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Author Jamie Davies, Recreation and Control Supervisor
Subject Invasive Plant Control Program – 2019 Annual Report

BACKGROUND

The following report provides an overview of the RDEK Invasive Plant Control Program, which consists of Invasive Plant Bylaw Enforcement and the Neighbourhood Invasive Plant Program (NIPP).

INVASIVE PLANT BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

In 2017, the RDEK implemented Invasive Plant (IP) Regulation Bylaw No. 2711 (IP Bylaw) and IP Bylaw Enforcement Policy and Procedures (IP Policy) to support property owners with their obligations to control IPs as required under the provincial Weed Control Act.

Jamie Davies (Recreation & Control Services Supervisor) remains as RDEK Weed Control Officers to enforce and administer the provincial Weed Control Act. Kevin Paterson (Environmental Services Manager) remains as an alternate.

Complaints

Since 2005, the RDEK has received and responded to IP complaints on private land (complaints on provincial lands are forwarded to the East Kootenay Invasive Species Council). All IP complaints on private land are organized by file number and all pertinent site information (i.e. property info, IP inspection reports, infraction class ranking, action required) is added to Tempest. Tempest is a land management system for local governments, which includes permitting, bylaw, local improvements and utility data collection and payments. The table below summarizes the total number of filed IP complaints on private land.

Year	Number of Complaints	Comments
2005-2016	38	Total number of complaints prior to implementation of the IP Bylaw and IP Policy
2017	26	26 inspected with correspondence mailed in March 2018
2018	74	69 inspected with correspondence mailed in March 2019 (Unable to inspect five sites due to time/weather constraints)
2019	67	67 inspected with correspondence to be mailed in March 2020

Infraction Class Ranking

Complaint sites are inspected and ranked from 1 (high priority) to 4 (low priority). To date, there are 532 IP sites in Tempest. This includes all private land complaint sites, NIPP sites, RDEK sites and sites with no species/closed files. IP sites in Tempest are summarized as:

- Class 1 Infractions – 56 (require subsequent annual inspections; if compliant, five-year inspections scheduled).

- Class 2 Infractions – 232 (once compliant, follow up as time/resources allow).
- Class 3 Infractions – 155 (once compliant, follow up as time/resources allow).
- Class 4 Infractions – 43 (education only, follow up as time/resources allow).
- No Species/Closed Files – 46 (includes 34 RDEK owned properties requiring inspections).

Anytime a new complaint is received for an existing site, the site requires follow up.

Enforcement

Enforcement correspondence (Letters, Warnings and Notices) for IP complaint sites are mailed to private landowners in March (additional correspondence may also be issued throughout the year as new sites are inspected or for non-compliance) and are summarized as:

- **Letters** are issued to new Class 2, 3 and 4 infractions. Letters contain IP species information and deadlines for IP management plan receipt and IP control initiation (Class 4 infractions only receive IP species information).
- **Warnings** are issued to new Class 1 infractions and as follow up to non-compliant Letters (Class 2 and 3 infractions). Warnings contain IP species information and deadlines for IP management plan receipt and IP control initiation.
- **Notices** are issued as follow up to non-compliant Warnings and to sites with habitual non-compliance (Class 1, 2 and 3 infractions). Notices contain a deadline for IP control initiation. If unable to achieve compliance through a Notice, remedial action (hiring of a contractor) is initiated and the cost to control IPs is issued to the landowner; if unpaid, the cost is added to their taxes.

The expectation is that landowners are utilizing their IP management plan to continue IP control on their own. The Weed Control Officer uses the annual control date in the IP management plan to schedule inspections. The table below summarizes the total number of enforcement correspondences.

Year	Number of Letters	Number of Warnings	Number of Notices
2010-2017	39	0	0
2018	48	33	9
2019	45	21	13

In 2019, all landowners issued Letters, Warnings and/or Notices were compliant (initiated IP control); although some properties required multiple site visits and correspondence to achieve compliance.

The exception was 10 Canadian Pacific Rail (CP) complaint sites and one commercial site in Cranbrook. These landowners did not undertake acceptable IP control or submit IP management plans for the 11 sites. As such, the Weed Control Officer issued Notices (under section 7 of the provincial *Weed Control Act*) to control IP species at the sites. The landowners did not control regulated IP species as requested in the Notices and therefore remedial action (spraying and/or hand pulling) was undertaken at all sites. The assessed cost to control the IP's was invoiced to both landowners. Full payment for all sites was received in January 2020.



