WRITTEN FINDINGS OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

Scientific Name: *Hypochaeris radicata* L.

Common Name: Common catsear

Family: Compositae (Asteraceae)

Legal Status: Class B: (a) regions 3, 4, 6, 7, 10
(b) region 9 except Klickitat Co.

Description and Variation: Common catsear is a perennial with rosettes of leaves. Leaves are rough-hairy and lobed or wavy-margined. The hollow flowering stems, which have a white, milky juice, are sparsely branched and 0.75 to 2 feet tall. The yellow flowers occur in heads that are 1 to 1.5 inches in diameter. Fruits are long-beaked and tipped by a circle of plume-like bristles.

Economic Importance: A serious weed of lawns, pastures and waste areas, Gilkey refers to it as "the worst lawn weed in western Oregon". In lawns, its foliage tends to hug the ground, forming unattractive patches. *H. radicata* is an extremely aggressive weed of lowland pasture and lawn, where it appears to need a considerable amount of moisture to reproduce well. Although most of eastern Washington is too dry for this species, it does flourish in lawns in Moscow, Idaho and it has been reported from lawns along True Street in Pullman. The plant is also reportedly poisonous and believed to be the cause of Australian Stringhalt in horses.

Geographical Distribution: Common catsear is native to Europe, but is now widespread in the US and southern Canada. Abundant in western Washington and western Oregon, one population has been reported on Washington State University campus in Pullman.

Habitat: Common catsear occurs in lawns, pastures, gardens, seed fields, and waste places.

Growth and Development: Common catsear is a perennial.

Reproduction: This species spreads by seeds, crown and root sections.

Response to Herbicides: 2,4-D provides good control.

Response to Cultural Method: Scattered plants in lawns can be spaded out below the crown in early spring as soon as the leaves appear. Badly infested field should be cultivated 1-2 years before reseeding. Rotating legumes with row or cereal crops is the most practical way of controlling common catsear in legume fields.

Biocontrol Potentials: None available.

References:

Hitchcock, C. Leo. and Arthur Cronquist. 1973. Flora of the Pacific Northwest. University of Washington Press. Seattle.

Common and False Dandelion. 1983. PNW 117. Cooperative Extensions of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

A Guide to Selected Weeds of Oregon. Oregon Department of Agriculture. 1985.

Dennis, La Rea J. 1980. Gilkey's Weeds of the Pacific Northwest. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, OR.

McBarron, E.J. 1983. Poisonous Plants: Handbook for Farmers and Graziers. Inkata Press. Melbourne.

Rationale for listing: Although common catsear is widely established in western Washington, its distribution is limited in the eastern portion of the state. *H. radicata* poses only a minimal threat to agriculture in eastern Washington, but it would be prudent to prevent it from becoming established in lawns in eastern Washington, since it is at least as troublesome as dandelions for the homeowner.