



**Western Governors' Association
Policy Resolution 05-11**

June 14, 2005
Breckenridge, Colorado

Undesirable, Invasive Aquatic and Riparian Species

A. BACKGROUND

1. Invasive or undesirable aquatic, riparian and terrestrial species influence the productivity, value, and management of a broad range of land and water resources in the West. These undesirable species have significant negative economic, social and ecological impacts which include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Reduction of the yield and quality of desirable crop forage plants;
 - b. Poisoning of livestock;
 - c. Reduction of native biodiversity resulting in a growing number of threatened, endangered and extinct species;
 - d. Adverse affects upon human health through allergies, poisoning, and harboring vectors;
 - e. Degradation of natural aquatic systems including obstruction of water flow in irrigation and drainage systems;
 - f. Reduction of the value of streams, lakes, reservoirs, oceans, and estuaries for fish and wildlife habitat, and public water supply;
 - g. High cost of control;
 - h. Increase in facilities maintenance costs such as power plants, water treatment plants, etc.;
 - i. Detracting from the aesthetics and recreational value of wildlands, parklands, and other areas; and
 - j. Decreased real estate property value and increased costs of property development;
 - k. Competition with or transmission of diseases to wild Pacific salmon or other important marine and aquatic species.
2. Undesirable species are those listed on a state or federal recognized list of noxious, nuisance or deleterious species.
3. Aquatic invasive species such as the zebra mussel, giant salvinia, and eurasian water milfoil are spreading into more Western water-bodies each year. The most common source for these species is via recreational watercraft movement and from supplies sold by aquatic plant and animal suppliers. No Western state has implemented a program that is capable of adequately preventing or reducing the spread of these aquatic invasive species. The economic and environmental damage from aquatic invasive species will continue to rise in Western states without a well-organized and adequately funded effort to implement prevention programs in each state.

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Western Governors recognize that the spread of invasive, undesirable species results from the combination of human behavior, susceptibility of invaded environments, and the biology of the invading species, and that these characteristics are not dictated by geopolitical boundaries, but rather by ecosystem-level components which often span state borders. The Western Governors support coordinated, multi-state management and eradication actions preventing the spread, intentional and unintentional introductions, and control of undesirable aquatic and terrestrial species on land and in the water. The principal objectives will be to maintain properly functioning natural systems, agriculture productivity, enhancing resource and environmental protection, and the protection of human health. Control programs will be those that are economically practicable in relationship to the long-term impacts an introduced nuisance species will cause.
2. In pursuit of these objectives, programs for the control and/or eradication of unauthorized, undesirable aquatic and terrestrial species need to incorporate education, prevention, and early detection and rapid response techniques and base these upon Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concepts and practices. IPM involves the use of all suitable techniques, including biological, chemical, physical (mechanical and manual), cultural measures (environmental manipulation), and public awareness programs.
3. The Western Governors strongly encourage all natural resource land management agencies, local governments, universities and the private sector to collaborate and form partnerships to prevent new unauthorized introductions; for the enhancement, development and implementation of IPM programs; and to work together to find creative new approaches for protecting and restoring natural, agriculture, and recreational resources, including the use of challenge grants.
4. The Western Governors urge full funding support for federal programs that manage invasive species on federal lands and provide assistance to states in the management of invasive species, including the national invasive species act and programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior.
5. The Western Governors recognize the importance of, and need for, a coordinated Western regional approach to all invasive species.

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

1. The Western Governors' Association (WGA) shall post this resolution to its Web site to be referred to and transmitted as necessary.
2. This resolution will be specifically distributed to federal and state agency administrators and members of congressional subcommittees having authority to address the problem of undesirable invasive species.

3. The Western Governors' Association shall obtain necessary resources and work with appropriate partners to facilitate the development and coordination of Western strategies to limit the spread of undesirable aquatic and terrestrial species. The executive director is authorized to obtain federal staff support under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act in connection with this directive.
4. WGA shall convene an Aquatic Invasive Species Working Group to develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive program to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in the water resources of the Western states. The Working Group shall partner with the Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species, the Western States Water Council, and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.
5. The WGA Aquatic Invasive Species Working Group will initiate a regional ecosystem based approach for preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species which would include:
 - a. Coordination of federal and state invasive species lists and efforts across the regions.
 - b. Establish model legislation, policies, and procedures to prevent the transport, sale, and dispersal of undesirable species by improving the consistency of state regulations but allowing for individual state's needs.
 - c. Develop the needed public outreach and education tools as identified by the regional working groups.

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This resolution was originally adopted as Policy Resolution 04-12 in 2004.