the rate of marsh loss has accelerated in recent years to approximately 200 acres per year. Although there are many contributing factors (e.g., sea level rise, land subsidence), nutria are a catalyst of marsh loss due to their habit of foraging on the below-ground portions of marsh plants. This activity compromises the integrity of the marsh root mat, facilitating erosion and leading to permanent marsh loss. In light of the damage caused by nutria, the Service and 22 other Federal, State, and private partners joined forces in 1997 to identify appropriate methods for controlling nutria and restoring degraded marsh habitat. The Partnership prepared a 3-year pilot program proposal, which was subsequently approved by Congress, including authorization for the Secretary of the Interior to spend up to $2.9 million over 3 years beginning in Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 105–322).

The number of invasive species threats to fish and wildlife resources continues to increase dramatically. As noted earlier, we recommend that H.R. 1462 be amended to increase its scope of coverage to include not only invasive terrestrial plant species, but aquatic plants as well. We would also recommend that certain invasive animal species be included.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recognizes the need for expanding on-the-ground efforts at controlling noxious weeds. Since the completion of the BLM's "Partners Agains" Weeds@ Strategy Plan, the BLM has followed the plan's recommendation of expanding cooperative partnerships. We can attribute much of the BLM's success in managing invasive species through cooperative partnerships with Federal, State, and local government agencies, private landowners, and industries. As noted earlier, we have concerns about the need to expand the scope of H.R. 1462 to permit weed management efforts that cross state lines. The BLM has numerous ongoing cooperative management relationships in this area and amending the bill to permit cross-jurisdictional efforts would foster further development of these relationships.

The BLM considers public education the key to winning the war on weeds. Accordingly, our Partners Against Weeds Strategy focuses on education and outreach. BLM personnel have given over 200 weed slide presentations, prepared videos, produced flyers and classroom projects, and conducted numerous public weed field trips. The BLM has also developed a Weed Awareness Course that is given to each BLM employee. In Grand Junction, Colorado, for example, the Field Office Weed Coordinator has held classes for public land users at which all of the major grazing permittees in that field office have attended. Ranchers are now reporting new weed infestations and cooperating to help control them on private and BLM lands.

As the awareness of invasive plants and their impacts accelerates, our efforts with the public also increase. Today, for example, the BLM in New Mexico will be taking part in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Tribes, and State and Federal agencies to manage invasive and noxious weeds.

Recently, the creation of new Cooperative Weed Management Areas has risen significantly. Because the BLM manages over 264 million acres of public lands, cooperative weed management efforts are essential, primarily in those areas where public lands are intermingled with State, private, and other Federally-managed lands. Today more than ninety percent of the Federal, State and private lands in Idaho and California are part of cooperative weed management areas. For example, in Fis-

cal Year 2000 the BLM treated 291,000 acres and is involved in over 30 weed management areas. That figure is expected to rise annually.

In Fiscal Year 2001, the BLM received $8.9 million for weed management, a majority of which went to the BLM offices for on-the-ground weed efforts including inventory, weed treatments, and monitoring. In states with smaller amounts of infested acreage, the BLM focuses funding on efforts to provide states with the capability to detect small weed infestations in high-risk areas and to treat small infestations before they spread. The BLM is also dedicating funding to states with larger infestations, focusing efforts on areas not previously inventoried, but at risk. In addition, in Fiscal Year 2001, the BLM provided nearly $469,000 for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together Initiative for comprehensive, on-the-ground weed management, treatment, prevention and control efforts. We are concerned that, as currently drafted, H.R. 1462 could impact BLM's future efforts to fund this successful, ongoing program.

Conclusion

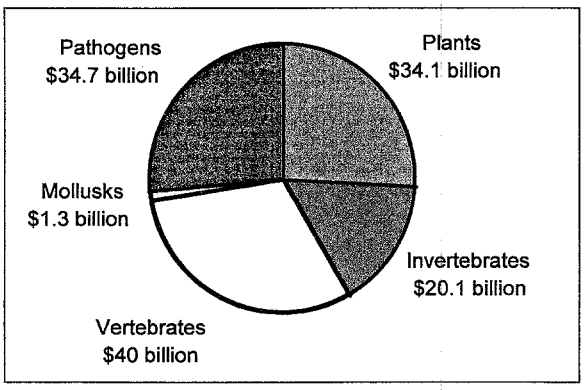
We appreciate the opportunity to appear before this Committee to discuss the issue of invasive species and we wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your efforts to address this issue through your sponsorship of H.R. 1462. We welcome this legislation as a symbol of future commitment to early detection and rapid response to mitigate the rampant spread of invasive plants. We, too, have recognized the need to work directly with private landowners and State and local governments. We applaud the bill's recognition of partnerships as key to success across multiple jurisdictions of natural resource management. Our goal is to ensure that the main provisions of H.R. 1462 allow for the coordination of existing Federal efforts and local control programs so that the bill serves to strengthen ongoing invasive species programs and support new partnerships and initiatives. We look forward to working with the Committee in formulating legislation that best reflects our mutual goal of assisting States, Tribes, and local entities to prevent, control, and manage nonnative invasive species while recognizing and strengthening existing partnership efforts among all stakeholders.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.

[An attachment to Dr. Tate's statement follows:]

COSTS OF INVASIVE SPECIES TO U.S. ECONOMY

- Invasive species: cost over $130.2 billion per year [1]
- Introduced weeds in agriculture: $13 billion per year [2]
- Aquatic weeds control: $100 million per year [3]
- Zebra mussel control: $200 million per year [4]
- Leafy spurge in Montana, Wyoming & the Dakotas: over $144 million per year [5]



Total: $130.2 billion. Derived from Cornell study, 2000.

[1] Pimentel et al. 2000, [2] Westbrooks 1998 for FICMNEW, [3] NOAA unpublished 1998, [4] NOAA 2001, [5] USDA 1999.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much.
Mr. Rains?

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL RAINS, DEPUTY CHIEF, STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY, FOREST SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. RAINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee. My name is Michael Rains. I work for the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture, and today I am accompanied by my partners here at the table, but also Dr. Deborah Hayes, a specialist in the subject matter. It has been said many times that non-native weeds pose an enormous economic threat, and the problem needs to be addressed in a very aggressive, systematic way. With the huge economic losses that we are faced with, it is a huge task, but I feel like we are up to it.

Fundamentally, we support the premise of the proposed legislation, but we would like to work with you and your colleagues to ensure that your efforts augment the current fine work that is already under way. Let me talk a little bit about that current work. We believe in USDA that we are probably uniquely qualified to address the non-native weed problem. We have six agencies currently that are dealing with that aspect right now.

For example, in the Forest Service, we have a wide range of existing authorities under way to help control non-native weeds on Federal, State and private lands. We have been doing that for the better part of 50 years. To answer the question of one of the congressmen on DOE and DOD lands, and Camp David lands, we also have the authority to deal with that. To be fair, our focus has been on insects and diseases in the past, and that is probably an issue of resources, but we do have the authority, and are focusing on, when we can, non-native weeds.

For example, this year in the National Fire Plan—which many of you are aware of—you have helped support it to help deal with the impact on the environments and communities due to the fires of 2000, and what we fear may be the fires of 2001. This year we put almost $25 million specifically in the West to deal with the non-native weeds. It is a big influx of cash from where we were last year. In my view, the basic elixir for the success of the program continues to remain adequate resources, continued cooperation and a wide range of tools to combat the problem, including biocontrol.

Our ARS agency in the Department of Agriculture is doing tremendous work along those lines of biocontrol. Let me talk about coordination. We have an existing National Invasive Species Council, as Dr. Tate has already mentioned, and we have various Committees and work groups under way. I think there is a strong foundation already in place to help ensure that coordination. We can always do better and with your guidance we will look for ways to do that.

The spread of non-native weeds is a national problem. We need to ensure that any legislation and current work focuses on that issue. In other words, it is not a Western or an Eastern thing. It is a national problem. Like Mr. Craig says, non-native weeds ignore boundaries. So, our work needs to be done on landscape-level issues or multistate issues. Clearly, if we begin to allocate funds,

we can do that under existing authorities to State-by-State and actually sub-State issues. To me, existing authorities will help to deal with any solution that we might be able to address.

Once again, I remind myself that the basic solution to the problem is adequate resources, continued cooperation, and adequate control methods. Let me talk a little bit about the fire plan as maybe a model. We are currently underway with the Department of Interior and every State across the country in addressing the wildfire impacts of 2000. A key tactical component of the fire plan is invasive species management, and with the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture, we will probably put in about $40 million this year, primarily in the West, to address that problem.

A similar approach, with the existing tactics and command systems, if you will—if I can talk fire for a minute, could be used to address this problem—again, adequate resources, close coordination, a wide range of tactics, like we are doing with the fire plan. We might view the non-native weed problem as a fire issue. It is exactly like that. The solution to the problem is complicated and I cannot overstress the importance of good, sound science in helping us deal with the problem. Again, although I am probably bias, I think the Department of Agriculture has a good standing in there. But I will also give nod and very strong compliments to our partners in the Department of Interior.

In summary, non-native weeds and other exotic pests threaten the health and sustainability of our productive lands, no question about it. We must address this problem in an aggressive way. Thank you for seeing the problem so clearly. Thank you for helping us solve it. The USDA is able and willing to help you and your colleagues meet this challenge. This concludes my remarks. Ms. Hayes and I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rains follows:]

Statement of Michael T. Rains, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am Michael Rains, Deputy. Chief, State and Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service. My comments today represent the views of the USDA on H.R. 1462, Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001.

First, I would like to thank the subcommittee for recognizing noxious weeds as a significant threat to our nation's ecosystem health. Non-native invasive plants alter ecosystem functions and reduce biological diversity by eliminating native plants, which in turn can lower the water table, increase soil erosion, runoff, and/or increase fire frequency and intensity. Non-native invasive plants also change the plant community used by domestic livestock, wildlife, and recreationists. These changes in the ecosystem often result in eliminating or restricting use of our wildlands and urban areas and increase the economic costs associated with these losses. We face a daunting challenge in managing non-native invasive plants, but the Department is committed to working with the Committee to identify solutions. USDA is in a strong position to address non-native invasive species because of the broad authorities supporting non-native species management: field operations for prevention, detection, control, monitoring and restoration; research and technology development; technical assistance to States, Tribes and private landowners; financial assistance including cooperative agreements and grants; and international collaboration.

USDA supports the objectives of H.R. 1462 to address the problem of invasive non-native plants. The Department supports the premise of the bill, that controlling invasive plants should be solved at the local level with support provided by a mul-

titude of partners. USDA has numerous programs and delivery systems already in place under existing statutory authorities to address non-native invasive species management. Within the Forest Service in particular, there is a full range of existing authorities to support an integrated program of research and development, technical assistance and management of invasive species on public and private lands. These programs focus on invasive insects such as the Asian longhorn beetle and Gypsy Moth, invasive pathogens such as Sudden Oak Death Disease, and non-native invasive plants, which are the focus of this bill.

For reasons I will detail in my testimony, USDA strongly supports the concept of allocating more resources for controlling non-native invasive plants at the local level. However, H.R. 1462 raises a number of questions for USDA. The Department would like to engage the Committee in more detail regarding (1) process, accountability and federal involvement; (2) compatibility with existing authorities in USDA; (3) scope of the legislation; and (4) current partnership funding.

The Department would like to work with the Committee to resolve some of the issues raised by this bill and move toward outcomes that will integrate the collaborative, mufti-agency planning that has begun over the past three years at all levels of government for invasive plants (and other non-native invasive species) management.

PROCESS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

Under H.R. 1462, roles and duties of the advisory committee should be identified to ensure duties arid responsibilities carried out by the Executive Branch are not being delegated to outside entities. States would also need authority from Federal agencies to manage weeds on Federal land, in particular National Forest System lands. USDA would like to work with the Committee to address these issues of concern, in particular management of Federal land. The Department believes these decisions should remain within the jurisdiction of Federal land managers.

H.R. 1462 would set up a new program entirely within the U.S. Department of the Interior. Six USDA agencies have programs that help manage the invasive plant issue: USDA is highly interested in working with the Committee to identify areas where these programs can be enhanced by this bill, and to determine what existing USDA programs fit well with the Department of the Interior programs proposed in this bill to avoid any redundancy.

USDA has some issues regarding implementation and coordination if a new program dealing with invasive species management is developed in the Department of the Interior. Under H.R. 1462, a new advisory committee would be created, exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972. The roles and duties of this committee are not clear, particularly in relationship to already existing advisory committees, such as the Invasive Species Advisory Committee that was created by Executive Order 13112. Members on the Invasive Species Advisory Committee were appointed by the National Invasive Species Council, which is an inter–Departmental Council, co-chaired by the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior. Also, there are a number of other diverse stakeholder committees that could be used as an advisory committee to provide peer review of submitted projects from "weed management entities." One such program is the "Pulling Together Initiative Steering Committee" sponsored by the Federal Interagency Committee for Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW). The Pulling Together Partnership Initiative has been ongoing since 1996, and is a mufti-agency effort that provides federal matching grants through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for local and regional weed prevention and control projects. Federal agencies involved include the FS, BLM, FWS, Bureau of Reclamation, NPS, Department of Defense, and APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service).

USDA notes very little specific direction in the bill on how funds will be allocated to and by the States. The Department would like to work with the Committee to establish criteria in the bill to ensure that regional differences and needs are accounted for and that a balance of funding is achieved among regions and states.

USDA recommends that a mechanism for State and local consultation and/or coordination with Federal partners be specified in the bill. Currently, the bill requires no consultation or coordination with Federal agencies other than allocation by the Secretary of the Interior of funds to the States based on input from an advisory committee established by H.R. 1462. Coordination and consultation is important between Federal and private landowners who work together to manage non-native weeds that, grow across boundaries. An example of this coordinated effort is occurring on the Humboldt–Toiyabe NF where noxious weeds are confined to several thousand acres and are still considered to be in manageable patches. The State of Nevada is allocating available funds to this area based on the coordinated efforts

by local entities and Federal managers to eradicate invasive weeds. The coordination and priority setting that is occurring between Federal, State, and private partners becomes more critical as State and Federal funds are allocated that impacted multi-jurisdictional boundaries. USDA would like to work with the Committee to identify language to address the issue of coordination and consultation with Federal agencies. Fostering a climate of cooperation and coordination with all concerned entities results in increased sharing of expertise, information, resources, experience, and applied action to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of any invasive weed management program.

COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING AUTHORITIES IN USDA

Currently, within USDA there are six agencies that have a leadership role in dealing with the introduction and spread of invasive species and involved in research, regulation, operations, partnerships, technical and financial assistance, and education: APHIS is the front line of prevention, dealing with detecting and mitigating disseminations, and providing, control of new introductions. The USDA research agencies, Agricultural Research Service, Cooperative State Research, Education; and Extension Service and Forest Service; provide information on the: basic ecology of invasive 'species; as well as detection, monitoring and control methodologies and' technologies. The Forest Service responsibilities include Research and Development, State and Private Forestry, and, the National Forest System. In addition it has the lead for research in natural areas. The Forest Service has a broad range of authorities to address the invasive species issue and to coordinate with other Federal agencies with corresponding responsibilities.

Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, APHIS and Farm Services Administration provide technical and financial assistance, consultation, and technology transfer prevention, control of invasive species, and landscape restoration following an invasion or disaster. The invasive species programs in these agencies run both independently and collaboratively. FICMNEW is a prime example of a collaborative government effort affecting land management. FICMNEW was established under a Memorandum Of Understanding signed by 17 Federal Agencies in 1994, with the charge of enhancing Federal coordination for the management of weeds. Member agencies seek to improve the Federal government's ability to prevent, control, and manage harmful non-indigenous plant species, maintain and restore healthy ecosystems, and preserve biological diversity on Native American and Federal lands and waters, with assistance on private lands and waters. Federal agencies work cooperatively to achieve this through advancement of knowledge and skills, good land stewardship practices, public awareness of noxious weed issues and management, and collaborative projects. We will work with the Committee to ensure that H.R. 1462 does not conflict, and where possible enhances, existing USDA programs.

SCOPE OF THE LEGISLATION

FICMNEW stated in a 1998 report that invasive plants (called non-native weeds in the bill) cause more than $20 billion per year in economic damage and affect millions of acres of all types of private and public lands across the United States. H.R. 1462 provides a framework for States and local governments to work with local weed groups to control and eradicate invasive plants.. However, the Department is concerned how balance will be maintained between different regions of the U.S. or how multiple state efforts will be supported.

Under the bill's framework it may be difficult for the Southeast and eastern States to compete with Western states that .have an existing infrastructure likely to qualify as "weed management entities." There currently exist well over 100 weed management areas that have been organized at the local level by various partners in the west. These organizations are virtually non-existent in the eastern States. USDA would like to work with the Committee to identify potential alternative structures, which partner with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, such as conservation districts, which could serve as "weed management entities."

The Department would like to work with the Committee to ensure that the bill adequately addresses multiple state efforts. Partnerships with States (especially those adjoining other States), other Federal agencies, and local groups are important since plants grow across jurisdictional areas. Projects can be split at the State line and funded separately while being coordinated across State lines, but additional constraints are sometimes imposed when this occurs. The recent fires in Idaho and Montana for example, demonstrate how natural forces do, not heed political boundaries. As a result of the 2000 fire season, in the states of Idaho and Montana, the Forest Service has spent approximately $24.5 million in treating invasive plants on

National Forest System lands and private lands (4.2 million in NFS noxious weeds funding, 17.0 million from the National Fire Plan Restoration program, and 3.5 million from State and Private Forestry funds). Many of these invasive species treatments are directly attributable to interstate coordination.

The Department also believes that the bill language should clarify to indicate that the purpose of funding for weed management entities through this bill is, at least in part, for environmental restoration purposes as much as it may be for economic purposes.

CURRENT PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

Invasive weeds have been coming into this country for over a century, and they are well established in many areas. New species continue to be encountered at our national border and at individual State's borders. USDA along with agencies in the Department of the Interior has been working with State and local entities for many years on various partnerships to eradicate this problem. Funds have been allocated through these partnerships and the Department continues to participate in them. H.R. 1462 does not identify funding sources for the States allocation, the incentive payment program, or how this program will relate to projects already funded in USDA. This program could involve significant new funding obligations that are not now assumed in the President's Budget. It is unclear how much funding is needed or how it will be paid for. Because the bill does not include an authorization of appropriations section that would provide a separate authorization of funds, we are concerned that there would be no authorization limit on funds or any assurance that this program would not impact existing agency and multi-agency programs that support local and regional weed prevention and control projects. The Department would like to work with the Committee to ensure currently funded programs are continued and adequate funding provided.

The bill's impact on current partnerships for local action, such as, the mufti-agency "Pulling Together Initiative" (PTI) mentioned earlier is uncertain. In Fiscal Year 2001 the Forest Service contributed $300,000 to this program. In addition to FS support of the PTI program, the FS also directly supports local weed entities through its S&PF and NFS programs. Many projects are already underway with this initiative, which demonstrate some of our best examples of need, partnerships, integrated weed management, and monitoring.

