



WSWS Newsletter

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April 2008

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**Summer Newsletter
Deadline July 31, 2008**

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Report from the President, by Dan Ball, OSU COLUMBIA

AG RES, P O 370, PENDLETON, OR 97801 541-278-4394

It was great to see everyone for the 61st annual WSWS meeting held this past March in Anaheim. The program went smoothly, the Southern California weather was fantastic, the presentations thought provoking, and the interactions among colleagues and friends, as always, were a pleasurable highlight of our meeting. I need to emphasize that the success of this meeting was largely due to the efforts of many committees, particularly our local arrangements committee, chaired by Nelroy Jackson. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in committee activities. Without the leadership and hard work from our WSWS officers and from those of you on a WSWS committee, our annual meetings would not be possible. Please note the names of your various officers, committees, and committee members on the margins of this newsletter. These are the folks that put in the extra time to make our meetings go well and for the WSWS to function smoothly.

The Arundo/Phragmites symposium held in conjunction with the Anaheim meeting, was another successful, special event, drawing a significant number of participants from outside the usual WSWS membership. Final registration for that symposium was just over 100 participants. I'd like to extend a special thanks to Carl Bell and his organizing committee for offering this symposium. Another symposium on Adjuvant Technology was organized as part of the regular program. Thanks to Patrick McMullan and his organizers for putting together an informative and well attended session.

The overall WSWS annual meeting, including the two above mentioned symposia, consisted of 126 oral and 56 poster presentations. Included in the program was the annual student paper competition that consisted of 10 student posters and 16 student oral presentations. I was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and preparedness of the students that made presentations. I'd like to extend a thanks to Jim Harbour and the student paper judging committee, and to the judges who took the time to contribute to the contest.

In other news from WSWS, the Board of Directors last winter voted to support a conference entitled "Invasive Species of Natural Areas: Management and Impacts" held on February 13 and 14, 2008 at the Hilton Conference Center in Missoula, Montana. Also, the Board of Directors recently voted to assist in sponsoring the 5th International Weed Science Congress to be held June 23 to 27, 2008 in Vancouver, British Columbia. If you have the opportunity, I encourage all our WSWS members to attend this outstanding meeting.

I hope you have a productive and enjoyable spring season. I look forward to serving as your President this coming year, and hope to see you in Albuquerque, New Mexico for the 2009 annual meeting, March 9-12, 2009. Cheers!

Notes from the Business Office by Phil Banks



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I hope that all of you enjoyed the recent meeting in Anaheim. I want to thank Ed Morris and Amber Groves from my office for the great work they did at the registration desk during the meeting. If any of you did not order a 2008 Proceedings or

2008 WSWs Awards

Fellows



George Beck



Rick Boydston

Honorary Member



Robert Zemetra

Outstanding Early Career Weed Scientist



Pat Clay

Research Progress Report and want one, you will be able to order and pay for them at the website. For those of you that did not attend the meeting, you will need to pay the annual dues (\$25.00) to remain on the active membership list. Active membership allows you to vote in officer elections, receive the quarterly newsletter, and receive updates on job openings or other activities of interest. The Board of Directors also approved a project to scan and post all old Proceedings (1938-2006) on the website. Only current members will be able to access these publications. One final request, if your contact information changes during the year, please login to your account and update your profile so we can keep in contact with everyone. Thanks, Phil Banks, WSWs Business Manager.

2008 Student Paper and Poster Contest by James Harbour, Chairman

Contest Summary

26 students competed in total

7 students competed in the graduate student paper Agronomic and Horticultural Crops contest; and, 9 graduate students competed in the Range & Forest and Basic Sciences contest.

6 students competed in the graduate student poster contest

4 students competed in the undergraduate student poster contest

WSWS Judges

Agronomic and Horticultural Crops session:

Marty Schraer, Joel Felix, Andy Hulting, Sandra McDonald, Cody Gray

Range & Forest and Basic Sciences session:

Terence McGonigle, Paul Figueroa, Lars Baker, Mike Edwards, Joe Yenish

Poster session:

Carol Malroy-Smith, Craig Alford, Pam Hutchison, Jim Harbour

Thanks to all the presenters and judges

See winners on sidebar pages 4 and 5

REQUEST FOR WSWs FELLOW AND HONORARY MEMBER NOMINATIONS BY Phil Stahlman

WSWS FELLOW

WSWS Guidelines for Nominating Fellows

Fellows of the society are members who have given meritorious service to the Western Society of Weed Science.

The nominator must contact the member to be nominated and request them to prepare a concise [2-3 page] resume.

- The nominee must be involved in the process. The most pertinent information about the nominee can only be obtained from the nominee.
- The nominee's resume should be based on the WSWs guidelines approved by the Board of Directors (see below).
- Information from the resume will be used by the nominator in writing the letter of nomination.
- The nominator also is responsible for soliciting two letters of support for the nominee. The letters should be sent to the nominator and included in the nomination package sent to the committee.
- The nomination package should include the nominee's vita, the nominator's letter of nomination, and two support letters.

SERVICE TO WSWs – Please address the following points in the resume:

- Officer:** President; Vice-President; Secretary, Research Section Chair; Education & Regulatory Section Chair; Editor; Other.
- Committees:** Standing; Special; Ad Hoc.
- Presentations and Publications:** WSWs – Papers, Proceedings, Research Progress

**Outstanding Public
Weed Scientist**



Robert Wilson

**Outstanding Private
Practice
Weed Scientist**



Leo Charvet

**Outstanding
Professional Staff**



Lori Howlett

**Outstanding
Weed Manager**



Lars Baker

- 4. **Report Articles.**
- 5. **Service to other Weed Science Societies:** Weed Science Society of America; State Organizations.
- 6. **Academic Weed Science Endeavors:** Teacher; Graduate Students; Refereed Publications; Extension Publications, Books; Popular Publications; Academic Weed Science Pursuits; Other.
- 7. **Industry Weed Science Endeavors:** Sales and Marketing; Research and Development; Regional Manager; Product Manager.
- 7. **Other Meritorious Weed Science Service**

WSWS HONORARY MEMBER

WSWS Guidelines for Nominating Honorary Members

Honorary members are selected from individuals whose activities have been largely from outside the Western Society of Weed Science, but who have significantly contributed to the field of weed science.

The nominator must contact the person to be nominated and request them to prepare a vita.

The nominator will then prepare a letter summarizing the nominee's contribution to the area of weed science with emphasis on how the interests of the WSWS have been served by this non-member.

Include the vita with the letter of nomination to provide all pertinent information to the Committee.

**NOMINATIONS FOR FELLOW AND HONORARY MEMBER PACKAGES ARE DUE
BY DECEMBER 1, 2008 TO:**

Electronic submission preferred.

