

# **PROTECTING ECOSYSTEM HEALTH AND AGRICULTURAL VALUES**

**A Strategy for  
Crown Land  
Invasive Plant  
Management  
in the  
Thompson-Nicola  
Region**

**March 2017**



# INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT

- Strong partnership with BC Cattlemen's Association, Thompson-Nicola Regional District and Southern Interior Weed Management Committee
- Coordinated multi-year planning
- \$2.2 million three-year funding
- Quality Research and Centre of Excellence

**THOMPSON-NICOLA**



## SUMMARY

A new strategy is being created for Crown Land Invasive Plant Management proposed to be piloted in the TNRD over the next three years. The funding will be targeted for on the ground delivery with partnerships between BC Cattlemen's Association, Thompson Nicola Regional District, Southern Interior Weed Management Committee, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and Ministry of Environment-BC Parks.

Invasive plants don't respect property boundaries. This partnership will improve coordination between private land owners and Crown land including road rights of way, making sure invasive plants on both sides of the fence are treated.

This pilot comes with \$2.2 million funding over three years. The new partnership will develop multi-year plans and be able to deliver treatment on the ground when treatment will have the best results, not only when funding comes available.

Plans for additional research will assist in improving management approaches for both well-established species, such as knapweed, and new invaders. Resources will be made available to assist research and develop a centre of excellence in invasive plant management.

# BACKGROUND

There are increasing concerns being expressed about spotted knapweed and other invasive plants within the Thompson-Nicola region of British Columbia. Residents and stakeholders are seeing increased populations of invasive plants and are worried about their impacts on grasslands, ecosystem health and forage production. There has been a long history of invasive plant management within the Thompson-Nicola to protect the important environmental and agricultural economic values in the area. However, concerns exist regarding the effectiveness of the invasive plant treatment program on Crown land in the area.

Invasive plant management on Crown land is overseen by the Inter-Ministry Invasive Species Working Group (IMISWG). Led by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the working group is comprised of subject matter experts from that ministry as well as the Ministries of Environment, Transportation and Infrastructure, Agriculture, Energy and Mines, Aboriginal Rights and Reconciliation, Community, Sport and Cultural Development, the Oil and Gas Commission, and the Royal BC Museum.

## **The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR)**

is the lead ministry for invasive plant management for the Province, administers the *BC Weed Control Act* and is directly responsible for invasive plant management on 60 million hectares of Crown land including rangelands, forested ecosystems and wildlife management areas.

## **The Ministry of Environment (MOE)**

administers the *Integrated Pest Management Act*, regulating pesticide use and pest management, and through BC Parks is responsible for managing invasive plants on 14 million hectares of provincial parks and protected areas.

**The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI)** is responsible for controlling invasive plants on approximately 47,000km of provincial highway rights of way and over 2,800 gravel pits used for road construction and maintenance.

Many volunteer and non-profit societies also play a role in controlling invasive plants in the Thompson-Nicola Region.

## **The Southern Interior Weed Management Committee (SIWMC)**

is a non-profit society comprised of volunteer members representing private and public agencies, clubs and organizations dedicated to increasing awareness of invasive plants in the Thompson-Nicola. Since 2009, this group also delivered a large portion of the province's invasive plant management programs in the Thompson Nicola, but have withdrawn this service for large Crown land treatment programs for 2017/18.

## **The BC Cattlemen's Association**

**(BCCA)** represents over 1200 ranchers and is dedicated to promoting, protecting and developing the cattle industry in B.C. They have recently offered to deliver a portion of the province's invasive plant management program in the Thompson-Nicola.





**The Grasslands Conservation Council (GCC)** is a volunteer organization dedicated to fostering greater understanding and appreciation for the ecological, social, economic and cultural importance of the grasslands throughout the province and to promoting stewardship and sustainable management practices that will ensure the long-term health of B.C.'s grasslands.

**The Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC)** is a charity and non-profit society with an over 10-year history of uniting and coordinating a wide variety of stakeholders to improve outreach and education, training, research and operations.

Other government organizations also play an important role.