USDA has found that research and technology development is often critical to successful land management, including efforts with State and local partners. Similarly, restoration actions following weed treatments are often key to sustaining control and ecosystem health over the long-term. Options are needed for supporting applied field tests, technology development and restoration actions, which are essential components of an effective on-the-ground management strategy. The Department would like to work with the Committee to identify how "weed management entities" can obtain flexibility to fund and conduct field tests, demonstrations and other applied research activities when these components are essential for success of management goals.

Once weeds are brought under control or eradicated, it is important to consider what will come in behind them. USDA believes the bill should provide for and encourage the restoration of a treated area, thus lessening impacts of the treatment as well as improving the health of the site making it less vulnerable to reinfestation. Knowledge from research and development would help "weed management entities" in evaluating what tools and/or techniques can best be used in an area that needs treatment.

In conclusion, non-native invasive species threaten forest and rangeland sustainability and ecosystem viability. Populations of invasive plants in the U.S. are expanding annually by 7 to 14%. Although there are points of concern related to this bill, both the Department and its Agencies believe this bill is a commendable effort to address invasive species management on public and private lands.

The Department is committed to working cooperatively with the Committee and the bill sponsors toward solutions that will meet our mutual concerns and objectives.

This concludes my testimony. I would be .happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much, both of you, and thank you for your suggestions. We would like to work with you specifically on suggestions on changes that you think need to be in the legislation to make it more effective.

Would you both agree that the problem is so big and so pervasive that it is not something the Federal Government can do on its own, that we do need that local management and control, coordination, to help make this thing work?

Mr. RAINS. Absolutely, in the Forest Service, specifically in our State and Private Forestry mission area, everything we do is through somebody else, and typically that is the States. We have county weed councils, for example, in the West in almost every State where we work with them, but lack these entities in the East. And so every dollar that we invest, they will invest at least another dollar and typically overmatch that. There is no question about it. We can provide an niche or, perhaps, an elixir, if you will, to get going, but we need the State and county level involvement to make it a success.

Mr. TATE. We would certainly agree with you. The problem is beyond the capabilities of any one of us in this room or any one of us out working the fields and working the crops. Integrated planning, the kind that I was doing at the Idaho Engineering Laboratory just a few months ago, before I took this job, is something that we are very interested in seeing, using all of the tools available to us in an integrated manner that controls the weeds. A brief example, Cheatgrass in the West is a cold season grass. It grows well during the cool season, especially in the spring. By the time summer comes, it has used up all the nutrients and goes senescent. It makes a tremendous fire potential. We have discovered in the West that we can toss the advantage back to our native warm season grasses by fertilizing at the right time of year. In Idaho, we have a natural fertilizer in the form of about 75 million gallons of potato-processing wastes available to us. That helps us to use this one tool to throw Cheatgrass back to the native plants, when combined with other integrated methodologies, it might be just what we need. Thank you.

Mr. HEFLEY. What exactly do you see the council doing to address noxious weeds at the local level? Will the council action duplicate ongoing efforts? You said that you do not think we need a new council. Would you speak to that a little further?

Mr. TATE. Could I ask one of you to—is one of you particularly interested in that?

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Chairman, we believe the council would help. First of all, there is an existing council with an advisory Committee, established under the executive order, and we believe the membership of that existing advisory Committee, established under the executive order, represents many of the stakeholders and interest groups that have an interest in this area, and would, I think, serve as a good model for addressing some of the issues in the bill.

Mr. HEFLEY. Does it include local—or could it include local participation, as well?

Mr. TATE. No response.

Mr. RAINS. The answer is yes, we do have a wide range of participation at the national level, but it is important to know that that is guidance, and then what we have from that is a series of work Committees that then begins to quickly delve into regional and local issues. Of course, at the regional and local level, we have that grass-roots involvement. So, there is no question we could seek

ways to tighten up, but perhaps one might view this as a duplication. We want to work with you carefully on that so you really focus your resources.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you. You talk about aquatic weeds. Will they be addressed in the reauthorization of the National Invasive Species Act in 2002 or do they need to be included in this? It is certainly a problem and we want to deal with the problem as best we can.

Mr. TATE. The Invasive Species Act dealt especially with ballast water and with marine species, and there is apparently some effort and some interest in including aquatic species there. Within the broader concept, though, our Fish and Wildlife Service's refuges, in particular, are subjected to large numbers of aquatic species, plants, that would fall under the concept of weeds and plants and would be especially important that they be included here, so that we do not stop when the jurisdictional wetlands start or something of the nature.

Mr. RAINS. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Agriculture really strongly supports that notion, as well.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you. I think you mentioned, Mr. Rains, that the Department of Agriculture spends about $40 million a year on this. I wonder, from Interior, what are you spending on weeds at this point, and what do you anticipate would be spent under legislation such as this?

Mr. TATE. I would let Ms. Ramos answer.

Ms. RAMOS. Well, at this time, the Bureau of Land Management spends $8.9 million per year on invasive and noxious weeds, and I would let the Fish and Wildlife Service and Park Service tell you what they spend.

Mr. TATE. Our total Interior contribution is about $40 million, that includes interesting species such as the Brown Tree Snake in Guam, and its cost as well.

Mr. RAINS. The fire plan allowed us a real opportunity to increase our expenditures. What I did say, that between the Department of Interior and the Forest Service, we are spending on the fire plan about $40 million. Prior to the fire plan, the Forest Service spent about $11 million, and maybe the Department of Agriculture spent about $15 million. Now with the additional $25 million on the fire plan, we have been able to augment that considerably.

Mr. HEFLEY. What would you anticipate under this legislation that you would be requesting? Do you have any idea?

Mr. RAINS. We really do not know, but I can tell you, we are probably going to at least work with our Department to probably have a request, at least in discussions, about double our current funding.

Mr. HEFLEY. What do you think the increase would be if you add aquatics to this, as well?

Mr. TATE. Mike, do you—would you add Aquatics?

Mr. IELMINI. Yes. Mr. Chairman, the aquatic problem, at least in the National Wildlife Refuge System, would probably at least double our needs and in the terrestrial plant arena, at least those that we have identified as priority projects, and right now we are talking about approximately 6 million acres affected in the Refuge Sys-

tem—terrestrial plants alone, if we identify that most of the refuges in the system have an aquatic component, i.e., a wetland component, and the impacts are rapidly increasing there, we could certainly say that that increase would probably double.

Mr. HEFLEY. Do you have the dollar figures at all?

Mr. IELMINI. Our current projects identified in the Refuge Operation Needs System, identifying all terrestrial and aquatic projects that are needed, amounts to approximately $140 million, about a $1.1 million backlog of total operations, also a large percentage of our overall operations needs.

Mr. RAINS. In the Department of Agriculture, we are probably looking at a figure of around $100 million that would include the aquatic species.

Mr. HEFLEY. Who is winning the battle with what you are doing now? The weeds that came from outer space, are they conquering humanity, or is humanity beginning to push them back?

Mr. TATE. This problem is often referred to as a long fuse and a big boom. In some cases, Cheatgrass and Star Thistle and a few others, we are approaching the boom. The fuse is getting very short and it could, in fact, overwhelm our facilities. I am thinking how it already has in some cases. We keep referring to the fires and the relationships on rangelands caused by these things. We see in Florida, in some of the semitropical ecosystems, the same kinds of problems. We are very much at the big boom in the Southeast.

Mr. RAINS. I think from the Department of Agriculture's point of view, maybe overall we might be losing, but we have some real success stories, especially on National Forest System land, where we are winning the battle. I will have to say, because of the fire plan in those burned areas, we are going to win that battle. In some of the eastern areas of the country, where the focus is—where the Southern Pine Beetle and the Gypsy Moth are taking away a majority of our resources, we are a little bit behind.

Mr. HEFLEY. What kind of a priority are you giving this within the departments? Are you requesting the money you need to do the job?

Mr. TATE. We are systematically looking at this, and we have requested, as I had mentioned in the case of the National Park Service, additional teams, and that is in the 2002 budget, and we are looking hard at the 2003 budget right now. We do see additional needs and we will be making additional requests.

Mr. RAINS. I think in the Department of Agriculture—I think in the past we might have begun to focus a little bit too much on what I call insect and diseases. But every now and again there is a catalytic event, and really perhaps the fire plan was that for us. So, in the last year or two, we have been aggressively asking for and planning for the type of funds that we need, and I think Secretary Veneman is going to do a marvelous job for us, in being able to make some real strong, legitimate requests for us.

Mr. HEFLEY. Well, thank you very much, all of you. We appreciate your being here and we look forward to working with you to try to perfect this piece of legislation so it will be an additional weapon you can use in the battle.

The next panel will be composed of Dr. George Beck, Professor of Weed Science at Colorado State University; Mr. Bob Skinner,

who is a rancher, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, from Oregon; Dr. John Randall, Director, Wildland Invasive Species Program, from the Nature Conservancy; Mr. Mike Carroll, Vice President of the North American Weed Management Association, Fort Collins, Colorado; and Dr. Terry Riley, Director of Conservation, Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C.

Okay, I would want to remind you again, if you would, to try to hold your testimony to 5 minutes. Your entire testimony will be put in the record, so if you would summarize it for me.

We will start with Dr. Beck, from Fort Collins, Colorado. Welcome to Washington D.C., Dr. Beck.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE BECK, PROFESSOR OF WEED SCIENCE AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Mr. BECK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 1462, the Harmful Non-Native Weed Control Act of 2001, and indeed, it is an honor to do so. My name is George Beck and I am a professor of weed science at Colorado State University. I also am the Chairman of the Intermountain Noxious Weed Advisory Council, also known as INWAC. Invasive weeds threaten the integrity and environmental stability of our ecosystems, and dramatically interfere with agriculture production. The serious nature of this problem across our nation certainly requires that a concerted weed management effort be waged by private landowners and public land managers alike if we are to be successful.

I believe H.R. 1462 will help us to succeed and there are many positive aspects to the bill. The bill will provide much-needed funds to manage basic weeds throughout our country. Certainly, weed management is expensive and easily can cost from $100 to $200 per acre. Financial assistance from H.R. 1462 will help to defray weed management expenses and stimulate more people to become involved in this effort. Our collective experience at the county weed district level clearly demonstrates that financial assistance often engages the most recalcitrant of landowners in weed management.

Federal land managers have been frustrated by the cost of weed management because of their inadequate budgets. For many years, INWAC has recommended to Federal agencies that they augment their weed management budgets. While some progress has been made, their budgets do still remain inadequate. H.R. 1462 will certainly help to alleviate the situation, but Federal agencies still must dramatically increase their weed management budgets through the normal process.

H.R. 1462 will be awarded to weed management entities, thus the bill will foster the formation of weed management areas, and weeds are more efficiently and effectively managed on a landscape or watershed scale, and doing so creates the opportunity to form partnerships where all participants have ownership in project planning and implementation. When one has a sense of ownership, they become engaged willingly and actively. Fostering such partnerships is an extremely powerful aspect to H.R. 1462.

Grant funds in California, Montana and Colorado have encouraged landowners and land managers to become organized into weed management areas. Clearly, this is outstanding and H.R. 1462 will

be a powerful engine to take this process to the next level. Also, the bill appropriately limits the duration of incentive payments so as to encourage weed management entities to become self-sufficient, thereby preserving funds to help others become organized.

There are, however, a few aspects of the bill that deserve attention or clarification. Many are concerned about how funds associated with the goals of H.R. 1462 will affect existing programs within Federal agencies. The funds to support the bill should be new monies and should not be taken from existing Federal land management programs. Taking monies from existing programs to fund H.R. 1462 may well cause a setback in invasive weed management by Federal agencies.

There are active weed management areas in the West that include partners from several States, and Colorado is an excellent example of the need for States to cooperate and form multistate weed management areas. We are the headwaters for several major rivers that flow throughout the West and, for example, salt cedar infests the Colorado River and small tributaries near Rifle and Silt. These then serve as infestation sources for the entire river drainage from Rifle clear to the Gulf of California.

H.R. 1462 should encourage the formation of multistate weed management areas, but instead, it prohibits using funds to operate weed management areas in more than one State. This is confusing and potentially counterproductive to the goals of the bill. Research based information is the fundamental component for developing weed management, and while data are available for the majority of invasive weeds, certainly not all the questions have been answered and new weeds continue to show up. Funds from H.R. 1462 should be available to support applied research that provides immediate and practical results when necessary. H.R. 1462 prohibits the use of funds to manage weeds on land that is used to produce an agricultural commodity, but appropriately excludes livestock production from this prohibition. However, the definitions cited are broad enough that when subjected to interpretation, it may lead to logistical problems when administering the bill.

In summary, H.R. 1462 is an outstanding bill that will take our collective weed management efforts in our country to a new and much more appropriate level than we currently enjoy. The essence of invasive weed management is to be a good neighbor and a conscientious steward of the land. H.R. 1462 will help promote these fundamental tenets. Thank you very much, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Beck follows:]

Statement of K. George Beck, Ph.D., Professor of Weed Science, Colorado State University, also representing The Intermountain Noxious Weed Advisory Council

Mr. Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 1462, the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001. Indeed, it is an honor to do so. My name is George Beck. I am a Professor of Weed Science at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, and I also am chairman of the Intermountain Noxious Weed Advisory Council. INWAC has worked diligently since its inception in 1987 to raise the awareness of the problems associated with invasive, nonnative weeds throughout the western United States, particularly on lands managed by the federal government. Invasive weeds threaten the integrity and environmental stability of our ecosystems and dramatically interfere with agricultural production systems. Invasive weeds displace native plants, decrease native biological diversity, and disrupt established ecosystem proc-

esses. Invasive weeds also decrease livestock production on rangelands and pastures, decrease crop yields, and decrease wildlife habitat. The breadth and serious nature of this problem across our nation certainly requires that a concerted weed management effort be waged by private landowners and public land managers, if we are to be successful.

H.R. 1462 will provide much-needed funds to manage invasive weeds throughout our country. Weed management is expensive and easily can cost from $100 to $200 per acre especially if seeding of desirable plant species is necessary. Financial assistance provided by H.R. 1462 will help to defray weed management expenses and stimulate more landowners and land managers to become engaged in this effort. Our collective experience at the county weed district level clearly demonstrates that financial assistance often engages the recalcitrant landowner in weed management. Federal land managers in particular have been frustrated by the cost of weed management because of inadequate budgets. For many years, INWAC has recommended to federal agencies that they request additional funds targeted specifically for weed management. While some progress has been made, federal agency budgets for weed management remain inadequate. H.R. 1462 will help to alleviate this situation, but federal agencies still must dramatically increase their weed management budgets through the normal fiscal process.

H.R. 1462 funds will be awarded to weed management entities; thus, the bill will foster the formation of weed management areas and stimulate a concerted weed management effort. Weeds are more efficiently and effectively managed on a landscape or watershed scale. Managing weeds in a watershed or across a landscape creates the opportunity to form partnerships where all participants have ownership in project planning and implementation. When one has a sense of ownership, they become engaged willingly and actively. Fostering such partnerships is an extremely powerful aspect of H.R. 1462 and the bill not only will help stimulate new partnerships it also will enhance the activities of the many weed management areas that already exist in the western United States. Weed management areas such as the Big Hole Resource Area in Montana, the Tri-county Weed Management Area in Oregon, the Cheyenne River Weed Management Area in Wyoming, the Upper Arkansas River Weed Management Area in Colorado, and the Axial Basin Weed Management Area also in Colorado area are in operation and poised to take advantage of the competitive funds to be made available by H.R. 1462. Competitive grant funds in California, Montana, and Colorado, while modest in comparison to H.R. 1462, have encouraged landowners and land managers to cooperate and become organized into weed management areas in a fashion that otherwise would not have occurred. Clearly, this is outstanding and H.R. 1462 will be a powerful engine to take this process to the next level. However, competitive grants only should be a tool to boost the activities of existing weed management areas or stimulate the formation of new ones such that they become self-sufficient. H.R. 1462 limits the duration of incentive payments so as to encourage weed management areas to become self-sufficient, thereby preserving funds to help others become organized.

There are, however, a few aspects of the bill that deserve attention or clarification. Many people are concerned about how funds associated with the goals of H.R. 1462 will affect existing programs within federal agencies. The funds to support H.R. 1462 should be new monies and should not be taken from existing federal land management programs. It is critically important that federal agencies continue to increase their budgets for weed management in addition to the potential help offered by H.R. 1462. Taking money from existing programs to fund H.R. 1462 may well cause a setback in invasive weed management by federal agencies.

There are weed management areas in the west that include partners from several states. Good examples of these include the Monida Pass Weed Management Area on the border of Montana and Idaho where each state is trying to keep their weeds from spreading to their neighbor; the Team Leafy Spurge Project on the Missouri River breaks where multiple governmental agencies and private landowners from Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota employ a coordinated effort to battle leafy spurge; and the Greater Yellowstone Weed Management Area is perhaps the oldest weed management area in the country and involves Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. Colorado is an excellent example of the need for states to cooperate and form multi-state weed management areas. We are the headwaters for several major rivers that flow throughout the west. Salt cedar infests the small tributaries near Rifle and Silt that flow into the Colorado River, which then serve as infestation sources for the Colorado River drainage from Rifle to the Gulf of California. The North Platte River flows through North Park in north central Colorado and on into Wyoming. Leafy spurge infests the banks of the North Platte on both sides of the Colorado–Wyoming border and a very active weed management area encompasses the neighboring counties in each state. H.R. 1462 should encourage the

formation of multi-state weed management areas, but section 7(d)3(B) prohibits any weed management entity from using funds to operate a weed management area in more than one state. This is confusing and potentially counterproductive to the goals of H.R. 1462.

Research-based information is the fundamental component for developing effective weed management. While data are available for the majority of invasive weeds and the various habitats they infest, not all the questions have been answered. This is especially the case when a new weed occurrence is found. Funds from H.R. 1462 should be available to support applied research that provides immediate and practical results when necessary. While H.R. 1462 does not prohibit funds from being used on research, it is not specifically mentioned. A clause in the bill that describes the type of research that could be supported would be beneficial.

H.R. 1462 prohibits use of funds to manage weeds on land that is used to produce an agricultural commodity. This is understandable in light of other federal programs that are available to crop producers. H.R. 1462 excludes livestock production from this prohibition, but the definitions cited are broad enough that when subject to interpretation, may lead to logistical problems when administering the bill. For example, forage growing on rangeland could be construed by some to be an agricultural commodity and thus, funds from H.R. 1462 could not be used by weed management entities to manage weeds on that land. If this occurs, it would be counter to the goals of H.R. 1462. Perhaps language could be inserted in the bill that clearly states rangeland and pastures upon which forage is grown and directly consumed by grazing livestock is excluded as an agricultural commodity.

