

## **NEWS – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Wasco County SWCD was awarded \$4,086 to identify and eradicate the Yellow Flag Iris infestations that have been detected in several isolated patches along 1-84 along the Columbia River.**

For More Information:

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Salem – The Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB) awarded \$4,086 to the Wasco County SWCD for the Yellow Flag Iris Treatment Project at their February 20-21, 2020 board meeting.

The award was one of 58 grants totaling \$1,635,486 for the ODA Weed Grants (\$1,416,509 for ODA Noxious Weed Grants, \$218,977 for ODA County Noxious Weed Grants) recommended for approval in Cycle 33-2020 provided to local organizations statewide to support fish and wildlife habitat and water quality projects. The grants represent great projects that will be taking place in all areas around the state.

*“The primary assessments that have been completed that identified over a 9 mile stretch of invaded habitat make it clear that it is important to eradicate the species before the population spreads to an unmanageable size. The eradication of noxious weeds is a priority for Wasco County Area Watersheds and we strongly encourage and support this project”* says Abbie Forrest, Wasco County Area Watershed Councils Coordinator.

The Yellow Flag Iris Treatment Project will identify the size of the Yellow Flag Iris infestation and eradicate identified plants.

If weed suppression is successful, the existing vegetation will compete for the space. Current conditions include, Reed canary grass, Indigo Brush, alder, and Himalayan blackberry. These plant species are either an ODA B listed weed or an introduced species. In future landscape conservation planning efforts these riparian sites are great candidates for conservation uplift. At this time, stopping the spread of yellow flag iris is the #1 goal. Yellow flag iris out-competes native riparian vegetation, displacing native sedges and rushes. Many overwintering waterfowl species are dependent on these plant seeds as a high-energy food source. Replacement of this food source with yellow flag iris reduces the ability of these marshes to sustain waterfowl populations. It also can block water flow, damage bird nesting sites and invades important fish habitat.

The plants have been detected in several isolated patches in the project area. Surveying will take place from bloom, generally late May through June when plants are easily identifiable. Treatment is planned for the Fall when plants go dormant for the season. Removing this non-native aquatic invader from this region of Oregon is extremely important. It is not known to have taken root along the Columbia River in North Central Oregon. It is not known if there are plants growing along the main stem river but the identified infestation has a buffer of 100 ft between sites and the main stem Columbia River. Infestations span over 9.52 miles of sloughs.

Funding for grants comes from partnership with OWEB- Oregon Lottery funds. Since 1999, the Oregon Lottery has provided over \$500 million to OWEB’s grant program that helps restore, maintain and enhance Oregon’s watersheds. Combined, the Lottery has earned over \$9 billion for watershed

enhancements, public education, state parks and economic development. For more information about the Oregon Lottery visit [www.oregonlottery.org](http://www.oregonlottery.org).

For additional information about this project contact Scott Susi at [scott.susi@or.nacdnet.net](mailto:scott.susi@or.nacdnet.net). For additional information about ODA Noxious Weed Grant Programs, contact Tristen Berg at [tberg@oda.state.or.us](mailto:tberg@oda.state.or.us).

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