



For Immediate Release

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National Invasive Species Awareness Week

January 10-14 summit focuses on minimizing the impacts of harmful, nonnative species in a "green" economy

LAWRENCE, Kansas – October 26, 2009 – A coalition of public and private scientists, educators and policy officials will gather in Washington, D.C., early next year for National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW). Scheduled for January 10-14, the four-day summit will focus on how invasive species are related to climate change, biofuels and an emerging "green" economy.

When left unmanaged, harmful nonnative species can destroy wildlife and fish habitats, reduce the diversity of our natural resources, and cause major losses in agriculture, forestry and other segments of the U.S. economy. Researchers at Cornell University have estimated the annual toll at \$120 billion.¹

Even homeowners feel the impact of invasive species as ornamentals introduced to the U.S. from other countries become invasive in their new habitat. Examples include Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*).

"Invasive species are one of our most significant problems in a global economy," says Lee Van Wychen, PhD, science policy director of the Weed Science Society of America. "But despite the threat, we have yet to see adequate resources applied to the problem. We hope to build a grassroots network to highlight the issues involved and to generate action on a cohesive national management plan and funding."

The Weed Science Society of America and Center for Invasive Plant Management are leading the planning effort for NISAW with guidance from a broad range of public and private organizations, including the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, National Invasive Species Council, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Entomological Society of America, Healthy Habitats Coalition, National Conference of State Legislatures, Aquatic Plant Management Society, National Governors Association, Federal Interagency Committee for the

¹ *Update on the environmental and economic costs associated with alien-invasive species in the United States.* <http://www.plantright.org/library/pdfs/Pimentel-et-al2005.pdf>

Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds and the North American Weed Management Association.

NISAW will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Washington, D.C. The reservation deadline for group-rate rooms is December 10.

For more information or to register to attend, visit <http://www.nisaw.org/>.

About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit professional society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Weed Science Society of America promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, and fosters awareness of weeds and their impacts on managed and natural ecosystems. For more information, visit www.wssa.net.

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