

Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program

"Making a Difference in Skamania County"

2018 Annual Programmatic Report



Prepared by
Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program
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Board Mission

Our mission is to serve as responsible stewards to limit the economic loss and adverse environmental effects to Skamania County's agricultural, natural, recreational, and human resources as a result of the presence and spread of noxious weeds on all terrestrial and aquatic areas in the county.

We believe prevention of noxious weeds is the best approach and may be achieved through full implementation of the state noxious weed law. To further this approach, we strive for increased public awareness through improved educational efforts.



Partners from the Gorge CWMA discuss invasive grass treatment in a sensitive Oregon Spotted Frog habitat, June 2018



Volunteers planted over 1000 native plants in the Hegewald Center Native Plant/Pollinator Demonstration Garden in spring

Board Goals and Priorities

- 1) Annually adopt the Skamania County Noxious Weed List.
- 2) To improve countywide noxious weed education and public awareness about integrated pest management and biological control.
- 3) Seek and secure adequate funding to support continued success of the Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program.
- 4) Nurture cooperative working relationships with county residents, landowners, land managers, tribes, and local, state, and federal agencies.
- 5) Monitor and document the presence and work to reduce the spread of noxious weeds throughout Skamania County.

Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board

The noxious weed control board members are appointed from five geographic areas within Skamania County. Each appointed board member has a duty to represent their geographic area. Board members serve a term of four years before seeking reappointment.



District 1

Sally Newell, Chair

Underwood, WA
509-493-3624

District 2

Steve Hansen

Stevenson, WA
509-427-5069

District 3

Kenneth Cole

North Bonneville, WA
509-427-8418

District 4

Kenneth Bajema, Vice-Chair

Washougal, WA
360-837-3273

District 5

Larry Willson

Washougal, WA
360-835-8115

Ex-Officio Member

Hannah Brause

WSU Extension Director

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Letter from the Chair

On behalf of the Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking time to read about our program. As a board, we are very proud of our staff and crews for the achievements they made this year. They continue to make significant progress in the battle against noxious weeds in Skamania County and with partners across the region.

Noxious weeds pose a serious threat to the unique habitat in our county. Weeds are an economic threat to agriculture, recreation and forestry. They also impact public infrastructure such as roads and power lines. Our dedicated staff worked hard to carry out the board's vision, mission and goals. The board is particularly pleased with the work done to elevate public awareness of the dangers posed by invasive noxious weeds through proactive weed prevention signage and public outreach activities region wide.

This report summarizes the broad scope of activities undertaken by the Skamania County Noxious Weed Program staff in 2018. It is an impressive body of work and clearly illustrates our commitment to the citizens and resources of Skamania County.

As we transition into 2019, we look forward to working with you again as we continue our important mission.

Sally Newell

2018 Program Staff

Program Coordinator

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Lead Natural Resource Worker

Kristi Walker

Natural Resource Workers

Charlie Bevans
Nicky Nyholm

Natural Resource Aides

Markham Price
Karly Nyholm
Emilee Smart
Kyler Vincent

Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program “Making a Difference in Skamania County” 2018 Program Overview

Noxious Weed Control Program

509-427-3941 weeds@co.skamania.wa.us
http://www.skamaniacounty.org/noxious-weeds/

Benefit to the community by creating jobs, patronizing local businesses and enhancing recreational opportunities county-wide

- 8,457 hours of total staff time
- Provided 1 full-time position
- Provided 1 part-time, permanent position
- Provided 7 full-time, temporary positions
- Increased worker skills and marketability by providing specialized training
- Assisted 350+ community members with noxious weed issues

Protection and enhancement of land and resources through weed control

- Manual & chemical control on 2,487 acres
- Release of 500 biological control agents to Scotch broom
- Prevention education to over 2200 individuals at 11 events

Leveraged funds to maximize county investment & program footprint

- Leveraged over \$240,000 in grants and agreements

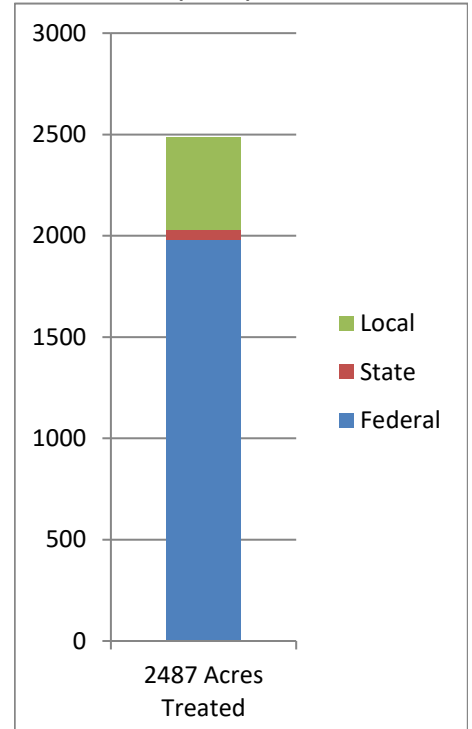
Partnership & coordination with local, state, federal, private and non-governmental organizations