**First Nations** have a historic link to the land and many communities have an interest and are involved with invasive plant management within their traditional territories and on reserve lands.

**Thompson Nicola Regional District (TNRD)** has a Noxious Weed Bylaw in place to require control of invasive plants on private property. To assist private property owners, they have run a successful private land partnership program where they have partially funded and loaned out equipment for management and control of invasive plants on private lands. They have also recently expressed a desire to deliver a portion of the province's invasive plant management program on public lands.



## REPORTING INVASIVE PLANTS

The public plays a key role in identifying and reporting invasive plants. Early detection allows treatment before plants spread and increases the chance of successful control.

### THREE WAYS TO REPORT INVASIVE PLANTS:

1. **Report-A-Weed BC** app for iPhone and iPad or Android
2. **Online** at [www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species)
3. **Phone** the SIWMC at (250) 851-1699

All reports are verified and entered into B.C.'s Invasive Alien Plant Program (IAPP). IAPP is accessible to all invasive plant managers and enables strategic planning and coordination of treatments.



# INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT

## A new plan for invasive plant management in the Thompson-Nicola

Since 2009, the SIWMC has received funding from FLNR, MOTI and MOE-BC Parks, and has been responsible for facilitating planning, delivering treatment programs, and monitoring the effectiveness of weed management on public lands and utility corridors in the Thompson-Nicola Region. They have also been a focal point for education and outreach.

The committee has done a quality job of combatting invasive plants in the region. However, given the increase in the number of invasive plant species expanding in the region, rising impacts of wide-spread, well-established invasive plants, and the recent pressures of delivering an increased budget, the committee has opted not to deliver large Crown land invasive plant management programs in 2017/18. The committee will focus on their traditional role of education, outreach and inter-agency coordination.

There are six key agencies that have a role and interest in developing the annual invasive plant management plan for Crown land within the Thompson-Nicola:

1. The provincial ministries of FLNR, MOTI and MOE-BC Parks have a legal responsibility to manage invasive plants on public Crown lands.



## INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT CYCLE

Treatments should occur before invasive plants go to seed, typically from April – July in the Thompson-Nicola. August and early September are challenging as hot dry conditions cause many plants to stop growing; reducing the effectiveness of herbicides, and mechanical methods can be difficult in dry soil and may spread seed. Fall brings a second treatment window for many species when cooler temperatures and fall rains cause plants to grow again. Annual planning must take this treatment cycle into account.