H.R. 1462 is an outstanding bill that will help take our collective weed management efforts in our country to a new and much more appropriate level than we now enjoy. The essence of invasive weed management is to be a good neighbor and conscientious steward of the land. H.R. 1462 will promote these fundamental tenets.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you.

Mr. Bob Skinner?

STATEMENT OF BOB SKINNER, RANCHER, NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION

Mr. SKINNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Robert Skinner. I am here on behalf of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Public Lands Council. I want to thank you for your interest in my comments concerning weeds and H.R. 1462. I am a fifth-generation rancher from Jordan Valley, a small community in extreme southeastern Oregon. I have lived on and operated my family ranch now for over 50 years. My family currently owns about 10,000 acres and leases well over 30,000 acres from the BLM, on which we graze livestock.

The reason I am here today is because I have a vested interest in the health of our rangeland resources, and it is absolutely crucial that we act now for the sake of the resource-dependent industries, as well as the watersheds and ecosystems. Folks, we are fighting a war on weeds out West, and weeds are like a dreaded cancer. Once invaded, there is a certain point where treatment becomes almost feudal. But if we treat the cancer early, our chances of winning will certainly greatly improve.

I became more aware of the magnitude of the weed problem when I served on a regional resource advisory council, RAC. Recently, our RAC had the opportunity to tour Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area. What we witnessed was absolutely sobering. From canyon rim to canyon rim, all you could see were tens of thousands of acres of Yellow Star Thistle. In fact, our local BLM district office asked me to invite you and the members of this Committee to take this very same tour up the Snake River and the Salmon River in a jet boat, and I strongly recommend that you

take this trip to witness, firsthand, the devastating impact of Yellow Star Thistle to this national treasure.

To fight the weed scourge on Federal lands in Fiscal Year 2002, the Forest Service plans to treat 85,000 acres, while BLM plans to treat 245,000 acres. The number of acres these agencies plan to treat is rather trivial, considering that the Forest Service manages approximately 192 million acres, or an area larger than Texas. The BLM manages over 264 million acres or about one-eighth of the total land mass of the United States. Simply put, this means the Forest Service is treating roughly one out of every 2,300 acres, and BLM is treating one out of every 1,100 acres. Numbers do not lie and these figures speak volumes on the dire need for more weed management activity by these two agencies.

In comparison, my home county covers 9,926 square miles, or close to 6.5 million acres. Furthermore, there are 36 counties in Oregon, and the Forest Service and BLM could expend their entire planned effort in my home state, or my home county for that matter, and not even a make a dent in the weed crisis. My county and the state of Oregon are not alone in this predicament. Imagine this scenario repeated for every rural county.

H.R. 1462 is a gallant effort and a needed effort by Congress to address the weed problem. However, we believe the bill could be improved. For instance, the bill caps the Federal cost share of any financial award to 50 percent. When we are confronted with a serious invasion, we have to have the ability to focus as many resources as possible to fighting that problem. We need a provision allowing for up to 100 percent of the Federal share of the financial award to effectively fight that problem. I am also concerned with the multiple state section. I am afraid weeds straddling lines cannot be properly treated under this provision. Weeds absolutely know no boundaries and geographic location should not be a restriction to receiving any funding.

Overall, perhaps my biggest concern with the bill is the lack of a NEPA exemption, and in my area, the BLM is constantly under attack for undertaking any management action at all, regardless of whether the action will actually benefit the resources. These delays can actually have a devastating effect on the very environment that it tries to protect.

In closing, I support the goals of H.R. 1462. It provides the necessary funding to help us wage the war on the weeds on the ground. The Federal land management agencies currently do not have the capability to address the problem sufficiently, and the bill directs funds where needed most, at the local level. We need a collaborative and cooperative approach between the Federal, State and local governments' weed management entities, citizens, coupled with more Federal funding to tackle the current problem. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak to you and members of the Committee today, and I will be happy to answer any questions at the end.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Skinner follows:]

Statement of Mr. Bob Skinner, Jordan Valley, Oregon, on behalf of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and Public Lands Council

Chairman Hefley and Distinguished Members of the House Resources Committee:

On behalf of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the trade association of America's cattle farmers and ranchers, and the marketing organization for the largest segment of the nation's food and fiber industry, and the Public Lands Council (PLC), a non-profit organization representing over 27,000 federal grazing permittees, thank you for your interest in my comments concerning very important matters to me, weed eradication and H.R. 1462. I appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns about the war currently being waged on weeds across the West and in my own backyard.

I am a fifth generation rancher from Jordan Valley, Oregon, a small community in southeastern Oregon close to the Oregon/Idaho border and approximately 100 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. I have resided on and operated my family ranch for over 50 years. I am a member of NCBA, the PLC and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA). I serve on NCBA's Board of Directors for the Policy Division and as President-elect for OCA. I am speaking today in support of H.R. 1462 as a rancher, a citizen and as a member of these organizations.

I am here today to discuss my experience and share some observations about harmful nonnative plants. I would also like to share my thoughts on H.R. 1462. Hopefully my comments will provide some insight into our country's weed problem.

The spread of weeds is a matter of grave concern to me. My family owns over 10,000 deeded acres and leases well over 30,000 acres from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on which we graze livestock. Therefore, I have a vested interest in the health of my own land as well as the land surrounding my private acreage.

Members of the Committee, we are fighting a war out West. A war that in many places has already been lost. The enemy in the war I am speaking about is weeds. I am currently fighting new invasions of leafy spurge, yellow starthistle and pepperweed. These weeds are like cancer. Once we are invaded, there is a certain point where treatment becomes futile. However, if we treat the cancer early in the process our chances of winning greatly improve. We absolutely have to strike now or we will continue to lose huge masses of this nation's land resources. Recovery will be extremely expensive, if recovery is at all possible.

I am a federal lands rancher and like my 27,000 counterparts, face major weed problems. Some ranchers face weed problems that cannot immediately be solved. Others face problems that can at least be fought to a standstill. Nonetheless, the majority of us are facing severe problems that require urgent action. These ranchers and farmers lease federal land managed by the BLM or the United States Forest Service (USFS). We use this land to graze cattle, horses, sheep or goats. Livestock, namely sheep and goats, may consume noxious or invasive weeds and can be used as an effective tool in weed management. However, for the most part, cattle, wild horses and burros, and wildlife do not consume noxious weeds except only when other native forage is not available. Some weeds, such as the yellow larkspur, tansy ragwort, and locoweed, can be harmful or even lethal if consumed. Leafy spurge can cause irritation of the mouth and digestive tract of cattle and wild ungulates and may even result in death.

In spite of all these dangerous weeds, I am not here today to discuss the health hazards of weeds to animals. I am more concerned about the impact of weeds on ecosystems and the environment. It is absolutely imperative for the sake of our resource dependent industry, wildlife, wildlife habitat, endangered species, native plants, watersheds and the entire ecosystem that we act now.

I have lived in Jordan Valley for over 50 years and I have never seen a threat as severe I am witnessing now. In many areas of the West, weeds have completely consumed vast areas of federal land. The federal government is the major landowner in my home county. As the major landowner, the government must do their part or all landowners' efforts are fruitless. If the government wants to own land, it has to take responsibility for managing it properly.

For example, the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR) is the largest national wildlife refuge in the United States and completely overrun by pepperweed. The MNWR is approximately 60 air miles west of my ranch. Pepperweed can grow up to six feet tall and in extremely dense growth resulting in the destruction or diminution of wildlife habitat. It shocks the conscience to see this wildlife refuge being destroyed by pepperweed and other nonnative weeds. I find it ironic where the government has set aside land to preserve and enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat, the government's failure to address the weed problem has destroyed the very purpose the refuge was set aside to accomplish.

Furthermore, pepperweed on the MNWR, or anywhere else, is particularly problematic since it produces a waterborne seed. Pepperweed is now spreading onto contiguous lands via any available watercourse. In effect, pepperweed on the MNWR is a source of infestation for lands downstream from this wildlife refuge. Whatever occurs on the MNWR affects all the surrounding landowners, whether they are pri-

vate individuals or the state or federal government. The spread of pepperweed is not just restricted to contiguous landowners, the entire watershed is now affected. No matter what landowners downstream try to do, they are constantly susceptible to new invasions. Now, pause for a moment and imagine this scenario played out across the entire West. As I stated earlier, we must declare war on these invaders.

I have been involved in fighting weeds for a number of years now. I became more aware of the significance of the weed problem when former Secretary of the Interior, Secretary Babbitt, appointed me to serve on our local Resource Advisory Council (RAC). The weed problem was one of the most important issues our RAC faced. The BLM provided field tours for the RAC with the intent of examining the weed problem. While the BLM appears willing to address the weed problem they are severely lacking in manpower and financial resources to complete the task. More funding is needed, more manpower is needed, and more collective effort is needed.

Recently, our RAC had the opportunity to tour Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area (HCNRA). Hell's Canyon spans the Oregon and Idaho border and is located north of Boise. The BLM offered to take members of our RAC on a boat tour of the area to see first hand one of the worst invasions by a nonnative weed in the West. What we witnessed was a sobering sight, all we could see were thousands of acres of yellow starthistle from canyon rim to canyon rim. This weed-infested landscape extended for mile after mile. Yellow starthistle is a horrible weed and can grow to three feet tall and contains very sharp thorns. It grows very thick, chokes out almost all competing plants. Walking through it requires snakeboots, leather pants or the equivalent to be protected from its vicious spines. This weed is dangerous to wildlife, livestock or anything attempting to consume it. Wildlife or livestock will not eat this plant due to its viscous thorns. What used to be an area of breathtaking beauty is now overcome with an ugly scourge. The topography restricts aerial spraying and in a lot of areas, even hand spraying. Hell's Canyon is just another example illustrating what can happen if strict and effective control is not extended early in the process.

I have also become more engaged with our local weed organization, the Malheur County Weed Advisory Board. This Board consists of seven members appointed by the County Court. The Board's purpose is to assist county citizens in controlling and eradicating noxious weeds in the county. Malheur County also has a County Weed Inspector. These people have been a great resource in identifying weeds, determining the best control measures such as spraying, chemicals, organic methods and identifying the best time to treat the weed. So far, this practice has worked well.

Considering demographics, Malheur County is a very large county. The county is the state's second largest in total acreage. It is 94 percent rangeland, two-thirds of which is controlled by the BLM. Malheur County is also one of Oregon's most rural counties with only about 28,000 residents. Furthermore, most of these residents rely on agriculture in some fashion such as growing, processing, packing or other business supporting agriculture. Irrigated fields in the county's northeastern corner, known as Western Treasure Valley, are the center of intensive and diversified farming. With such a large dependence on agriculture, weeds pose a major threat to the economic well-being of Malheur County. Thus, weeds and weed management are of vital importance to my agriculture-dependent county.

Since Malheur County is a rural county and heavily dependent on agriculture, you can imagine the pressures the Malheur Weed Advisory Board and County Weed Inspector face. Weeds have no regard for economics, heritage, public or private land, livelihoods or any type of boundary. Noxious weeds will continue to spread and place added pressure on the residents of Malheur County, the Weed Board and the Weed Inspector. The same holds true for almost every other rural county throughout the West.

As I stated before, luckily our Weed Board has been somewhat successful in stemming the invasion of noxious weeds. However, we are fighting a losing battle. In fact, I recently noticed new colonies of leafy spurge in areas that were completely free of this nonnative noxious weed. Soon, our Weed Board will not be able to handle all the demands for assistance. Without further economic assistance, our Weed Board and County will not be able to cope with the assault upon the county by weeds. The bottom line is that more funding and resources must be devoted to battling noxious weeds.

Weeds are a major problem out West. They threaten the livelihood of western communities, county infrastructure, the rural landscape and our range resources. Action needs to be taken soon. I am pleased to finally see a mechanism to assist localities in the battle against a ubiquitous and persistent enemy. H.R. 1462 is that mechanism. I support this bill and would like to see its passage. H.R. 1462 is a good start to help our war against weeds. I do have some concerns, however, and

also some praise for the bill. I will also provide my recommendations on how we can improve the bill.

First of all, I like the emphasis on local participation required by this bill. Effective weed management cannot take place without the input of local citizens. When you are fighting a weed problem you will find that landowners and interested citizens will be more than willing to do whatever can be done to defeat the invasion or control the spread. Providing funds at the local level in order to battle weeds on federal or private lands is much more efficient and effective than anything federal agencies can perform. I am not saying that federal agencies cannot perform the task, currently the BLM and USFS simply lack the manpower, resources and budget to undertake the necessary countermeasures against weeds.

Every year the BLM and USFS are appropriated funds specifically for fighting weeds. For Fiscal Year 2002, the USFS plans to target 85,000 acres for noxious weed control while the BLM plans to treat 245,000 acres. I am sure that weed infestation on federal lands far exceeds the number of acres these agencies plan to treat. In fact, the number of acres these two agencies plan to treat are rather paltry considering that the USFS manages approximately 192 million acres, an area larger than the state of Texas. The BLM manages over 264 million acres, or about one-eighth of the U.S. land mass. This means that the USFS is only treating approximately one out of every 2,300 acres. For the BLM, roughly one out of 1,100 acres will be treated. Numbers do not lie and these figures speak volumes on the need for more resources and activity in weed management by these two federal agencies.

In comparison, my home county, Malheur County, covers 9,926 square miles. With one square mile equaling 640 acres, Malheur County consists of 6,352,640 acres. The BLM's and USFS's planned treatment could not come anywhere close to covering my county. There are 36 counties in Oregon and the USFS and BLM could expend their entire planned treatment acreage in Oregon and not even make a dent in the weed crisis. This lack of focus on weed management on federal lands boggles the mind that more effort has not been extended to address the weed problem. Again, imagine this scenario repeated for every rural county across the West. My county and the state of Oregon are not alone in this predicament.

Fortunately, the majority of rural counties have weed advisory boards or weed management entities. Currently, most of these weed management entities obtain funding directly from the state with some funding coming from the county. Since my county has a weed management entity that would be eligible for funding under this bill, I hope to see this bill pass. Nonetheless, most counties' resources are limited with most of the work being completed by individual landowners. Moreover, most of these weed groups are not allowed to extend any management effort to federal lands. In counties with high percentages of federal lands, most of the management activity is restricted to controlling weeds on rights-of-way. We need to extend these management efforts onto federal lands in order to obtain results and to finally gain some control of our country's weed problem. Only when we can achieve cooperation and collaboration with the federal agencies, state agencies and local weed control groups will we see results.

The above statistics and the necessity for more effort on federal lands signify the importance and need for H.R. 1462. As good as this bill is, I believe that the bill can be improved. For instance, the bill limits the federal cost share of any financial award to 50 percent. I believe that when we are confronted with a severe invasion, we must divert as many resources to the problem as possible. I would like to see a provision that allows an increase to a maximum of 100% of the federal share to meet the need. We must extend all available resources if we really want to see success. Such a provision already exists in the bill under Section 7(b) (C)(ii). Placing a similar provision under the financial awards section can only improve this bill.

I am also concerned with Section 7(d)(3)(B), titled "Multiple States." As I have stated previously, weeds know no boundaries and I live near a state line. Does Section 7(d)(3)(B) mean that my weed management group cannot treat weeds straddling the Oregon and Idaho border? What about other citizens, ranchers or groups in the same situation? Geographic location should not be a restriction to receiving any funding in this bill. Many areas in the West are considerably remote with the only access being from a neighboring state. Federal agencies realize this and often one jurisdictional district extends into another adjoining state in order to facilitate administration and management. To facilitate weed control and improve the bill to achieve the H.R. 1462's goals, Section 7(d)(3)(B) must be removed.

Perhaps my biggest concern with H.R. 1462 is the lack of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) exclusion language. In my area, the BLM is constantly under attack by radical obstructionists for undertaking any management decision, irregardless of whether the decision will actually benefit the environment, ecosystem, riparian area, habitat, or endangered species. Radical obstructionists ini-

tiate these attacks and seek to stop or at least hinder any action planned by the BLM. The result is that problems or issues that require immediate action are suspended or delayed leading to more environmental degradation, increased cost and overall frustration. My problem here is not with environmentalists per se, but with radical, obstruction-minded environmentalists. Delays caused by radical obstructionists, while proclaiming to save the environment, essentially destroy the very environment we are trying to protect. A NEPA exclusion will demonstrate to the world Congress's commitment to protect our natural resources from weeds.

I have worked with many environmental groups and most are rational and favor decisions and activities based on sound science devoid of political maneuvering. In fact, this very bill has the support of The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC has worked diligently with NCBA and PLC staff to help bring this bill to fruition. I sincerely applaud TNC's efforts on this bill. This type of combined effort between industry and conservation groups is the kind of effort that can only bring positive results.

In closing, NCBA and PLC support this bill. H.R. 1462 provides the funding necessary to help wage the war against weeds on private, state, and federal lands. The BLM and USFS do not have the capacity to adequately address the weed problem. This bill directs funding where resources are needed the most—at the local level and on the ground. We need a collaborative and cooperative approach with more federal funding directed to problems on the ground. We need this bill to stem the tide of the harmful nonnative weed invasion. Otherwise, we will lose more habitat to weeds. Unless we act soon, rangelands will continue to disappear and continue to be inundated with weeds. Moreover, wildlife will be forced to move off of public lands onto private lands resulting in more human/wildlife conflicts.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to visit with you and the House Resources Committee today. I look forward to further discussion on weeds and weed management. We need to take action, immediate and tough action to control the weed problem in order to preserve our environment, wildlife habitat and our range resources. I will be happy to answer any questions you or Members of the Committee may have.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you, Mr. Skinner.

Dr. Randall?

STATEMENT OF JOHN RANDALL, Ph.D., DIRECTOR, WILDLAND INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Mr. RANDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee and staff. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of H.R. 1462 today, and in particular, I am grateful for the opportunity to bring more attention to the issue of invasive species. I am Dr. John Randall. I represent the Nature Conservancy. I lead our invasive species program. The Conservancy is a private, nonprofit conservation organization. We have 1.1 million individual members and over 1,900 corporate sponsors. We have programs in all 50 States and in 27 other countries. To date, we have protected more than 12 million acres in the 50 States and we have worked with partner organizations to protect tens of millions of acres in other countries. We, ourselves, own over 1,300 preserves. That is the largest private nature sanctuary system in the world.

I say all this by way of giving background on our group because we are a little different than the others who are here, and I want to make clear why we care as much as we do about the issue. I want to make four points in my summary of the testimony. The first one is that weed invasions are a severe threat to native plants and animals and, as such, are a major problem for the Nature Conservancy and other conservation groups.

The second point is that we regard the suite of invaders, plants and animals, as a problem, and would love to see Congress take ac-

tion to address them all, but we recognize that often on complex issues, such as this, incremental progress is the way forward.

The third point is that we have direct experience working in and with cooperative weed management areas and other similar entities across the country in various States, and we see them as effective.

