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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council Established

Texas – On June 2, 2008, the Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council (TIPPC) became officially established in the State of Texas. TIPPC originated as a motion from the floor at the second statewide Invasive Plant Conference held at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin, Texas in November 2007.

Invasive species spread easily in today's modern global commerce network and are difficult and costly to control. Invasive species impede industries, threaten agriculture and, in some cases, can endanger human health. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, invasive species impact nearly half of the species currently listed as Threatened or Endangered under the U.S. Federal Endangered Species Act. One study estimates that the total costs of invasive species in the United States amounts to more than \$135 billion each year.

Texas is under attack on every front by a host of plants and pests from exotic places with exotic names like Tamarisk, Giant Salvinia, Hydrilla, Emerald Ash Borer, Channeled Applesnail, and many others. These invaders threaten the health of Texas' native ecosystems by decreasing biodiversity, threatening the survival of native plants and animals and interfering with ecosystem functions like fire, nutrient flow, and flooding.

Stakeholders from state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, academia, green industry and the public sector had long discussed the need for one unified body to address the threat of invasive species in Texas. The objectives of TIPPC are to promote understanding and awareness of invasive plant and pest impacts in Texas; provide a forum for the exchange of scientific, educational and technical information; and support research and restoration activities that reduce impacts of invasive plants and pests in Texas.

The organization has 96 charter members and will be governed by an interim board until a general election is organized. Membership in TIPPC is open to individuals, corporate and institutional entities.

According to acting Board President, Damon Waitt, Senior Botanist at the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, "Over half the states in the U.S. have established invasive species councils (www.naepcc.org). Forming the Texas Council will not only help Texas pull together, it will also foster national cooperation to address a threat that knows no geopolitical boundaries."

Information about TIPPC is available online at www.texasinvasives.org. For more information, contact any of the TIPPC Board Members listed below:

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