

Invasive Species

Western Confluence magazine, a publication of the Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming, seeks story ideas for our next issue on **invasive species in the West**. The magazine explores our region's greatest natural resource challenges and shares sound, interdisciplinary, collaborative solutions. More at westernconfluence.org.

What we are looking for

The theme of our next issue is **invasive species**. Many exotic or nonnative species—plants, mammals, insects, crustaceans, and more—have been introduced to the Rocky Mountain West ecoregion either accidentally or intentionally only to thrive, outcompeting native species and proliferating with serious ecological and economic ramifications. This issue of *Western Confluence* will help readers understand the scope of the challenges invasive species pose to our region, approaches being undertaken to address these challenges, and new solutions or ways of thinking about and dealing with invasive species.

In covering this subject, how can we inform and surprise readers? What information, ideas, stories, and data points might be new and most relevant to them? What angles on invasive species might throw a twist into the expected storyline while painting a picture of the scale of this challenge? What characters could put a new face to our battle with invasive species? What cutting edge work is being done to address invasive species? See following page for additional framing questions to help guide your thinking around story proposals for this issue.

How to pitch

Email your story idea, the angle you think it might take, and the reporting and storytelling approaches it could employ to editor@westernconfluence.org. Pitches should be no longer than 500 words. In addition to formal story pitches, we also welcome tips, names of contacts, links to papers, or other leads that we might develop into stories and assign to writers. To be considered for the upcoming issue, pitches must be received by 9:00 a.m. on **Monday, May 6, 2019**.

Western Confluence editors and advisors will discuss and answer all pitches. For those we'd like to pursue, an editor will work with the writer to hone the approach to the story. All *Western Confluence* articles go through several rounds of editing to bring them in line with our style. Writers should expect an extensive revision process.

Compensation

If you are a University of Wyoming employee for whom a contribution to *Western Confluence* fulfills part of your professional duties, we will not provide compensation for the article. If you are a student, a freelance journalist, or a contributor of another sort, we will pay you for the story. The amount will be determined by length, difficulty, and quality of the article.

Please direct any questions to editor Emilene Ostlind at emilene@uwyo.edu or (307) 766-2604.

Framing Questions to Consider

Definition of the challenge

What might be a compelling example or a situation that could become a story to help readers understand invasive species? What makes a species invasive versus just exotic? And how do we distinguish between the invasive species we have introduced to a landscape versus those we cultivate on our landscapes? What defines a *native* species? Can invasive species convert to native species over time? What governmental, private, or non-governmental organizations are working on invasive species challenges? Who cares whether invasive species live in our ecosystems or not and why? How have attitudes toward invasive species changed through history? What is the end goal for policies or management approaches to address invasive species?

Scope of the challenge

Which invasive species pose the greatest threats to our region and why? What's their story? How did they get here, how much have they spread, and what damage are they causing? I'm imagining in-depth profiles of a couple of really important invasive species that citizens of our region are struggling with to help readers grasp what an exotic species invasion means ecologically and economically. Each species has distinct ecosystem impacts, so finding species with really different impacts and management approaches would make this section most robust. These might be the most damaging and expensive of the species we are dealing with. These pieces should illustrate just how confounding invasive species can be, giving a sense of the extent of the ecological and landscape threats posed by invasives.

Infographic

Beyond highlighting individual species as examples, what is the scale of invasive species influence in our region? What organizations or agencies have the best comprehensive grasp on invasive species activity? What data exists describing that activity? Is there a way to use that data to paint a picture of how invasive species are transforming our landscapes or hitting our pocketbooks? This could be an annotated infographic featuring a map of the region, a diagram, graphs, or other visual representation of data.

Approaches to address the challenge

How are managers, landowners, conservation groups, and others battling invasive species on the ground? This is where economics really comes into play. What are the craziest, most ambitious, and cleverest techniques for wrangling species invasions on the landscapes? Are there any success stories of species that were once very problematic getting under control? Are there horror stories of brutal or toxic responses to species invasions that went awry? And what kind of resources are we pouring into the fight against invasive species, be it human hours and physical labor, money, or others? What examples will best help readers understand the toll of dealing with invasive species on our landscapes?

New ways of thinking about the challenge

What research and new ideas are changing how we think about, approach, or solve the challenges posed by invasive species? Who are the leading scientists, economists, philosophers, and other scholars tackling questions about invasive species in our region? What interesting new lines of thinking are they following? Is anyone arguing that invasive species benefit us? How are people reimagining changed landscapes? How do we understand, and who is investigating, the links between invasive species and climate change? What are the ethics of killing one species to protect another? In what ways is fighting invasive species about economic defense or about mourning the loss of an older version of the ecosystem or about something else?

Back-page thought piece

We end each issue of the magazine with a 1-page thought piece written by someone who is influential or uniquely experienced in the issue's theme. The back-page essay should reveal surprising insights or push readers to think in new ways about the invasive species challenges of our day. What big-picture, forward-looking ideas about invasive species might be particularly effective to close the issue? Who might be a candidate to write such a piece and why do you think this person would be a good fit? Or what qualifies you to take on this subject and what argument would you put forward in the essay?