The fourth point is, finally, that we support this bill and recommend it be funded with uncommitted funds. It can be most effective only if the complementary Federal work in the Federal land managing agencies continues and grows, in fact.

Now I would like to make some more detailed remarks. The Conservancy determines how and where to do its work through a fairly rigorous process of planning that helps us identify where we should do our work. We then analyze the threats that we face that are present to biological diversity at these sites. We have recently done a summary of sites across the country and, indeed, in other sites across the world and found that the number one, the widest threat that we faced, was invasive species. It was surprisingly not other threats that come more commonly to mind.

Now, this is reflected in the information that in terms of bio-diversity threats worldwide, it is now commonly regarded that invasive species are the second greatest threat that is present. We found at sites that they were the single most widespread threat. This has brought the issue to the attention of all of our higher level executives. This is a major problem for us, and weeds are one aspect of that.

We recognize also that there are threats to economic interests, including ranching and others, and that is why we have been working together with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association to support this bill, and with other partners, as well. We often find that these economic interests are dovetailed very well with our interest in protecting biological diversity. Here, we clearly have a common problem that we can work together on. Cooperative weed management areas and, again, similar entities that would be funded under this bill in all the States are an excellent way to go forward with this.

We would also like to point out that in the Senate version—Senate 198, the companion bill to H.R. 1462, was introduced, as you heard this morning by Senator Craig, but also Senators Daschle, Conrad, Crapo, Smith, Burns, Johnson and Dorgan—and since its introduction, has been cosponsored by Senators Wyden, Akaka and Inouye. What we see there is a beautiful representation of the bipartisan support for this bill.

I want to discuss a little bit the weed management entities that would be supported financially by this bill. They are not a creation of this bill. As you heard before, they exist in many States. California has more than 30 cooperative weed management areas. There are cooperative weed management areas or demonstration weed management areas in many or most of the Western States. There are similar entities, often under different names, in the East, as well. We are involved in them in various states; Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida. We see that they work. They do good work. They bring people together. They help them decide on their common interests and set priorities. They deserve funding.

The bill also addresses the fact that some States may not be as organized as others to fight weeds, and for this reason incentive payments are made available to stimulate formation of these entities. And, funds are explicitly made available for Indian tribes in recognition of the large role they play in the control of invasive weeds.

We would also like to make a point that has been previously made by other witnesses, that local cooperation also crosses State lines. We are involved ourselves in the Tristate Demonstration Weed Management Area, which encompasses parts of Idaho, Oregon and Washington. This is an excellent weed management area. This illustrates beautifully why the amendment, a change in language that would include multistate weed management entities, would be valuable and helpful.

We would like to address the questions that have been asked about the fact that the bill bars payments for projects related to submerged and floating aquatic noxious weeds. As I had mentioned earlier, our concern is with all invaders that are harmful to biological diversity, and we would love to see Congress enact legislation that effectively addresses all aquatic weeds and animal pests, but we do believe that progress on an issue like this is complex and can be achieved best incrementally. We also understand that under the Aquatics Act, which we hope to see amended or reauthorized in the next year or the year after, that some of these species will be addressed. We would like to point out that wetland species, such as Purple Loose Strife, are explicitly covered under this bill.

Finally, I would like to speak to the amount of funding. There is no existing independent Federal account to address the issues presented by non-native, harmful weeds across private and public lands. There is a great case to be made for enhanced Federal involvement here. In connection with preparing this testimony, we went to various States, to do a survey of their needs. We were only able to reach, I believe, 12 States, and they reported an unmet need for funding for these entities in excess of $219 million. Divided by 12, that equals about, $18.25 million per state. Multiply back out by 50 and we get something over $900 million. That is what we believe to be a very conservative estimate. In light of this, we would like to see Congress authorize an expenditure of up to $300 million for H.R. 1462. That ends my prepared testimony and I would be glad to answer questions as well.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Randall follows:]

Statement of John M. Randall, Ph. D., Wildland Invasive Species Program Director, The Nature Conservancy

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony for the record on H.R. 1462, the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001. In particular, I would like to thank the Chairman for holding this hearing which is bringing needed attention to the importance of the noxious weeds issue and the vital role that H.R. 1462 may play in abating this pernicious threat to both our heritage of native species and natural communities and the economic livelihood of our nation's farmers, ranchers, and foresters.

The Nature Conservancy is dedicated to preserving the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Conservancy has more than 1.1 million individual members and over 1,900 corporate sponsors. We currently have programs in all 50 states and in 27 nations. To date our organization has protected more than 12 million acres in the 50 states and abroad, and has helped local partner organiza-

tions preserve millions of acres in other nations. The Conservancy itself owns more than 1,340 preserves—the largest private system of nature sanctuaries in the world. Our conservation work is grounded on sound science, strong partnerships with other landowners, and tangible results at local places.

The Conservancy determines where and how to do its work through a planning process that identifies areas in the country containing the most viable and important examples of plant and animal communities. This process further identifies the principal threats to the integrity of the sites such as land conversion, non-point source runoff, or repression of natural fire regimes. An overwhelming 94% of our sites have identified invasive species as the most significant threat to the integrity of biodiversity. The next most important threat, development of roads or utilities, was identified by 62% of reporting sites.

HARMFUL NON–NATIVE WEED PROBLEM

Non-native weeds cause severe economic and environmental losses. Generally, non-native weeds damage ranch, farming, and natural lands by out-competing and replacing indigenous vegetation. Loss of this vegetation can transform the physical characteristics of the affected landscape as well as eliminate the animal species that depend on the native vegetation. Invasive plants and animals are now widely recognized as second only to habitat loss as threat to biological diversity. Unlike pollution, invasive organisms continue to spread on their own and do not degrade with time. Once introduced, invasive weeds can spread from site to site, region to region, without further human assistance. Rare species appear to be particularly vulnerable to the changes wrought by non-native invaders, but even relatively common plants or animals can be driven to near extinction by particularly disruptive invaders.

Conservative estimates are that non-native harmful weeds exact a price of hundreds of millions of dollars each year in losses and control costs to the nation's farmers and ranchers. In particular, the Federal Interagency Weed Committee attributed a $20 billion annual loss in the productivity of our nation's agricultural sector to damages caused by noxious weeds. The Idaho Department of Agriculture has estimated the cost of noxious weed damage on all Idaho lands to be $300 million annually. A study of the damage caused by leafy spurge in Montana, Wyoming, and North and South Dakota showed a reduction of $129 million annually to the regional economy and to ranchers' net income. Although we are not aware of any study documenting this issue, losses of this magnitude logically translate to higher costs for consumers for agricultural products.

Non-native harmful weeds also cause severe damage to America's public and private natural areas and wildlands. These are lands set aside for the stated purpose of protecting our natural heritage of plants, animals, and biological communities. Just as farms and ranches are managed for a specific crop or valuable forage, natural areas are managed for certain plants, animals, and other organisms. Weeds prevent achievement of these goals, and ruin the values for which these lands have been dedicated.

H.R. 1462: THE HARMFUL NONNATIVE WEED CONTROL ACT OF 2001

Organizations and people who have an interest in land, whether an economic interest and/or an interest in natural values, recognize the seriousness of the threat posed by invasive weeds and are eager to take effective action to fight weeds. For this reason, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and The Nature Conservancy are natural partners in this fight. Together with a number of Senate and House offices and our partners, we have worked to create the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001. Members of Congress from both parties understand the practical nature of the need to take immediate, effective action. In the Senate, S. 198, the companion bill to H.R. 1462, was introduced by Senators Craig, Daschle, Conrad, Crapo, Smith, Burns, Johnson, and Dorgan. Since its introduction, it has been cosponsored by Senators Wyden, Akaka, and Inouye.

H.R. 1462 employs the right approach to fighting weeds. It promotes cooperation and control by local public and private stakeholders; it makes funds available to public and private entities; it seeks to stimulate the creation of additional cooperative efforts; and, it funds all activities related to the management of weeds.

1. Weed Management Entities

Harmful weeds pay no heed to property lines and can only be controlled when neighbors work together. For this reason, The Nature Conservancy strongly believes the structural heart of H.R. 1462 is the weed management entities. These entities consist of local public and private landowners who voluntarily come together to fight weeds affecting all their lands. Only these entities are eligible to receive funding under the program. It is anticipated that federal land managing agencies will participate on the entities as good neighbors working to fight a common scourge. All

stakeholders participating in an entity will come to agreement about a proposal to submit to a state government for approval. The proposals will address harmful weeds on either private or public land, or some combination of the two. States will then submit packages of approved proposals to the Department of Interior which will make broad allocations of available funds to the states based on criteria set forth in the statute. Depending on the availability of funds, all projects approved by states may not be funded under the allocation made by the Department.

Weed management entities are not a creation of this bill. They have a demonstrated track record of success in leveraging cooperation on the ground. California has more than 30 such entities. Other states with entities include Arizona, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Florida, Utah, Delaware, and Pennsylvania among others. Cooperative efforts to fight weeds take place in Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, and other states. Descriptions of the activities of five of these entities are attached to this statement as Appendix A. H.R. 1462 builds on what is already successful. It does not seek to impose a different order on those engaged in the states in fighting weeds.

The bill addresses the fact that some states may not be as organized as others to fight weeds. For this reason, incentive payments are made available to stimulate the formation of entities. Additionally, funds are explicitly made available for Indian tribes in recognition of the large land areas they control and the important role tribes play in the fight.

A final point about local cooperation is that it also occurs across state lines. For example, the Tri–State Demonstration Weed Management Area is composed of local stakeholders from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington who have banded together to fight weeds in Hells Canyon. The Senate version of H.R. 1462 recognized multi-state weed management entities and authorized funding for them. H.R. 1462 does not include this provision. The Conservancy urges the Committee to include recognition of multi-state weed management entities in its bill out of deference to the judgment of people leading the fight on the ground.

2. Funding

A. Scope of Funded Activities

The Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act provides funding for education, inventories and mapping, management, and monitoring related to the control or eradication of weeds. The Senate bill also provides funding for innovative practices and we urge this Committee to include a similar provision in its bill. More work needs to be done by experts to determine the most effective methods for controlling weeds, and this bill should support these efforts. Additionally, it would be helpful for the bill to explicitly authorize payment for restoration of vegetation on land damaged by weeds since proper restoration is one of the more important steps that can be taken to suppress future infestations.

The bill bars payments for projects related to submerged or floating aquatic noxious weeds or animal pests. As indicated above, invasive species are an issue of the highest concern to The Nature Conservancy. We want Congress to enact legislation that effectively addresses all invasives, including aquatic weeds and animal pests. We also believe that progress on complex issues often occurs incrementally. This is the first major piece of legislation to emerge since the issue of invasives received a boost in attention with the issuance of the Executive Order in February, 1999. We urge Congress to seize this opportunity to take effective action against a problem ruining the economic and natural value of our lands. Aquatic weeds and animal pests will be addressed during reauthorization of the National Invasive Species Act in the next session of Congress. The Nature Conservancy anticipates being fully engaged and supportive of efforts to strengthen that legislation when its time arrives for attention from this body.

B. Amount of Funding

There is no existing independent federal account to address the issues presented by non-native harmful weeds across private and public lands. The case for an enhanced federal role in providing funding is that existing sources of funds do not come close to addressing the need for management of noxious weeds on public and private lands and across state borders.

In connection with preparing this testimony, the Conservancy attempted to conduct a survey of states to determine what their funding needs are to fight weeds. The collected information presents at least a ballpark estimate of the kind of funding twelve states have determined their agencies are capable of using to fight weeds. The information does not address the larger question of how much funding is needed to address the underlying resource issue. In conducting this survey, we also

learned that many states have made slow progress in determining the scope and cost of weed infestation and damages in their states.

The twelve surveyed states reported an unmet need for funding in excess of $219 million annually.[1] This works out to be an average of $18.25 million per state. Multiplying this figure by 50 states yields a total of $912.5 million. We recognize that the need for funding may not be distributed equally across all the states, and so each state may not need $18.25 million to address noxious weeds. On the other hand, the $219 million figure is based on very incomplete information about the degree of infestation in the responding states, and so the required national figure is very likely considerably higher than $912.5 million. Furthermore, we know this figure does not address what the actual resource need may be, or what the need is for funding on federal lands. In short, the $912.5 million estimate of national need is very likely a conservative guess; but it is a guess with some basis in fact.[2]

In light of this information, the Nature Conservancy asks Congress to authorize the expenditure of $300 million through the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act. An authorization of this amount acknowledges the scope and severity of the problem posed by harmful nonnative weeds as a matter of policy, even though the amount is still far short of what is needed in the country. Should the time come to appropriate funds for the legislation, we understand the Appropriations Committee may make an amount smaller than $300 million available for the bill.

Appropriations for the bill should not be drawn from existing accounts, but rather should be drawn from uncommitted funds. Federal land managers need secure sources of funding for managing weeds on their own land. Appropriations for this legislation will be available for those situations in which weeds on federal land also adversely affects neighboring private land, when a weed management entity decides to submit a proposal involving exclusively federal land, and of course situations in which no federal land is involved.

Again, The Nature Conservancy thanks the Committee for holding this hearing and bringing needed attention to this important problem. We urge this Committee to report H.R. 1462 to the floor of the House with the minor amendments and authorization level we have identified today. We would be pleased to answer any questions you have about our testimony.

APPENDIX A

WEED MANAGEMENT AREAS

The Tri–State Demonstration Weed Management Area, ID/OR/WA

The Tri–State Weed Management Area (DWMA) includes roughly 250,000 acres in the Hells Canyon Area of Idaho, Oregon and Washington, with most of the acreage in Idaho. Within the DWMA area there is a mix of state lands, BLM lands, and National Forest lands with some private lands. Grasslands and sagebrush steppe are the predominant vegetation, with some mixed coniferous forest at higher elevations. The terrain is steep, rugged and inaccessible. The Snake River runs through the middle of the DWMA. The Tri–State DWMA got its start as an initiative of the Bureau of Land Management, but now includes 16 other federal and state land management agencies, county weed programs, private landowners, nonprofit organizations and the Nez Perce Tribe.

Treatment of some weed infestations has produced results. For example, the group has successfully treated every known occurrence of rush skeletonweed, contained spotted knapweed, and contained leafy spurge with two of five spurge sites remaining. Additional needs of the DWMA include hiring additional seasonal workers to inventory and treat additional acreage, release bio-control agents in critical areas, engage more private landowners. There is also a need to greatly increase the supply of native seed for restoration.

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[1] The reporting states and the amount they reported are as follows: California, $5 million; Hawaii, $16.3 million; Idaho, $39.7 million; Kansas, $19 million; Montana, $38.3 million; New Mexico, $4.5 million; Nevada, $1.8 million; Oregon, $12.4 million; South Dakota, $24.7 million; Tennessee, $22.7 million; Washington, $24.6 million; and Wyoming, $10 million. Additional background information on many of these states is set forth in Appendix B.

[2] The Conservancy was not able to systematically collect information about the independent federal need for weed funding. The information for Montana, South Dakota, and Washington includes amounts needed to address weed needs on public lands in those states. See Appendix B. We understand that the refuge system in the Fish and Wildlife Service has a backlog of 300 projects requiring funding of approximately $120 million.

Red Rock Watershed Weed Project, Centennial Valley, MT

Centennial Valley is a remote area in southwest Montana that provides habitat for more than 230 bird species (including trumpeter swan, sandhill cranes, and peregrine falcons), mammals such as pronghorn, badgers, wolverines, bears, and wolves, and native fish such as arctic grayling and westslope cutthroat trout. Small populations of invasives occur in the Valley, and large populations of weeds occur nearby. The high quality of Centennial Valley habitat is clearly threatened.

In 1999, a coalition of landowners and groups including representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Beaverhead County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the Bureau of Land Management, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the Montana Audubon Society, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation formed the Red Rock Watershed Weed Project (RRWWP). The RRWWP is a joint effort to help private landowners of the lower Centennial Valley deal with noxious weed control. Twenty-five of the thirty-four landowners within the 400,000 acre project area, controlling 88% of the land, have agreed to participate in the program. Educational brochures and workshops have been made available. At least 2500 acres of weeds have been sprayed. An increasing amount of the project area has been mapped, and weed inventories are being made. The RRWWP is far from finished in its work, and sustained vigilance will be required to protect the Valley.

North Fork Cache la Poudre Watershed Cooperative Integrated Weed Management Area, CO

The North Fork of the Cache la Poudre is rich in biological and cultural diversity but is under grave threat from a suite of weeds including leafy spurge, Russian and Spotted knapweed, Dalmatian toadflax, yellow toadflax, Canada thistle, and cheat grass. In 1998, a cooperative weed management area was formed by area landowners and it now includes: Phantom Canyon Ranches Landowners Association (PCR LOA), Colorado Division of Wildlife, North Poudre Irrigation Company, Glade Ranch, Colorado State University's Maxwell Ranch, Colorado Lien (mining company), The Nature Conservancy, Abbey of St. Walburga, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service and several other private landowners including both ranches and ranchettes. This group owns or manages approximately 40,000 acres. All other landowners within the watershed have been invited to participate. Other partners include Western Governors' Association, State Weed Coordinator (Dept. of Agriculture), Colorado State University Departments of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Recreation, Natural Resources and Tourism, Sociology, Integrated Pest Management, and the Society For Conservation Biology student chapter at Colorado State University. Western Governors' Association adopted this project as a possible "pilot" community-driven initiative focusing on managing alien species cooperatively.

Digital mapping has already been carried out for part of the project area illustrating the extent of the problem, and helping to set management priorities. Selective spraying and mowing of priority patches and roadsides on PCR LOA lands has begun to reduce the spread of weeds along these corridors. Biological control insects were released on leafy spurge patches on PCR LOA land. Some cooperating ranchers have changed grazing patterns to intensely graze weedy patches and reduce seed production. Prescribed fire is being used to reduce density of cheat grass on Conservancy lands. Restoration efforts have also begun with several landowners collecting and planting native seed into treatment areas. The Conservancy conducted 65 volunteer weed management and restoration workdays.

Critical next steps and resources needed to move this project forward include project-wide mapping of weed populations; setting priorities and strategies through integrated management plans; training in plant identification, best management practices, and safe use of herbicides and equipment; applying integrated methods including cutting, pulling, spraying, grazing, biocontrol releases, and burning; and producing a newsletter to help disseminate information to landowners. Many of the weed species are not yet widespread, and can be contained and with an intensive 3-year effort.

Berkshire Taconic Landscape, CT/MA/NY

The Berkshire Taconic Landscape is a 36,000 acre area of the Berkshire Taconic range in western Massachusetts and adjacent Connecticut and New York. Most of the land in the area is forested and owned by private landowners, or the state with some small TNC holdings. Mapping indicated that the core 16,000 of the area has few invasive weeds now but that weeds have begun to penetrate the area. To combat this, TNC and area landowners combined to produce a cooperative project (Weed It Now) for expanding the uninvaded core to 24,000 acres.

