



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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State Department of Agriculture begins spartina treatments for 2009 season

OLYMPIA – The 2009 spartina treatment season will start June 1 and continue through October, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced today. Eradication and control efforts this year will take place on the saltwater tideflats of Grays Harbor, Hood Canal, Willapa Bay, Puget Sound, and the north and west sides of the Olympic Peninsula.

Spartina, commonly known as cordgrass, is an aggressive noxious weed that severely disrupts the ecosystems of native saltwater estuaries in Washington. Spartina overruns native vegetation and converts ecologically productive mudflats into solid spartina meadows, destroying important migratory shorebird and waterfowl habitat, increasing the threat of flooding and impacting the state's shellfish industry.

Over the past six years, the combined statewide effort to eradicate spartina from the state's marine waters has reduced infested acres from a high of 9,000 acres in 2003 to less than an estimated 120 acres this year.

"The cooperative effort to eradicate spartina is saving some of the state's most productive shoreline habitat from certain loss," says Brad White, manager for WSDA's Pest Program.

WSDA and other agencies will use various eradication techniques including digging out small infestations, crushing larger meadows and spraying the cordgrass with the herbicides glyphosate and imazapyr. WSDA administers the discharge permit required to treat spartina with herbicides.

Since 1995, the Washington State Department of Agriculture has served as the lead state agency for the spartina eradication. WSDA facilitates the continued cooperation of local, state, federal and tribal governments; universities; interested groups; and private landowners.

Brad White, WSDA permit coordinator, can be contacted at (360) 902-2071 for further questions about the Spartina program or visit www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/Weeds/Spartina.

The state Department of Ecology has a 24-hour emergency number that can be used to report concerns about spartina treatments (360) 407-6938.

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