October 2, 2017

Contact Alison Halpern, Executive Secretary, at ahalpern@agr.wa.gov or 360-902-2053 for more information or photos of proposed noxious weed list changes.

For immediate release

State Noxious Weed Control Board sets public hearing to consider changes to the 2018 noxious weed list

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB) will hold a public hearing on October 31 in Wenatchee to take comments on proposed rule-making changes to the 2018 state noxious weed list. The WSNWCB is considering the addition of six new noxious weeds, reclassifying a Class A noxious weed, and changing six Class B designations in four counties.

When: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31, 2017
Where: The Wenatchee Convention Center, 201 N. Wenatchee Ave, Wenatchee, WA 98801.

How to comment:

- Mail written testimony to: WSNWCB; P.O. Box 42560; Olympia, WA 98504-2560.
- Send comments by email to noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov.
- Attend the public hearing to provide written or verbal testimony in person.

Written testimony should be received by 5 p.m. Monday, October 30, 2017 or brought to the public hearing on October 31. At the hearing, verbal testimony will be limited to three minutes per person, with an additional opportunity to speak if time allows.

At the same location, the WSNWCB will vote on the proposed rule changes during its regular board meeting, which will be held the next day at 9:00 am on Wednesday, November 1. This meeting is also open to the public.

Proposed changes to the 2018 state noxious weed list:

The WSNWCB is considering the addition of six noxious weeds:

- Small-flowered jewelweed, *Impatiens parviflora*, is being considered as a Class A addition to the noxious weed list for 2018. Already widespread and highly invasive in Europe, this annual species has been found in only two locations in Washington, both in King County. The two infestations of small-flowered jewelweed were found growing along roadsides and into adjacent properties. This species is known to rapidly dominate forest understories in Europe and outcompete native species. A Class A listing would require eradication of all known plants. The intent is to eliminate known populations while its distribution is limited, preventing this invasive species from gaining a foothold in Washington.

- European coltsfoot, *Tussilago farfara*, is being considered as a Class B addition to the noxious weed list for 2018. Considered a problematic weed in agricultural land in the Scandinavian region, it may disrupt restoration of native plants and can invade riparian areas after knotweed control in Washington. It is currently an A designated noxious weed and quarantined in Oregon. The State Weed Board is considering the Class B listing of European coltsfoot and designating it for mandatory control throughout most of Washington except for Grant, Lincoln, Adams, Benton, and Franklin counties (where it is unlikely to pose a threat). Currently, known infestations are relatively small and have been found primarily in riparian areas and disturbed roadside habitats in King County, Snohomish County, and at the Mount Rainier National Park in Pierce County.
- Malta starthistle, *Centaurea melitensis*, is being considered as a Class B addition to the noxious weed list for 2018. Malta starthistle, similar in appearance to the highly invasive noxious weed yellow starthistle, was recently discovered on Cypress Island in Skagit County. While the impacts of this spiny, unpalatable species are similar to those of yellow starthistle, it does not appear to be as aggressive. The State Weed Board is considering the Class B listing of Malta starthistle and matching the designation for mandatory control with that of yellow starthistle since they look alike and pose similar threats. Therefore, control would be required throughout Washington *except* for Klickitat, Whitman, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin counties, and a portion of Stevens County.
- Spotted jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*, is being considered as a Class C addition to the noxious weed list for 2018. This wetland species is native to the eastern U.S., but appears to be rapidly establishing in lowland areas in western Washington, particularly in freshwater wetlands and along riverbanks. While the rate at which it has been colonizing has raised concerns that it could displace native vegetation, there is even greater concern about its ability to hybridize with the native spurless jewelweed, *Impatiens ecornuta*. A Class C listing would mean that the State Weed Board would not require control, though outreach would be undertaken to encourage its removal in areas where it coexists with the native jewelweed. County noxious weed control boards can also provide education and may choose to require control if it is a local problem.
- The Eurasian watermilfoil hybrid (*Myriophyllum spicatum* x *M. sibiricum*) is being considered as a Class C addition to the noxious weed list for 2018. The cross between the invasive and aggressive Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and the native northern watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum sibiricum*) exhibits a wide range of variability in appearance and impacts. The hybrid is often suspected when an aggressive infestation of what appears to be Eurasian watermilfoil does not respond well to herbicide. DNA testing is used to confirm its hybrid parentage. Because it requires genetic testing and its impacts are variable, the State Weed Board is considering the Class C listing and would not require control and will focus on providing education. County noxious weed control boards can also provide education and may choose to require control if it is a local problem.
- Cheatgrass (aka downy brome), *Bromus tectorum*, is being considered as a Class C addition to the noxious weed list for 2018. Cheatgrass is a highly invasive annual grass. Although it can be palatable to livestock when it is young, its productivity is unpredictable and at maturity, its sharp seeds and awns can injure grazing animals. Cheatgrass produces a layer of highly flammable litter in the early summer and contributes to increased fire frequency. These wildfires and the highly competitive ability of this grass can transform healthy perennial grassland and sagebrush habitat into less productive areas dominated by cheatgrass.

Cheatgrass appears to be expanding in a few parts of western Washington but is otherwise widespread in the state. As a Class C noxious weed, the State Weed Board would not require control of cheatgrass and so far no county weed boards seem to be interested in selecting it for control. However, there is interest in educating more about cheatgrass management in areas impacted by wildfires. Many county weed boards already provide education about cheatgrass and will continue to do so.

The WSNWCB will also be considering the following reclassification and Class B designation changes:

- The Class A noxious weed spurge flax, *Thymelaea passerina*, be reclassified to a Class B noxious weed, because it has become too widespread in Okanogan County for eradication to be a reasonable requirement. If reclassified to a Class B noxious weed, control would be required throughout eastern Washington, except in Okanogan County.
- Undesignate butterfly bush, *Buddleja davidii*, and shiny geranium, *Geranium lucidum*, in Thurston County.
- Undesignate Eurasian watermilfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*, in Cowlitz County.
- Undesignate Eurasian watermilfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*, and yellow nutsedge, *Cyperus esculentus*, and designate policeman's helmet, *Impatiens glandulifera*, and indigobush, *Amorpha fruticosa*, (except within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark of the Columbia River) for control in Clark County.
- Designate Eurasian watermilfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*, for control in Kittitas County everywhere except in the Columbia River.

Visit www.nwcb.wa.gov for more information about these listing proposals and other noxious weeds.