

WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

2018

Biennial Report to the Legislature



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At a Glance

Invasive species are non-native organisms that cause economic or environmental harm and are capable of spreading to new areas of the state. Invasive species harm Washington State's landscapes, ecosystems, agriculture, commerce, recreation, and sometimes human health. The damages from invasive species translate into economic losses for communities and businesses.

QUICK FACTS

- Invasive species can damage five types of infrastructure—power, water, transportation, development, and military readiness.
- Power and water infrastructure is one of the most at-risk sectors. The total potential impact of invasive freshwater mussels are estimated to be \$100 million a year.
- Species recovery, such as salmon, steelhead, and orca investments, total more than \$700 million a year in Washington and the Columbia River basin. Invasive species directly and indirectly threaten these investments and their associated benefits.
- The council's reporting tools, such as the WA Invasives mobile app provide quick response to invasive species detections. Streamlined reporting is efficient, effective, and provides the greatest opportunity to stop invasive species before their impacts are widespread.

The vision of the council is to sustain Washington's human, plant, and animal communities and our thriving economy by preventing the introduction and spread of harmful invasive species.

The council works to achieve this vision by providing policy level direction, planning, and coordination that will empower those engaged in the prevention, detection, and eradication of invasive species.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the council, I'd first like to share a huge thank you and kudos to everyone who helped to make this another successful 2 years. For the council to be successful in its charged duties, we need everyone's help on tasks small and large. Within this 2-year period, I'm happy to note that we are making progress and I'm confident that in the next 2 years we'll do even more.

In addition to the work of the council, invasive species are getting more and more coverage at the regional and national level. We are excited to be working with organizations such as the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, Western Governors' Association, and others to bring our perspectives and experience to a broader audience. We feel that the success of Washington State's invasive species programs depend on strong national, regional, and state programs. We move forward and reach success as one united front.

During the past 2 years, the composition of the council has changed in a handful of ways as council members depart for other ventures. We said goodbye to Marc Daily (Puget Sound Partnership), Shawna Bautista (U.S. Forest Service), Alison Halpern (Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board), and Vicki Yund (U.S. Customs and Border Protection). The long-time leadership of these members will be missed as the council continues in their absence and we wish them the absolute best. The council also welcomed Karen Ripley (U.S. Forest Service), Todd Hass (Puget Sound Partnership), Adam Sepulveda (U.S. Department of the Interior), and Luke Woods (U.S. Coast Guard).

This biennium was the first that the council was able to hire additional staff to work on its behalf. Kenzi Smith joined as an intern in 2017 and played a critical role in several federally-funded projects. She was followed by Brianna Widner as a community outreach and environmental education specialist in 2018. Brianna will focus on developing middle school curriculum, implementing adult educational workshops, and helping with a rapid response training exercise at Lake Roosevelt. We applaud their contributions and will elaborate on their accomplishments below.

The work of the council is more ambitious and wider in scope and reach than ever before. We feel that the risk posed to Washington's environment, economy, and way of life is higher than ever before. The collaborative efforts of the council, our partners, and everyone in Washington and beyond are critical to saving million, if not billions of dollars every year.

This report summarizes the council's key achievements in 2017 and 2018. We welcome any and all input and invite you to partner with us in the future to achieve even more success.

Ray Willard, Chair



THE WASHINGTON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

The Washington Invasive Species Council was established by the Legislature in 2006 to reduce risks to Washington's economy and ecosystems. The Invasive Species Council is a partnership of tribal, local, state, and federal governments, as well as private sector and nongovernmental interests. The council provides policy-level direction, planning, and coordination support to the various public and private entities managing invasive species prevention and response throughout Washington State.

In 2016, the Washington State Legislature voted to continue the council for 6 more years with a sunset date of June 30, 2022. The council develops and maintains various tools critical to the management of invasive species in Washington State. The council writes and implements a statewide invasive species strategic plan, maintains the state's list of priority invasive species, manages the state's invasive species reporting system, and maintains the state's education [Web site](#).

After 7 years of implementing its original strategy, [Invaders at the Gate](#), the council recognized a need to update its statewide strategic plan. In 2015, the council adopted its [second strategic plan](#), which identified 14 objectives and 29 specific actions within 5 areas of work. This revised plan provided new priorities and policy direction and formalized the council's commitment to working towards the common goal of preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species in Washington State.

