

WeedSeeker®

Selective Spray System



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News Release

For Immediate Release

Selective Spray System Wipes out Spartina Grass

September 30, 2002

Ukiah, Calif. — A WeedSeeker® selective spray system is making it environmentally and economically possible for United States Fish and Wildlife Service Officials to eradicate spartina grass in Willapa Bay, OR. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Officials at Willapa National Wildlife Refuge at Willapa Bay have mounted a WeedSeeker® system on a tank-like amphibious tractor which will be used to fight non-native spartina grass that threatens habitat for birds, salmon and commercial oyster beds in Willapa Bay.

Charlie Stenvall, Fish and Wildlife program leader, called the machine the “last greatest hope” in their fight against the invasive weed that has consumed at least 15,000 acres of bay.” Spartina is a non-native plant that has infested about a third of Willapa Bay. The weed carpets once-open mud flats and captures silt, which raises and hardens the bay floor destroying forage areas for shorebirds and ruining habitat and food sources for young salmon and other native species. Stenvall said his team will run the machine 24 hours a day until they run out of pesticides hoping to kill 500 acres of the grass — roughly two-and a half times as many acres as they could control using older methods.

The WeedSeeker® system is mounted on a vehicle that weighs 10,000 pounds and moves on a continuous track with less impact than a human footprint. The vehicle can cover more territory in a week than manual sprayers can cover in a year. A global positioning system was installed to track the vehicle’s course by satellite and automatically shuts the sprayers off when passing over an area that has already been treated. The equipment regulates the amount of herbicide released and creates a precise map of where, when and how much spraying was done. Those records will help researchers refine the process. “Hopefully, this will be the biggest bang for the buck . . . without dumping tons and tons of chemicals into the environment,” said refuge equipment operator, Jonathan Bates.

The WeedSeeker® selective spray system is a sensor-controlled spray system that selectively applies herbicides to weeds not bare ground. The WeedSeeker® sensor uses advanced optoelectronics technology to detect weeds and trigger herbicide application. This environmentally sensitive spray system dramatically reduces herbicide use and lowers chemical costs. The WeedSeeker® selective spray system has been used successfully since 1995 in vineyards, orchards, and with row crops. Road maintenance departments, railroads, irrigation districts, airport runways also use the system. In addition, it is utilized at military installations world wide to control weeds on runways, tarmacs, airfields, sidewalks, roads and parking lots.

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Amphibious tractor equipped with WeedSeeker® selective spray system in Willapa Bay, Oregon.



WeedSeeker® selective spray system mounted on the front boom.

