

A STATEWIDE MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT OF INVASIVE SPECIES IN OREGON— A SUMMARY

A copy of the full report can be accessed online at <http://www.clr.pdx.edu/docs/statewidemanagementassessmentreportfinal.pdf>

The purpose of the Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC) shall be to conduct a coordinated and comprehensive effort to keep invasive species out of Oregon and to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate the impacts of invasive species already established in Oregon.

Definition: Invasive species are nonnative organisms whose introductions cause, or are likely to cause, economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

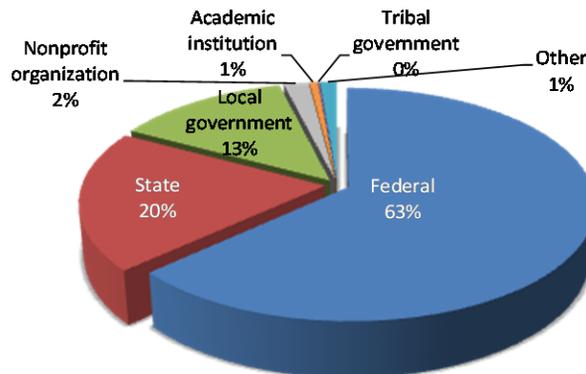
To more effectively control and manage invasive species that threaten Oregon’s natural resources and economy, the Oregon Invasive Species Council commissioned a study to provide an expansive and detailed profile of the current state of invasive species management efforts in Oregon.

Creative Resource Strategies, LLC, conducted a statewide management assessment of invasive species in Oregon to frame the working partnership that exists across relevant agencies and organizations at the local, state, regional, and national levels and provide clarity relative to legislative gaps, policy overlap, public outreach potential, effective funding strategy and application, and the need for increased definition of roles and responsibilities within the invasive species management community.

A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

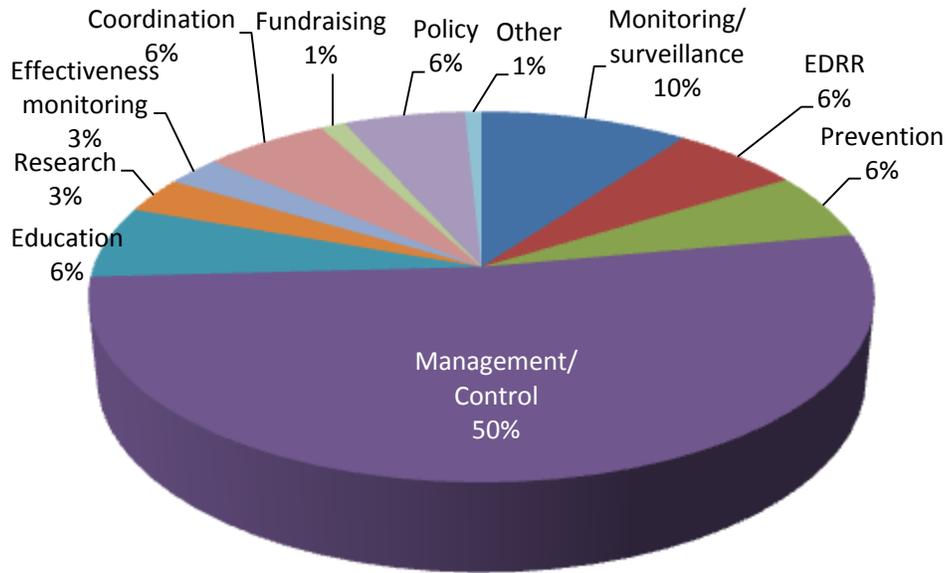
Oregon expended an estimated \$26,362,404 on invasive species-related activities in 2008.¹ Analyses were conducted to determine the source of funds for invasive species as well as who ultimately expended those funds, and for what invasive species activities.

Federal agencies are the largest funder for invasive species activities in Oregon (\$16,668,890), followed by state agencies (\$5,169,971), local governments (\$3,494,453), nonprofit organizations (\$497,596), industry and out-of-state entities as well as public and private foundations (\$327,835), academic institutions (\$165,660), and tribal governments (\$38,000).



¹ This does not include control by homeowners, timber companies, and those that did not participate in the survey.

In 2008, a total of 50% of all reported funds spent on invasive species was spent on management and control, followed by 10% on monitoring and surveillance, 6% on outreach and education, prevention, policy work, EDRR, and coordination, 3% each on effectiveness monitoring and research, and 1% on fundraising and other activities.