The Florida Keys Invasive Exotics Task Force (Task Force) was organized in early 1996 to address invasive exotic plants in the Florida Keys. These biological pollutants beset the Keys' subtropical ecosystem and the flora and fauna supported by it. The Task Force is composed of biologists, planners and natural resource managers from 25 local, state and federal agencies, non-profits and public utilities (see list below). Goals of the Task Force include documentation of weed populations, prioritization and control of infestations, and public education and promotion of interagency cooperation. Members also put their muscles where their mouths are while toiling together on invasive exotic plant control workdays.

Region-wide identification and mapping of invasive exotic plant populations enabled the group to prioritize control projects. An educational brochure, the "Keys' Invasive Exotic Removal Guide," was produced and distributed to thousands of interested property owners. And a highly visible exotic removal and native species restoration demonstration project was carried out to prove the efficiency of the interagency cooperative approach on a 50 acre island. Since 1997 the West Summerland Key Demonstration Project has involved 780 volunteers including Boy and Girl Scouts, AmeriCorps members, Alternative Spring Breakers and local residents. As the project nears completion, the island is 99% exotics free and native plants are being restored to their rightful place.

The GreenSweep initiative will also strive to address the "missing link" in exotics control efforts up to this point, the private residential landscape. By teaming up with the Monroe County Cooperative Extension Service and its highly successful Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program (FYN), The Nature Conservancy and other Task Force members will step up public education and outreach.

Task Force members are confident that the group's comprehensive interagency approach and sheer determination, will result in an early and lasting victory in the war on invasive exotic plants in the Keys. It is estimated that an annual budget of $400,000 would enable the Task Force to reach a maintenance level of control in the Keys by the year 2010. After this time the cost of maintaining control would be significantly reduced.

Florida Keys Invasive Exotics Task Force Members

• Private:

Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, Clean Florida Keys, Inc, Florida Keys Environmental Restoration Trust Fund, Key Deer Protection Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, City Electric System, Florida Keys Electric Cooperative, and Friends and Volunteers of Refuges.

• Local governments:

City of Key West, Village of Islamorada, Monroe County Division of Environmental Resources, Monroe County Cooperative Extension Service, Monroe County Grants Department, Monroe County Public Works, and, Monroe County Land Authority;

• State of Florida:

Division of Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Invasive Plant Management, Division of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, Environmental Resources Permitting Office, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Community Affairs, and, South Florida Water Management District.

• Federal Government:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Navy.

APPENDIX B

AVAILABLE STATE DATA

ARIZONA

Acres infested: 8,520.5, (based on voluntary not systematic reporting)
Acres currently being treated: No current estimates available
Estimated funds spent solely on invasive plant species annually: $85,000[3]

CALIFORNIA

Current annual budget for
only administration of Weed Management Areas: $1,400,000.00
Estimated annual need: $5,000,000.00[4]

HAWAII

Estimated total annual funding need (all islands): $16,300,000

By sector:

Prevention -	$3,100,000.00
Early Detection -	$4,200,000.00
Control -	$7,300,000.00
Public Outreach -	$600,000.00

Requested portion from federal sources: $8,150,000
Requested portion from island-level sources: $8,150,000

[3] This is amount is based on 1 full-time, 1 part-time salary, and annual supply and publication costs.
[4] This estimate is based upon a half-time salary for each existing Weed Management Area, plus program funds for each of the state's fifty counties to administer Weed Management Areas.

IDAHO

Current and Required Budgets for Integrated Weed Management Activities in Idaho - April 2001

IWM Activity	Current Budget	%	Req'd Budget	%
Public Educ & Awareness	$1,430,460.00	9	$5,006,610.00	9
Prevention	$317,880.00	2	$5,562,900.00	10
Inventory & mapping (early detection)	$2,225,160.00	14	$7,788,060.00	14
Rapid Response (eradication/early intervention)	$1,271,520.00	8	$4,450,320.00	8
Control/Mgmt.	$7,788,060.00	49	$16,887,700.00	30
Rehabilitation	$158,940.00	1	$5,562,900.00	10
Research/Tech Transfer	$1,271,520.00	8	$5,562,900.00	10
Administration (county, state & fed)	$1,430,460.00	9	$5,006,610.00	9
TOTALS	**$ 15,894,000.00**		**$ 55,629,000.00**	

KANSAS

Acres infested:	3,827,408
Acres currently being treated:	Approximately 50% of total infested acres can be treated annually
Funds spent to combat noxious weeds:	$19,050,000.00
Estimated annual loss to noxious weeds:	$75,000,000.00 in crop/forage production
Total additional budgetary needs:	**Minimum of twice the current funding and expenditures, or $38,100,000.00, would be needed to treat existing noxious weeds.**

MONTANA

Acres infested: 8,000,000

Average noxious weed spread rate per year: 10%

Minimum management cost per acre: $20/acre

FROM the MONTANA WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN, JANUARY 2001
(Estimates are based on a total infestation of 7 million acres at $20/acre min. management cost.)

ENTITY	CURRENT ANNUAL BUDGET	REQUESTED OR REQUIRED ANNUAL BUDGET
County Weed District (mills)	$3,300,000.00	$9,400,000.00
Bureau of Land Management	$1,530,000.00	$4,500,000.00
US Forest Service	$931,000.00	$5,000,000.00
Montana Dept. of Trans.	$1,100,000.00	$1,300,000.00
DNRC Trust Lands (includes on-ground management costs)	$35,000.00	$1,700,000.00
Fish Wildlife and Parks	$186,316.00	$500,000.00
Dept. of Corrections	$5,000.00	$5,000.00
State Water Division	$14,000.00	$38,000.00
University Lands (UM, MSU)	$110,140.00	$120,000.00
Fish and Wildlife Service	$75,000.00	$600,000.00
Yellowstone Park	$19,000.00	$41,400.00
Glacier Park	$150,000.00	$320,000.00
Other NPS lands	$17,600.00	$111,000.00
Bureau of Rec	$65,000.00	$120,000.00
Tribal	$400,000.00	$2,300,000.00
Private landowners	$1,300,000.00	$10,000,000.00
University Extension	$400,000.00	$800,000.00
University Research	$2,000,000.00	$4,000,000.00 (Requested)
USDA ARS Research	$500,000.00	$2,000,000.00 (Requested)
Research Budget MDA (includes weed free forage)	$277,000.00	$5,200,000.00 $277,000.00
State Weed Education Program	$82,500.00	$2,500,000.00
Noxious Weed Trust Fund	$1,800,000.00	$1,800,000.00
Total	**$14,297,556.00**	**$52,632,400.00**

NEVADA

ENTITY	ACRES MANAGED	ACRES INFESTED	CURRENT ANNUAL BUDGET	Requested or Required ANNUAL BUDGET
State/Private				
Douglas Weed Dist.	144,769	15,000	$180,000.00	$195,000.00
Churchill Weed Dist.	640,000	6,400	$125,000.00	$250,000.00
NV Div. Wildlife	142,959	17,955	$1,585.00	$185,000.00
NV Dept. Parks	132,500	1,000	$11,200.00	$20,000.00
NV Dept. of Transport.	133,000	12,000	$150,000.00	$240,000.00
University Lands	( )	( )	( )	( )
Tribal Lands	1,218,651	12,000		
NV Cons. Districts	11,000,000	( )	$70,000.00	$320,000.00
Federal				
Bureau of Land Mgmt.	46,500,000	195,750	$313,000.00	$1,500,000.00
US Forest Service	6,500,000	16,000	$250,000.00	$350,000.00
US Fish & Wildlife	( )	( )	( )	( )
Total Acres/ Expenditures	66,268,920 w/o USFWS or Univ.	258,150[5] w/o Univ. Cons. Dist. Or USFWS	**$1,099,200.00** w/o Univ. Or USFWS	**$2,875,000.00** w/o Univ. or USFWS

[5] Please note that this is the documented infested area in Nevada. It is estimated that 1% of all lands or 700,000 acres are infested in NV.

NEW MEXICO

County Weed Supervisors $1,440,000.00

Currently, only one county in New Mexico has a full-time person dedicated to managing noxious weeds. Two other counties have part-time employees. In all three instances, the funding is provided by the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) with assistance from federal land management agencies--principally the Bureau of Land Management.

Based on estimates from the Socorro Weed Management Area an FTE for a county was estimated at $45,000. Multiplying this by the number of counties in the state[6] results in a total need of $1,440,000.

Rapid Response[7] $146,000.00

Management $2,560,000.00

New Mexico is in the process of compiling a statewide inventory in order to more accurately estimate the level of infestation and consequent level of funding necessary for effective management. A rough estimate based on counties that have completed noxious weed inventories is approximately 2,000 infested acres/county. Management costs are estimated at $40/acre.

Awareness $500,000.00

Due to the relative newness of New Mexico's noxious weed program, developing public awareness is one of the highest priorities.

Total Need **$4,464,000.00**

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[6] Although there are 33 counties in New Mexico, Los Alamos County was left out of calculations because of its small size in relation to other New Mexico counties.

[7] This amount illustrates funding needed to treat noxious weed populations with limited distribution in the state that should be considered top priority for management to prevent further spread.

OREGON

Acres infested by the 21 noxious weed species:	31,773,390 total acres
Acres in which the 21 noxious weeds have damaged rangeland, farmland, forestland, or wetlands:	6,496,878 acres

Estimated foregone economic benefits of the infested acreage:

$118,884,183 in sales were foregone by affected sectors due to lost productivity. This decrease in cattle, wheat, and timber sales as well as a decrease in tourist expenditures would result in an estimated decrease of $83,221,050 in total personal income or 3,329 in annual jobs lost.

Noxious weeds have the potential to infest an estimated 10,004,000 additional acres. If this were to occur, the estimated potential forgone economic benefits would be a further decrease of affected industry sales by approximately $91,128,664 and an impact on total personal income by $53,569,717, or 2,143 in annual jobs lost.

Total additional budgetary needs: $12.4 million

TENNESSEE

Acres infested:	No current estimates available
Acres currently being treated:	No current estimates available

Estimated funds spent solely on invasive plant species annually:

2001 Approximate TN Government Spending:	$225,000.00
2001 Approximate TN Non-Government Spending:	$225,000.00
2001 Total Expenditures:	$480,000.00

Estimated annual need:

TN Government:	$12,270,000.00
TN Non-Government:	$10,950,000.00
Total:	$23,220,000.00

SOUTH DAKOTA

ENTITY	ACRES MANAGED	ACRES INFESTED	CURRENT ANNUAL BUDGET	REQUESTED OR REQUIRED ANNUAL BUDGET
County Weed Boards	48,600,000	5,685,629	$5,554,205.00	$7,259,893.00
Bureau of Land Mgmt.	279,000	1,294	$10,000.00	$25,000.00
SD Dept. of Transport.	9136 miles		$2,595,325.00	$3,375,000.00
SD School and Public Lands	808,000	16,000	$150,000.00	$350,000.00
Game Fish and Parks	205,658	13,555	$677,750.00	$677,750.00
US Forest Service National Grasslands	940,491	82,000	$750,000.00	$1,600,000.00
US Army Corps of Engineers	205,648	100,000	$185,000.00	$700,000.00
SDDA			$150,000.00	$375,000.00
Fish and Wildlife Services	225,118	68,100	$473,000.00	$850,000.00
National Parks	273,602	78,735	$220,000.00	$500,000.00
Bureau of Reclamation	74,500	24,000	$80,000.00	$150,000.00
Tribal Lands	5,022,399	350,000	$380,000.00	$16,000,000.00
Private Landowners	42,400,000	4,700,000	$12,000,000.00	$15,600,000.00
US Air Force	7,939	2400	$5,000.00	$10,000.00
Army National Guard	583	100	$900.00	$1,500.00
USDA APHIS Research			$100,000.00	$200,000.00
Western Area Power Administration	700		$25,000.00	$50,000.00
South Dakota Weed & Pest Commission Grant Fund			$202,000.00	$500,000.00
Total Expenditures			**$23,558,180.00**	**$48,224,143.00**

WASHINGTON

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR
NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL IN WASHINGTON STATE

ENTITY	ACRES MANAGED	ACRES INFESTED	CURRENT ANNUAL BUDGET	REQUESTED OR REQUIRED ANNUAL BUDGET
County Weed Boards	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	$4,400,000.00	$5,200,000.00
Bureau of Land Mgmt.	300,000	75,000	$160,000.00	$450,000.00
US Forest Service	9,171,108	458,555	$748,300.00	$4,600,000.00
WA Dept. of Transport.	100,000	3,500	$2,150,000.00	$3,000,000.00
WA Dept. of Natural Resources	5,000,000	449,000	$354,000.00	$4,500,000.00
WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	794,446	124,940	$1,282,607.00	$2,500,000.00
WA State Parks	262,000	12,000	$55,000.00	$250,000.00
US Fish & Wildlife Service	674,733	101,210	$202,900.00	$1,000,000.00
National Parks	1,933,253	19,332	?	$200,000.00
Tribal Lands	2,504,716	375,707	?	$3,800,000.00
Private Landowners	23,614,068	1,180,703	?	$5,900,000.00
Research Budget	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	?	$1,600,000.00
WA Dept of Agriculture	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	$520,000.00	$1,400,000.00
WA State Noxious Weed Control Board	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	$183,000.00	$300,000.00
Total Expenditures			**$10,055,807.00**	**$34,700,000.00**

WYOMING

Estimated current annual spending: $10 to $11 million

Total estimated annual need: $20 million

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much.
Mr. Carroll?

STATEMENT OF MIKE CARROLL, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH AMERICAN WEED MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Mr. CARROLL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, members, it is indeed an honor to come before you and offer testimony on behalf of H.R. 1462. My name is Mike Carroll. I am the vice president of the North American Weed Management Association, and we are a professional organization that is dedicated to the control, management, and eradication of noxious, invasive plant species in the North American hemisphere. We are comprised of over 300 dedicated weed management professionals from the United States, Canada and Mexico. Our membership ranges from people on the local level, who are on the front lines of this battle, to research scientists and government administration.

Many of our members are located in counties throughout our great country, where the Federal Government owns 50 percent or more of the land. Typically, our membership receives their funding to address noxious and harmful vegetation from their county tax rolls. Currently, in counties where the Federal Government is the majority landowner, there exists a gross inequity in funding for this concern. Citizens are taxed for the control of noxious and harmful vegetation levied on private land, while no funding or very little is available for Federal lands.

I would like to share with you today how House Resolution 1462 would benefit members of the North American Weed Management Association in their efforts to provide protection from this nemesis for the citizens of this country. House Resolution 1462 would create the very distinct possibility of noxious plant eradication within 10-to-15 years in Rocky Mountain National Park. Jeff Connors of the National Park Service states, "That is the goal of our exotic plant management team, to eradicate 10 of the 32 species within 3 years, to control an additional eight species, with the longer-term goal of eradication in 5 years and to contain the remaining 14 spaces to isolated areas of the park, with the long-term goal of eradication in 10-to-15 years."

This proposal has been approved and, if funded, 1462 would help. Rocky Mountain National Park would be one of the few large National Parks in the lower 48 States that would be relatively free of invasive exotic plants. Tim Deitzler, agricultural field man from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and president of the North American Weed Management Association, informs us, "The establishment of such a program would have a positive impact, even outside the borders of the U.S." An example is the Spotted Knapweed problem in Glacier Waterton National Park, along the Montana-Alberta border. Knapweed is a restricted week under Alberta's Weed Control Act, meaning the few infestations that occur in Alberta—and when it is found, all infestations must be eradicated, not just controlled.

From our membership in the State of Utah, Craig Ceril states, "Utah is a State that is nearly 70-percent public lands. Most of these lands are threatened by exotic and invasive plant species. Currently, counties provide the majority of the funding for invasive plant control, with some landowners and agencies providing limited

support. Getting landowner participation can be difficult when the nearby public lands receive little or no attention because of limited Federal funding. The additional funding that would be provided through this legislation could be used to organize weed management areas that would include both public and private lands."

Boundaries could be eliminated and the invasive plant problem could be addressed throughout the weed management area. This would be a winning situation for everyone involved. Larry Walker, president of the Colorado Weed Management Association, also supports House Resolution 1462, "It will offer a way to shore up the lines between Federal lands and private lands and will allow private landowners that have weeds moving off government land to get help in managing those areas."

Eric Lane, member of the Colorado State Department of Agriculture, State Weed Coordinator, "Like many other States, Colorado and its citizens are engaged to fight and stop the spread of harmful, non-native weeds and reduce the significant impact these species inflict upon agriculture, environment, State and local economies, recreation and public health. In Colorado, these impacts easily exceed $100 million annually to agriculture alone."

From Miami, Adrian Peterson informs us, "Sublet County, Wyoming is probably one of the cleanest counties of invasive weed species in the western United States. Eradication of noxious, invasive plant species is practiced and realized in Sublet County. Some of our major successes have been on public lands. This eradication effort is extremely expensive. The fact that public land comprises 75 percent of Sublet County means the programs are funded by only 25 percent of the landowners. This additional resource would enable us to respond rapidly and more effectively to newly-discovered infestations."

The North American Weed Management Association Board of Directors and members support House Resolution 1462. We would like to see a change to the bill where a member of the North American Weed Management Association be appointed to the advisory board, so you could truly get the on-the-ground level of comments and concern that we could provide to this effort. That is pretty much it. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carroll follows:]

Statement of Michael Carroll, Vice President, North American Weed Management Association

The North American Weed Management Association is a professional organization dedicated to the control; management, and eradication of noxious invasive plant species in the North American Hemisphere. We are comprised of over three hundred dedicated weed management professionals from the United States, Canada, and Mexico Our membership ranges from people on the local level who are on the front lines of this battle to research scientists and government administration.

Many of our members are located in counties throughout our great country Where the federal government owns fifty percent or more of the land. Typically our membership receives their funding to address noxious arid harmful vegetation from their county tax roles. Currently, in counties where the federal government is the majority landowner, there exists a gross inequity in funding for this concern. Citizens are taxed for the control of noxious and harmful vegetation levied on private land while no funding or very little is available for federal lands. These same citizens, the owners of these federal lands, are taxed by the federal government for the maintenance and upkeep of these lands, but federal funding for harmful and noxious weed control remains, sadly, ignored for the most part.

I would like to share with you how H.R. 1462 would benefit members of the North American Weed Management Association in their efforts to provide protection froze this nemesis for the citizens of this great country.

H.R. 1462 would create the very distinct possibility of noxious plant eradication within 10 to 15 years in Rocky Mountain National Park. Jeff Connors of the National Park Service states, "That it is the goal of our Exotic Plant Management Plan to eradicate 10 of the 32 species within three years, to control an additional 8 species with the longer term goal of eradication within five years and to contain the remaining 14 species to isolated areas of the park with a long-term goal of eradication within 10 to 15 years. This proposal has been approved and if funded, Rocky Mountain National Park would be one of the few large national parks in the lower 48 states that will be relatively free of invasive exotic plants.