- Including a regional weed collaborative group and 30+ individual entities
- 13 contracts/agreements

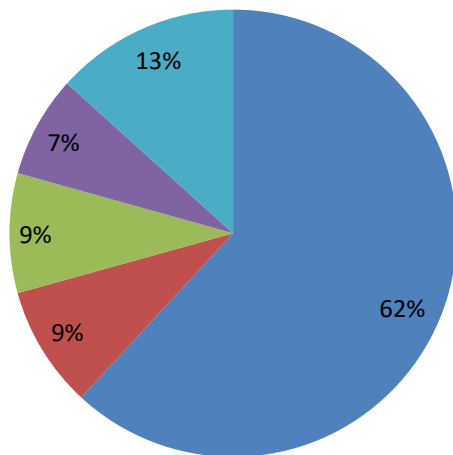
Provided locally produced weed free hay through certification

- 25 tons certified for use on National Forest System lands

Treated Areas (Acres)



2018 Funding for Noxious Weed Control



- Federal
(USFS, NSA, USACE)
- State
(State Parks, DNR, DOE, WSDA)
- Local
(Sk Co Cap Improvement, Cowlitz PUD, Klickitat Co NWCB)
- Private/Other
(Private Landowners, ISEP Workshop)
- County (not reimbursed)

Overall Direction and Major Results toward Programmatic Goals

- Education with an emphasis on protecting forest, pollinators, recreational, and aquatic resources
- Strengthening regional partnerships and increasing awareness and collaboration between public, non-profit, and private organizations
- Sharing information about vegetation management plan development, early detection rapid response strategies, and restoration

Collaboration

Partnerships and educational awareness are key to the prevention and effective control of invasive species. The program strives to establish working relationships with key stakeholders to ensure weed management is a recognized component in land management and information sharing with other habitat management groups is ongoing. In addition to sharing pertinent data, these valuable partnerships can access new sources of funding and increase regional productivity. Partners include: Garlic Mustard Working Group, Knotweed Control Partnership, Spotted Frog Working Group, Wa Invasive Species Council, Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Council, USFS, USACE, WSDOT and WSDA.



Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area

Skamania County is a participating member of the Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). The CWMA is intended to provide guidance to local government, land managers, and property owners to manage the impact of noxious weeds regardless of political boundaries. Messages shared with the public are consistent and reinforce the success of landscape scale management. The Columbia Gorge CWMA has developed and implemented many projects for the gorge region to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species and noxious weeds. The threat of invasive species stretches across all ownerships requiring collaboration and partnerships for effective management on a landscape scale. CGCWMA partners include:

- Bureau of Land Management
- Clackamas County SWCD
- Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute
- Columbia Riverkeeper
- Confederated Tribes & Bands of the Yakama Nation
- East Multnomah SWCD
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest
- Hood River SWCD
- Hood River County Weed & Pest
- Klickitat County Noxious Weed Control Board
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Oregon Parks & Recreation Department
- Mt. Hood National Forest
- The Nature Conservancy
- Underwood Conservation District
- US Fish and Wildlife
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- USDA Forest Service – Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area
- Wasco County Weed Department
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Education and Outreach

A top priority of the Noxious Weed Control Program is public education. The program continues to increase awareness about Best Management Practices and the latest developments in invasive species management in the form of classes and workshops for landowners, state and federal agencies, students, community members, volunteers, and collaborative groups.

The Skamania County Noxious Weed Program participates in the South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative to help inform forest management plans and coordinate funding for projects.

On March 1, 2018, with funding from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program, Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area, the Washington Invasive Species Council and WSU Extension hosted the 7th annual Invasive Species and Exotic Pest Workshop. As in previous years, the workshop was well attended by local land managers and interested citizens. Herbicide applicators attending earned recertification credits toward their pesticide license in Washington and Oregon.

Skamania County hosted an information center for the public at the Skamania County Fair in August. This year featured information about pollinators and pollinator specific gardens in addition to assistance with weed identification and best management practices to control noxious weeds. Staff provided information on the importance of prevention, answered questions about weed species and provided technical assistance with control and site restoration.



