



City of White Salmon Office of City Hall

March 3, 2022

Ben Thompson, Program Manager
Urban and Community Forestry Program
Washington Department of Natural Resources
MS 47000, Olympia, WA 98504
Submitted by E-mail only.

Re: Tree of Heaven/Spotted Lanternfly Eradication, Prevention and Demonstration Project

Ben Thompson:

This letter is to communicate the City of White Salmon's strong support (including the City of White Salmon Tree Board) for the Underwood Conservation District's (UCD's) grant application to the Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources' (DNR's) Urban Forestry Grant program for the *White Salmon/Bingen Tree of Heaven/Spotted Lanternfly Eradication, Prevention and Demonstration Project*. The goals of the project are to educate the local community about an existing noxious species, Tree of heaven, launch a community science project to map the local infestation, build capacity to successfully treat it, and remove it as a preferred host to an emerging pest, the spotted lanternfly. An additional goal of the project is to serve as a template for other municipalities to reduce or prevent tree of heaven infestations and prevent the spread of spotted lanternfly across the Pacific Northwest.

The neighboring cities of Bingen and White Salmon are located along the Columbia River, major rail lines and highways, are less than 60 miles from the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area and are in the heart of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, a major tourist destination. The towns are also situated adjacent to wine and tree-fruit growing areas, commercial timberlands, as well as natural landscapes of ecological and cultural significance which provide habitat for a number of ESA-listed species.

Both cities have existing and growing infestations of the invasive Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), which is a preferred host for the invasive Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*). Tree of heaven is a serious pest in its own right, aggressively invading both natural and human environments, and spotted lanternfly has the potential to cause billion-dollar losses to the state's agricultural sector as well as significant damage to the state's valued natural landscapes. Due to the high numbers of tree of heaven, many potential vectors of introduction in the area and the high risk of significant damage that an introduction of Spotted Lanternfly could cause to the region, this grant project seeks to proactively educate and engage the local communities, help control existing Tree of heaven infestations, and prevent the establishment and spread of Spotted lanternfly, through early detection and rapid response, and reducing its food source, in case Spotted lanternfly is introduced to the region.

The *White Salmon/Bingen Tree of Heaven/Spotted Lanternfly Eradication, Prevention and Demonstration Project* will engage the local community to enhance the local quality of life while enhancing and protecting priority natural resources in our communities, and we strongly encourage your support at this important moment.

Sincerely,

Marla Keethler, Mayor

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