Dr. Phil Staahlman
KSU Agricultural Research Center
1232 240th Avenue
Hays, KS 67601
stahlman@ksu.edu 785-625-3425 ext 214

**Call for Nominations for Candidates to the WSWS
Board of Directors by Jill Schroeder**

The Nominating Committee is soliciting nominations of candidates to stand for election to positions on the Board of Directors. The nominating committee is charged with identifying a talented, diverse pool of candidates for WSWS offices. Please help us identify candidates for office who can help realize the great potential of this organization. We are soliciting nominations of candidates to the following offices:

- President-elect (three year term of office) – The candidate elected serves three-one year terms as President-elect and Program Chair, President, and Past President.
- Research Section Chair-elect (two year term) – the candidate elected serves a two year term, one as chair-elect and one as chair.
- Education and Regulatory Chair-elect (two year term) – the candidate elected serves a two year term, one as chair-elect and one as chair.

The members elected to these offices will begin their duties at the close of the Annual Business meeting at the Albuquerque meeting in March 2009.

We ask you to provide us with the following information about the candidates you recommend for office:

- 1. Candidates name, contact information, and the board position you are nominating them to.
- 2. Statement of candidates willingness to stand for election (please make sure that the individual is willing to allow you to nominate them)

2008 Student Paper and Poster Contest

Graduate Paper Contest: Weeds of Agronomic Crops and Horticultural Crops



1st: Lydia Clayton
University of Idaho
*Using Brassicaceae Seedmeals as
a Bioherbicide in Fresh Carrot
Production.*



2nd: Dilpreet Riar
Washington State University
*Absorption and Translocation of
2,4-D in Resistant Prickly Lettuce*

3. Brief statement of support for the candidate

Please respond to this request by May 1, 2008 by sending your nominations to:
Jill Schroeder, Chair, jschroe@nmsu.edu 575/646-2328

Thank you for your help with this very important activity of our society!

WSWS Nominations Committee:

Vint Hicks

Don Morishita

Ron Crockett

Jill Schroeder, Chair

Cast Report by Phil Stahlman, WSWS Representative to CAST, and Linda M. Chimenti, CAST Managing Scientific Editor

Last October, CAST celebrated its 35th anniversary at its fall board meeting in Ames, IA, the birthplace of CAST. I was unable to attend, so Don Morishita represented the WSWS in my absence. As your WSWS representative, I serve as a member of the Plant Protection Workgroup and as vice-chair of the National Concerns Committee. Weed Science has a strong presence in CAST with representatives from each of the regional and national societies. WSWS Past-President Kassim Al-Khatib is the current President of CAST. This article includes a brief summary of CAST activities in 2007, and a report on the spring 2008 Board Meeting.

Highlights from 2007. CAST produced a record number of publications in 2007, three Commentaries and three Issue Papers and, in cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development, CAST produced a Special Publication on avian influenza vaccines that was written and reviewed by an International Task Force for an international audience. Each publication was "rolled-out" at public events and most received considerable media attention and have been widely circulated and referenced. Biofuels and biotechnology are hot topics as reflected in recent and forthcoming (early 2008) publications. Titles of 2007 publications:

- *The Role of Transgenic Livestock in the Treatment of Human Disease.* Issue Paper 35.
- *Probiotics: Their Potential to Impact Human Health.* Issue Paper 36.
- *Avian Influenza Vaccines: Focusing on H5N1 High Pathogenicity Influenza (HPA1), with a Comprehensive Bibliography.* Special Publication 26.
- *Avian Influenza Vaccinations: A Commentary Focusing on H5N1 High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza.* CAST Commentary QTA2007-3, text excerpted from the large Special Publication.
- *Biofuel Feedstocks: The Risk of Future Invasions.* CAST Commentary QTA2007-1.
- *Convergence of Agriculture and Energy: II Producing Cellulosic Biomass for Biofuels.* CAST Commentary QTA2007-1.
- *Implications of Gene Flow in the Scale-up and Commercial Use of Biotechnology-derived Crops: Economic and Policy Considerations.* Issue Paper 37.

Electronic copies of these and earlier publications are available on CAST's website at www.cast-science.org.

Spring 2008 Board Meeting. The CAST Board of Directors met for 2-½ days in Herndon, Virginia on March 12-14; unfortunately, the same week as the WSWS meeting in Anaheim. Board members participated in 2 ½ days of general sessions and work group and committee breakouts. Several guest speakers, including U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer, addressed the Board. Secretary Schafer complimented CAST for its ongoing work, especially on the issues of bioenergy, climate change, and food safety. He spoke about the importance of a strong agricultural research program, saying that "Important work is taking place, from corn genome sequencing to the surveillance of flyways across this nation for evidence of avian influenza. Working with our university partners, we're dealing with the challenges that have profound national and global implications, from food safety to the honeybee crisis to integrated management. I'm mentioning this because it represents two principles that go to the core of strong science in this century: partnerships, and keeping pace with the time in today's globally competitive environment."

CAST Board Members serve on one of four work groups and at least one policy committee. The work groups discussed several possible new publications and two new related issue papers from the Animal Sciences Work Group were approved by the Board: (1) "Air Issues Associated with Animal Agriculture: A North American Perspective", and (2) "Water and Land Issues Associated with Animal Agriculture: A North American Perspective." As the titles suggest, these papers will address concerns of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air quality, and water and land concerns specifically as related to animal agriculture. A proposed issue paper titled "Resistance Management in Genetically Engineered Pest Resistant Crops" was returned to the The Plant Protection Work Group for revision and further development.

Graduate Paper Contest: Weeds of Range & Forest and Basic Sciences



1st: Amy Blair
Colorado State University
*Interspecific Hybrids Between
Spotted and Diffuse Knapweeds
in North America and the
Implications for Management*



2nd: Travis Almquist
North Dakota State University
*Prairie Community Response to
Aminopyralid*



3rd: Jordana LaFantasie
University of Wyoming
*Greasewood, Rubber
Rabbitbrush and Plant
Community Response to
Chlorsulfuron and Metsulfuron*

The **Food Science and Agricultural Technology Work Group** voted to update the 2003 CAST Commentary on *Food Safety and Fresh Produce* and decided to draft a proposal for an issue paper version of the same topic. The group will move forward with a proposal for a publication on the nutritional and safety aspects of processed vs. unprocessed (raw) foods. Other topics discussed for future development include seafood safety, sweeteners, and school feeding programs. The work group voted to discontinue work on a previously approved task force report project on "The Food Environment and Its Influence on Human Diet and Health," citing concerns that the topic is too broad and other organizations already have work in progress on this subject that would be duplicative.