Jerry Franklin discusses a forest mgmt model during the South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative field day, July 2018



Students learn about weed prevention at Bonneville Dam: USACE Every Kid in the Park Event, September 2018



Noxious Weed information booth - Skamania County Fair

Other Outreach Events

- Government Mineral Springs Cabin Owners update on vegetation EDRR
- Escaped Ornamentals and Weeds of Concern presentation for the Underwood Community Garden
- Boot Brush Kick-off Event (throughout Gorge)
- PNW-Invasive Plant Council - EDRR Weed ID / Reporting Class
- White Salmon Riverfest – Yakama Nation Fisheries weed pull volunteer event
- Friends of the Gorge Stewardship Volunteer weed ID training
- Stop the Invasion: Weed Management 101 training
- Oregon Interagency Noxious Weed Symposium presentation outreach session
- Every Kid in a Park at Bonneville Dam



Yakama Nations' Riverfest Volunteers- Condit Dam weed pull, June 2018

Projects



US Forest Service Projects

Skamania County, in partnership with the US Forest Service, Klickitat, Cowlitz, and Lewis counties, conduct integrated weed management utilizing chemical and manual methods on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Habitat protection and enhancement through weed control in protected areas for elk and listed sensitive and threatened species such as the Oregon Spotted Frog, Mardon skipper, western pale blue-eyed grass and bull trout occurred in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.



Elk forage enhancement- Skookum Meadow thistle control, July 2018

There is only one Oregon Spotted Frog habitat on USFS land in Washington State. The Skamania County Noxious Weed Program was given authority to implement the only reed canarygrass herbicide treatment as a pilot project. Chemical treatment rendered excellent results instilling

confidence in agency partners who are now able to plan for ongoing treatments followed by restoration.

Program staff mentored Forest Youth Success participants in invasive removal at the Wind River Business Park, Middle Wind River Restoration Area, and the Curly Creek corridor. Other priorities include essential maintenance of the Hemlock Dam Restoration area, establishing weed free gravel resources in quarries to protect forest service infrastructure, timber sale weed abatement, and roadside maintenance to inhibit the spread of weeds.

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area worked with Skamania County on high priority projects in the Gorge at Collins Creek, Ives Island, High Valley, St. Cloud, Western Pond Turtle habitats and site preparation for a fish enhancement group project on Woodard Creek. Burn Area Emergency Relief (BAER) funding was provided to Skamania County for EDRR at the site of the Archer Mountain Fire from 2017.

Gifford Pinchot – 1,761 acres treated
NSA – 90 acres treated



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Class A Eradication Project

Program staff continued Class A weed eradication efforts on infestations within Skamania County with support from the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Class A weeds are required by law to be eradicated by landowners. Skamania County staff targeted garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and false-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*). Program staff cooperates with landowners to develop management plans for future control of their Class A sites. Cabin owners at Skamania County's primary garlic mustard infestation have coordinated with staff to organize a dedicated volunteer group working throughout the growing season to protect neighboring lands from further spread of garlic mustard and to reduce herbicide use.

Class A – 75 acres treated



US Army Corps of Engineers

In 2016, program staff developed a vegetation management plan for the Bonneville Lock and Dam. During the following growing seasons staff controlled noxious weeds prioritized in the management plan. Work conducted has resulted in an overall reduction with notable success in high traffic areas, thereby, reducing spread of weeds as visitors travel through the gorge. Work



Wauna Lake volunteers pull garlic mustard on their annual workday, April 2018

was conducted to protect the endemic state endangered species *Rorippa columbiana* habitat on the Columbia River shoreline and improve designated wildlife areas in addition to providing USACE worker safety.

Other species controlled include Scotch broom, poison hemlock, deadly nightshade, tansy ragwort, shiny geranium, spotted and diffuse knapweed, and thistles, among others.

Bonneville Dam - 115 acres treated



Rare, endemic *Rorippa columbiana* on Hamilton Island shoreline



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Knotweed Control Project

As of 2018, there are 391 participants in the knotweed program that either engage the services of Skamania County Noxious Weed staff for treatment of knotweed or actively participate through maintenance/monitoring of their sites. The objective of the knotweed project in 2018 and moving forward is to maintain control, assist landowners enrolled in the knotweed control project, and empower site managers to effectively maintain their knotweed sites. The goal of this project is to sustain the work already accomplished, prevent re-infestation and reinforce landowner commitment to maintenance in the future. The knotweed program has successfully eliminated >95% of the original knotweed infestation in Skamania County. Most sites are in maintenance phase and several have surveyed knotweed-free for many years. Many sites were surveyed clean in 2018. Community awareness of noxious weeds and the potential impacts on riparian ecosystems have been established and continue to drive programs based on the improvement of former knotweed sites. The Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program is committed to continued stewardship and will reinforce the importance of knotweed control as it relates to habitat and conservation ideals.