In 2018, the council completed implementation of the 2015 strategic plan's work plan and developed a [work plan for 2018-2019](#) that built upon the success of the prior plan. This update is intended to guide the council's work for the next 2 years. These areas of work include the following:

- Leadership and Coordination
- Prevention
- Education and Outreach
- Early Detection and Rapid Response
- Containment, Control, and Eradication

This report summarizes the work of the council in 2017-2018 and outlines its path forward to achieving even more.

LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

Increasing Capacity to Detect and Manage Aquatic Invasive Species

During the 2015 session, the Washington State Legislature requested that the Washington Invasive Species Council lead an advisory committee process to develop recommendations on long-term funding for aquatic invasive species management and prevention in Washington State. The council recruited committee members, hired a facilitator, and helped develop a charter for the group. The committee included members from industries including recreational boating, commercial shipping, and aquaculture, as well as local government, tribal government, power producers, irrigators, and environmental groups. The advisory committee held monthly meetings from September 2015 to January 2016 and developed a [report and recommendations](#) that were the basis for a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife funding package. These recommendations were the basis for [Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5303](#), which was signed into law effective October 19, 2017.

ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5303
Passed Legislature - 2017 3rd Special Session
State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session
By Senate Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, Soltes, Chase, Hawkins, Warrick, Bailey, and Ranker; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife)
READ FIRST TIME 02/09/17.

1 AN ACT Relating to aquatic invasive species management; amending
2 RCW 43.43.400, 77.120.110, 77.120.070, 77.135.160, 77.120.010,
3 77.135.110, and 77.135.120; reenacting and amending RCW 88.02.640,
4 88.02.640, 77.15.160, and 77.135.010; adding new sections to chapter
5 77.135 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 77.120 RCW; creating a new
6 section; repealing RCW 77.12.879; prescribing penalties; providing an
7 effective date; and providing an expiration date.
8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
9
10 PART ONE
11 AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT—AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES, BALLAST
WATER, AND BIOFOULING MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS
12
13 NEW SECTION. Sec. 101. A new section is added to chapter 77.135
14 RCW to read as follows:
15 The aquatic invasive species management account is created in the
16 state treasury. All receipts directed to the account from RCW
17 88.02.640 and section 203 of this act, as well as legislative
18 appropriations, gifts, donations, fees, and penalties received by the
19 department for aquatic invasive species management, must be deposited
20 into the account. Moneys in the account may be used only after
appropriation. Expenditures from the account may only be used to
p. 1 ESSB 5303.PL

Additional funds were used by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to open two mandatory boat inspection stations at the Spokane and Plymouth Ports of Entry to inspect watercraft, such as boats, Jet Skis, and kayaks. The additional efforts proved fruitful in June 2018 when a boat carrying invasive zebra mussels was stopped at the Spokane Port of Entry (See [Northwest News Network's broadcast](#).)

Increasing Collaboration with Federal Bureaus

At its December 2017 meeting, the council approved adding an additional member representing U.S. Department of Interior bureaus including the U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Reclamation, and National Park Service. The Department of Interior has emerged as a leader in invasive [mussel prevention](#), [response](#), and [innovation](#) and the council recognized a significant gap in state coordination. In February 2018, Hilary Smith, the U.S. Department of Interior's senior advisor for invasive species in Washington D.C. responded to the council's request by providing a primary council member representing U.S. Geological Survey and two alternates.



Accomplishments of the Council

The additional council member and alternate members representing other U.S. Department of Interior bureaus has institutionalized a formal relationship for the purpose of sharing information and coordinating to address invasive species activities.

Leveraging Federal Assistance to Benefit Washington State

Since 2017, the Washington Invasive Species Council has successfully leveraged more than \$590,000 in federal funding for invasive species education, outreach, and preparedness. With federal funding, the council has launched initiatives to provide invasive species regional workshops statewide, develop a first detector network of trained citizen scientists, and prepare for urban forest pest detections in collaboration with cities and counties statewide.

Requesting Funding for Emergency Response

Staff worked on the materials necessary to submit a budget request to create an invasive species emergency fund. If approved, \$500,000 would be set aside to respond to a governor-issued emergency declaration when new invasive species are detected. Emergency funding would enable agencies to act immediately to address and stop new invasions and would buy agencies time to secure long-term funding for continued eradication efforts. Two examples of potential uses of the emergency fund include the first detection of [zebra and quagga mussels](#) in Washington State or the detection of [northern pike](#) in the Columbia River below Grand Coulee dam.

