

Strategies for Managing Noxious and Invasive Plants in Alaska

Japanese knotweed



Photo by Michael Shephard



Photo by Brad Knechtlaus

On the Tongass National Forest in SE Alaska

This species is spreading in every community in Southeast Alaska, and it is now in Anchorage also. It is primarily spread by people moving soil during landscaping and DOT work along roads. Once established, it is extremely aggressive.

ABSTRACT:

Noxious and invasive plants are a growing problem in Alaska. In the past many biologists and land managers thought Alaska's remoteness offered protection from infestations. However, Alaska has several well-established infestations of noxious and invasive plants such as Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), White sweetclover (*Melilotus alba*), and Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*). These plants threaten to invade the urban and wildland forests. Alaska is in a unique position to prevent potentially severe problems before they develop into ecological and management quagmires. The costs can be low if we quickly identify, control and eradicate infestations. In 2000, an interagency Memorandum of Understanding was established to address the incursion of invasive and noxious plant species. Agencies participating in this initial mission include the Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. Working together, the agencies developed a strategic plan that lays the groundwork for cooperative surveys, education, prevention, control, and eradication measures.

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Canada thistle



Photo by Corlene Rose

In a City Park in Anchorage

This species is especially prevalent in the Anchorage area. One way it has come into the state is via tree and shrub plantings.

White sweetclover



Photo by Roseann Densmore

Along the road in Denali National Park

This species was seeded along the Parks Highway north of the park. It is now probably being continuously introduced into the park by vehicle tires. It is also now widespread along the Stikine River in SE Alaska.

A few tasks for this year

Coordination:

Set up steering committee (or equivalent); expand cooperating partners; hire statewide coordinator.

Education:

Create web based Field guide to noxious and other weeds of Alaska; put Integrated Pest Management information on web; facilitate additional media coverage; develop basic Alaskan invasive plant brochure; Develop brochures on the 5 most nefarious species for each geographic region in state.

Inventory and Monitoring:

Develop GIS coverage, metadata, and protocols. Populate with existing survey information; pilot weed scout program in Anchorage

Research: Determine species and location priorities, Compile list of treatment options by species based on current literature; and determine if Alaskan specific treatments need to be developed.

Bird vetch



Photo by Rich Baer

Along the Seward highway in Anchorage

This species is especially prevalent in the Anchorage area, where it is climbing up and over roadside trees.

Hempnettle

This species is widespread in Fairbanks and Anchorage. It is now spreading into SE Alaska. It appears to be spreading from agricultural fields and wildflower seed mixes.



Photo from BC web site



Photo by Michael Shephard

Along the shore of Admiralty National Monument



Photo by Marta Mueller

In a hay field near Delta Junction

Additional information is available on the Alaska invasive plant network over the Worldwide Web at <http://www.invasivespecies.gov/geog/state/ak.shtml>

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