Tim Dietzler, Agricultural Fieldman from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and President of North American Weed Management Association, informs us, "'The establishment of such a program would have a positive impact even outside the borders of the US. An example is the spotted knapweed problem a in Glacier/Waterton National park along the Montana/Alberta border. Knapweed is a restricted weed under Alberta's Weed Control Act, meaning few infestations occur in Alberta anal when it is found, all infestations must be eradicated (not just controlled). An active weed. management program. in this geographic location would help prevent the spread into ecologically sensitive areas here in Alberta. Secondly, any program undertaken in the U.S. to slow the spread of harmful invasive, non-native weeds have repercussions in Canada. Creation of the National Invasive Species Council has attracted an attention in Canada, and has helped move public opinion (and agencies dealing with invasive plant species) to recognize the ecological importance of this issue. I applaud consideration of consideration of H.R. 1462.

From our membership in the state of Utah, Craig Searle states, "Utah is a state that is nearly 70% public lands. Most of these lands are threatened by exotic invasive plant species. Currently the counties provide the majority of the funding for invasive plant control with some landowners and agencies providing limited support. Getting landowner participation can be difficult when the near by public lands receive little or no attention because of limited federal funding. The additional ;funding that would be provided through this legislation could be used to organize weed management areas that would include both public and private lands, boundaries could be eliminated and the invasive plant problem could be addressed throughout the weed management area. This would be a winning situation for everyone involved. One such WMA, exists here in Utah, the Squarrose Knapweed Management .Area. This project covers portions of 4 counties and includes private, state, and federal lands. The partnerships that have been developed have proven to be very effective in controlling invasive plants. The most important thing is to find a way to get the funding to the local level where the work is done.

Larry Walker, the President of the Colorado Weed Management Association states, H.R. 1462 will offer a way to shore up the lines between Federal lands and private lands. It will allow private landowners that have weeds moving off government land to get help managing those areas. Our county is about 73% public land, so this could be an important tool in helping local concerns manage weed problems. Since Federal lands are woefully under funded for noxious plant management this will assist the local land managers attack invasives moving in their direction.

Eric Lane, NAWMA member and Colorado State Department of Agriculture State Weed Coordinator states, "Like many other states, Colorado and its citizens are engaged in a fight to stop the spread of harmful, nonnative weeds and reduce the significant negative impacts these species inflict upon agriculture, the environment, state and local economies, recreation, and public health. In Colorado, these impacts easily exceed $100 million annually to agriculture alone.

While our citizens are committed to being good stewards of our public and private lands, the cost of developing and implementing effective weed management strategies is not small.. In fact, research suggests that the cost of managing harmful nonnative weeds is on par with the cost of annual wildfire fighting efforts. However, the nation invests comparatively little to assist its citizens and local governments in the war on weeds. H.R. 1462 will help to address this inequity by providing for a nationwide competitive grant-making program to support cooperative weed management efforts and leverage additional funds tom a variety of public and private sources to enhance such efforts. Colorado and several other western states including California and Montana have already initiated similar, albeit very limited, funding programs which have helped local communities to launch effective weed management efforts but have not been able to meet the demand and need demonstrated throughout these states. I believe that additional funding made available through

H.R. 1462 would help to better meet the need expressed by our communities as well as communities throughout the nation.

From Wyoming, Adrianne Peterson informs us, "Sublette County, Wyoming is probably one of the cleanest counties in the western United States. Eradication of noxious invasive plant species is practiced and realized in Sublette County. Some of our major successes have been on public lands. This eradication effort is extremely expensive. The fact that public land comprises seventy five percent of Sublette County means programs are funded by only twenty five percent of the landowners. This additional resource would enable us to respond rapidly and more effectively to newly discovered infestations. Hopefully this would strengthen the relationship between producers and public land managers.

The North American Weed Management Board of Directors and members feel that H.R. 1462 would equalize funding opportunities between highly populated areas and remotely urban areas, which are both under siege. Each is unique in the obstacles they face to commence dais effort, but lack of funding is the common denominator that restricts active environmentalists such as our members and other state, local and private interests and keeps these efforts grounded.

Infestations of noxious and harmful vegetation have had a long time to become established throughout our country. One of the major forces we need to enlist in our struggle to conquer this scourge is the talent and dedication of our fixture generations. We can only accomplish this by education. H.R. 1462 will enable this to become a major component in. this battle. It Will. complement and enhance programs already in existence and facilitate the creation of new education programs- Such programs currently inn existence are woefully under funded currently. Our members throughout the country, working with limited resources, have some excellent programs. One such program in Nebraska teaches children the dangers of noxious and harmful vegetation by utilizing global positioning techniques performed by these students to map and inventory invasive plant populations. Wyoming is involved in this education effort by teaching materials supplied to elementary classrooms. There are many other education programs worth mentioning, but for a lack of funding, most will never realize their full potential.

There are chore invasive plant infestations than all the members of congress and vegetation management professionals will be able to battle alone. This bill will enable these professionals the ability to assemble a wide variety of very concerned citizens, especially private landowners to turn the tide of this effort frown local skirmishes to full-fledged battle of these invaders.

H.R. 1462 will help states and local authorities facilitate the implementation of the North American Weed Management Associations Weed Free Forage Standards. Perhaps the single most important program to date to stop the spread and transport of the seeds of these invaders.

This resolution will put this great country on par with other countries such as Australia, by providing the means for halting the spread of these invasives , treatment of infestations that for too long have been ignored, of which many, perhaps the majority are on public land. The citizen owners of this land, desperately need this opportunity.

While current efforts to manage known infestation of invasives would benefit, it is the newly discovered infestations that H.R. 1462 would benefit greatest. This funding would make possible the realization of the Early Detection and Rapid Response program currently being designed by the Federal Interagency for the Control and Management of Noxious and Exotic weeds committee.

As I've traveled often to our nations Capital, I've had the opportunity to see the administration of various federal agencies recognition of this plague increase. I've seen the efforts and have been quoted the numbers of funding dollars committed for this cause. Dollars, that by the hard work of these dedicated professionals, have increased. Awareness of this issue in Washington, is at an all time high.

When I travel back home and deal with the local and regional offices of these agencies, they are unaware of these increases in funding. Our membership in Idaho confirms this concerning the Crater Moon and City of Rocks National monuments, where efforts to partner with these agencies to control noxious vegetation have faded for lack of funding available to these federal interests. Typically these movies are lumped into conservation programs and may or may not be utilized in this effort. These dedicated professionals have long been aware of the dangers posed by these invaders, and have been some of the strongest allies in the effort to stem this tide, but have been hamstrung by the lack of definitive funding. H.R. 1462 will allow these federal agencies to commit and form partnerships, with definitive, targeted dollars.

The threat of invasive plants to the United States of America has truly been the number one environmental pollution threat of the 20th century and will continue to be throughout the 21st century.

In it's current state, the effort to combat this problem, which is often referred to as wildfire in slow motion, is analogues to that extremely dangerous period in this country's history immediately preceding our great nations invasion of Normandy on D–Day in World War Il.

The resistance fighters are in place and have been exerting great effort with very limited resources, trying to hold these invaders at bay. They are extremely skilled professionals who are creative in stretching their resources to the limit, prioritizing the battles that can be won with these limited resources. They fight this relentless fight with one eye trained to the shore, hoping to see their Allies landing on the beach with the desperately needed resources to achieve victory.

This battle will be won in tinge, with the passage of H.R. 1462 and similar bills. If passage of this resolution fails, the fight will continue. When the citizen owners of our public lands can visually see that these invaders have conquered an ecosystem, as is the case in the State of Hawaii, where only two percent of the native plant population remains, they will again come before you and ask why our government did not. act. In this war, an ounce of prevention, truly is, worth a pound of cure.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you very much.

Dr. Riley?

STATEMENT OF TERRY RILEY, Ph.D., DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Mr. RILEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for inviting the Wildlife Management Institute to speak today on this extremely important issue. The Wildlife Management Institute was formed in 1911, and we are staffed by scientists and managers that have extensive experience in wildlife and natural resource management on Federal and private land. Our main goal is the conservation, management, and the wise use of wildlife and other natural resources in North America. We are concerned about the effects of noxious and invasive, non-native weeds on wildlife habitat throughout the entire country, not just the East or the West or aquatic species or upland species. This is an extremely important issue to WMI and to the wildlife species we are concerned about.

There are estimates that some people have put forth that say that noxious weeds are spreading at a rate of about 5,000-to-10,000 acres a day in this country. That is having a devastating effect on ranchers and farmers and Federal land managers and State land managers, and counties. It is everywhere and it is happening very, very quickly. As has been said by previous witnesses, if we do not do something now, the explosion will be shortly upon us. In fact, invasive plant species impact many different wildlife, particularly those that nest and breed on the ground. Many grassland birds are losing important habitats, because the habitat in places where they hide their nests and rear their young and feed and sleep at night are all being devastated by these invasive species.

Long-term funding is needed. This cannot be addressed in a 1-year, big-shot-of-money, with hope that the problem will go away. It is not going to go away. The problem is here to stay. At best, we may be able to, at some point of time in the future, get it to the point where we can stop most of the spreading, if we put enough resources to it now. That is going to require a coordinated effort by all participants, all stakeholders, county weed boards, State wildlife agencies, State Departments of Agriculture, the Fed-

eral Land Management Agencies, and every individual out there that is impacted by these invasive species.

We recommend, also, that whatever plan or program is developed and supported by any legislation that is developed, that it take a watershed approach. My experience with controlling noxious weeds on national forests, as a certified applicator of pesticides in South Dakota, particularly, required us to start at the top of a watershed and work down. If you do not do that, you end up with the weeds moving all around on you, and it takes an organized approach to actually attack this problem, and you cannot just hope to throw it out all over the landscape, and the control is going to land in the right places.

Federal Land Management Agency funding is a very big concern for us with respect to noxious weeds and invasive weeds. We consistently request more funding and a more-coordinated approach to controlling noxious weeds on Federal land, and I think you have heard from previous witnesses that we really have a serious problem here, and the Federal agencies have to be an active participant in whatever plan and program is developed from this or other pieces of legislation involving invasive weeds.

We are concerned about coordination, particularly between Department of Agriculture and Department of Interior. Both departments have their own programs, but there are times they do not coordinate very well. We hope anything that comes out of H.R. 1462 does not somehow pull away existing funding that is out there right now for invasive species, but that it also tries to bond those two agencies, those two departments, together, and all their various agencies, so they can work and do coordinated projects.

We are also concerned that H.R. 1462 may compete with other existing programs that are working very, very well out there right now. Dr. Tate mentioned in his testimony the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together initiative. This program is doing exactly what the legislation would propose, and it is doing it very effectively. Pulling together partners from local communities, from State and Federal agencies and county weed boards, and a variety of other entities, and we hope H.R. 1462 would not detract from all the effort, of pulling together and all the Federal dollars from six different agencies that are leveraged for this program. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Riley follows:]

Statement of Dr. Terry Z. Riley, Director of Conservation, Wildlife Management Institute

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, I am Terry Z. Riley, Director of Conservation for the Wildlife Management Institute. The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), established in 1911, is staffed by professional wildlife scientists and managers. Its purpose is to promote the restoration and improved management of wildlife and other natural resources in North America.

WMI commends the Committee for initiating this dialog. The seriousness of the invasive weeds issue cannot be overstated, and we urge the Committee to lay the groundwork today that will lead to a plan for long-term control of invasive weeds across the US.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to offer our insights. The debate that will occur on invasive weeds is not an either-or proposition. The economic viability of farms and ranches is dependent on a national, coordinated effort to control the spread of weeds. Production of wildlife, agricultural crops and livestock already have

been compromised, and farmers and ranchers are losing billions of dollars each year to weeds. Credible evidence exists that the cost of invasive weeds on our Nation's economy is at least $130 billion per year.

We are deeply concerned about the accelerating spread of invasive exotic plants, or "weeds," on public and private land. Some estimates indicate that exotic invasive plants are overtaking our Nation's native vegetation at a rate of about 10,000 acres per day. Infestations are reducing the productivity and biodiversity of our Nation's natural resources at a dramatic rate. For example, research shows that weed populations frequently reduce livestock carrying capacity between 35 and 90 percent. These infestations also are increasing the predicament for threatened and endangered species and the likelihood that additional species will warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act. Furthermore, weeds increase erosion, reduce water quality and quantity and reduce natural regeneration of our Nation's prairies, shrublands and forests.

These non-native invasive plants arrive here from other countries without the natural insects, diseases and pathogens that kept them in balance with other plants in their country of origin. Consequently, these plants aggressively out-compete our native wildland plant communities. The following examples of increased weed populations on private, state, and federal wildlands illustrate the devastation underway: In Montana spotted knapweed increased from a few plants in 1920 to 5 million acres today; in Idaho rush skeleton weed from a few plants in 1954 to 4 million acres today; in Northern California yellow starthistle from 1 million acres in 1981 to about 15 million acres today. Since these weed populations increase at about 14% per year, they continue to increase - at an increasing rate. Consequently, thousands of watersheds on public and private land are undergoing the greatest permanent degradation in their recorded history—with wildlife habitat and livestock forage suffering the greatest losses.

Local cooperative approaches offer the best opportunity to prevent and control weeds within a specific watershed. In a few states, Weed Cooperatives or County Weed Boards are bringing land owners and operators, utility companies, county and state road departments, state fish and wildlife agencies, federal land management agencies, businesses, nonprofit conservation organizations and public land users together to attack this insidious plague of weeds. Federal funds through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's "Pulling Together Initiative" already are providing these local cooperatives with the funds they need to develop and implement long-term plans to control invasive weeds within local watersheds. One-hundred and eighty weed control cooperatives have been supported by the "Pulling Together Initiative" since 1998, however, another 247 weed cooperatives submitted projects proposals to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that went unfunded because of insufficient funds. A wide array of partners associated with these projects have contributed millions of dollars to these cooperative weed-control ventures, leveraging 1.8 non-federal dollars for each federal dollar committed to the program. The Wildlife Management Institute has been the grantee on one of these "Pulling Together" projects since 1998 that brought together 14 federal, state, county and private partners to collectively control the spread of purple loosestrife up the Missouri River and its tributaries in Nebraska and South Dakota. These diverse groups come together enthusiastically to fight a common enemy. Unfortunately, in most areas and in most watersheds, these cooperative efforts to control and eradicate weeds are not yet in place, or have not been able to secure funding.

The technology is available to cooperatively bring the spread of invasive weeds down over the long term to a level approximating "no net increase"; along with making good progress at controlling and restoring some large infestations. However, the cost to apply this technology will not come cheaply. Without substantial federal funding over several years that can be used to leverage state and private funds, many more vast areas will become permanently degraded as these invasive weeds spread across our landscape.

Only now are we beginning to see the danger that lies ahead. There is great economic efficiency in increasing investments now to keep relatively healthy watersheds from becoming severely infested by weeds. Enormous increases in investments will be needed to restore land once it is seriously infested. With prompt action now these disasters can economically and efficiently be avoided.

Last year, our nation experienced some of the most devastating wildfires we have seen in some time; burning over 6 million acres and destroying immense amounts of public and private property. While most of those fires were ignited naturally by lighting strikes, the fuels that carried those fires often were invasive weeds, such as cheatgrass, that have invaded millions of acres of our western rangelands.

Congress immediately responded to these disasters by allocating nearly 2 billion dollars in Fiscal Year 2001 to aggressively deal with the wildfire hazards across the

country on public and private land. While exotic invasive weeds do not destroy homes like catastrophic wildfires did last year, and thus do not receive the interest of the Press, they are doing just as much if not more damage to the lives and livelihood of farmers and ranchers over a much larger area than wildfires.

House Bill 1462, the "Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001" is a good first step at addressing the invasive weeds, but we believe it does not go far enough. Our concerns related to HR 1462 include:

- Sufficient and long-term funding on public and private land;
- watershed-based approach to controlling weeds;
- Coordinated weed control projects on public and private lands;
- Assurances that all nonnative invasive weeds are addressed;
- Requirements to leverage non-federal funds;
- Opportunities to fund multi state weed control projects; and
- The future of the NFWF's Pulling Together Initiative.

Recommendation

We strongly urge the Committee to address the issue of annual and long-term funding needed to control invasive nonnative weeds on our Nation's public and private lands. Local cooperative efforts to control invasive nonnative weeds must have some assurances that funding will be available to help plan and implement their programs. Federal land management agencies also must have the funds to control weeds on our public lands, and there must be methods developed to ensure coordination between weed control efforts on public and adjacent private lands. We strongly urge the Committee to allocate at least $100,000,000 per year for nonnative invasive weed control projects on private land, and to commit at least 5 years of funding.

We also urge the Committee to allocate sufficient funds to the federal land management agencies to control noxious weeds on public lands. For example, the Bureau of Land Management needs at least $15 million in Fiscal Year 2002 to implement their weed control program, and they will need at least $30 million per year once the program is fully implemented. Congress provided $8 million in Fiscal Year 2001 to the USDA Forest Service to control invasive weeds on 150,000 acres, but already there are over 8 million acres of the agencies' 192 million acres that are infested by nonnative invasive weeds. Much more funding is needed to stop the spread of weeds on federal land. If they are not stopped, the consequences will be extremely expensive and tragic.

We are concerned that H.R. 1462 will reduce funding for other natural resource programs within the Department of the Interior (DOI). Since funding for H.R. 1462 has not been clearly identified in the text of the bill (specifically referred to as Section 11 in the bill), we believe H.R. 1462 will require the Secretary of the Interior to cut funding for other programs in order to meet the requirements in H.R. 1462. We urge the Committee to clearly identify the funding necessary to implement an effective weed control program, but not at the cost of other natural resource programs.

Most successful efforts to control weeds have been those that address the problem within an entire watershed. We recommend that the Committee require that all programs and projects using federal dollars to control weeds must be based on a watershed planning and implementation approach.

There are many nonnative invasive weed control programs already in existence on public and private land. However, many of these programs do not bring together all private and public agencies, organizations and stakeholders to mount a coordinated effort to control weeds. Government funding for control of invasive weeds on private land traditionally has come from the various federal and state departments of agriculture. We are concerned that federal funding through the Secretary of Interior might disrupt these traditional cooperative ventures. We recommend that the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture are equally involved in the administration of any nonnative invasive weed control program on public and private lands.

We are concerned that efforts to control invasive weeds might only focus on the widespread infestations in the western states. Our Nation's waterways often provide the avenues by which invasive weeds spread throughout a watershed, and many of our waterways (rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands) are completely choked and dysfunctional because of weed infestations. We urge the Committee to address all nonnative invasive weeds in any legislation they approve, including those weeds in waterways, wetlands, farmlands, pasture and haylands and our western rangelands.

