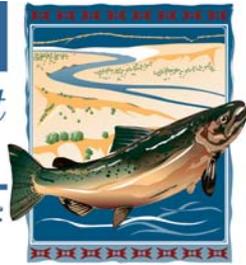




U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Hanford Reach National Monument
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge*

... protecting the last of the free-flowing Columbia River.



June 10, 2006

Hanford Reach National Monument Records a First in Invasive Species Management in Washington State

The Hanford Reach National Monument recently became the first site in Washington State to release the Saltcedar leaf beetle (*Dihorabda elongata* ssp. *deserticola*) as a biological control agent for Salt Cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*). The beetle release was accomplished in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), with assistance from the Grant County Noxious Weed Board and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).



Photo: Kevin Goldie/USFWS

The Saltcedar leaf beetle



Photo: Kevin Goldie/USFWS

Wildlife Biologist Heidi Newsome monitors the release using GPS

Saltcedar (*Tamarix* sp.) is an invasive plant that was first introduced to the United States in the early 1800s. It is an aggressive colonizer that now dominates many riparian corridors in the western United States. Saltcedar has been found in several counties of southeastern Washington, and the Monument has the unfortunate distinction of having one of the larger infestations in the state. Notoriously difficult to control, past treatments for this invasive have included repeated herbicide application, mechanical treatments, and prescribed burns. Infestations on the Monument are found along the Columbia River and upland on the Wahluke Slope, where pesticide restrictions, due to the adjacent fish-bearing waters, serve to limit control

options. Further, much of the area is difficult and dangerous to access due to its location in an active landslide area. Because of the poor access, the Monument has mainly treated Saltcedar using helicopter spraying, an expensive method which has not achieved 100% control.

USDA-APHIS approached the Monument with the intent to establish a site in Washington State that could be developed as an insectary for the Saltcedar leaf beetle. The Monument enthusiastically agreed to attempt the project and two sites were chosen on the Monument that met area size and target plant cover criteria. USDA-APHIS personnel set up monitoring stations to document the success of the population of beetles, monitor the impact to the Saltcedar plants, and record any changes to the vegetative community. USFWS will assist with the monitoring over the next 3 -5 years.



Photo: Kevin Goldie/USFWS

One release site on the Monument



Photo: Kevin Goldie/USFWS

Preparing to release the Saltcedar leaf beetles

On May 24, 2006, 3,000 adult *Diorhabda* beetles were released at each of the two Monument sites. The goal is to establish a beetle population that that will serve as a source for collecting and transporting beetles to infested sites throughout Washington state.