The **Plant, Soil, and Environmental Sciences Work Group** reviewed the status of a project on "Gene Flow in Alfalfa" that CAST is conducting on behalf of the National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance. A manuscript is in the peer review process and will be completed under CAST auspices as a special publication. The group continued planning for additional titles in the highly popular "Convergence of Agriculture and Energy" series. Parts 1 and 2 have been completed, and part 3 is under way. There is great interest in moving ahead with this series because the topic is timely. Two issue papers originating from this group are in the writing stage: "Water, People, and the Future: Supply and Demand" and "Food, Fuel, and Plant Nutrient Use in the Future." Other topics being discussed for future publications include an issue paper series on energy flow and energy systems, and the impact of fertilizers on urban and suburban environments.

The **Plant Protection Sciences Work Group** reported on two publications that originated by their group that were published since the last Board meeting. A CAST Commentary on *Biofuel Feedstocks: The Risk of Future Invasions* published in November 2007, and an issue paper *Implications of Gene Flow in the Scale-up and Commercial Use of Biotechnology-derived Crops* was rolled out in December 2007. The group discussed revisions to a proposal for a publication on "Resistance Management in Genetically Engineered Pest Resistant Crops." Topics for future consideration include wheat stem rust, invasive species, and a follow-up to the biofuels commentary.

The Board approved a committee recommendation that CAST Issue Papers be made available online at no charge, a change from the previous cost of \$5.00 each. Printed copies will be available for the cost of shipping & handling. CAST publications that are free of charge on the website will be linked to Google Scholar as a way of increasing the outreach of CAST.

Charles A. Black Award

On March 11, during ceremonies celebrating the kick-off of National Ag Week in Washington D.C., CAST President Kassim Al-Khatib presented The 2008 Charles A. Black Award to Dr. Pedro Sanchez for his humanitarian work in African countries. Dr. Sanchez is Senior Research Scholar, Director of the Tropical Agriculture and Rural Environment Program, and Director of the Millennium Villages Project, all at Earth Institute at Columbia University, Palisades, New York. He is Professor Emeritus of Soil Science and Forestry at North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Dr. Sanchez has received numerous awards and recognition from several national and international foundations and humanitarian organizations.

In his acceptance presentation titled "The Millennium Villages and the African Green Revolution," Dr. Sanchez spoke about the overarching problems facing agriculture in many African countries: unhealthy, nutrient-depleted soils and untamed water. The grassroots Millennium Villages program tries to empower communities to increase food production, improve sanitation, generate cash by selling crop surpluses, and provide better educational opportunities for children, especially girls.

WSSA March Press Release Contact: [Lee Van Wychen](#)

CLIMATE CHANGE MAY BE FUELING A NEW GENERATION OF MORE AGGRESSIVE WEEDS

(LAWRENCE, Kansas) — Is global warming fueling a new generation of more aggressive weeds? According to recent research, the answer may be yes.

One of the major characteristics of a warming planet is an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Rising carbon dioxide has been shown to help vegetable and grain crops grow more quickly, become more drought-resistant and produce potentially higher yields. Unfortunately, though, the impact of rising carbon dioxide seems to be far more pronounced in the weeds that compete with crops than in the crops themselves.

"Weeds are survivors," said Lee Van Wychen, director of science policy for the Weed Science Society of America. "They can fill various niches and thrive under a wide range of conditions. While we have about 45 major crops in the U.S., there are more than 400 species of different weeds associated with those crops. There is always another weed species ready to become a

Graduate Student Poster Contest



1st: Jordana LaFantasie
University of Wyoming
Interspecific Interactions
Between Black Henbane and
Three Native Grasses



2nd: Randall Stephens
Washington State University
Organic Transition Cropping
Systems for weed Management
in Eastern Washington

Undergraduate Student Poster Contest



1st: Jessica Ebler
New Mexico State University
Economics of Crop Rotation for
Integrated Pest Management in
Chile Pepper

major competitor with a crop if growing conditions change, such as an increase in carbon dioxide levels."

The impact of rising carbon dioxide levels on weeds can be striking. In a study conducted by Dr. Lewis Ziska of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, weeds grown under urban conditions of warmer temperatures and more carbon dioxide – conditions anticipated for the rest of the world in 50 years – grew to *four times* the height of those in a country plot 40 miles outside the city, where carbon dioxide and temperature reflected background conditions.

So what if there are a few more weeds? Well, Ziska's research shows that common ragweed plants exposed to higher levels of carbon dioxide dramatically increased the amount of pollen they produced. A doubling in carbon dioxide led to a quadrupling of pollen. Some people are allergic to ragweed pollen, resulting in the "hay fever" response, including sneezing and watery eyes. Additional work by Ziska also suggests that even recent increases in carbon dioxide during the last 50 years may have led to bigger poison ivy plants with a more virulent form of the oil that causes people to break out in a rash.

"As the climate and carbon dioxide levels change, we can no longer assume the weed control strategies we used in the past will continue to work," Ziska said. "Not only are some of the nation's most invasive weeds spreading, but they are becoming more difficult and costly to control. Understanding the impact of increasing carbon dioxide on weed control is still in its infancy. While researchers explore new approaches, we will need to mix and match the strategies currently available."

About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit professional society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Weed Science Society of America promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, and fosters awareness of weeds and their impacts on managed and natural ecosystems. For more information, visit www.wssa.net.

Center for Invasive Plant Management Appoints New Director

The Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM) appointed Liz Galli-Noble as its new director in mid-March 2008. The CIPM is an educational non-profit organization housed within the Land Resources and Environmental Sciences Department on the campus of Montana State University-Bozeman. The CIPM promotes ecologically sound management of invasive plants by facilitating collaboration and partnerships among scientists, educators, and land managers (<http://www.weedcenter.org/>).

Ms. Galli-Noble has more than 20 years of natural-resource management and research experience, including managing the upper Yellowstone River cumulative effects investigation, editing scientific documents for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, working as the Assistant Director for Research at the Montana Water Center, working for the US Forest Service in Montana, conducting forestry research in New England, Venezuela, and western Canada, and serving as Peace Corps Volunteer in Mali, West Africa. Liz attended the University of Montana-Missoula for her undergraduate studies and received a Master's degree from the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in 1995.

For the past seven years, the CIPM has benefited from Janet Clark's sound leadership and exceptional ability to promote positive and productive partnerships with many invasive plant groups, nationwide. As the new director, Liz Galli-Noble hopes to build on those past successes, while also exploring new avenues for the CIPM. She encourages invasive species colleagues – old and new alike – to contact her about continuing effective collaborative efforts with the Center, as well as to foster new partnerships and pursue innovative opportunities for the Center. Liz Galli-Noble can be reached at elizabeth.gallinoble@montana.edu or by phone at 406-994-6832.

