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PlayCleanGo® Awareness Week: June 3–10, 2023
Outdoor Enthusiasts Spreading the Word, Not the Problem of Invasive Species

Milwaukee, WI – PlayCleanGo Awareness Week will take place June 3–10, 2023, with events occurring across North America. PlayCleanGo Awareness Week is part of a national campaign focused on getting outdoor enthusiasts to take action to avoid spreading invasive plants and pests, while enjoying the activities they love.

“PlayCleanGo while on your adventures” says PlayCleanGo Campaign Manager Lindsey Cathcart. “When you do, you are not only helping protect our great outdoors from invasive species, but you’re also contributing to the positive work of landscape managers by reducing the spread of invasive species.” Nearly 50% of the 1,300 endangered or threatened species are at risk due to invasive species, which people unintentionally spread with their boots, tires, boats, firewood, pets, horses, and more, Cathcart adds.

Organizations and individuals are encouraged to join together in their efforts to promote stopping the spread of invasive species. Prevention activities include behaviors such as using a boot brush station along hiking trails or removing ornamental invasive species from your backyard.

For outdoor enthusiasts, it doesn’t take much to protect your favorite natural space from invasive species.

Here are 6 easy things you can do to help protect our natural spaces:

1. Clean your shoes, clothes, packs, and pets before and after exploring and stay on designated trails.
2. Clean your horse's hooves and feed them weed-free certified hay before your adventure.
3. Clean, Drain, and Dry your watercraft and angling equipment to Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!
4. Don't Move Firewood! Buy it where you burn it, buy certified heat-treated firewood, or gather on site when permitted.
5. Before traveling to new areas, inspect and clean your trailers, off road vehicles, and recreational vehicles with water or compressed air to remove mud, plant parts, and hidden pests.
6. Take the PlayCleanGo Pledge and invite your family and friends to do the same at PlayCleanGo.org.

Following any combination of these steps will do wonders to protect the places you love. Want to do more? Educate yourself about invasive species, especially those found in your region. Your county extension office and the National Invasive Species Information Center are both trusted resources. Every little bit of prevention helps, and combining the small measures you take at home with the large efforts of your local land managers leaves a huge impact.

Organizations across North America are spreading the word PlayCleanGo Awareness Week, including these PlayCleanGo partners: The Nature Conservancy, USDA - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA - Forest Service, Leave No Trace, Bureau of Land Management, North American Invasive Species Management Association, National Park

Service, state parks, other federal land management entities, state and county land managers, outdoor retailers, Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMA), County Weed Management Associations (CWMA), and Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs).

Join the movement to “Come Clean. Leave Clean.” Dozens of campaign materials for the public and the media are available for free at www.PlayCleanGo.org/awareness-week, including animated explainer videos, a mega-infographic combining data with how-tos, a 5-page PlayCleanGo Awareness Week Toolkit, social media posts and graphics, and more.

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About PlayCleanGo®

PlayCleanGo is a campaign committed to protecting valuable natural resources while encouraging people to enjoy the great outdoors. Using community based social marketing to build brand recognition, the objective is to slow (and where possible to stop) the spread of invasive species by changing public and worker behaviors at risk of spreading harmful pests living on land or in water. PlayCleanGo promotes awareness, understanding, and cooperation by providing a clear call to action to be informed, attentive and accountable for stopping the spread of all invasive species. We invite others with similar goals to utilize our materials. Join forces with like-minded organizations across North America and become a PlayCleanGo partner now!