

Cort Jensen, Attorney
Montana Dept. of Agriculture
303 North Roberts
Helena, MT 59602

Dear Mr. Jensen,

The Flathead Audubon Society supports the designation of Russian olive as a Priority 3 Regulated Plant by the Montana Department of Agriculture. We are concerned that this non-native invasive tree is taking over many areas and is especially problematic in riparian and wetland areas where it crowds out native species such as cottonwood, green ash, and willows. The native species provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife such as bald eagles, great blue herons, and many species of cavity nesters such as kestrels, woodpeckers, and bluebirds that Russian olive cannot provide because of its growth form and size attained.

Because of its invasive nature, many agencies and private landowners have already begun expensive control programs and it only makes sense to stop selling Russian olive so that the problem doesn't get worse.

Thank you for accepting our comments.

Lewis Young
Conservation Committee Chair
Flathead Audubon Society
68 Garrison Dr
Eureka, MT 59917