Contact US

WSWS Board of Director And Contacts for Committee Chairs

President

Dan Ball

Awards, Site Selection

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370, PENDLETON, OR 97801
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daniel.ball@oregonstate.edu

President-Elect

Jesse Richardson

Program, Poster, Publications, Student Paper Judging, Local Arrangements

DOW AGROSCIENCES

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Immediate Past President

Ron Crockett

Fellows and Honorary Members, Sustaining Members, Nominations

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Secretary

Ian Burke

Necrology

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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icburke@wsu.edu

WSSA Representative

Vanelle Peterson

Legislative

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Job Announcement **Contact: Anna Sher, Board President, Tamarisk Coalition**

Executive Director - Tamarisk Coalition

Starting Date: May 1, 2008, or until position is filled

Salary: \$60,000 per year, plus benefits. Position is currently funded for 2 years, with continuation contingent upon meeting fundraising goals and satisfactory work performance.

Organization background:

The Tamarisk Coalition is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization providing technical assistance, education and coordinating efforts for numerous state and federal agencies, private organizations, and landowners throughout the West who are beginning the effort of restoring riparian lands. The Executive Director position would be located either in Grand Junction, CO or Ft. Collins, CO. More information can be found at our website: www.tamariskcoalition.org

Duties and responsibilities: The Tamarisk Coalition is seeking a talented and dedicated individual for the position of Executive Director (ED). In addition to maintaining the operation of the Tamarisk Coalition, interacting with the Board of Directors, supervising other personnel staff members (i.e., Associate Director and Watershed Liaison), the responsibilities of the Executive Director (ED) are as follows:

1. Securing financial stability through the development of an annual budget and leading the fundraising effort:
 - Identify and pursue fundraising and grant initiatives: Coordinating grant writing for both operations and mission-directed proposals and developing database and strategy for grant acquisition from foundations and government agencies that best match the Coalition's mission needs and that of our partners.
 - Work directly with Associate Director (AD) and the staff of TC to manage funding proposals in a timely and effective manner.
2. Define long-term goals and objectives suitable for the development of a five-year strategy:
 - Institutionalize the guiding principles designed at the "Team Tamarisk" meeting of '04 as a foundation for the TC's five-year strategy,
 - Develop cooperatively with AD and Board position statements on related riparian invasive issues.
 - Establish TC as an organization of significance at national level, seek and monitor opportunities on Invasive Species at the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, and Energy and in Congress.
 - Develop Board with new members and ideas to create diversity of talents and interests and utilize the Board's talents and interests to enhance TC's effectiveness.
3. Work with Board to design and seek approval of initiatives.
 - Provide guidance to, and facilitate AD's research and monitoring initiatives,
 - Proceed jointly with AD to implement approved projects.
 - Work directly and cooperatively with Congress, state legislatures, legislative organizations, and national NGO's on behalf of TC.

Qualifications: The successful candidate must have at least a Bachelor degree in a biological sciences related field or non-profit administration, five years minimum experience in a leadership position preferably with an environmental non-profit. This should include demonstrated capability to work with diverse boards and/or committees, and demonstrated experience and success in obtaining significant funding to support programs. In addition, the candidate should have good computer skills and communication, organizational and multitasking skills.

Application Procedure: Screening of applications will begin March 15 and continue until the position is filled. To apply, applicants should submit:

- 1) A letter of application describing how their experience, talents and background uniquely qualify them for the position.
- 2) A resume or curriculum vitae
- 3) Names with contact information of five professional references.

Electronic applications are preferred. Please direct questions and submit materials as attached files (MSWord or PDF only, please) to: Anna Sher, Board President, Tamarisk Coalition, Anna.sher@du.edu

**WSWS Board of Director
And Contacts for Committee
Chair**

**Member-At-Large
Public Sector
Carol Mallory-Smith
Finance**

Oregon State University
Dept of Crop & Soil Science
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carol.mallory-
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**Member-At-Large
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Washington Report by Lee Van Wychen, Ph.D., Director of Science Policy

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Phone: 202-746-4686

Farm Bill Agreement Unlikely: Expect at Least a One Year Extension

On March 15, President Bush said he would ask Congress to pass a one-year extension of the farm bill if the House and Senate cannot negotiate a new Farm Bill by April 18. Congress passed another extension of the 2002 Farm Bill, this time a 30-day extension, on March 12. Lawmakers are hoping to finish negotiations on a \$280 billion five-year policy overhaul before the president's deadline.

House-Senate negotiations have been stymied by a stalemate between the White House and Congress over how to pay for about \$10 billion in new spending beyond the bill's \$280 billion baseline. Lawmakers must offset that new spending with cuts to other programs or tax revenue.

The President insists he will not sign a bill that includes new taxes. He has also pushed for significant restructuring of agricultural subsidies, a hard sell among lawmakers who represent big farming districts. A squabble brewing between the Senate Agriculture and Finance committees is complicating matters. The Finance panel is responsible for coming up with offsets to support the extra \$10 billion in spending, but Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, says those efforts are infringing on his jurisdiction.

Fed up with feuds in the Senate, House negotiators say they are poised to write a new farm bill that includes no new spending above the baseline.

Energy Independence and Security Act Becomes Law on December 19, 2007

After much fanfare and political wrangling, the House and Senate passed the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) and President Bush signed it into law (Public Law 110-140) on December 19, 2007. EISA sets new renewable fuel goals and raises the average fuel economy standard for automobiles for the first time in 32 years to 35 miles per gallon by 2020. More importantly, EISA requires that by 2022, the United States of America work to produce 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels. The mandated sources of those 36 billion gallons are:

1. Cellulosic-based ethanol- 20 billion gallons
2. Corn ethanol- 15 billion gallons
3. Biodiesel- 1 billion gallons

The WSSA Science Policy Committee has worked diligently over the past year on multiple fronts to ensure that any federal programs on cellulosic energy production move forward in a "smart" way. The WSSA does not advocate the ill contrived "precautionary principle" when it comes to using weeds for cellulosic biomass. However, the WSSA does not want to see the USDA intentionally introduce the next kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) or see the Department of Interior intentionally introduce the next salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*). EISA includes an important section (Section 204) in this regard, titled "Environmental and Resource Conservation Impacts". Specifically:

*"Not later than 3 years after the enactment of this section and every 3 years thereafter, the Administrator of the **Environmental Protection Agency**, in consultation with the Secretary of **Agriculture** and the Secretary of **Energy**, shall assess and report to Congress on the impacts to date and likely future impacts of the requirements on the following:*

- (1) Environmental issues, including air quality, effects on hypoxia, pesticides, sediment, nutrient and pathogen levels in waters, acreage and function of waters, and soil environmental quality.*
- (2) Resource conservation issues, including soil conservation, water availability, and ecosystem health and biodiversity, including impacts on forests, grasslands, and wetlands.*
- (3) **The growth and use of cultivated invasive or noxious plants and their impacts on the environment and agriculture.***

In advance of preparing the report required by this subsection, the Administrator may seek the views of the National Academy of Sciences or another appropriate independent research institute. The report shall include the annual volume of imported renewable fuels and feedstocks for renewable fuels, and the environmental impacts outside the United States of producing such fuels and feedstocks. The report required by this subsection shall include recommendations for actions to address any adverse impacts found."

