

Invasive plants can be introduced to wilderness via non-certified hay, mulch, straw, and raw feeds. Invasive plants, including noxious weeds such as the examples below, outcompete native plants, degrade wildlife habitat, and reduce soil and water quality. Invasive plants cause economic losses in natural areas and impact aesthetics and recreation opportunities.

While weeds can be extremely difficult to remove once established in croplands, rangeland, yards, and abandoned lots, they are especially hard to detect and then eradicate in wilderness areas.

The USDA Forest Service passed order 36 CFR 261.58(t) to help prevent the introduction of new weed seeds into designated wilderness area.



Top to Bottom, Left to Right: Rush skeletonweed, spotted knapweed, perennial sowthistle, orange hawkweed, yellow starthistle, and musk thistle.

*For more information,
please contact:*

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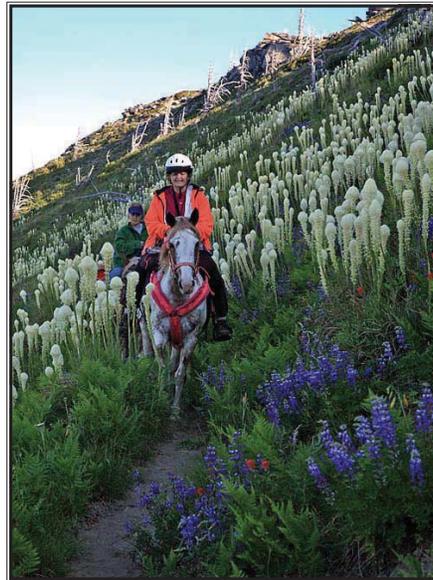


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*Cover alfalfa field image courtesy of Perry Beale, WSDA
Horse images courtesy of Jim Thode
Inside hay image courtesy of USDA*

Literature Citation:

*NAWMA- Weed Free Certification Standards
(www.nawma.org)*



Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch (WWHAM):

*Frequently Asked Questions
About Buying & Producing
WWHAM Products
in Washington State*



Frequently Asked Questions About WWHAM

Effective January 1, 2007, commercially processed feed pellets and/or certified weed-free straw and feed is now required within all wilderness areas and adjacent trailheads in PNW National Forests, managed by the USDA Forest Service. On January 1, 2009, this requirement will be in effect for all US Forest Service lands. The USDA Forest Service passed this order [36 CFR 261.58(t)] to help prevent the introduction of new weed seeds into designated wilderness areas.

Q. What kinds of products are included in this new Forest Service requirement?

Regardless of how they are used, (livestock feed, erosion control, mulch, etc.) hay, hay cubes, straw, grain, and other crop or mulch products must be certified weed-free using North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) standards.

Please note: Commercially processed feed pellets and steamed, rolled grains are considered weed-free feed and do not need additional certification. The processes by which they are made effectively destroy most viable seeds.

Q. Are these weed-free products required if someone is passing through National Forests?

No. You can transport non-certified products through National Forest lands, as long as you do not unload or use them while on the designated wilderness areas and nearby trailheads.

Q. Does Washington have a weed-free forage program?

Yes! The Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board has been working with county weed boards in 2008 and several integral groups to implement a voluntary, pilot program to certify hay and straw. It is called the Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch (WWHAM) program, and it is North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) approved. Please note that WWHAM products are for domestic use only.

Q. Where can I purchase WWHAM certified hay and mulch?

Please refer to our website for growers who have produced WWHAM certified products during this growing season and for feed stores that sell WWHAM certified product. If you are interested in purchasing WWHAM certified hay and mulch, please email us at noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov to receive notification of when products are available to purchase.

Q. How will I know if I am purchasing WWHAM-certified hay and mulch?

There are two ways to distinguish certified WWHAM hay and straw bales. A bale can either have a self-adhesive, tamper-proof WWHAM certification tag attached to the bale twine, or it will have at least one strand of purple and yellow proprietary twine encircling the bale (see examples below). For best assurance that you are purchasing a WWHAM product, check our website (www.nwcb.wa.gov) to make sure the seller of a WWHAM product is listed as being apart of the WWHAM Program.



Q. What is the process for getting fields WWHAM certified?

Basically, a WWHAM trained inspector- typically county noxious weed control board coordinators and staff or participating members of the Crop Improvement Association- will inspect your fields and storage facility for Washington State and North American noxious weeds no more than ten days prior to cutting or harvest.

Certified fields may comply with, meet, or exceed WWHAM standards. In order to comply with the minimum standards, your fields may not contain more than a variable amount of noxious weeds and cannot have any mature seedheads or propagating parts of noxious weeds.



If you are a producer of hay, straw, or other mulching crop product and are interested in getting certification, please contact the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board at 360-725-5764 or at noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov. We can provide you with more specific information.