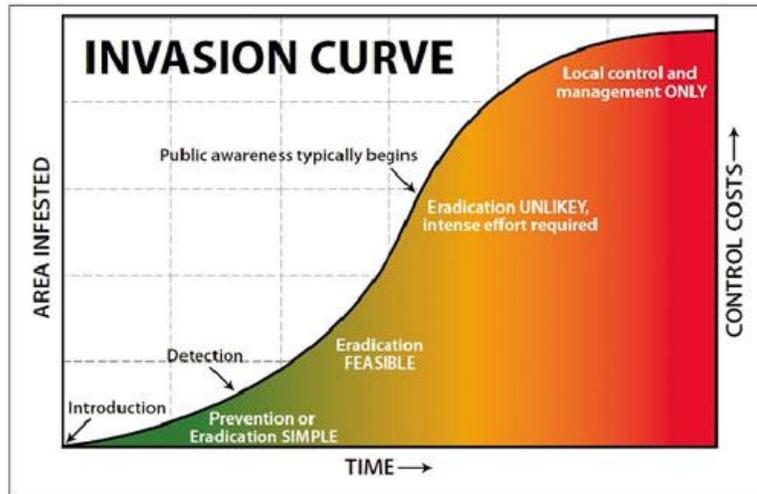
The majority (51%) of statewide management assessment survey respondents ranked the adequacy of Oregon’s invasive species regulations and laws as good, followed by fair, poor, and excellent.

Two surveys were conducted to determine the needs and wants of invasive species database users as well as the attributes of existing databases. Short-term, the state should develop minimum standards for the most commonly used databases and develop tools that allow people to query across databases to record and extract information; long-term, the state should analyze the specifics of each of the most commonly used databases, and make recommendations to pool resources and potentially reduce the number of databases while increasing the utility of those in existence.

The most common method to evaluate program effectiveness in 2008 was outcome-based performance objectives (27%), followed by effectiveness monitoring (20%) and met the requirements of a contract (20%), compliance monitoring (14%), and conduct opinion surveys (6%).

A total of 38% of respondents ranked funding as the most important or second most important obstacle to effective implementation of invasive species programs, compared to a total of 14% of survey respondents, who ranked public awareness as the most important or second most important obstacle.

A total of 58% of survey respondents indicated they participate in an EDRR network; however, it is unclear what constitutes an EDRR network. Survey respondents identified numerous basin, local, county, regional, and state EDRR networks—many more than those identified by The Nature Conservancy. These results indicate the need for Oregon to develop a set of best management practices and minimum standards for EDRR networks to ensure consistent use and application of these networks statewide.



Prevention is the first defense for invasive species. After prevention, EDRR is the most successful, cost-effective, and least damaging means of invasive species control.

There was no evidence found to support the theory that there are conflicting actions promoted by agencies that contribute to invasive species establishment; however, evidence was found that indicates there are opportunities for collaboration among agencies not being realized and that there are significant gaps relative to planning outcomes.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The statewide management assessment concluded with a comprehensive list of recommendations for the Council. With the Council’s review and input, these recommendations were combined and prioritized to produce a total of 12 recommendations:

- (1) Develop one comprehensive invasive species list/plan that spans all taxa and identifies the highest priorities for funding and management activities and identifies costs. This plan could also serve as the implementation plan for the invasive species key priority conservation areas of the Oregon Conservation Strategy.
- (2) Establish a funded weed district and program for each county in Oregon to provide consistency across the state, and cost-efficient early detection and monitoring.
- (3) Create and statutorily protect a \$5 million emergency fund and provide sustainable funding for invasive species.
- (4) Move the state toward the development and use of a few shared databases to track and manage invasive species.
- (5) Fund programs that provide for experienced/trained individuals to survey for invasive species. Develop a comprehensive statewide Early Detection and Rapid Response network that includes Best Management Practices.

- (6) Develop measurable invasive species performance measures.
- (7) Direct more resources into effectiveness monitoring. Replace current voluntary grant-based funding process with direct funding aimed at high priority projects and programs. Require effectiveness monitoring as a critical adaptive management function to ensure appropriate design and selection of projects.
- (8) Better coordinate amongst all natural resource agencies (locally, statewide, regionally, and where appropriate, nationally) programs and messages that address invasive species instead of developing stand-alone campaigns and agency-focused outreach. Look beyond Oregon's borders and partnering with neighboring states.
- (9) Explore opportunities to redirect a portion of existing funds to fund high priority invasive species programs in the state—not through expensive and time-consuming grant programs, but through direct funding to initiatives designated as the highest priorities.
- (10) Identify existing invasive species plan expenditures and ensure alignment and linkages across plans.
- (11) Develop an all-taxa invasive species strategic plan for the Pacific Northwest to identify high priority regional issues. Encourage the use of the West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health as a vehicle for facilitating regional consistency, coordinating actions, and promoting federal support for invasive species management goals and programs.
- (12) Oregon should better balance its three-legged stool for invasive species funding to ensure financial contributions from government, industry, and private corporations and foundations reflect a shared responsibility and commitment.

By streamlining the management structure, funding process, and partnerships to create a unified front to manage invasive species, Oregon will be well positioned to make progress. More comprehensive policy coverage; a better informed public; a less time and resource consuming funding process; and more efficient management of invasive species can be achieved by moving forward with the Council's recommendations.

