

## **FEATURE – USDA LEADS INVASIVE SPECIES EDUCATION EFFORT**

INTRO: A growing number of hunting and fishing organizations is joining with the USDA Forest Service and other agencies to fight back against invasive species. The USDA's Pat O'Leary has more in part 4 of a 5 part series – "Defending Favorite Places."

(1:58)

THE WETLANDS AND MARSHES OF MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE ARE CRITICAL HABITAT FOR MIGRATORY WATERFOWL. BUT INVASIVE SPECIES THREATEN THAT HABITAT, AND THE HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES IT PROVIDES.

Cliché: This is Phragmites, an invasive plant. Once your native habitats start to become overpopulated with non native species, you start losing your native plants.

Rachel Cliche, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: And it's not only your native plants, you start losing your native animals as well. I mean, it's all connected.

HUNTERS AND ANGLERS ARE PART OF AN EXPANDING PARTNERSHIP, LED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S FOREST SERVICE AND OTHER AGENCIES, TO STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES.

Bill Giese, Farmer/Hunting Preserve Owner: Our family owns farms here and we do lease several of our farms to groups of hunters. And we've asked them to be very conscious of invasive species. It's a high priority for us.

Tim Richardson, Wildlife Forever: Phragmites is tempting to use because it's high, it shields you. But what you're doing when you are using Phragmites for a duck blind, you are carrying it to a location. The seeds are going to come out, and they are going to create a greater problem.

SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN CAN UNINTENTIONALLY CARRY SEEDS OF INVASIVE PLANTS INTO UNINFESTED AREAS, SO IT'S CRITICAL TO CLEAN OFF EQUIPMENT.

Bill West, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Crawl underneath your rig and make sure you're not dragging some material out with you. And stop by a car wash and do a good job on the undercarriage of your car.

THE GUIDELINE IS THE SAME FOR TERRESTRIAL OR AQUATIC INVASIVES.

Dan Stockton, Fishing Guide: It's real important that you clean your waders and all of your gear that you have in the water because it can all pick up these invasive species.

Richardson: Perhaps the most effective legacy that the hunting and angling community has is the ability to transmit our knowledge through succeeding generations. We hand down ideas like safe gun practices, catch and release. We must now hand down ideas such as combating invasive species.

YOU CAN LEARN MORE AT [INVASIVEPSECIESINFO.GOV](http://INVASIVEPSECIESINFO.GOV).

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M PAT O'LEARY.