Creating Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week

In both [2017](#) and [2018](#), Governor Jay Inslee proclaimed Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week in conjunction with National Invasive Species Awareness Week to raise awareness and identify preventative solutions for invasive species issues. During the week, the council and partners held events statewide in addition to issuing a news release. Notably, the council created a sample proclamation for partners, which was used by the Chelan County, Skamania County, Clark County, and Mason County Boards of County Commissioners.



Participating in the Western Governors' Association Survey and Workshops

In 2017, the council participated in a Western Governors' Association top invasive species of the western states and islands data sharing and economic analysis initiative. The [council's priority species list and management grid](#) and its [analysis](#) served as models for the first [priority invasive species report for the West](#). This list already is being used to drive decision-making in the West, with at least one competitive funding source referencing species on the list as eligible for funding.

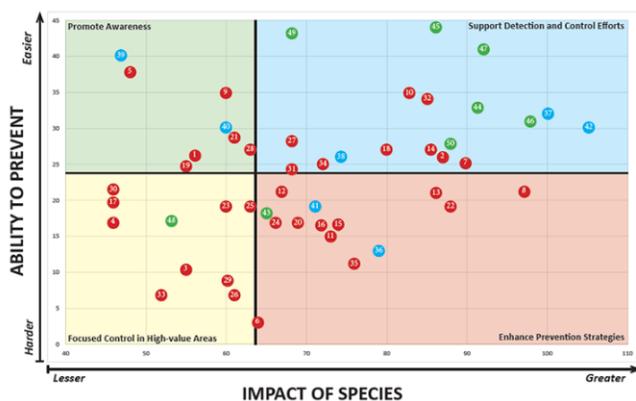
Additionally, Western Governors' Association chair, Governor David Ige of Hawaii, launched a new chairman's initiative in 2018 titled [Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative](#), which focuses on the impacts that nuisance species, pests, and pathogens have on ecosystems, forests, rangelands, watersheds, and infrastructure in the West. The initiative includes four regional workshops across the West that gathered leading regional experts to discuss challenges and opportunities in addressing cross-boundary issues. The Washington Invasive Species Council executive coordinator was invited to participate on a panel focusing on early detection and rapid response by the governor's association. [Watch the livestream recording](#).

PREVENTION

Revising Priorities and Focusing on Preventing and Stopping New Species

In 2017, the council concluded a year-long process to review and improve its top 50 priority species list, which was created in 2011. Interagency workgroups evaluated and proposed changes for consideration by the council. In 2017 and 2018, the council has placed greater emphasis on preventing and stopping species that are new or spreading including the following:

- [Flowering rush](#)
- [Northern pike](#)
- [White-nose syndrome](#)



- Japanese beetle

Multiplying the Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Force

In 2017 and 2018, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife developed two agreements with the National Park Service and Clark County Sheriff's Office that extended the department's enforcement authority to officers in Clark County and at the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. The authority allows Clark County and the National Park Service to operate mandatory boat inspection stations; arrest drivers for not stopping at the inspection stations; enforce clean, drain, dry requirements; and issue decontamination orders. A novel approach in the western states, the force multiplication of the two agreements has been promoted by the council, Western Governors' Association, Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, and others as a model for other states.



Preventing the Introduction and Establishment of Feral Swine

Feral swine are descendants of escaped or released pigs and are highly destructive and potentially dangerous animals. Their spread is blamed for an estimated \$1.5 billion in damage to crops, wildlife, and the environment. These swine can carry more than 30 diseases and parasites that pose a threat to livestock and humans, including swine brucellosis and pseudorabies. Feral swine tend to forage in areas around streams, and their trampling and destructive rooting behavior—often compared to rototilling—causes erosion, spread of noxious weeds, loss of crops, and harm to fish habitat.



Feral swine are not established in Washington, although they have been found in the past. The council worked collaboratively with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services to update and improve the Washington State Interagency Feral Swine Response Plan both in 2017 and 2018 with lessons learned from operations in both years.

