

OKANOGAN COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED NEWS



Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board

Fall—October 2018

Fall Recreation and Noxious Weeds

As we come into our various hunting seasons this fall, keep in mind that the use of public and private lands comes with responsibility. It's up to everyone to make sure that our wildlands are properly managed, and a big part of that is reducing the impact of invasive species. There are a few things you can do while out and about this fall.

Look Before You Leave!

If you go out to hunt and fish this fall, remember that we humans supply very effective transportation for weed seeds. Regularly inspect everything that you bring with you, including boots, clothing, vehicles, and dogs. Bring a small bag to properly dispose of weed seeds and any vegetative parts you may encounter.

Some seeds will stick to your clothing; the velcro-like seeds of Houndstongue and Knapweed are prime examples. Other noxious weeds, like Longspine Sandbur and Puncturevine, have hard, spiny seeds that will catch a ride on the bottom of your shoe or on your tires. And be sure to pick the Cheatgrass seeds out of your socks! Removing all of these seeds before moving on to a new area and before heading home will greatly reduce your impact on our wildlands and on your neighborhood.

Report Infestations!

If you come across an infestation of invasive species, be sure to report the location. If on private land, make sure to notify the responsible landowner. If on state or federal lands, contact the appropriate agency. If you're not sure who to contact, don't hesitate to give us a call at (509)422-7165 and we'll help you contact the appropriate agency or landowner.



Mule Deer buck among the yellowing larches. *Photo by Larry Hudson

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Feed Seeds, Not Weeds!

As our resident wildlife prepare for the long winter and as the migratory birds start their journey south, you may find yourself tempted to provide food as they pass by. Be cautious of what you're purchasing for these animals, as invasive species often find their way into hay and bird seed.

Many of our noxious weeds in Washington and the rest of the United States originally found their new homes via contaminated feed. Be sure to either buy certified weed free feed, or make sure the seeds in the feed are sterilized and cannot germinate.



Fall Updates

We've Moved!

Our office is now in the Public Works Building at 1234 2nd Ave S, Okanogan, WA 98840.

Stop by and say hi!



Spurge Flax MUST be controlled along right-of-ways and parking areas.

Spurge Flax Control

Looking back at the Spring 2018 Newsletter, you might remember a section about the new requirements regarding control of Spurge Flax in Okanogan County. In November 2017, the State Noxious Weed Board proposed that Spurge Flax be listed as a Class B Noxious Weed rather than a Class A Noxious Weed. This decision was reached because the rapid spread of this species through ATVs and off-road vehicles, combined with remote and rugged locations of infestations, makes survey and control efforts very costly and time-consuming. These costs were assumed by all county landowners, not just those with Spurge Flax and ORVs.

This change means that landowners are not required to control this weed unless otherwise specified in an individual county. As Okanogan County is the only county in Washington known to have Spurge Flax, our board members decided that it's our responsibility to ensure control of this species along right-of-ways and parking areas. Please help us in our efforts to keep this species from spreading throughout the Pacific Northwest. For information regarding the identification and treatment of Spurge Flax, contact the Noxious Weed Office.

Cost Share Program

Although it's too late to effectively treat Spurge Flax this year, if you treated some this past spring or summer, you may be eligible for a partial reimbursement from the Noxious Weed Control Board. For more information come into our office or call us at (509)422-7165.

2017 USDA Risk Assessment

In 2017, the USDA concluded Spurge Flax poses a "very high" risk to United States ecosystems. Based on climate alone, 73% of the United States is suitable for the establishment of this species. The main concern is the reduction of carrying capacity in pastures and rangelands. For more info, visit the [State Noxious Weed Spurge Flax info page](#).

Aquatic Program

With so many lakes and rivers in Okanogan County, keeping up with aquatic invasive species can be a real challenge. This is even more apparent when you take into account the thousands of boats, jet skis and other watercraft that enjoy our local waterways each year.

This year, our aquatic program had a major setback due to high water levels and flooding in the spring. However, two lakes were treated for Curlyleaf Pondweed and Eurasian Watermilfoil; Spectacle Lake was treated in June and Lake Osoyoos was treated in July.

The Department of Ecology awarded the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board a grant to treat three more lakes: Alta Lake, Palmer Lake, and Leader Lake. Alta Lake and Palmer Lake were surveyed in September, looking for populations of invasive phragmites. A treatment date will be planned at a later time. The treatment in Leader Lake will be focused on Eurasian Watermilfoil and is scheduled for October.

For more information contact OCNWCB Manager Anna Lyon at (509)422-7165.



Preparing for the 2016 Salmon Lake treatment.

