

# Media Release

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To All Media

For Immediate Release

## Purple loosestrife control saves Ontario wetlands

*O.F.A.H. declares success in battle against aggressive wetland invader*

In celebration of Project Purple Week, August 1 to 7, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is pleased to declare that efforts to control purple loosestrife are working and wetlands are being saved. The battle against purple loosestrife, considered one of Canada's most invasive plant, is being won thanks to a tiny leaf-eating beetle.

"After years of championing purple loosestrife control programs and public awareness campaigns, the O.F.A.H. and its conservation partners have become part of one of the most successful invasive species control programs in North America," said Francine MacDonald, O.F.A.H. Biologist.

"In many parts of the province, purple loosestrife is now coming under control and the native plant community in wetlands are once again flourishing thanks to the successful biocontrol project that has been ongoing since 1992," she said adding that the annual Project Purple Week is an important public awareness campaign supported by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

After stringent scientific research, and proof that the leaf-eating *Galerucella* beetles are harmless to native species and the environment, both Canada and the U.S. approved their release. As such, the O.F.A.H. Invading Species Awareness Program and several O.F.A.H. member clubs, conservation authorities, stewardship councils and landowners have been using these tiny insects as part of a community involvement project supported by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and other conservation groups.

The science community has hailed this environmentally friendly beetle – which can disperse many kilometers from the original release site -- as a perpetual control tool for purple loosestrife. Though the beetles will not completely eradicate the plant, they minimize its impact on our environment.

"A comprehensive review of over 300 biological control sites in the province found that purple loosestrife was successfully being controlled by these insects at more than 80 percent of the release sites. In the future, scientists estimate that purple loosestrife will not be on the landscape like it is today," Francine said.

For more information call the Invading Species Hotline 1-800-563-7711.

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