Accomplishments of the Council

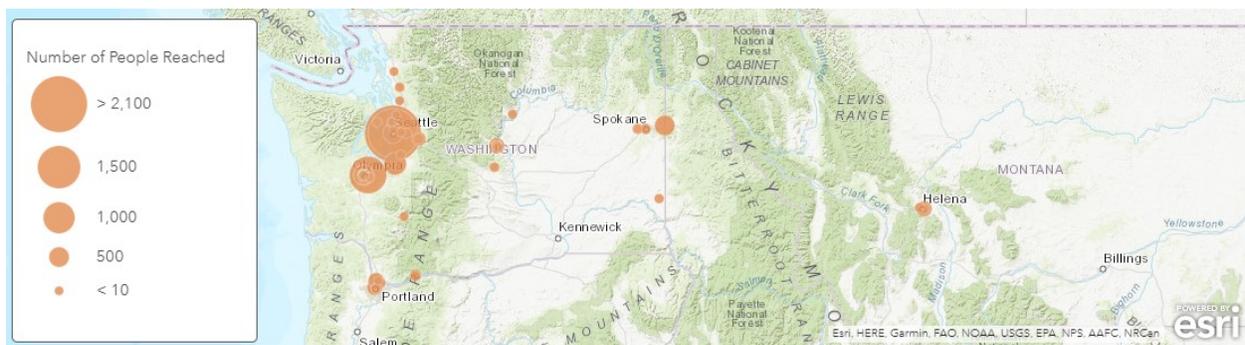
The council also worked with the Washington AgForestry Leadership Program and partners to implement a statewide awareness program and to investigate strengthening state authorities.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

In 2017, the council created its first outreach plan and in 2018 the council built upon the successful strategy by fine tuning its approach. In the past 2 years, the council issued eight news releases, led or participated in 63 events statewide or regionally, and overall reached 425,214 people via social media, 402,590 via Web site visits, and 21,602 via events. In December, these accomplishments were analyzed to inform the 2018 outreach plan.

Site	Reach
Wise.wa.gov	54,372
InvasiveSpecies.wa.gov	320,762

Event Map



Educating Through News Releases

- [Invasive Species Could Cost Washington Businesses, Agencies \\$1.3 Billion](#) (January 12, 2017)
- [See it? Report it! Washington Launches an Updated Invasive Species Reporting App](#) (January 23, 2017)
- [Governor Spotlights Threats to Washington’s Economy and Natural Resources from Invasive Species](#) (February 22, 2017)
- [State Asks You to Check Trees for Invasive Pests in August](#) (August 1, 2017)

Accomplishments of the Council

- [Washington Hunters Reminded to be Aware of Noxious Weeds](#) (October 16, 2017)
- [Gov. Inslee Highlights Need To Prevent and Stop Invasive Species](#) (February 21, 2018)
- [Boaters Reminded to “CLEAN, DRAIN and DRY Boats and Equipment to Block Invasive Species](#) (March 29, 2018)
- [Public Invited to Become a First Detector and Report Invasive Species](#) (September 10, 2018)
- [Non-native Fish Left Belly Up](#) (November 19, 2018)

Engaging People Through Social Media

Social Media Platform	Name	Reach
Facebook	@WAInvasiveSpeciesCouncil	323,369
Twitter	@WAinvasives	104,260
Instagram	@wa_invasivespeciescouncil	106,335

Educating through Television

In May 2017, Justin Bush, the executive coordinator of the Invasive Species Council, talked with Mike McClanahan on TVW’s “The Impact.” The interview covered a range of topics from the role of the council, to invasive mussels and feral pigs, to what we all can do to prevent invasions. [Watch the full interview.](#)



Throughout 2018, the council worked with Dave Martinson on TVW’s “TVW @ Large” to produce a series of invasive species features. In May 2018, the council agencies and partners worked to produce a feature on aquatic invasive species threats such as quagga and zebra mussels and European crab. [Watch the full interview.](#)

In June 2018, TVW’s “TVW @ Large” released a feature on invasive northern pike. The feature focused on the status of northern pike distribution, imminent threat to the anadromous portion of the Columbia River, and suppression operations being led by Native American tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. [Watch the feature.](#)

In October 2018, TVW's "TVW @ Large" released a feature focusing on new technologies for citizens to report invasive species and the value of citizen involvement in quickly detecting and responding to invasive species introductions. [Watch the feature.](#)

TVW also featured two council meetings (September 2018: [Morning Session](#), [Afternoon Session](#), a briefing to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (April 2018: [Afternoon Session](#)) and a briefing to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (March 2018: [Afternoon Session](#)) this biennium.