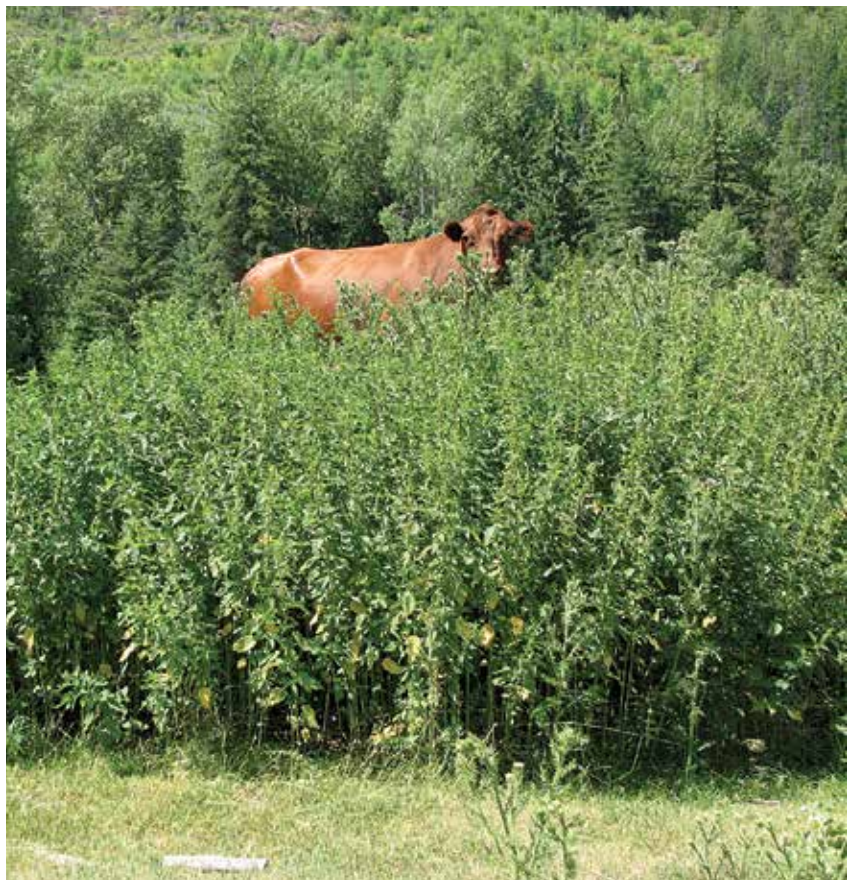


2. The BCCA and their member ranchers use both private and public land to graze cattle. They are responsible for controlling noxious weeds on their private properties and have an interest in ensuring treatment of private range land aligns with treatment on public lands.
3. The TNRD runs a successful program to assist with treatment of invasive plants on private property. As the representative of local governments in the Thompson-Nicola region, they have a role in enforcing their noxious weed bylaw on private lands, and controlling noxious weeds on regional district properties.
4. SIWMC has broad membership including representation from First Nations, local government, utility companies, non-profit associations, provincial government and industry and is well positioned to be the lead on education and awareness.

## Annual Planning

These groups will develop a rolling three year work plan designed to prevent the spread of new invasive plants, reduce the footprint of existing plants and most of all, ensure coordination between local governments, private land owners, First Nations and provincial ministries. The implementation of multi-year plans and resourcing will assist with building a sustainable number of contractors needed to combat invasive plants in the region.

FLNR, as the ministry responsible for overall invasive plant management in the province, will lead the development of the work plan.





## Delivery

For fiscal 2017/18, the Ministries FLNR MOE-BC Parks and MOTI will lead in delivery of the invasive plant program on Crown land. During this year, the BCCA and TNRD will be supported to develop their capability to deliver subsequent year's programs.

For fiscal 2018/19 and beyond, funding for delivery will be allocated among the BCCA, the TNRD and the three provincial ministries. A three-year rolling commitment will allow these agencies to make staffing commitments and build the resources necessary to deliver increased and effective programs.

Allocation of funds among the agencies will support enhanced treatment of Crown lands and improved coordination with private ranches to protect the agricultural industry.

Building on the TNRD's successful private land owner reimbursement program, the Province will provide funding for a "good neighbour" approach that will link with the TNRD's private land cost-share program and fund control of invasive plants on crown lands adjacent to private properties that are being treated. Management of this program will be offered to the TNRD with funding from the Province.

Other priorities and special initiatives, such as new invaders to the region and management of invasive plants in gravel pits, would be delivered directly by provincial ministries.

## Monitoring

To ensure value for money and an effective invasive plant management program, each ministry will undertake post treatment monitoring. Feedback from the monitoring, along with comments from the public, will be used to update the rolling three year plan.

## Education and Outreach

The SIWMC is rooted in education and outreach and has done an exceptional job raising the community's understanding of invasive plants. Provincial funding will be provided to support the committee to continue to play this role.

Education and outreach helps raise awareness of the impact invasive plants have on the region, reduce their spread on private property and reduce the likelihood of new plants being introduced.





## Research

Thompson Rivers University has provided research into new and innovative ways to combat invasive plants in the region and into restoration of lands following treatment. Provincial funding will be provided to build on this work and to pilot a Centre of Excellence, based in Merritt, which will work in collaboration with groups like the Nicola Watershed Community Roundtable and the Laurie Guichon Memorial Grasslands site to deepen our understanding and identify new opportunities for new treatment approaches and restoration of impacted ecosystems.

## Funding

The Province will commit \$2.2 million over the next three years to fund invasive plant management within the Thompson-Nicola. This amount more than doubles the allocation provided to the region in recent years and will enable enhanced invasive plant management on Crown lands in the region, and support improved multi-year planning, coordination, education, monitoring and research.