CAST Representative

Phillip Stahlman
Kansas State University
Agric. Research Center
1232 240th Ave.,
Hays, KS 67601
785-625-3425

stahlman@ksu.edu

WSWS

2007-2008 Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

Awards

Robert Wilson, Chair
Roland Schirmann
Frank Young

Herbicide Resistant Plants

Steve King, Chair
Craig Alford
Ian Burke
Joel Felix
Earl Creech

Program

Jessie Richardson, Chair
Kirk Howatt
Bill Cobb

Sustaining Membership

Pete Forster, Chair
Jeff Tichota
Jeff Koscelny

Site Selection

Bill Kral, Chair
Brian Olson
Steve Wright

Education-Ad Hoc Distance Education

Tracy Sterling, Chair
Carol Mallor-Smith
Scott Nissen
Bill Dyer
Kassim al-Khatib

Noxious Weed Short course

Celestine Duncan

The first step in the new law will be to boost renewable fuel production to 9 billion gallons in 2008, an increase of at least 2 billion gallons over last year. To help in that endeavor, EISA provides funding for research on production of so-called advanced biofuels, such as "cellulosic" ethanol from switchgrass, corn stover or other organic materials. **If you are a WSSA member, you should be establishing partnerships with your colleagues and positioning yourself for the \$600 million included in the following four sections of EISA (Section's 207, 223, 230 and 234):**

SEC. 207. GRANTS FOR PRODUCTION OF ADVANCED BIOFUELS.

- (a) *In General.*--The Secretary of Energy shall establish a grant program to encourage the production of advanced biofuels.
- (b) *Requirements and Priority.*--In making grants under this section, the Secretary--
 - (1) shall make awards to the proposals for advanced biofuels with the greatest reduction in lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions compared to the comparable motor vehicle fuel lifecycle emissions during calendar year 2005; and
 - (2) shall not make an award to a project that does not achieve at least an 80 percent reduction in such lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.
- (c) **Authorization of Appropriations.**--There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section **\$500,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2008 through 2015.**

SEC. 223. GRANTS FOR BIOFUEL PRODUCTION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN CERTAIN STATES.

- (a) *In General.*--The Secretary shall provide grants to eligible entities for research, development, demonstration, and commercial application of biofuel production technologies in States with low rates of ethanol production, including low rates of production of cellulosic biomass ethanol, as determined by the Secretary.
- (b) *Eligibility.*--To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity shall--
 - 1. (1)(A) be an institution of higher education (as defined in section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801)), including tribally controlled colleges or universities, located in a State described in subsection (a); or
 - 2. (B) be a consortium including at least 1 such institution of higher education and industry, State agencies, Indian tribal agencies, National Laboratories, or local government agencies located in the State; and
 - 3. (2) have proven experience and capabilities with relevant technologies.
- (c) **Authorization of Appropriations.**--There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this section **\$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2010.**

SEC. 230. CELLULOSIC ETHANOL AND BIOFUELS RESEARCH.

- (a) *Definition of Eligible Entity.*--In this section, the term "eligible entity" means--
 - (1) an 1890 Institution (as defined in section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7061));
 - (2) a part B institution (as defined in section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061)) (commonly referred to as "Historically Black Colleges and Universities");
 - (3) a tribal college or university (as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b))); or
 - (4) a Hispanic-serving institution (as defined in section 502(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1101a(a))).
- (b) **Grants.**--The Secretary shall make cellulosic ethanol and biofuels research and development grants to 10 eligible entities selected by the Secretary to receive a grant under this section through a peer-reviewed competitive process.
- (c) *Collaboration.*--An eligible entity that is selected to receive a grant under subsection (b) shall collaborate with 1 of the Bioenergy Research Centers of the Office of Science of the Department.
- (d) **Authorization of Appropriations.**--There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to make grants described in subsection (b) **\$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, to remain available until expended.**

SEC. 234. UNIVERSITY BASED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM.

- (a) *Establishment.*--The Secretary shall establish a competitive grant program, in a geographically diverse manner, for projects submitted for consideration by institutions of higher education to conduct research and development of renewable energy technologies. **Each grant made shall not exceed \$2,000,000.**
- (b) *Eligibility.*--Priority shall be given to institutions of higher education with--
 - (1) established programs of research in renewable energy;
 - (2) locations that are low income or outside of an urbanized area;

Fellows and Honorary Members

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Rod Lym
Bill Cobb

Legislative

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Pam Hutchinson
Lee Van Wychen, *Ex-officio*

Nominations

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Finance

John Fenderson, chair
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Leo Charvat

(3) a joint venture with an Indian tribe; and

(4) proximity to trees dying of disease or insect infestation as a source of woody biomass.

(c) **Authorization of Appropriations.**--There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary **\$25,000,000 for carrying out this section.**

(d) **Definitions.**--In this section:

(1) **Indian tribe.**--The term ``Indian tribe'' has the meaning as defined in section 126(c) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

(2) **Renewable energy.**--The term ``renewable energy'' has the meaning as defined in section 902 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

(3) **Urbanized area.**--The term ``urbanized area'' has the meaning as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

To access the full 311 page EISA, please visit the Government Printing Office (GPO) website at:

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ140.110.pdf

Gealy Presents CAST Gene Flow Report on Capitol Hill

On February 25, Dr. David Gealy, WSSA Treasurer and USDA-ARS Weed Scientist from Stuttgart, AR traveled to Washington DC to present the results of the Council for Agricultural and Science Technology (CAST) Issue Paper titled: " Implications of Gene Flow in the Scale-up and Commercial Use of Biotechnology-derived Crops: Economic and Policy Considerations". This Issue Paper identifies the nature of gene flow and how it relates to adventitious presence, describes the biological traits being imparted into biotech crops, summarizes present risk assessment and regulatory mechanisms, and discusses potential economic effects and policy and research ramifications of gene flow of commercial biotech crops. The paper can be obtained at <http://www.cast-science.org> Dr. Gealy also presented the results of this paper twice more on February 25, once at the USDA South Building and once at the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO).

This seminar was part of the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (National C-FAR) 'Lunch-N-Learn' Seminar Series. National C-FAR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based and customer-led coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation and natural resource stakeholders together with the food and agriculture research community, serving as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, extension and education. The WSSA is a member of National C-FAR, and as Director of Science Policy, I serve as liaison between the National C-FAR and WSSA.

Science and Engineering Indicators 2008

On January 15, the National Science Board (NSB) released the Science and Engineering Indicators 2008 available at www.nsf.gov/statistics/indicators The NSB, whose primary role is oversight of the National Science Foundation (NSF), is required by law to report to the President and the Congress on the state of science and engineering research and education every two years. This report highlights a trend in many parts of the world toward the development of more knowledge-intensive economies, in which research, its commercial exploitation, and other intellectual work play a growing role. Implicit in the discussion are the key roles **played by industry and government** in these changes.