Building Connections to Salmon Recovery in the *State of Salmon in Watersheds* Report

The council, the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, and other Recreation and Conservation Office staff collaborated to build content to update the 2018 [State of Salmon in Watersheds](#) report. The consortium developed an interactive story map that highlights how invasive species impact salmon and steelhead recovery. Visit the [story map](#).



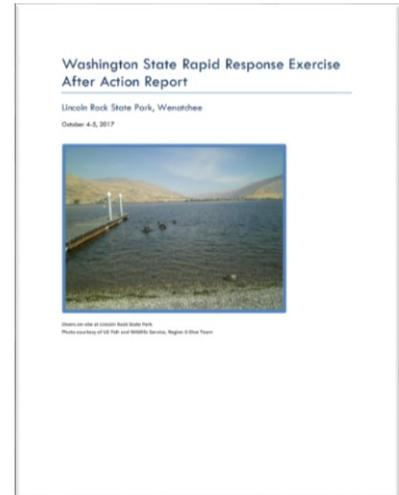
EARLY DETECTION AND RAPID RESPONSE

Increasing Readiness for Urban Forest Pest Introductions

In 2018, the council began a project to enhance readiness for new detections of forest pests focusing on urban areas near international shipping ports. The council is working with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and others to build relationships and readiness between city and county urban forestry programs that are on the front lines of detection and responders from state and federal agencies. In the event of a new invasive insect detection, the state will be prepared for a quick and efficient response, thus limiting cost of control and damages to the economy and environment.

Lincoln Rock State Park Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Exercise

In summer 2017, the council and partners updated the [Washington State Rapid Response Plan](#) for invasive quagga and zebra mussels. In October 2017, the council and partners held an invasive mussel rapid response/incident command exercise in Wenatchee to test the updated state plan and [Columbia River Basin Response Plan](#). The council played a leadership role in the Multiagency Advisory Committee, advising the incident commander. Council staff played the command role of planning section chief. The exercise proved to be a great success in implementing the incident command system and quickly responding to an infestation.



Planning the Lake Roosevelt Aquatic Invasive Species Enhanced Rapid Response Exercise

With the appointment of U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke in 2017, the U.S. Department of Interior launched initiatives to collaborate with western governors, and federal, state, and tribal agencies to project the West from the economic and ecological threats posed by quagga and zebra mussels. This initiative culminated in [Safeguarding the West from Invasive Species: Actions to Strengthen Federal, State, and Tribal Coordination to Address Invasive Mussels](#).

Through a project suggestion process via the Western Governors' Association and U.S. Department of Interior, the Washington Invasive Species Council was awarded funds to collaborate with federal and state agencies, tribes, and local stakeholders to develop a drill on a scale never held before in the western states. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has provided \$150,000 to the council to plan and hold a 5-day exercise at Lake Roosevelt in 2019. For the purpose of testing both incident command center activities and on-the-ground activities, including deployment of field staff for site containment using sediment and turbidity barriers, watercraft inspection and decontamination stations, sampling to determine the extent of the infestation, and performing a mock treatment.

Safeguarding the West from Invasive Species

Actions to Strengthen Federal, State, and Tribal Coordination to Address Invasive Mussels



Training Citizens through the Washington Pest Watch: Invasive Species First Detector Network

In 2017, the council and partners launched a new initiative titled Washington Pest Watch, which is a citizen science initiative led by agencies and universities that are the front line in protecting our state's natural resources and economy from the damaging effects of invasive species. Participants don't have to be an entomologist or biologist to participate in the network; the majority of network members are everyday people who keep their eyes peeled for the signs and symptoms of high priority invasive species and report them to responding agencies to aid in detections and rapid response. The public can become involved through in-person trainings, Webinars, or on-demand recordings.



CONTAINMENT, CONTROL, AND ERADICATION

Addressing Northern Pike

Northern pike are highly invasive, predatory fish that when introduced to freshwater lakes and rivers quickly take their place at the top of the food chain. Within the Columbia River basin, northern pike were introduced illegally for recreational fishing in Montana in the 1950s. During the past several decades, more illegal introductions have occurred, along with downstream movement, so that northern pike now are found in Idaho, British Columbia, and Washington. Northern pike were detected in the Pend Oreille River in 2004 and have subsequently spread downstream to Lake Roosevelt above



Grand Coulee Dam. Further downstream expansion of northern pike below Grand Coulee will impact salmon directly and pose significant risks to regional power rates by adding expenses associated with meeting operating license requirements, tribal fisheries, commercial and sport fisheries, and recovery of threatened or endangered species. Within the 2017-2018 biennium, the council worked with the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Upper Columbia United Tribes, and others to raise awareness of northern pike, prevent the

Accomplishments of the Council

continued spread downstream in the Columbia River, and prepare for rapid response action if northern pike are found in the anadromous portion of the Columbia River.

