

GREAT BASIN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM

A Multi-state Partnership to Improve Land Health and Ecosystem Productivity

www.cabnr.unr.edu/gbep

The Great Basin Environmental Program (GBEP) is an innovative environmental initiative. It is the first program of its kind proposed for a terrestrial area: the Great Basin, one of the important at-risk ecosystems in the nation, comprising parts of Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Oregon and California. Seventy percent of the land in the Great Basin is public. This program is being initiated by a coalition of land grant universities and state agencies of the Great Basin states and is funded in part by a special grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), USDA.

In recent decades, the expansion of invasive plant species has been rapid and extensive in the Great Basin. Invasive plant species are responsible for catastrophic wildfires, reducing forage, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, affecting ecosystem productivity, and degrading riparian areas.

Substantial new federal, state, and private resources are needed to address this serious environmental threat. While excellent work is already being done on invasive species issues in the Great Basin, a multistate effort is needed to enhance these valuable efforts. All five state land grant universities, many state agencies and their coalitions, the Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (a consortium of 14 universities and eight federal agencies), and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are supporting and participating in the GBEP. Involvement of federal agencies, communities and tribes will be key to the success of

GBEP activities.

The GBEP will focus on plant invasive species through coordinated activities in six thematic areas: wildfires; water resources and conservation; land use and health; urban, rural and wildlands mosaic; sustainable communities and cultures; and biodiversity.

In each of these areas, the emphasis will be on the impacts of invasive plant species and related

threats. The objective is to make the GBEP an initiative in which all interested parties and organizations can find a place to apply their energies and resources more effectively.

The GBEP will help coordinate the efforts of federal agencies, state agencies, universities, NGOs, and tribes and focus them on research, result-oriented on-the-ground projects, implementation of management strategies, and education.

There will be systematic monitoring for effective management and development of metrics to inform citizens of progress in addressing invasive plant species and related environmental issues.

Public understanding and appreciation of issues will be important for efforts to initiate regulatory and legal reforms, as well as changes in attitudes and individual behavior to improve the environmental quality of the Great Basin region.

If federal funding can be obtained similar to the major estuarial initiatives, the Great Basin can be the vanguard for a new set of terrestrial regional environmental initiatives in the United States.

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FOCUS INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

THEMES

- ▶ Wildfires
- ▶ Water Resources and Conservation
- ▶ Land Use and Health
- ▶ Urban, Rural Wildlands Mosaic
- ▶ Sustainable Communities and their Cultures
- ▶ Biodiversity

FUNDING

- 70% for on-the-ground projects
- 25% for research and education, including monitoring, mapping, and metrics development
- 5% for administration and communication of metrics



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