Events

- October 10th—Ferry County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting; 509-775-5225 ext. 1111
- October 24th—Okanogan County Noxious Weed Assessment Public Hearing
- October 24th—Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting; 1 pesticide license credit available
- November 6th—State Noxious Weed List Public Hearing; 1pm @ Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel
- November 7th-9th—68th Annual Weed Conference; Wenatchee Convention Center; Pesticide license credits available
- November 14th—Ferry County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting; 509-775-5225 ext. 1111
- November 28th—Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting; 1 pesticide license credit available
- December 6th—Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Recertification Class; Omak Theater; 6 pesticide license credits available
- December 12th—Ferry County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting; 509-775-5225 ext. 1111
- December 19th—Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board Meeting; 1 pesticide license credit available

For more information about these events, contact our office. Our email, phone number and address are on page 4 of this newsletter.



Aggressive Tree of Heaven stands quickly invade backyards, including your neighbors'!

Fall Tree Treatments

Fall is a great time to control invasive or unwanted tree species. When compared to applying herbicide at other times of the year, fall herbicide treatment greatly increases the effectiveness of the application and saves time and money.

Highly invasive trees like Tree of Heaven, Saltcedar, and Russian Olive are all capable of sending new trees up from their roots. This makes herbicide application tricky, requiring an herbicide that translocates down into the roots. During the fall, these trees are already sending all of their energy down to the roots, so an application at this time is much more likely to kill-off the roots, reducing the chance of resprouting.

Tree of Heaven produces chemicals that inhibit the growth of other vegetation. Saltcedar excretes salts from its stems and leaves, which increases salt levels in the topsoil, also inhibiting vegetation. Russian Olive forms stands of thorny branches so dense that birds and other wildlife have been seen speared onto the strong thorns.

These three trees are often planted as ornamentals in people's yards and gardens. They may make a nice addition during the first few years, but will quickly take over, creating hours of maintenance. They also spread to neighboring parcels through the root systems, potentially causing disputes and bad neighbor relations.

Tree Control Options

This summer, Ag Technologies donated an herbicide injection gun to the Noxious Weed Office. Thank you Ag Tech! This injection gun is quite large and specifically designed to treat large woody perennials like trees. You may qualify to use this control tool. A \$100 refundable deposit is required for check out. For more information, come into the office or contact us at (509)422-7165.

Office Changes

As was mentioned in the Spring 2018 Newsletter, the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board Office has moved! We moved from our original location in the courthouse, to our new location in the Public Works Building. The WSU Okanogan County Extension Office was previously across the hall from us in the courthouse, but now we're happy to say that we are sharing this new office space.

Even with two agencies using one office, we're all very satisfied with the upgrade, as this new space has plenty of room for everyone to work comfortably and efficiently. Stop by sometime and say hi!

Interagency Collaboration

There also happens to be an unforeseen benefit to having the two agencies in one office. Both the WSU Extension and the Noxious Weed Office often receive mystery plant and insect samples, with landowners asking for help with identification and control. The technical expertise of the WSU Master Gardeners, along with the extensive field experience of the Noxious Weed Staff, has made identification and control recommendations much simpler.

If you have a plant or insect that you'd like more information on, stop by our office with a small sample and we can help you identify the sample and provide control options.

Special Thanks to our Seasonal Staff



Our "go-getter," Mike Slattery, returned early this spring and gave us a great head start on inspecting previously-known noxious weed infestations. His drive to get things done right and in a timely manner has helped the office make every day count.

Linda Schmidt, a seasonal inspector from a few years ago, also returned to the office. Along with allowing our staff to cover even more ground, she's provided great insight into how our noxious weed populations have changed over the years.

After graduating high school, Erin Quinlan returned to the office and took over inspecting the northeast section of our county. She's been a great help the past two years and her knowledge of the area has made inspections much more efficient.

Ryan Balkcom also returned for the season and traveled from Wauconda down to Brewster, and all the way up to Mazama inspecting for noxious weeds. Now that Ryan has graduated from college, he is searching for full-time employment.

Congratulations Joan!

Join us in congratulating our wonderful employee of 9 years on her retirement! Over the years, Joan has provided crucial support to the Noxious Weed Office. Her organizational skills and positive, cheerful attitude kept everyone on track and in good spirits. She will be missed!



Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about invasive species identification and control.

Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board

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Visit us on the web at:
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Please feel free to forward this newsletter on to your friends. Make sure you keep our office up to date with your email address, so we can keep you informed. Or, to be added to our email list, please send us an email at noxiousweeds@co.okanogan.wa.us.