Notable accomplishments include partnering with the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) to hold a special session at the PNWER 2018 Annual Summit in Spokane bringing together more than sixty people for a cross-border forum and coordination meeting. A meeting resulted in a consensus that a Columbia River basin-scale economic analysis of potential risks from northern pike predation was needed immediately for advocating for northern pike suppression, response readiness, and programmatic funding. The council is working with PNWER, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, and partners to plan and implement such study.

Addressing Flowering Rush Regionally

In 2015, the council was briefed by the Washington Department of Ecology about [flowering rush](#), a new aquatic noxious weed threat to the Columbia River basin and Washington waters. In 2016, to address flowering rush regionally, the council requested funding through a nationally competitive program administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The [Columbia River Basin Cooperative Weed Management Area](#) seeks to work cooperatively and collaboratively to address cross-boundary invasive species issues focusing on flowering rush, in the Columbia River basin. A regional flowering rush summit was held in Spokane in February 2018 that brought together more than 90 participants from Columbia River basin states and provinces. In addition to sharing best management practices, the forum participants developed an action plan for addressing this species at a basin scale and which will be implemented using U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funding through [America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018](#). Flowering rush is a habitat issue on the Columbia River and is conducive to salmon predators, such as [northern pike](#).



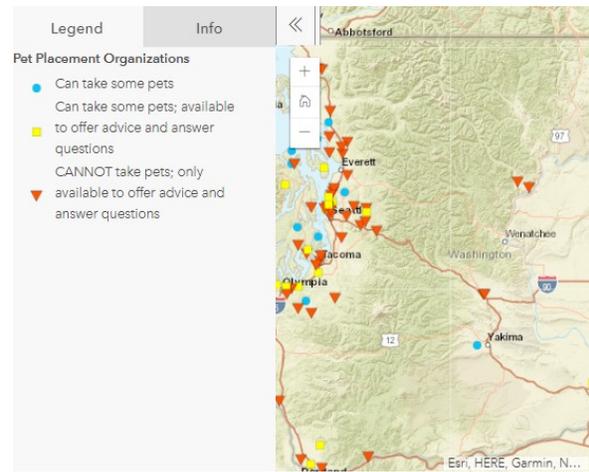
Stopping the Spread of Scotch Broom

The council and partners held a regional [Scotch Broom Ecology and Management Symposium](#) on May 23, hosted by the Snoqualmie Tribe in collaboration with 14 sponsoring organizations. In total, 223 participants from five states and one province attended the symposium, representing academic institutions; Native American tribes; businesses; city, county, state, and federal governments; nonprofits; ports; utility providers; and the public. In addition to viewing presentations from leaders in research and management, the symposium featured facilitated discussions to collaboratively identify potential solutions to shared problems.



Stopping the Intentional Release of Unwanted Pets

Abandoned pets that are released into the wild can become a serious problem that the council seeks to address in its [Don't Let It Loose](#) initiative. The council and partners developed actions the public can take to avoid releasing unwanted pets, educational materials, and posters. Following beta testing this message and programming at pet conventions and expos, the council worked with the Washington State Department of Licensing to develop a contact list for every pet store, animal rescue center, and veterinary clinic statewide. The council then invited all into a voluntary network to help connect unwanted pet owners to helpful resources statewide. The final product of an interactive map with contact information, facility addresses, services, and business hours is available to all on a [Web page](#).



LOOKING FORWARD

Making Progress, but More to Do

The council is now more than 50 percent through its 5-year strategic plan and recently produced a [work plan](#) outlining specific objectives that will be achieved within the next 2 years. The next 2 years build on the accomplishments of the past biennium and of the council since 2006. The next biennium is one of the most ambitious to date. The council is responding to new challenges, committed to finding solutions, and capitalizing on the fact that this issue is becoming more and more important regionally and nationally. The council has made much progress since 2006, but more is needed. We know how to stop invasive species, but we need your help. We invite you to partner with us in the future to achieve even more success.