Almost all local agencies, organizations and stakeholders are concerned about invasive weeds, and most are eager to commit their own time and resources to provide control. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together Initiative demonstrated that it can leverage millions of dollars from a wide array of pri-

vate and public partners to control weeds. We recommend that the Committee use the proven model for leveraging private resources for weed control that has been successfully employed by the NFWF's Pulling Together Initiative.

Often nonnative weeds infestations cross boundaries created between administrative, political and state entities. We are concerned that H.R. 1462 would not accommodate nor encourage cooperative efforts across all of these boundaries, such as a multi-state weed control project. We recommend that the Committee provide funding to a broad array of cooperative ventures to control invasive weeds, including multi-state projects.

Finally, we are concerned that H.R. 1462 will reduce or eliminate much of the federal funds available to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Pulling Together Initiative. Six federal agencies contribute substantial funds each year to the cooperative invasive weed control partnerships that have been formed under the Pulling Together Initiative. Many of these existing partnership, including the purple loosestrife control project that WMI administers in Nebraska and South Dakota, would be affected severely if the Secretary of the Interior withdrew the federal commitment to these cooperative weed control ventures. We urge the Committee to support the existing and future cooperative weed control partnerships in the NFWF's Pulling Together Initiative (PTI). The PTI has a proven record of leveraging millions of private dollars to match federal dollars in cooperatively controlling invasive weeds on private and public lands. We would be very disappointed to see the effectiveness of the PTI program diminished or destroyed by a new duplicative program that draws upon the same partners and the same private and public funds.

Concluding Remarks

We thank the Chairman and members of the Committee for inviting the Wildlife Management Institute to testify on H.R. 1462. Nonnative weeds are costing our nation's economy more that $130 billion per year, and we are very concerned that our wildlife and other natural resources will suffer irreparable harm if we do not act now. We fully support a broad array of active and cooperative nonnative invasive weed control ventures on public and private lands. We believe significant and long-term funding is needed to assist these partnerships in controlling weeds within all of our Nation's watersheds. Funding for invasive weed control on our public lands is woefully inadequate to stop the spread of these insidious pests, but we would not support funding for any new weed control program that would be at the expense of other federal natural resource programs or existing cooperative weed control partnerships, such as our purple loosestrife project in Nebraska and South Dakota that is funded through the highly successful Pulling Together Initiative. Mr. Chairman, we respectfully request that our written and oral comments presented here today be entered into the permanent written record of this hearing.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you, Dr. Riley. Am I given to understand correctly that, by and large, these weeds that we are talking about are not consumed by either livestock or wildlife? Mr. Skinner could probably speak to the livestock part of it.

Mr. SKINNER. In some cases, you are right. Of course, some of the noxious weeds—and you have got to be careful when you use the word "noxious." Some of the noxious weeds, invasive would be a better word, because noxious weeds do not necessarily fit the category. But they talked about using goats earlier to control these, sometimes sheep will control them. Sometimes cattle or horses will control these weeds. That doesn't necessarily totally address the problem in all cases, because sometimes those invasive species are just totally taking over the habitat for our wildlife, or are destroying our watersheds. They are destroying our croplands.

I cannot possibly emphasize the importance, and I am so frustrated. I guess that is why I am here, as a person on the ground, who sees the magnitude of what is hitting us. I do not think people can fathom what is coming our way. It is almost overwhelming to me.

Mr. RILEY. From the wildlife perspective, there are some species out there that can have an impact on invasive weeds, but land-

owners probably would not want the densities of those species, such as pronghorn antelope, necessary to do some damage to these invasive species. It could take thousands and thousands of them. As an example, just looking at goats, as Senator Craig had mentioned earlier, in Idaho, they have been putting as many as 5,000 goats into one pasture to try to control the invasive species over a fairly short period of time. It is quite an impressive sight to see 5,000 goats concentrated in one pasture. Well, that has an impact in itself, just putting that many animals in one place, and you can just imagine most ranchers out West thinking, "Okay, well, I'd like to have 5,000 animals concentrated in my pasture," which might be very impractical. But you cannot get the densities of wildlife up to the point that they could have an impact on invasive species. So it would be difficult.

Mr. BECK. Whether livestock or wildlife will consume weeds is, at least in my experience, highly dependent upon the weed species. A plant like Leafy Spurge is not consumed by horses or cattle, but is consumed by sheep and goats, and I have not seen too many wildlife species to know whether they really consume it or not. But probably just as importantly, even plants like Knapweeds tend to be very palatable at their early stages of growth during the spring of the year, but once they flower, very few—animals, including grasshoppers, will refuse to eat them.

So it is very dependent upon weed species, the situation. Certainly, I think more times than not, weeds are detrimental to wildlife and livestock.

Mr. RANDALL. I would just like to add to that, that we do see declines in the numbers of species and in the diversity of species, and that is what we are focused on. So we clearly see, across the board with most of these weeds, that we lost at least some of the species we are interested in, plants and animals.

Mr. HEFLEY. Thank you. Further questions, Committee?

Mr. OTTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I have a few questions, and it is unfortunate that one the victims of the noxious weed invasion that we have not talked about, and I use that term, noxious weeds, instead of just invasive weeds, because having been the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Idaho for 14 years and led a lot of international trade delegations, I was surprised, in fact, amazed at how many countries would not let some of our products into their countries because of an infestation of a problem with some of our seed, and Idaho is a big seed grower.

They actually boycotted a lot of our products from Idaho, because of noxious weeds, for instance, in our potato seed crop, which is big in Idaho, because of nematodes and some of the noxious weeds—not nematodes—were the vectors for. They would not allow us to ship those practically any place in the world for quite a period of time. Mr. Randall, I was impressed with your testimony and also with your suggestion relative to the inclusion of water plants and particularly Purple Loose Strife. We have a tendency to think of invasive weeds as invading land and pushing out habitat, and I am familiar, especially along the reaches of the Lower Boise River, that runs through the Treasure Valley in Idaho, where it is being actually choked off by Purple Loose Strife.

The only known chemical that we can use, the only certified chemical, I think, is Rodeo, that we can use over water. But we have been working and found some bugs that will eat the reproductive part of the Purple Loose Strife plants, and of course we are concerned now, if we turned the bugs lose and we run out of Purple Loose Strife, what are we going to get to eat the bugs, or what else are they going to want to eat?

False Indigo is another one that is very invasive on water bodies, and interestingly enough, both Purple Loose Strife and False Indigo are transmitted or relocated by the very water that they are invading. I was told that one plant can release as many as one million seeds of the Purple Loose Strife, and where that ends up down the river and in whose backyard. Yet, interestingly enough, we have government rules and regulations on the eradication of those, even on private lands that are adjacent to what they call navigable waters of the United States Government.

I would be interested, especially from the Nature Conservancy, because I know you folks probably do a better job than any of the other conservation groups that I am aware of, of managing your lands for beneficial use and multiple use, at least you do in Idaho. I do not know about the other projects you have. But I would be interested if we could put a dimension in here that included the eradication of weeds on private lands, as well, and projects that would encourage that.

Mr. RANDALL. Yes, as the bill is written now, it definitely encourages the inclusion of private landowners in these cooperative weed management entities.

Mr. OTTER. Under that process, do you see a permit would be required?

Mr. RANDALL. For use of herbicides on private-entity lands?

Mr. OTTER. Yes.

Mr. RANDALL. I believe that is going to be regulated by the States themselves. So, as far as I understand it, this bill does not address that directly. The examples that I can give you are where I have been involved as an adviser-consultant, if you will, on cooperative weed management areas that the conservancy is a partner in, and we are a private landowner, and we have been directly involved in cooperative weed management.

Mr. OTTER. Do you pay taxes on that land?

Mr. RANDALL. Yes.

Mr. OTTER. How much taxes do you pay per acre, for weed control, to the county?

Mr. RANDALL. Since we are all across the country, it is all over the board, and I do not know. I could get that information.

Mr. OTTER. That would be interesting. I would like to have that information.

Mr. RANDALL. I will say that it will be all over the board, because we have 1,300 preserves and they are all across the country.

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Carroll, you are going to have to help me out with part of this, because I am not aware of how the other States are, but in Idaho, we have 44 counties. So, subsequently, we have 44 weed control districts, and then we have some spread across the counties. In my home county of Ada County, if I have got a noxious weed patch that the county weed supervisors happen to see, and

they give me warning and I do not eradicate those weeds, they can then come in and take defensive action on those weeds to eradicate them and then send me a bill, and if i do not pay the bill, they can actually put a lien against my land.

I think maybe you were in the audience when I asked Senator Craig if this was the direction we were going here. But it seems to me that responsible land ownership, no matter who owns the land, requires that you have a peaceful existence with your neighbor, and it seems to me that the Federal Government has not been a peaceful neighbor. Am I right or wrong there?

Mr. CARROLL. I believe you are right. Typically, in the West, that basically the way the laws are set up, that if mitigation is not completed by the landowner, then they have the ability to go in and make a treatment and lien the property. I am also a local county weed manager. One of the problems we run into, you cannot get blood out of a turnip, so if you go into a portion of Federal land that pays no taxes, I have no way to lien their taxes.

Mr. OTTER. But it is not just the taxes, sir, it is my property. If I went to sell that property, the results of the income that come off of that property, actually, the county can come in and attach part of that.

Mr. CARROLL. That is true.

Mr. OTTER. Or any income that comes off that property, that the county knows about.

Mr. CARROLL. I think that might vary from State to State.

Mr. OTTER. Well, in Idaho, I can tell you on the private ground, because about 65 percent of the land mass of the State of Idaho is Federal ground. So the larger the neighbor, the larger the problem.

Mr. CARROLL. Exactly.

Mr. OTTER. Whether it is with Mr. Skinner's industry in the cattle business—and I have been in the cattle business, and I have gone through the larkspur kills in the early spring, because we were not allowed, in many cases, to eradicate the flower, and, of course, that is the first thing that turns green and when you turn the cattle out, that is the first thing they are going to eat, and it kills them.

So we have got many problems as far as I am concerned. This bill is going in the right direction, but it is not near far enough, because I think if it is a public policy, and it is necessary for the government to say noxious weeds are a problem, and so therefore we need teeth in the law in order to be able to control those invasive weeds, that teeth in the law should apply no matter whom the property owner is. So I would hope that this is a beginning and not the end of where we need to go with the eradication.

Mr. CARROLL. Perhaps I could clarify a little bit; when Senator Craig made the statement that counties or States are not able to do what they term is an enforcement action on Federal land, that is not the case in Colorado. In Colorado, we do have the authority to go and enforce on Federally-owned ground. I do not believe anybody has ever tried it and I am not quite sure how it would end up, but the main thing is you are right. This bill is a good start. It points us in the right direction. It allows the formation of partnerships, and that is probably key.

Mr. OTTER. I am interested in your right to enforce the Federal Government on their land, because under the equal standings doctrine, it seems to me if Colorado has that authority, every State should have that authority or does have that authority.

Mr. HEFLEY. Colorado has particularly good representation in Congress, is the reason they have that authority.

[Laughter.]

Mr. CARROLL. That is exactly right.

Mr. OTTER. Actually, beginning this year, so does Idaho, but I am only a 160-day wonder here, Joe. Give me a little time. I would be interested in that authority and the source of that authority, because if that is truly the case and if we can enforce that law—it is the right thing to do—then I think we certainly have been missing the bet, because we ought to be able to do the same thing in the Oregon Breaks. We ought to be able to do the same thing everywhere.

Mr. CARROLL. I think Dr. Beck be able to talk a little bit about that. He has been around forever, so he probably wrote the law.

Mr. BECK. I think the legislation that Mike is referring to is out of the Plant Protection Act, and I think it is Section 2814 out of the old Federal Noxious Weed Act, is what he is referring to, and that portion of the law requires Federal agencies to manage weeds in cooperation with State and local government.

Mr. OTTER. What is the penalty if they do not?

Mr. BECK. There is no penalty in there, that I am aware of.

Mr. OTTER. I want to say that is the problem, and that is the problem that I see in this bill. If Butch Otter does not manage his land in a peaceful way to his neighbors, there is a penalty, and people sitting in this Congress and probably in this room at one time or another said we have to have teeth in the law to make people obey it, yet we never have teeth in the law when we want to make our big neighbor, the Federal Government, obey the law. I understand, in many ways, how difficult that is for people to understand. But I also feel what is good for the citizen is good for every citizen; what is good for the landowner, the private landowner, is good for every landowner.

I am going to continue to pursue that course during my time in Congress. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HEFLEY. I hope you do, Congressman. I always feel it is necessary to apologize that we do not have more Committee members here, and many of you have come a long way to testify. I do not want you to think that it is not important for you to be here. You can help shape this legislation, and I think the fact that there are not more members here is the fact that this is not a very controversial issue, for which I am thankful. I do not usually introduce legislation that turns out to be supported by both the departments of the government and the environmental community and everybody concerned. So I am very pleased that there is strong support here.

We would like any specific recommendations, in addition to what you have testified to, that you would have to make this a better bill, a more effective piece of legislation. So we would welcome that and ask you to submit that to us. Let me ask you, Mr. Skinner, before we close, do you ranch near Bob Smith?

Mr. SKINNER. About 130 miles from where Bob Smith used to ranch. He ranched to the west. We actually even leased some of his permit.

Mr. HEFLEY. I see. Thank you very much for being here. We appreciate your testimony.

The Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:44 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[The following additional information was submitted for the record:]

1. Statement of the American Farm Bureau Federation;
2. Letter from the Colorado Department of Agriculture;
3. Letter from the Florida Farm Bureau Federation;
4. Letter from the Montana Department of Agriculture;
5. Letter from the Weed Science Society of America; and
6. Letter from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture.

Statement of the American Farm Bureau Federation

The American Farm Bureau Federation is the largest general farm organization in the United States, representing the interests of more than five million member families in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Our members produce virtually every commodity produced in the United States. We submit this statement for the hearing record.

Harmful noxious weeds pose an extremely serious problem for agriculture. It was estimated in 1994 the impacts from noxious weeds were over $13 billion per year. A Cornell University study completed last year estimated invasive plants and animals cost the American people $137 billion every year.

A 1996 Bureau of Land Management report estimates that invasive plants infest over 100 million acres across the United States. It mentions that every year they spread across another three million acres—an area twice the size of Delaware. It says that up to 4,600 acres of additional federal lands in the Western United States are negatively impacted by harmful plants per day.

Harmful noxious weeds also cause significant environmental damage. These plants rapidly spread over large land areas, and there are no natural barriers to prevent their spread. One study estimates that invasive plants and animals have contributed to 35 to 46 percent of all species being listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Harmful plants also may dramatically alter the ecology of an area. For example, cheatgrass in the western United States has increased fire risks twenty fold.

The list of harmful plants and the damage they cause increases every year. It is a national problem that causes significant damage. And needs to be addressed at the national level.

Prevention and control of harmful weeds are very important to Farm Bureau and our members. Farm Bureau supports an aggressive effort at both the federal and state levels to control or eradicate these devastating plant species. The recently released management plan entitled "Meeting the Invasive Species Challenge" indicates a commitment of the many federal agencies having some responsibilities on this issue to coordinate their efforts to more effectively combat these species.

H.R. 1462 recognizes that efficient use of funds and effective control of noxious weeds requires coordination of all levels of government. The bill would allocate federal funds to the states through recommendations from a federal advisory committee, and the states would distribute the funds to local entities upon selection of local projects. The federal share would be up to 50 percent of the total cost of a project.

We believe the process contained in the bill provides proper coordination among the different levels of government. States and local entities should take a leadership role in controlling harmful weeds in their area. The role of the federal government should be to recognize that control work should be done at the state level, and to coordinate and support these efforts. H.R. 1462 incorporates these roles.

While we generally support the purpose of the bill and the procedures employed in the bill to carry out that purpose, we offer a few suggestions for improving the bill.

The plants should be referred to as "noxious weeds" instead of "nonnative weeds." The term "noxious weeds" has an established meaning and there is a list of noxious weeds which the agencies can refer to. "Nonnative weeds" has no such established meaning. Calling them "harmful nonnative weeds" does not resolve the problem, because "harm" is a relative term and the bill does not specify the type of "harm" being described. Terminology should be consistent throughout, and "noxious weeds" offers the best understanding of what is covered under the bill.

The term "weed management entities" needs clarification. This is an important concept in the bill because these entities are the ultimate recipients of the federal funds that the bill would distribute. Because of the way in which the bill is structured—with funds being distributed through the states—we suggest that there be some element of local government involved in a weed management entity, or at the very least some recognized coordinated resource management or watershed management group. To be effective, control of noxious weeds needs to occur at the widest appropriate geographical level to prevent their return or their spread. Furthermore, noxious weeds need to be controlled across property lines in order to achieve the same result. A concern that we have with the current undefined "weed management entity" is that money will be awarded for projects that are less than encompassing, and the problem sought to be resolved would reappear a short time later. Noxious weed control efforts must be coordinated among affected landowners in order to be effective.

Section 7(d)(4) of the bill provides that a weed management entity may undertake a project on public or private lands with the consent of the landowner "other than land that is used for production of an agricultural commodity." Does this mean that no such projects may be undertaken on those lands, or does it mean that no consent is required before entering those lands? Section 9 of the bill'requiring landowner consent for any actions taken on his property—would suggest the former interpretation. We would very strongly object to an interpretation that would allow entry onto agricultural lands without having the consent of the landowner, and we could not support a bill that would allow entry without consent. As written, this section of the bill is ambiguous. The bill needs to be amended to eliminate this ambiguity.

The bill restricts eligible projects to a single state. For reasons set forth in (2) above, we do not believe worthy projects should be rejected solely on the basis that is crosses state lines. We believe that states should be encouraged to jointly address weed problems that are common to them, and joint projects that might receive funding from two or more states, assuming they all deem it worth of funding under this Act, would foster that cooperation. Because weeds do not stop at state lines, funding for weed control projects should not stop at state lines either.

We look forward to working with the committee to craft a bill that will provide some relief to the massive noxious weed problem that faces farmers and ranchers across the country.

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June 12, 2001

Representative Joel Hefley, Chairman
National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands Subcommittee
2230 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Hefley,

I am writing to provide testimony on behalf of the State of Colorado in strong support of H.R. 1462, the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001. In my opinion, H.R. 1462 and any funds appropriated to fulfill the purposes of this Act will provide much needed financial assistance to stimulate and support the development of cooperative weed management efforts in communities throughout the nation. Like many other states, Colorado and its citizens are engaged in a fight to stop the spread of harmful, nonnative weeds and reduce the significant negative impacts these species inflict upon agriculture, the environment, state and local economies, recreation, and public health. In Colorado, these impacts easily exceed $100 million annually to agriculture alone.

