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Gov. Little recognizes National Invasive Species Awareness Week

Boise, Idaho – Governor Brad Little proclaimed this week, February 20-26, 2023, as National Invasive Species Awareness Week. In the proclamation, the Governor recognized the great impact that invasive species have on Idaho’s productivity and management of land and water resources. The proclamation acknowledged the value in the collaboration of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and other county, state and federal entities working together to address this threat.

“This week, ISDA is looking to raise awareness on invasive species and what can be done to prevent the spread.” said Nic Zurfluh, section manager, ISDA Invasive Species Program. “As we continue our efforts across the state, we look to the public remaining as our best line of defense to invasive species.”

The ISDA Invasive Species Program is proactively addressing the threat through prevention, education, early detection and treatment programs. Some of the programs include the Watercraft Inspection Stations, Noxious Weed Management and Control, Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Control and Regulated and Invasive Insect Pests. The Watercraft Inspection Station Program is the largest program, inspecting over 100,000 watercrafts at station locations across the state in 2022. Invasive quagga and zebra mussels have not been detected in Idaho waterways nor the Columbia River Basin, but infestations elsewhere in North America have had significant impacts on native habitats, water quality, hydropower generation, water delivery and recreational opportunities.

National Invasive Species Awareness Week is an opportunity to recognize the efforts that prevent the spread of invasive species and noxious weeds in Idaho and across the Nation. This is a nationwide event to educate citizens, policymakers, agency leaders and elected officials on what can be done to stop the spread of invasive species. This week invasive species programs across the country are focusing on policy issues related to biodiversity, infrastructure, mussel and other aquatic invasive species, forest health and more.

Idaho has invested significant funding and energy into the Invasive Species Program. The direct efforts of each program are carried out by ISDA employees and cooperators while strongly supported by stakeholders, legislators and industry. The ISDA’s Invasive Species Program has been in place for 15 years working to protect Idaho’s waterways and environment from invasive species.

ISDA Invasive Species Program highlights:

- Blue Heart Springs, located on the Snake River near Hagerman, had an infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil, which has since been removed by ISDA staff. This natural area is enjoyed by visitors for its crystal-clear and unique blue water.

- ISDA staff surveyed and treated Bear Lake and the Bear Lake Wildlife Refuge for a Eurasian watermilfoil infestation. Bear Lake is an important headwaters and home to multiple species of wildlife and fish, an important source of irrigation water in the Bear River Basin, and a popular recreation destination.
- In the Coeur d'Alene and Pend Oreille basins, crews have surveyed and treated flowering rush and curly leaf pondweed. These aquatic weeds impact native habitats and recreation.
- In the Bruneau River, a survey and removal of an infestation of hydrilla was conducted by ISDA. Hydrilla affects native habitat and the efficiency of water delivery.
- Along the Snake River in Hells Canyon, Turkish thistle has been identified and ISDA staff have planned treatment for the area. This species has never been seen in Idaho or North America, and ISDA is working cooperatively with Idaho County and the U.S. Forest Service to survey and define the infestation area and identify treatment options to eradicate this highly invasive weed.

For more information on the ISDA Invasive Species Program, visit invasivespecies.idaho.gov.