



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### ADOPT A TRAILHEAD MONTANA KICK-OFF TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

To celebrate National Public Lands Day on September 26, 2016, the Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign has partnered with the Montana Department of Agriculture, Region 1 Forest Service, the Montana Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program (NWSFF), and the Lolo National Forest to kick off an exciting new volunteer program titled, 'Adopt A Trailhead Montana' (AATM). The AATM is designed for civic groups and organizations who wish to select a trailhead and provide noxious weed management at the trailhead and on the trail. The group that performs maintenance is then recognized for their efforts with a sign that is placed at the site. The first AATM project will be at the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area (NRA) on the Missoula Ranger District in the Lolo National Forest outside of Missoula. This area sees the most recreational use in terms of visitors in the entire Lolo National Forest. In order to encourage all users for the Rattlesnake NRA to be a part of this program, the trailhead will be adopted by the "Rattlesnake Trail Users" which is a combination of groups, organizations, businesses, and individual users.

As an additional component of the AATM message, an educational boot brush kiosk will be placed at the trailhead to promote the "Play.Clean.Go." Campaign (PGC) and their national message of 'Stop Invasive Species in YOUR Tracks'. PCG is geared to all outdoor recreationalists and focuses on what they can do to help stop the movement of invasive species. At the AATM kickoff event, volunteers will be educated about what species of noxious weeds are present at the site and what types of management activities need to be done to reduce existing populations. The group who has 'adopted' the trailhead will then be responsible for annual maintenance on their adopted trailhead, maintenance performed will be site specific. Hand pulling will be the primary noxious weed control option at all sites unless other management options have been approved by the land management agency who oversees specific AATM trailheads.

The Montana Noxious Weed Education Campaign is a cooperative effort among state and federal entities, including Montana State University, and non-governmental organizations that educates the people of Montana about noxious weeds and encourages them to participate in integrated weed management. Noxious weeds can impair wildlife habitat, increase erosion, impact hydrologic cycles, and reduce productivity on farms and ranches. One of the best strategies for combatting noxious weeds is to prevent them from moving to new areas. Once they are established, they are much more difficult to contain and eradication may prove impossible.

If you would like additional information about the AATM program, to volunteer at an AATM trail or to participate in the kick-off event on September 26, please contact: Shantell Frame-Martin (406) 444-9491 or Karen Stockmann (406) 329-3936.