

Thurston County Noxious Weed Agency Coordinator Honored Nationally

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - An upriver soldier in the state's battle against invasive species has been recognized nationally for keeping an aquarium plant from taking over the Chehalis River system. Rick Johnson, Coordinator of the Thurston County Noxious Weed Agency in Washington State, is recognized by the US Department of the Interior for his 34-year record of commitment to invasive plant management, and has served on multiple weed management committees, boards and associations



Rick led a program for the management of Brazilian Elodea in the Chehalis River system, an initiative which spanned multiple agencies over the course of ten years. Up until 1996, the plant was commonly sold in Washington pet stores under the name "anacharis." Unfortunately Brazilian elodea grows very well in Washington lakes, and was quickly classified as invasive. The major national groups that coordinate the battle against invasive species today announced the 2013 National Invasive Species Achievement Awards. The awards recognize the dedication and collaborative efforts of local, state and federal officials; private citizens; and volunteers in preventing and controlling invasive species. The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, the National Invasive Species Council and the Federal Interagency Committee for Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds presented the awards to: The Lake George Association in New York; the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Austin, Texas; Rick Johnson, Thurston County, Wash.; Dr. Richard Reardon of the U.S. Forest Service; Dr. Richard Everett of the U.S. Coast Guard; and the

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program; The Malheur Wildlife Associates, Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon; and Ben Schrader in Texas.

These eight individuals and organizations were recognized for their accomplishments in the categories of leadership, volunteerism, outreach and education, and lifetime achievement, as follows:

For *Outstanding Achievement in Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach and Education*

The Lake George Association in New York is recognized for its Lake Steward program, which combines prevention measures to stop the spread of invasive species with public outreach and education, while collecting invaluable invasive species data. For *Outstanding Achievement in Terrestrial Invasive Species Outreach and Education*

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin is recognized for leading invasive species efforts at the national, state and local levels through its innovative approach combining advocacy, education and public outreach with research and citizen science. For *Lifetime Invasive Species Achievement & Aquatic*

Rick Johnson, Coordinator of the Thurston County Noxious Weed Agency in Washington State, is recognized for his 34-year record of commitment to invasive plant management, and has served on multiple weed management committees, boards and associations. Rick led a program for the management of Brazilian Elodea in the Chehalis River system, an initiative which spanned multiple agencies over the course of ten years. For *Invasive Species Achievement & Terrestrial Lifetime*

Dr. Richard (Dick) Reardon of the U.S. Forest Service, a leader of the Maryland and Appalachian Integrated Pest Management programs, is recognized for his career devoted to the management of forest pests and invasive plants. His work with mating disruption techniques was vital to the success of the gypsy moth Slow-the-Spread program. management. For *Outstanding Aquatic Invasive Species Leadership*

Dr. Richard Everett of the United States Coast Guard is recognized for leading Coast Guard initiatives to prevent the arrival and spread of aquatic nuisance species and being instrumental in developing measures for the U.S. government and the international maritime community to prevent the spread of invasive species through ballast water. For *Outstanding Terrestrial Invasive Species Leadership*

The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program is recognized for leading the collaborative efforts of more than 30 organizations to control invasive species infestations through education programs, volunteer action, identifying policy improvements and coordinating regional response teams to address new invasive species infestations. For *Outstanding Aquatic Invasive Species Volunteer*

The Malheur Wildlife Associates, Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon is recognized as a strong proponent of the Aquatic Health Program at Malheur refuge, where they have led efforts to combat the common carp, an invasive species. For *Outstanding Terrestrial Invasive Species Volunteer*

Ben Shrader, founder of the Invasive Hunter Academy in Texas, & Commander Ben, & is recognized for leading efforts to engage students in invasive species issues through his Invasive Hunter Academy, using interactive methods to teach about invasive species and their effects on native ecosystems. & We applaud the winners of the invasive species achievement awards for demonstrating visionary leadership, innovation, and creativity in your efforts to protect our vital natural resources from the harmful impacts of invasive species, & said Lori Faeth, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs at the Department of the Interior.