

Oregon launches new online invasive species database

After two years of surveying scientists and land managers, and engaging the help of partners across the United States, Oregon has launched iMapInvasives (<http://www.imapinvasives.org/orimi/map/>), an online, GIS-based invasive species reporting and querying tool. iMapInvasives, developed through a partnership between The Nature Conservancy, NatureServe, the New York Natural Heritage Program, Florida Natural Areas Inventory, and the Oregon Biodiversity Information Center, will help land managers, regional planners, and others who are working to prevent, control or manage invasive species to accurately and quickly record and track where all types of invasive plants, animals, fish, and diseases are found.

"This is a huge step forward for Oregon," said Northwest Weed Management Partnership Coordinator and Oregon Invasive Species Council member, Vern Holm. "There are other tools that provide important functions for organizations

such as ours, but iMapInvasives provides a very comprehensive package to meet the needs of public and private land managers and citizen scientists, and it's exciting that Oregon is one of the first western states to use the program."

iMapInvasives provides trained users with their own interactive GIS data base, where they can enter and retrieve site information, share data with partnering organizations, and plan for future activities. In the future, iMapInvasives will also allow users to record and retrieve treatment data.

The initial list of species included in iMapInvasives was developed from the Oregon Department of Agriculture's "A" and "B" noxious weed lists, the Oregon Invasive Species Council's 100 Worst Invaders, noxious weeds listed in neighboring states, and any species that partner agencies are tracking. The tool has launched with over 85,000 observations of invasive species, and the list will continue to grow as species are recommended. The Oregon

Biodiversity Information Center is managing iMapInvasives for the Oregon Invasive Species Council. The Center will review each species before adding to the list to ensure the species is invasive and its taxonomy aligns with NatureServe's standards.

One of the greatest benefits to iMapInvasives is that, while an organization can upload large batches of information at once, anyone with data entry access can add observations at any time.

"One of the reasons our organization provided financial support to iMapInvasives is because of the many functions it can provide," said Sam Leininger, WeedWise Program Manager at the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District. "...instead of using fifty-plus databases to manage invasives, we now have one central location [to] input data, share data with partners, and have access to real-time information."

iMapInvasives leverages the utility of the Oregon Invasive Species Hotline (<http://oregoninvasiveshotline.org/>), the go-

to place for questions about species people are seeing that they think might be invasive, or for those who have an observation to report but do not want or need an iMapInvasives account. When a suspected invasive is reported, Hotline experts for each county review reports in their area to determine if the observation is indeed an invasive species. Confirmed observations from the hotline will be downloaded twice yearly to iMapInvasives.

The public will be able to view general distribution data of invasive species, while those who request an account will be able to see point observation data, as well as detailed assessment/treatment polygons when this feature is added later this year.

We're... "pleased to have played an important role in initiating a fundraising effort, and doing the legwork to offer a great product," said Rian Hooff of the Oregon Invasive Species Council. "We look forward to continued strong partnerships with groups throughout Oregon that manage invasive species."

iMapInvasives will comple-

ment WeedMapper (<http://www.weedmapper.org/>), a collection of information managed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture, on the distribution of noxious weeds in the state. Weed-Mapper facilitates identification, reporting verification and early detection and rapid response for noxious weeds. An updated version of Weedmapper will be available the first week of May.

For more information about how to use iMapInvasives, visit Portland State University's Oregon Biodiversity Information Website at <http://orbic.pdx.edu/invasives.html>. The site contains background information, frequently asked questions, and training videos.

The Oregon Invasive Species Council was established by the Oregon Legislature in 2002. Its mission is 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. Members of the council include both public and private organizations.

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