- **Assisted 114 land owners on 134 sites**
- **26.46 River Miles Surveyed**
- **67 Acres Treated**
- **134 sites visited, 60 treated, 64 clean, 10 treated by owner**
- **28 sites maintained by landowner**

Yakama Nation Fisheries

The Skamania County Noxious Weed Program has partnered with Yakama Nation Fisheries and Klickitat County since the removal of Condit Dam to inhibit invasive plants from occurring in the

restoration area where Northwestern Lake existed prior to the dam removal. Program duties were expanded to include the Yakama Nations In Lieu site at the mouth of the White Salmon where the agency has restored dock access and constructed fish refugia structures where silt from the dam removal had collected.

Yakama Nation – 10 acres treated



The Cowlitz PUD employs the Skamania County Noxious Weed staff to conduct weed and brush removal along Swift canal, dikes, and other structures to protect the integrity of infrastructure and provide line of sight for inspection purposes. In addition, crews work to remove invasive plants and enhance forage opportunities in agency designated wildlife areas. The improvement in the Devil’s Backbone Wildlife area has been a major driver of an expansion of that project area.

Cowlitz PUD – 140 acres treated



Coldwater Lake Eurasian Watermilfoil Project

An aquatic survey of Coldwater Lake on the Mt. St. Helens Monument found an infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil at the outflow of Coldwater Creek. With exception of this discovery, Coldwater Lake remains pristine in its aquatic ecosystem. Skamania County, the US Forest Service, and Cowlitz County have been successfully collaborating to eliminate this infestation. The Forest Service deploys their dive team to carefully pull plants to lessen fragmentation. Nets are set up downstream to catch fragments while Cowlitz and Skamania county staff assist divers with plant material removal and proper disposal. The infestation has been reduced by more than 90% with eradication in sight. Public outreach and education about how to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species and signage installed on site continue to build visitor awareness.



Divers hand pull milfoil in Coldwater Lake, July 2018

Other Projects

- Beacon Rock State Park – 41 acres treated
- Department of Natural Resources – 13 acres treated
- Skamania County Parks – 13 acres treated
- Cape Horn Conservancy – 12 acres treated
- Private Landowners – 150 acres treated



Feed a Bee

Bayer Feed a Bee Grant

Utilizing a \$5000 grant awarded from Bayer and \$300 from the US Forest Service, program staff built upon ongoing pollinator projects in the Columbia Gorge. This funding supported 3 projects in Skamania County at Mt. Pleasant Elementary School, Stevenson Community Garden and the Hegewald Center.

Mt. Pleasant Elementary School on the west end of Skamania County has an established pollinator garden and classroom honey bee hive. This project enhanced their garden, provided interpretive signage to support their educational efforts, and assisted with installing native plants and seed around a newly established pond.

The Stevenson Community Garden adjacent to the Skamania County Fairgrounds received interpretive signage and a 200-square-foot pollinator hedgerow with project funds.

A native plant/pollinator demonstration garden was established adjacent to the Hegewald Center where volunteers completed site preparation and installed native plants, flower seed, bunch grasses, and shrubs characterizing local native habitats. Staff will design and place multiple interpretive signs describing the value of pollinator habitats and integrated vegetation management. Nesting and habitat materials for pollinators and other insects, including bare ground, woody debris, rocks, and nest boxes will be constructed by local students and installed in the garden. The demonstration garden is utilizing only native plants to educate visitors of their importance and value to our pollinators and wildlife, to display their role in water conservation, and to exhibit the ease in which establishing a native pollinator garden can be accomplished.



Volunteers help install native plants in the demonstration garden, spring 2018



Future Directions

- Develop the capacity and capabilities of the program and regional projects through collaboration and the pursuit of funds to provide avenues for the control of noxious weeds in Skamania County and the Columbia Gorge region.
- Continue to develop Early Detection/Rapid Response (EDRR) protocols for Class A weeds and species of concern in Skamania County and increase awareness of ecological impacts of invasive species.
- Work to further strengthen relationships with adjacent weed boards and programs. Analyze weed issues approaching this area and coordinate activities to actualize effective Early Detection and Rapid Response.
- Ensure the successful transition of remaining knotweed sites back to landowners and develop management strategies to assist landowners battling Class A weeds while seeking grants to assist the public with control.
- Further develop stewardship activities and training to private and public land managers to build regional capacity for ongoing weed control. Cooperate with WSU Extension to provide continuing education and workshops.

