



UNITED STATES SENATOR
LARRY E. CRAIG



SPECIAL REPORT

Noxious Weeds: The Silent Scourge

Non-native weeds threaten fully two-thirds of all endangered species and are now considered by some experts to be the second most important threat to bio-diversity. In some areas I have visited, species such as spotted knapweed and thistle grow so thick that deer and other game are moving out of the area to find edible plants elsewhere. Noxious weeds also increase soil erosion, and prevent recreationists from accessing land that is infested with poisonous plants.

Like a slow burning wildfire, noxious weeds take land out of production, force native species off the land, and interrupt the commerce and activities of all those who rely on the land for their livelihoods — including farmers, ranchers, recreationists, and others.

I believe we must focus our efforts to rid our lands of these non-native weeds. Noxious weeds are not only a problem for farmers and ranchers, but a hazard to our environment, economy, and communities in Idaho, the West, and for the country as a whole. We must reclaim the rangeland for natural species.

Noxious weeds do not recognize property boundaries, so if we want to win this war on weeds, we must integrate all stakeholders at the federal, state, local, and individual levels. The Noxious Weed Control Act I have introduced in the Senate is an important step to ensure we are diligent in stopping the spread of these weeds.

At present, both my bill and the companion House bill are ready for passage by both bodies. I applaud the initiative and attention the National Wildlife Refuge Association has brought to this issue. I am confident that if we work together at all levels of government and throughout our communities, we can protect our land, livelihood, and environment.