This 18th report compiles data from a variety of national, international, and private sources and provides key analyses on the national science, engineering, and technology workforce and education, research and development trends, public support for science, and federal support for academic scientists and engineers. Additionally, it provides indicators and analyses for individual states and the District of Columbia.

Some findings include:

Research and development within the US:

- The U.S. is the largest, single research and development-performing nation, supplying a record high \$340 billion for research and development in 2006.

- Of this \$340 billion, basic research accounted for 18 percent (\$62 billion); applied research accounted for 22 percent (\$75 billion); and development accounted for the other 60 percent (\$203 billion).

- In real terms, federal obligations for all academic research (both basic and applied) declined between 2004 and 2005 and are expected to drop further in 2006 and 2007. This represents the first multi-year decline for academic research since 1982.

Public support for science:

- In a 2006 survey, 87 percent of Americans supported government funding for basic research, up from 80 percent in surveys dating back to 1979.

- In 2006, Americans expressed greater confidence in leaders of the scientific community than any other institution except the military.

Local Arrangements

Keith Duncan, Chair
Tracy Sterling
April Fletcher
Nelroy Jackson
Jeremy Gooding

Poster

Charles Hicks, Chair
David Belles
Carl Libbey
Robert Finley

Publications

Jesse Richardson, Chair
Joan Campbell, Proceedings
Traci Rauch, Research Program
Cheryl Fiore, Newsletter
Tony White, Web site

Student Paper Judging

Paul Figueroa, Chair
Jim Harbour
Andy Hulting

2008 Calendar

For more information on these
and other events:

www.wsweedscience.org

Univ of Idaho Weed Tours

June 17 and 18, 2008
Kimberly and Aberdeen Research
and Extension Centers,
Kimberly and Aberdeen, ID.
Tours start at 8:30 am and end
with a catered lunch. For more
information contact Don
Morishita at 208.736.3616 or
don@uidaho.edu or Pamela
Hutchinson at 208.397.4181 or
phutch@uidaho.edu.

6th International IPM Symposium

Transcending Boundaries
March 24-26, 2009
Portland Oregon
For more information go to:
<http://www.ipmcenters.org/ipmsymposium09/>

Federal support for academic scientists and engineers:

- Academic science and engineering doctorate holders who received federal support has remained steady during the last 20 years: 48 percent in 2006 and the late 1980s.

- However, among life scientists, this percentage has dropped from 65 percent in 1989 to 58 percent in 2006.

In addition to the Indicators report, the NSB issued a companion piece, "Research and Development: Essential Foundation for U.S. Competitiveness in a Global Economy," with three policy recommendations:

1. The Federal Government should take action to enhance the level of funding for, and the transformation nature of, basic research.
2. Industry, government, the academic sector, and professional organizations should take action to encourage greater intellectual interchange between industry and academia, with industry researchers encouraged to also participate as authors and reviewers for articles in open, peer-reviewed publications.
3. New data are critically needed, and this need should be addressed expeditiously by relevant Federal agencies, to track the implications for the U.S. economy of the globalization of manufacturing and services in high technology industry

The National Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Conference

"People-Powered Projects: The National Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Conference" will be held April 15-17, 2008, in Reno, NV. Representatives from all 50 states will gather to focus on CWMA funding and logistics, working with volunteers, EDRR, awareness and outreach, and state and national initiatives. The conference will conclude with an all-day field trip to sites in the Reno area.

Cooperative Weed Management Areas mobilize communities to prevent and manage invasive plants and to support healthy ecosystems. Join CWMA workers, land managers, and concerned citizens in a national conference to learn from each other, improve approaches to CWMA organization and management, and increase support for CWMA across the United States.

The event is organized by the Center for Invasive Plant Management and co-hosted by organizations from across the U.S. For more information, visit http://www.weedcenter.org/CWMAconf/cwma_conf.htm

Bonanno Selected to First-Ever EPA Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee

Continuing efforts to strengthen relations with the agriculture community, EPA has established the first-ever Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities (FRRRC) Federal Advisory Committee. The committee was formed under the guidelines of the National Strategy for Agriculture, and it will advise the administrator on environmental policy issues impacting farms, ranches and rural communities and operate under the rules of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

The first time members of the 30 person FRRRC Federal Advisory Committee were announced on February 20 and the WSSA was quite fortunate to have one of its own members, Dr Rich Bonanno selected to serve on this very important committee. As many of you know, Rich is quite active in the WSSA and long time chairman of the Science Policy Committee and Past President of the Northeastern Weed Science Society. Rich is the owner/operator of Pleasant Valley Gardens in Methuen, MA and Adjunct Professor and Extension Educator at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. For more on Dr. Bonanno's biography as well as the other 29 committee members, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/frcc/members.html>

The FRRRC Advisory Committee will meet approximately twice yearly and is intended to consist of approximately 25 members representing: (1) large and small farmers, ranchers and rural communities; (2) rural suppliers, marketers and processors; (3) academics and researchers who study environmental issues impacting agriculture; (4) tribal agricultural groups; and (5) environmental and conservation groups.

EPA's Agriculture Strategy: <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/agstrategy.html>
Agriculture Regulatory Web site: <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/llaw.html>

Will You Be the Next USDA-ARS National Program Leader for Weed Science?

As many of you have heard, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will be looking for a new National Program Leader for Weed Science after May 1. Equally as important, USDA will be soliciting customer input for its National Program 304 (NP 304), Crop Protection and Quarantine. This is the **WSSA Science Policy Committee's NUMBER 1** priority. The WSSA Board of Directors sent the following letter to Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer on February 15:

The Honorable Edward Schafer, Secretary

**5th World Congress on
Allelopathy
Saratoga Springs, New York
Sept. 21-25, 2008**

Sessions on all aspects of allelopathy, including allelopathy in agriculture and the role of allelopathy in invasive species success. For further information go to the website (www.iascongress5.org) to download the meeting brochure.

***Invasive Plant Science
and Management***

IPSM will now accept brief articles about new invasive plants called "**Invasion Alert**". The purpose of these articles is to quickly distribute information to document new invasive plant introductions, significant range extensions, or new relevant taxonomic information. These Alerts will consist of significant populations or plants with potentially high impact.