While our citizens are committed to being good stewards of our public and private lands, the cost of developing and implementing effective weed management strategies is not small. In fact, research suggests that the cost of managing harmful nonnative weeds is on par with the cost of annual wildfire-fighting efforts. However, the nation invests comparatively little to assist its citizens and local governments in the war on weeds. H.R. 1462 will help to address this inequity by providing for a nationwide competitive grant-making program to support cooperative weed management efforts and leverage additional funds from a variety of public and private sources to enhance such efforts. Colorado and several other western states including California and Montana have already initiated similar, albeit very limited, funding programs which have helped local communities to launch effective weed management efforts but have not been able to meet the demand and need demonstrated throughout these states. I believe that additional funding made available through H.R. 1462 would help to better meet the need expressed by our communities as well as communities throughout the nation.

I would like to commend you and your staff for developing a bill that will provide much needed funding to stimulate and support a wide variety of cooperative weed management efforts. It also promotes coordination with existing efforts, financial flexibility to meet the needs of communities

with significant federal land holdings, accountability of expenditures, and the long-term self-sufficiency of successful grantees. Your efforts to address the concerns raised by supporters of S. 198 have resulted in many improvements that make H.R. 1462 a positive step forward and a new benchmark for discussion and debate.

However, given the substantial responsibilities and duties that this Act will place upon States, I would like to make several points that I hope will help you and your subcommittee to continue to discuss and improve this Act:

1. Concerns have been raised by numerous entities, including many western states with significant federal land holdings, that any funding appropriated via H.R. 1462 be new funding rather than redirected, federal funding already allocated for weed management and research. I share these concerns. Federal land management agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (which manage approximately 24 million acres in Colorado alone) are presently underfunded in their efforts to manage harmful, nonnative weeds. For example, the Forest Service, in the Environmental Assessment regarding the control on weeds on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland released last month, estimates the total acreage of weed infestations on these lands to be about 8,150 acres. However, given current budget constraints, even its most aggressive weed management alternative will control only a maximum of 1,500 acres annually (18.4% of known infestations). Groups such as the Intermountain Noxious Weed Advisory Council and the North American Weed Management Association as well as the State of Colorado have worked for years to increase the resources available to federal land management agencies to address weeds adequately. Slowly, agency resources have increased in this area. Consequently, it would be quite damaging to many western states and local communities that have worked to develop partnerships and programs with federal land management agencies if allocated federal funding were reduced to fund the financial package offered by H.R. 1462. Successful weed management efforts in the West will only benefit if H.R. 1462 is a part of the solution offered by Congress in addition to increased resources for federal land management agencies. Federal land management agencies need reliable and adequate long-term funding to manage noxious weeds on federal lands just as many local communities need additional funding that would be provided through H.R. 1462 to stimulate cooperative efforts across watersheds and the larger landscape of which public and private lands are a part.

2. While weed management areas (cooperative efforts with geographic rather than political boundaries) will be a cornerstone for many successful efforts across the nation, I do not believe that they represent the only type of cooperative effort that should be considered as a "weed management entity" (WME). Under S. 198, I understand this term to include not only WMEs but also multi-state efforts that address common weed management concerns shared by communities across state political boundaries as well as state noxious weed teams that represent multiple stakeholder interests. However, in a clear departure from S. 198, H.R. 1462 contains Section 7(d)(3)(B) that prohibits the use of funds to carry out a project in more than one State. In my opinion, this will impede many communities from addressing weed problems that may be shared along vectors that cross state boundaries such as highways or rivers. Certainly Colorado communities would benefit from the opportunity to work with neighbor state communities that share water resources such as the Colorado, Arkansas, Rio Grande, and Platte Rivers. Furthermore, one of the oldest weed management areas of the nation is the Greater Yellowstone Area, a weed management entity that shares three western states as active partners. I also believe that multi-state collaborative efforts will be an important component of future weed management successes in the West. Consequently, I expect that western efforts at the local, state, and regional level will benefit

from the flexibility to share funding to address weed problems that cross state boundaries. I urge you to consider the merits and needs of such efforts and delete Section 7(d)(3)(B).

3. Section 7(d)(1) describes the numerous activities to which a WME may apply federal funding to carry out a project relating to the control or eradication of harmful, nonnative weeds. These activities reference most of the components of an integrated weed management approach but it is notable that applied research is not included. Although it is not specifically excluded and I believe it would meet the spirit, if not letter, of the Act, I ask the subcommittee to consider including a specific reference to applied research that addresses the management needs of a weed management entity. Although applied research is not a large part of many local weed management efforts, many local communities need additional information specific to their area and problems that only additional applied research can help provide. Oftentimes it is the land grant university that helps to address such needs but funding can be critically short for even the most basic and useful studies. The information generated locally through applied science, e.g. via test plots, can provide exceptionally useful information to local weed managers that will help to stretch their resources further, improve the use and effectiveness of control techniques, and reduce the costs of control for all participants. I hope you will consider the important, and sometimes vital, role that our land grant universities and their science and extension staff provide to local communities and consider inserting specific mention of local applied weed science as a specific activity permitted with federal funding through this Act.

4. To promote the development of self-sufficient weed management efforts, an important provision was added to H.R. 1462 that is lacking in S. 198. Section 7(b)(1)(B) limits the duration of incentive payments to an individual weed management entity to five years in the aggregate. Based upon Colorado's experience administering a small competitive grants program, it is important to emphasize the limited nature of funding to all applicants and to encourage grantees to develop permanent, often local, funding sources that will continue to provide the necessary financial support for a long-term weed management effort. This permits state funding to be used elsewhere by other communities in future years. Setting a duration of payments provides a strong incentive for WMEs to develop a plan for long-term self-sufficiency and to utilize funding provided by this Act to create such an effort. Without such incentives, communities may only tackle short-term concerns and not create a successful program to address the long-term nature of weeds. However, I note that a duration of payment provision has not been included in Section 7(c) regarding the use of financial awards. This may have been a simple oversight. For the reasons I have identified above, I hope that the subcommittee will consider the merit of including a similar provision here.

I hope these comments will assist you and your subcommittee's efforts to continue to improve H.R. 1462 and gain the support of your colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives. I would like to reiterate the State of Colorado's strong support for this Act. It will provide much needed funding to the nation's communities to help stop the spread of harmful, nonnative weeds and reduce the significant negative impacts these species already inflict upon agriculture, the environment, state and local economies, recreation, and public health. On behalf of Colorado's citizens, I applaud you for your interest and action. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance and thank for the opportunity to present my thoughts.

Sincerely,

Eric M. Lane
State Weed Coordinator

FLORIDA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

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June 6, 2001

House Resources Committee
National Parks Recreation and Public Lands Sub-committee
1333 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Subject: HR 1462 Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001

Florida Farm Bureau Federation is very concerned with the introduction and establishment of invasive noxious plant pests. We have spearheaded efforts in Florida to unite the agriculture industry and reach consensus on ways to improve our pest protection systems. Our members have adopted policy, which for the most part supports the spirit and intent of HR 1462.

I strongly urge you to consider using the words "invasive plants" or "noxious weeds" in place of " nonnative weeds". I believe this wording change will strengthen the bill and clarify your intent. The words "native" and "nonnative" always stir individual emotions and leave room for wide interpretations. It is not a plant's origin that makes it a bad plant. It is its invasive or noxious behavior in a particular environment or setting. Here in the Southeast there are hundreds of nonnative plants that have thrived since their introduction ranging as far back as the 1500's. Many of these plants are domesticated agricultural plants that are not invasive or noxious, and for all practical purposes are considered native plants by the residents of the state. Technically these plants are not native. As a matter of fact, Citrus, our state's leading agriculture sector, is not a native plant even though it's been here for hundreds of years.

Farm Bureau agrees that we must encourage local involvement and action if we are to successfully control invasive noxious plants. These pests are not just an agricultural problem. All citizens should share responsibility for the maintenance of public lands that are overrun by an invasive pest. **While it is important and necessary to foster local action to control noxious plant pests, it may pose problems if various groups are empowered to identify, list, seek, eradicate or control plant pests, which they deem "harmful".** For this reason I would like to know more about your intentions and guidelines for the Weed Management Entities as well as their responsibilities and authority. The State of Florida has purchased large land holdings that are managed by five separate Water Management Districts. Each of these agencies has considerable staff and resources dedicated to the control of invasive pests. Would your legislation recognize these existing agencies as the designated " weed management entity"?

Many state and federal agencies share authority for the control, maintenance or eradication of plant pests. While HR 1462 requires the Secretary of the Interior to establish this program, how would it be administered on a state level and through which agency? Will there be adequate coordination and funding among other state or federal agencies? We have learned that it is very important to include and coordinate with private organizations as well as agencies having regulatory authority such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the individual state departments of agriculture. This coordination truly helps eliminate "turf" protection between the agencies that sometimes prohibit the accomplishment of our goal of plant pest eradication or control.

Thank you for introducing this legislation. I will be contacting Florida's congressional delegation to make them aware of our position pertaining to invasive plant pests.

Sincerely,

Kevin Morgan
Associate Director
Agricultural Policy Division

cc. Allen Boyd
Karen Thurman
Adam Putnam
Mark Foley
Rosemarie Watkins

JUDY H. MARTZ
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June 15, 2001

The Honorable Joel Hefley, Chair
National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands Subcommittee
of the House Resources Committee
1333 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: **Testimony on H.R. 1462 - "Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001"**

Dear Representative Hefley:

I would like to express support for the "Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001." The state of Montana has supported the development and funding of local weed management areas and cooperative programs since the 1980's. We currently have a $1.9 million cost-share program that helps private land owners control weeds on their lands, supports creative weed management research, including the development of biological controls, and provides educational programs on weed issues.

The proposed federal legislation (H.R. 1462 and its companion bill, S. 198) would help to support the efforts we have in place in Montana. Montana has a statewide Weed Management Plan that clearly identifies weed management priorities and this legislation could be used to support and further implement effective weed management in the state.

We do have several suggestions about the legislation as proposed:

1) While funding of this legislation is critical to the implementation of the program, it is also important that current level funding for weed management programs on Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture lands not be impacted. The Montana State Weed Management Plan clearly outlines funding needs for all weed managers in the State of Montana and it should be noted that current level funding of our federal partners in weed management programs is seriously inadequate. Current funding for all federal land management agencies in Montana is less than $2.8 million and it is conservatively estimated that the real need is more that $10 million. We urge that any funding for this legislation not be taken from current, on-the-ground weed management programs in place by federal land management partners.

2) Section 7(d)(3)(B) prohibits the use of funds for multi-state projects. We are currently working cooperatively with Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota on problems that cross our borders. These multi-state efforts are effective weed management programs and should be encouraged.

3) The definition of "agricultural commodity" in Section 3(2) seems unnecessarily restrictive. It seems that the purpose is to prevent use of the funds on cultivated lands. Even with the exclusion of "livestock," the current definition seems that it would prevent funds from being used on areas such as improved pasture and hay lands. At the least, the term may cause some confusion to those implementing the program. Possibly this term could be further clarified.

4) To maximize the effective use of limited funds authorized under this legislation, it may be useful to establish a specific system of prioritization for funding listed within the legislation. Montana's weed management plan helps immensely to use our limited funding wisely. It would be useful for the legislation to require weed management entities and states distributing funds to have current management plans in place and an effective process for distribution of the funds.

5) Research plays a vital role in the development of effective weed management programs. Possibly the state funding agencies could be provided leeway in the program to support limited, local research on specific local problems on a matching fund basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important piece of legislation. If we can answer any questions on our comments, please feel free to contact me, or our state Weed Coordinator, Barbra Mullin, at (406) 444-3140.

Sincerely,

Ralph Peck

W. Ralph Peck
Director

c: Senator Conrad Burns, Montana
Senator Max Baucus, Montana
Representative Dennis Rehberg, Montana

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June 15, 2001

The Honorable Joel Hefley, Chair
National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Subcommittee of the House Resources Committee
1333 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Comments on H.R. 1462, The Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001

Dear Chairman Hefley,

I am writing on behalf of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) and our regional affiliate societies to support H.R. 1462, the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001. This bill begins to address a major concern of over 4000 members who apply science to promote effective, economical and environmentally sound weed management. Our expertise is used in many environments including natural areas, public and private lands, forestland, cropland, rangeland, aquatic and riparian areas as well as road, rail and utility right of ways throughout the country. In addition to our strong support for this bill we have several suggestions to help integrate this bill with other important ongoing, public and private, local, state and federal efforts.

Increases in ongoing weed management efforts on federal lands should accompany this bill. For years federal land management agencies have been asked to do more to control the severe weed problems that are degrading public lands and infesting adjacent land. Commendable efforts such as FICMNEW (Federal Interagency Committee for Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds), the Pulling Together Initiative and the National Park Service's new prototype Exotic Plant Management Teams are now making long awaited progress. However, current funding for weed management on federal lands is still inadequate. It is not even keeping pace with new infestations, much less existing problems. It is important that this bill not siphon funds away from ongoing weed management programs nor preclude future increases in the weed management budgets of federal agencies.

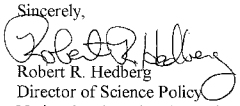
Because weed problems exceed available funding it is important to prioritize management for the greatest gains. An example of prioritization is the Montana Weed Management Plan that united federal, state, tribal, local, public and private concerns to develop a cohesive assessment and prioritized plan for the entire state. The state now has a comprehensive picture of the problem and a sensible roadmap for the future. They know how much is currently spent, how much needs to be spent and where the next available dollar can be most effective. Because such plans provide significant benefits the legislation should encourage state and local recipients to prepare management plans of their own design prior to receiving second and subsequent year funding. The Pulling Together Initiative currently has such a requirement for its competitive grants.

We also recommend the legislation specifically allow state and local weed management entities to use funds authorized by this legislation for applied research when new management techniques are needed. Applied research is sometimes needed to learn how to manage new weed problems, especially ones that are only found in small local areas. An example is Chinese clematis, a new weed problem confined to a three county area in Colorado. Inexpensive research that solves problems for local weed management groups can keep small problems such as Chinese clematis from becoming big problems later.

In closing we strongly support this bill that will help overcome some of the financial barriers that impede weed management. We hope that it will function as part of cohesive and comprehensive efforts to improve weed management on all types of public and private lands and waters. Because weeds spread across all types of boundaries our efforts to manage them must also work in unison across these boundaries.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments and welcome any questions they may have raised.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Hedberg
Director of Science Policy
National and Regional Weed Science Societies

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House of Representatives
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June 18, 2001

The Honorable Joel Hefley
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation & Public Lands
House Committee on Resources
1333 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6207

Dear Chairman Hefley:

I would like to respectfully request that the following written testimony be submitted for the official record during your Subcommittee's June 19th Legislative Hearing regarding H.R.1462, the *Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001*.

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture, and specifically, the Department's Weed and Pest Program Coordinator, Roy Reichenbach, possesses extensive expertise on this issue. With that in mind, I believe the written testimony they have provided will greatly assist the Subcommittee in determining the positive, real-world effects H.R. 1462 would have on Wyoming and other western states. Further, I would suggest that particular attention be given to several small, but important, revisions cited in the testimony which I feel would make this important piece of legislation even better.

Again, I would appreciate your assistance in submitting this written testimony for the official record on Tuesday, June 19th. Please feel free to contact me or Rick Axthelm of my staff at 225-2311 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Barbara

Barbara Cubin
Member of Congress

Enclosure

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Wyoming
Dept. of Agriculture

Jim Geringer, Governor
Ron Micheli, Director

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June 15, 2001

The Honorable Joel Hefley, Chair
National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands Subcommittee
of the House Resources Committee
1333 Longworth House Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Testimony on H.R. 1462, "Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001"

Dear Representative Hefley:

Thank you for opportunity to provide written testimony for H.R. 1462, "Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001." This bill will have a positive impact for many states across the nation, who are combating invasive weeds. H.R. 1462 has several refinements over S. 198 and you should be commended for taking the initiative to enrich Senator Craig's very innovative bill.

I would like to make a few comments about some of the changes that appear in H.R. 1462.

1. Reserving some of the funds for the Tribes is a positive addition to the bill. The tribes have been getting very interested in weed management over the last few years, particularly in Wyoming.

2. Sec.7., regarding incentive payments and financial awards. The differences between these two program segments are much clearer in H.R. 1462.

3. The ability of the Governor to adjust the percentage of the federal obligation, in the incentive payments section, to above 50% in states with a high percentage of federal land is very positive and will help several western states. However it appears that the same type of adjustment for the financial awards subsection was omitted. I am sure this was an oversight on the part of the committee staff. A Governor's adjustment in the financial awards is very much needed to make this program work in many western states. Wyoming has some counties that are more than 90% federal land. A program in such a county would be impractical without the Governor's adjustment.

4. Sec. 7.(b)(1)(B) Duration of Payments. This subsection places a five-year limit to the duration of incentive payments to weed management entities. This is new, but should be workable, as these entities should be able to develop stable funding sources after that period of time. Financial awards [Sec.7.(c)] for weed management projects however, are long term projects that will require initial treatments, rehabilitation, management changes, monitoring, and re-treatments for long periods of time. A five-year limit in financial awards would be counterproductive. One large influx of funding for a short period of time may purchase some equipment that may last for 20 years, but that will not

solve the problems associated with established weed problems. Stable long-term funding is the key to good weed management programs. In addition, federal agencies are looking at long-term contract with weed management entities of 5 years or longer. They are now realizing that short term programs are not effective.

Wyoming has spent $27 million over a 20-year period from 1978 to 1998, to manage leafy spurge, applying the weed management area concept. One third of the leafy spurge in the state was treated each year, and previously treated areas were monitored and retreated as needed. During that time the leafy spurge population increased from about 45,000 acres to about 60,000 acres (current best estimate). This seems like a poor result for the money spent, but neighboring states that did not attack leafy spurge so vigorously had acreage increases that were exponential in many cases during the same time frame. We protected approximately 30 million acres, which are susceptible to leafy spurge invasion with this effort, while more effective biocontrol insects were being moved through the system, more effective herbicides were being developed and more effective integrated weed management strategies were being tested. If we had stopped our program after five years, Wyoming would have millions of acres of leafy spurge to combat. Now instead of millions of acres of leafy spurge to manage with newly developed technology, we only have 60,000 acres to deal with.

5. Restricting the program to exclude the new term of "agricultural commodity"may cause some problems even with the livestock exclusion. Improved pasture and native hay meadows may be excluded from programs and rangeland may be interpreted as producing feed, and therefore an agricultural commodity, which is excluded from the program.

6. Multi-state programs are prohibited in the bill. Wyoming is working with neighboring states on several weed management projects. It makes sense to manage weeds starting at the top of the watershed and working down, as many weed seeds are transported in water and by recreationists, wildlife and livestock following drainages. Wyoming is at the top of the watershed of three major river systems, the Colorado, Snake and Missouri, so working with our neighbors is essential for good management of weeds.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment favorably for this bill. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ron Micheli

Ron Micheli
Director

cc: Congresswoman Barbara Cubin
Senator Craig Thomas
Senator Mike Enzi
Bobby Spellman, Wyoming Weed and Pest Council
Arlene Brown, Board of Agriculture
Kate Moon, Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Weed and Pest Districts
Ag Coalition