WRITTEN FINDINGS OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD
(November 1998)

Scientific Name: *Euphorbia oblongata* Griseb.

Common Name: eggleaf spurge

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Legal Status: Class A

Description and Variation: *Euphorbia oblongata* is a perennial herb, reaching to about 3 feet tall, from a woody rootstock. Several stems, often hairy when young, arise from a central crown. Leaf arrangement is alternate. The leaf is glabrous (smooth and hairless), the shape is oblong and the margins are finely toothed. Eggleaf spurge is monoecious, with male and female flowers on the same plant. The inflorescence is a cyathium, found in clusters. The glandular bracts below the cyathium are yellow, ovate and rounded at the base. The whorl of leaves below the flowers are yellowish and oblong and they appear in May, depending on the site. The fruit is a three-lobed capsule. The seed is olive-brown, smooth and shiny. (Hickman 1993; Turner 1995).

Economic Importance:
Detrimental: Eggleaf spurge is closely related to and exhibits invasive and competitive strategies similar to leafy spurge (*E. esula*). This ornamental species escaped cultivation, and is located in a natural area in San Juan County. The heavy root is very difficult to remove, and new shoots are consistently present on follow-up monitoring. Eggleaf spurge also has a white latex sap common to *Euphorbia*, and contact should be avoided.

Beneficial: Sold as a garden ornamental. Very drought tolerant. (Heronswood Nursery).

Habitat: In its native range, eggleaf spurge is found in damp meadows, shady woodlands or waste areas and also in dry hillsides (Turner 1995). In Washington, this species is found on a very dry hillside with a southern exposure, in an open and very sandy and rocky Mediterranean type of soil, growing under blackberry bushes. (Personal conversation with San Juan Co. Coordinator).

Geographic Distribution: Native to Macedonia, Albania, the Aegean Islands, Western Turkey and Greece. Found at elevations from 650 - 2600 ft. (Turner 1995).

History: The request for identification for this species came from the San Juan County Coordinator, in May, 1998. Two sites were located on San Juan Island, WA. The original site is estimated as 30' x 40'. The second site originated as an ornamental planting, which spread, and is very difficult to control. (Lee 1998 correspondence). Previously not known to Washington state. It is considered a noxious weed in California, often found in waste places (Hickman 1993).

Growth and Development: Perennial, from a central crown with a woody rootstock. The stems die back annually. The yellow bracts appear in May. When mechanically cut after flower production, eggleaf spurge will produce a new set of flowering shoots (Turner 1995).

Reproduction: Spread by seed or division.

Response to Herbicide: None known.

Response to Cultural Methods: None known.

Response to Mechanical Methods: When mechanically cut after flower production, it will produce a new set of flowering shoots (Turner 1995). Pulling is not a control option. Because of the large tap root, it must be dug out for effective control (Personal conversation with San Juan County coordinator).

Biocontrol Potentials: None known.

References:

*Heronswood Nursery Plant List. 1998. Internet site
*Hickman, J. C. 1993. The Jepson Manual Higher Plants of California. University of California Press. Pp. 573-4.
*Lee, R. S. May 27, 1998. Correspondence to the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.
*Lee, R. S. July 14, 1998. Correspondence to the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.
*Turner, R. 1995. Euphorbias A Gardeners' Guide. Timber Press. Portland, OR.

**** References available*** *from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board Office in Kent.*

Rationale for Listing:

Euphorbia oblongata meets the requirements for a Class A noxious weed. This species has a limited distribution, it escaped cultivation and is considered invasive, competitive and difficult to control in natural areas. Hand-digging to remove the woody rootstock is an effective control option, at this time, while the infestation is still small. The very limited distribution of this plant makes it feasible to eradicate *E. oblongata* in Washington state.

Eggleaf spurge is closely related to leafy spurge (*E. esula*). Leafy spurge is considered to have the highest priority for prevention, control and containment by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board because of its ability to invade and dominate a site once established, and because of it's reputation and history in nearby states.