Articles submitted for the **Invasion Alert** section of IPSM will be peer reviewed and posted online as soon as they are accepted in order to expedite the availability of the information. Papers can be either short research papers or non-experimental notes. Complete instructions for contributing an Invasion Alert can be found at <http://wssa.net/WSSA/Pubs/IPSM.htm>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Jamie L. Whitten Building, Rm. 200-A, Washington DC 20250

Dear Secretary Schafer:

We are contacting you to emphasize the importance of the National Program Leader for Weed Science at the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). We understand that Dr. Ernest Delfosse, the current National Program Leader for Weed Science, will be taking a position outside ARS this spring. The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) is the professional organization representing nearly 2000 individuals in the public and private sectors, including university researchers, teachers, and extension personnel, along with land managers, consultants, agribusiness representatives, government agency employees, and others directly involved in the development and implementation of weed management programs. The WSSA strongly supports filling this position as soon as possible with a qualified weed scientist. The economic impact of weeds and invasive plants on the Nation's agriculture, water quality, wildlife and recreation in the U.S. is estimated at \$34.7 billion annually. Herbicides are the largest group of pesticides applied in the United States, with total use greater than that for insecticides and fungicides combined. With the critical need for increased implementation of Integrated Pest Management strategies and the desire for reductions in pesticide use, a National Program Leader for Weed Science is a necessity to achieve these goals. On any given acre of cropland, failure to control weeds results in 50 to 90 percent yield loss. In 3 national surveys, organic farmers ranked weed control as their number one priority among 30 different research areas. Invasive plants are threatening natural aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems at an unprecedented rate, and are particularly a threat to habitat for endangered species. While advances have been made to minimize the impact of weeds and invasive plants in agricultural and natural systems using sound environmental strategies, this leadership position in ARS is vital for continued advances in the science of integrated weed management.

The USDA-ARS National Program for Crop Protection and Quarantine (NP 304) is the second largest program within ARS, with 236 full time scientists devoted to this effort. The fiscal year budget for NP 304 was \$102.8 million, representing almost 10 percent of ARS's total research budget. Based on the national need for research to mitigate the impact of weeds, and the size of the current ARS program to address this critical issue, a National Program Leader for Weed Science is an absolute necessity.

The mission of the ARS Crop Protection and Quarantine National Program is "to provide technology to manage pest populations below economic damage thresholds by the integration of environmentally compatible strategies that are based on increased understanding of the biology and ecology of insect, mite, and weed pests." Without a National Program Leader for Weed Science, it will be impossible to fulfill this mission.

The WSSA commends USDA for having the vision to create this important position originally, and urge you in the strongest terms to represent the interests of agriculture, public and private land managers, and the general public by maintaining this essential position with a qualified Weed Scientist. Failure to do so will greatly impair USDA's ability to serve the needs of a diverse set of stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeffrey Derr, 2008 WSSA President

cc: Gale Buchanan, Under Secretary for REE, USDA

Edward Knipling, Administrator, ARS

House and Senate Agriculture & Appropriation committees

In addition to filling this critical USDA-ARS Weed Scientist position, USDA-ARS will be soliciting customer input for the Crop Protection and Quarantine National Program 304 (NP 304) Workshop to be held at the

Hyatt Regency Miami Hotel in Miami, Florida from 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, May 20, through 4:30 p.m., Friday, May 23, 2008. The purpose of the workshop is to initiate the next 5-year cycle of the Crop Protection and Quarantine National Program (NP 304).

The **expected outcomes and goals** from the USDA-ARS NP 304 Workshop for ARS customers, stakeholders, and partners include:

- A better understanding of crop protection and quarantine issues relating to insects, mites and weeds
- Identified and prioritized areas for increased research emphasis, emerging issues and critical "gaps" as well as those issues that may be de-emphasized.
- Strengthened professional and interpersonal relationships with other meeting participants.
- Identified highest priority NP 304 problem areas that ARS will address in the next 5 years.
- Identified specific products associated with the highest priority problem areas.
- Developed the framework for the new Action Plan.
- Agreed upon assignments and deadlines for completion of this Action Plan.

The initial NP 304 Customer Review Workshop invitations have already been sent out. However, if you would like to attend the Workshop in Miami, please email Lee.VanWychen@wssa.net stating your interest in being added to the invitation list. Dr. Ed Knipling, USDA-ARS Administrator, Dr. Earnest Delfosse,

USDA-ARS NPL for Weed Science, and Dr. Gail Wisler, USDA-ARS NPL for Plant Diseases have assured us that WSSA could add interested customers to the invite list and we greatly appreciate their support in this regard.

Please note that while the NP 304 Workshop is scheduled from May 20-23, the Hyatt Regency Miami Hotel room block may only be available at \$119.00 per night until April 18. You should contact the hotel directly at 1-800-233-1234 or 305-358-1234 to make your reservations and mention that you are part of the USDA/ARS – NP 304 Workshop.

Again, if you did not receive an invitation for the USDA-ARS NP 304 Customer workshop and would like to attend, please email Lee.VanWychen@wssa.net so that I can work with USDA-ARS to get you a formal invitation.

NIWAW 9 Wrap Up

About 140 invasive plant management stakeholders from 31 states attended the 9th annual National Invasive Weed Awareness Week (NIWAW 9) held February 24-29 in Washington DC. This special awareness week, hosted by the Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition (IWAC), is dedicated to increasing both government and public education and awareness of the issues surrounding invasive weeds. The impact of invasive weeds on the nation's agriculture, water quality, wildlife and recreation already costs the U.S. an estimated \$34.7 billion annually. The WSSA fully supports the Coalition's efforts and takes an active role in NIWAW events.

During NIWAW 9, attendees participated in and heard from many of the partners in the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW) including the EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, USDA, and the Department of Interior as well as the National Invasive Species Council (NISC).

The theme for NIWAW 9 was "Weeds Won't Wait: Don't Hesitate", which subsequently provided education and awareness of the destructive impacts caused by the following five invasive plants

1. Beach vitex (*Vitex rotundifolia*),
2. Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) a.k.a. Downy brome,
3. Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*),
4. Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*),
5. Yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*)

Two special events were held at the U.S. Botanic Garden (<http://www.usbg.gov>) during NIWAW 9. On February 24, Children's Fun Day kicked off NIWAW 9 with plenty of engaging, hands-on activities for children and families to help them learn more about invasive weeds. On February 26, a reception hosted by IWAC partners recognized the outstanding achievements and contributions of both individuals and IWAC partners engaged in educating the public about the environmental and economic impacts caused by invasive plants. Dr. David Shaw, WSSA President-Elect served as master of ceremonies for the evening.

Finally, I would personally like to thank WSSA President Jeff Derr and WSSA President-Elect David Shaw for traveling to Washington DC to participate in the weeks events and orchestrating many successful meetings in conjunction with and outside of the auspices of NIWAW. In addition, NIWAW 9 would not have been possible without the many hours of volunteer time and effort put in by the Invasive Weed Awareness Coalition members. Thank you all very much!

USDA Awards More Than \$4 Million in Weedy and Invasive Species Grants

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced on March 3, 2008 that USDA is awarding \$4.6 million to 13 universities and research labs to develop ecologically and economically rational strategies for management, control and elimination of weedy and invasive species, which cause more than \$100 billion in losses each year.