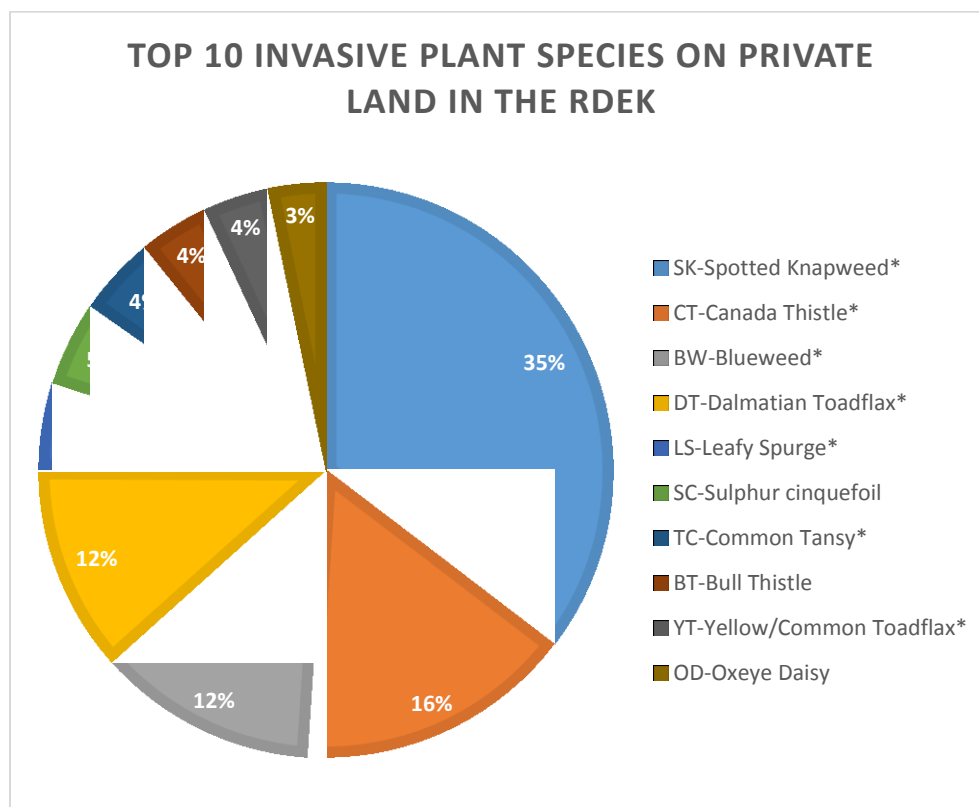
Bull Thistle



Japanese Knotweed

Mapping

ARC Geographical Information System (GIS) using a portable tablet continues to be a useful tool for mapping IP species during initial site inspections and tracking IP control progress during follow up site inspections. Data collected with ARC GIS allows for the quantitative analysis of IPs on private land in the RDEK and can be overlain on Tempest land maps.



*Regulated IP Species in the RDEK as per the provincial *Weed Control Act*.

NEIGHBOURHOOD INVASIVE PLANT PROGRAM

Since 2010, the RDEK has administered the NIPP. The NIPP provides landowners with the guidance, resources and in some cases financial support to manage priority IPs on private lands. The NIPP is not intended to fund property owners' ongoing legal obligation to control IPs as required under the provincial *Weed Control Act*.

The NIPP provides five options to assist with IP control:

1. Sprayer Loan Out - Backpack sprayers are loaned out.
2. New Invader Rebate (IPs new to the area) - 100% reimbursement of initial treatment costs incurred from hiring a licensed herbicide applicator or from the purchase of herbicide.
3. Cost Share Rebate - 50% reimbursement of the treatment costs incurred from hiring a contractor or purchase of IP control equipment to a maximum of \$500.
4. Herbicide Rebate - 50% reimbursement of herbicide purchase to a maximum of \$500.
5. Guidance/Resources - On-site inspection, educational materials/resources and IP management plan.

Table 3 - A summary of NIPP applications is as follows:

Year	Number of Applicants	Financial Support Provided to Landowners
2010	32	\$15,420
2011	38	\$25,595
2012	39	\$23,450
2013	70	\$20,820
2014	87	\$23,975
2015	77	\$20,775
2016*	79	\$2,210
2017	21	\$1,530
2018	20	\$2,024
2019	22	\$3,720

*As of 2016, new applicants only receive funding if they meet requirements. Prior to 2016, applications for successive funding were approved. Also, a shift from the NIPP to prioritizing enforcement.

In 2019, there were 21 NIPP applicants of which:

- All received guidance and/or resources;
- 19 were new applicants (nine were inspected) and two were previous applicants;
- Eight applied to the NIPP after receiving enforcement correspondence;
- 17 were approved for financial support (seven herbicide rebates, nine cost share rebates and one new invader rebate);
- 11 submitted receipts for financial support; and
- One utilized a backpack sprayer.

The 21 NIPP applicants are located in the following Electoral Areas/Municipalities:

- Area A - 1
- Area B - 5
- Area C - 6
- Area E - 5
- Area F - 0
- Area G - 1
- Kimberley - 1
- Cranbrook - 2
- Fernie - 1

In 2020, the proposed NIPP financial support budget is to remain at \$5,000.