

# SPARTINA IN PUGET SOUND

A regional effort to protect shorelines from an invasive noxious weed | Summer 2016

Crews with the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA) are again engaged in the annual effort to find and eliminate spartina, an aggressive noxious weed. The work began with an annual overhaul and safety inspection of specialized equipment including amphibious tracked vehicles, air boats and even kayaks, all used to reach often remote sites where spartina can be found. This season's emphasis will be Puget Sound.

- **Spartina is a non-native weed that disrupts the ecosystems of native saltwater estuaries.** Left unchecked, it pushes out native vegetation and turns valuable mudflats and estuaries into spartina meadows. Fish, shellfish, migratory shorebird and waterfowl habitat are lost and recreational areas damaged.
- **WSDA is the lead state agency for spartina eradication.** With program partners, WSDA crews inspected thousands of acres of saltwater estuaries and hundreds of miles of Puget Sound shoreline for evidence of spartina last year, locating and treating about 30,000 "discrete finds" of spartina plants.
- **The efforts have reduced Puget Sound's spartina infestation from a high of more than 1,000 acres in 1997 to about nine solid acres today.**
- **The effort succeeds because of the continued state funding provided to WSDA, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), as well as federal funds provided to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS).** The second key to success has been the continued cooperation of WSDA, WDFW, DNR, and other state agencies, USFWS, universities, counties, tribal partners, private organizations and private landowners.
- **Without a sustained and continuous effort, spartina reductions would quickly reverse and this invasive weed could easily re-infest Puget Sound.**



*Spartina anglica* in foreground. In background, a Marsh Master amphibious vehicle at SE Skagit Bay, Snohomish County.



WSDA crew member removing a spartina plant.



Clone of *Spartina anglica* found in Fisherman Bay, Lopez Island, San Juan County.

August 2016

**For more information, visit [agr.wa.gov](http://agr.wa.gov) and search for "spartina".**

To report a sighting, call the Spartina Program at (360) 902-2061.



Washington  
State Department of  
Agriculture