The awards are administered by USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) through the National Research Initiative (NRI) Biology of Weedy and Invasive Species in Agroecosystems competitive grants program. This grant program has awarded more than \$20 million in grants over the past five years.

This year, projects support integrated and basic research projects, equipment purchases, conference symposia and network development. Funded projects include research at Pennsylvania State University to establish and demonstrate effective biological control of the Canada thistle. Research at Oregon State University will develop and implement ecologically-based cropping systems that suppress summer annual weed populations in vegetable row crops. University of Wisconsin researchers will work to predict invasion of exotic species and their impact on tree regeneration and native plant diversity in Wisconsin lowland forests. To view the complete list of recipients, please visit: http://www.csrees.usda.gov/newsroom/news/2008news/03031_invasive_species.html

CSREES' NRI program is the largest peer-reviewed, competitive grants program at USDA. NRI supports research, extension and education grants that address key problems of national, regional and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture.

Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, CSREES focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. For more information, visit www.csrees.usda.gov

Feds. States Seek to Tackle Cheatgrass – By Colleen Luccioli

NOTE- The following article appeared in the Land Letter on March 13, 2008 and is "Reprinted with permission. Copyright 2008 E&E Publishing, LLC. www.eenews.net".

Cheatgrass has the attention of many Congressional Members and their staff because of its role as a fire vector. Last year's firefighting costs were \$1.34 billion. Adjusted for inflation, the average annual firefighting cost between 1998 and 2006 was \$994 million nationwide. Congress and the President's Office of Management and Budget would certainly like to find alternatives to spending that much on firefighting. WSSA members can and will lead this battle against cheatgrass. However, due to lack of focused federal research and funding, this weed continues to menace the Western United States. Research on ecology and integrated weed management techniques is essential to address this challenge. Lee Van Wychen

Projects at both the state and federal levels are looking at management measures to curb the spread of cheatgrass. However, no curing elixir appears to be on the horizon.

As the tenacious invasive species outcompetes native vegetation -- creating problems for both ecosystems and wildlife -- and presents an increased risk for higher-intensity wildfires, land managers say efforts to control the weed have become more urgent. Their efforts have demanded increased state and federal resources and have included many research endeavors, some of which have been done in conjunction with universities and interest groups.

Yet, despite years of efforts, "it's a dismal picture," said Paul Spitler, public lands director for the Center for Biological Diversity. "There is no long-term solution that has been shown to be effective."

"There is no magic bullet that would kill cheatgrass and nothing else," noted Joel Tuhy with the Nature Conservancy's Utah field office.

The infestation of cheatgrass has been almost intractable in the Great Basin area, which is considered "ground zero" for cheatgrass, according to Tuhy.

Mike Pellant, the coordinator for the Great Basin Restoration Initiative for the Bureau of Land Management, noted, "We've seen an expansion in the range of cheatgrass." He explained that cheatgrass is found in almost all states, though it is not necessarily a problem east of the Rocky Mountains. It is also found in different types of environments, including lower elevation areas, more arid areas, and forestlands, which triggers concerns about wildfires.

Combating cheatgrass

State and federal managers say they are loading up with an arsenal of techniques to combat the spread of cheatgrass.

"We're looking at multiple projects to control cheatgrass and re-establish native grasses," said David Pyke, a scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey and an associate professor with Oregon State University. "This invasive species impacts millions of acres of land -- most of it is public land, some of it is private and some of it is cropland," he added.

Rory Reynolds, watershed program coordinator for the state of Utah, said efforts in his state, which has more than 20 million acres of cheatgrass, have focused on maintaining a "healthy and diverse" rangeland. The objective to these efforts is to ensure native plants are maintained so that cheatgrass does not have an opportunity to be introduced.

The cycle and tenacity of cheatgrass growth present challenges to maintaining native vegetation. Cheatgrass starts from seed in the fall, and by the time native plants start their springtime growth on Western rangelands, this highly competitive weed has already tied up water and nutrients critical to native plants, explains USGS.

Once a cheatgrass infestation has occurred, "We look at ways to restore the land to prevent cheatgrass from gaining dominance," Reynolds said.

Efforts looking at which plant species could compete with cheatgrass and reduce its tendency to spread have included analyses on the effectiveness of introducing fungi to the soil around cheatgrass.

Pyke discussed recent experiments in using livestock to control cheatgrass. The effort sought to address at what season the grazing would have to occur and how aggressive the grazing would have to be. "The problem is that it would be difficult to get cattle to graze at the level identified as effective in our experiment," Pyke conceded.

In addition, Pyke described an experiment looking at using a combination of prescribed burns and herbicide application. The experiment was performed at two locations in Idaho, and the results are still being analyzed.

But herbicide application raises concerns among conservationists who worry that other problems to the ecosystem will result.

"We worry about the impact herbicide use will have on ecosystems and species," Spitler said. "We're wary about adopting a response that might have other negative implications down the road," he added. "We don't want a solution that is worse than the problem."

'A primary vector for fires'

"Cheatgrass is the major fuel for forest fires in arid areas in the Intermountain West," Pyke said. In addition, many sources agree that cheatgrass leads to higher intensity and bigger fires.

The invasive species, which is native to Europe and Asia and was first introduced to the United States in the late 1800s, has become one of the most widespread weeds in the arid American West. In particular, it now plagues California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington -- states that are all severely bruised by wildfires.

With the increased incidence of landscape-level fires in the West, the importance of controlling cheatgrass has become urgent. "Last summer, 2.7 million acres burned in the Great Basin alone," Pellant pointed out.

"Cheatgrass changes the fire dynamics and makes the fire season become longer. And, cheatgrass forms a continuous fuel bed," Pellant said.

"It is considered a primary vector for fires," Reynolds added.

Not only is cheatgrass problematic because it can help spread wildfires, but once a fire occurs, the area becomes vulnerable to being overtaken by cheatgrass. "If an area is affected by a fire, managers are concerned that that creates a welcoming environment for cheatgrass," said Jaelith Hall-Rivera, wildfire policy analyst with the Wilderness Society.

Impact to species

Cheatgrass and other related invasive weeds also carry significant implications to wildlife, particularly threatened or endangered species.

Rob Mrowka, conservation advocate for the Center for Biological Diversity, discussed two species heavily affected by the spread of cheatgrass, both of which are also considered keystone species.

The desert tortoise, a species classified as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, is impacted by the spread of both cheatgrass and red brome, a related invasive weed, because the two invasives displace native plants that the animal eats. "Cheatgrass has a very negative impact on the population of the desert tortoise," Mrowka said.

And the sage grouse, which is currently being reviewed for listing under ESA, is also affected by the spread of cheatgrass. According to Mrowka, the animal is deprived of its typical habitat -- sage brush canopy -- when cheatgrass outcompetes sage brush.

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