



REGIONAL INVASIVE PLANT DISPOSAL PLAN 2021



qathet
REGIONAL DISTRICT

Prepared for qathet
Regional District by:

Let'sTalkTrash.ca
WHAT IS WASTE?

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As identified in the qathet Regional District Invasive Plant Management Strategy, invasive plant species pose a serious threat to the region through reducing biodiversity, increasing costs to parks and operations maintenance and negatively impacting the economy and human health. A critical component of this Strategy identifies the creation of a Regional Invasive Plant Disposal Plan.

The purpose of the Invasive Plant Disposal Plan is to provide the qathet Regional District (qRD) with a robust plan for the proper disposal of invasive plant species that compliments the Invasive Plant Management Strategy.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Invasive plant species are plants that have been introduced to an area without the predators and pathogens from their native habitats that would help keep them in balance with the surrounding ecosystem. They can threaten property and recreational values, infrastructure, agriculture, public health and safety, as well as the ecological health and diversity of our natural environment. A regional strategy for proper disposal of invasive plants has been outlined as a critical component to the success of the qathet Regional District's Invasive Plant Management Strategy to avoid the spread of plants through mismanagement and illegal dumping. The following Plan outlines a regional disposal program to ensure responsible and complete destruction of invasive plant material to ensure that they do not take root in other locations.

The most successful and effective means of disposal can vary depending on the species. Air Curtain Burning Technology is generally a preferred method for a large variety of species. Open backyard burning does not provide a high enough heat to ensure total eradication of all plant components. Air Curtain Burning Technology does provide the required temperature to destroy the plant components and is compliant with environmental regulations. The Burn Boss, which is the model purchased by the qRD, is a certified Air Curtain Burning Technology and therefore qualifies for exemption of use during burn and smoke bans due to its low emission output and burning inside a self-contained unit. Being portable, the unit can be transported to allow disposal on-site for larger infestations or collections. Destroying plants on-site is important as transporting materials creates risk of seed or plant material distribution while transporting plant material to an off-site disposal location.

In order to prevent illegal dumping of invasive plants and the resulting spread of these species, it would be advantageous if there were no tipping fees charged for the collection of invasive plants. For species that require on-site herbicide treatment, enabling easy and free, or low cost (ie. rebate program), access to certified treatment technicians is paramount to fighting the spread of these species.

Since invasive plants know no boundaries, a cooperative and collaborative approach between local government, land managers and residents is essential to ensure that invasive plant management activities are not hindered by private ownership, jurisdiction or political boundaries. Adopting a

cooperative approach can more efficiently utilize limited funds and personnel while achieving mutual objectives. An Invasive Plant Technical Review Committee was formed by the qRD to foster such an approach, which included representation from Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Tla'amin Nation, City of Powell River, BC Hydro, Powell River Fire Rescue, Western Forest Products, Mosiac Forest Management, Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and Evolugen.

3.0 DISPOSAL STRATEGY

Common practice in the qRD for landowners is backyard burning, transporting plant material to Augusta Recyclers or illegally dumping. The qRD is in a unique position in that all of our waste is shipped out of region and there is no local landfill. Many municipalities and regions have a specific protocol for disposing of invasive plant species within their local landfills. The Republic Services Roosevelt Landfill currently does not recommend the transportation of invasive plant material to be disposal of at the Roosevelt site and advises local disposal options to prevent the spread of these invasive plant species. Specifically identified plants include:

- Japanese Knotweed
- Giant Hogweed
- Morning Glory
- Himalayan Blackberry
- Scotch Broom
- Ivy
- Periwinkle

Additional local options for disposing of invasive plant species include:

- Incineration with qRD Burn Boss
- Mixed in with hog fuel at Catalyst Paper Excellence

Developing a robust disposal program for invasive plant species includes the four following strategies:

Education and Public Awareness

Continuing to engage, support and motivate residents and landowners to take action to address invasive plant species in conjunction with the Invasive Plant Species Management Strategy will help ensure proper plant management recommendations are followed. Specific species such as Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed require herbicide treatment as opposed to pulling plants out of the soil or cutting them at the base. Consolidating material and guidelines on how to best manage, treat and dispose of specific species will promote more effective control of invasive plant species within the region. Promotion of any supporting programs or financial assistance will help to remove barriers and will further promote responsible treatment and disposal.

Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination

Engagement with the Regional Invasive Plant Technical Review Committee, interested organizations (eg. Broom Busters, Tla'amin Nation, Garden Club, City of Powell River, etc.) on the use of the Burn Boss will encourage large collection events throughout the region to facilitate on-site disposal of invasive plant material. To facilitate the use of this mobile unit, priority in the first year of this program should focus on increasing operator training for use of the Burn Boss. The more qualified operators there are in the region who can rent or sign out the Burn Boss and transport it to different locations for use will help to reduce the risk of spread through the transport of invasive plant species.

Through these identified committees, stakeholder groups and organizations, and by encouraging localized annual invasive plant collection events, the region will work to prevent, reduce and eliminate the spread of invasive plant species. In addition to these efforts, data collection from events and regional mapping can be integrated to increase our understanding of invasive plant species growth or decline and program effectiveness.

Policy

The development of policy tools can be used to direct both residents and commercial users to dispose of invasive plants responsibly. A common way to do this is to create a list of noxious weed species, which is then categorized as a controlled waste in the Regional Waste Bylaw (No.532) with specific direction as to how this waste is to be handled and disposed of.

Financial Incentives

Reducing barriers to landowners for proper disposal of invasive plant species will help to reduce illegal dumping and inappropriate disposal. Many regions offer free disposal for invasive plant species or rebate programs to subside costs. As stated in the qRD Invasive Plant Management Strategy, "it would be advantageous to having tipping fees waived on invasive plant material".

The qRD has been providing a "Free Invasive Plants Species Drop Off Month" each May since 2019. Providing year-round or spring and fall free drop off of invasive plant species would further accommodate responsible disposal, a common approach being used in different regions and municipalities.

4.0 PROPOSED 5 YEAR WORK PLAN

Year 1

- Implementation of Public Education/Communication Plan.
- Increase the number of certified Burn Boss operators in the region.
- Draft a list of priority and noxious weed species that will guide an update to the qathet Regional District Bylaw No.532.
- Propose budget amendments to the Solid Waste Service for 2023 for free drop off of invasive plant species identified in the priority list.

- Continuation of the “Free Invasive Plants Species Drop Off Month” for spring and fall 2022.

Ongoing

Implementing free or low-cost disposal options for residents as well as rebate programs or subsidies for specified plant species that require on-site treatment is recommended to help remove barriers. Establishing a year-round free drop off of invasive plant is highly recommended to allow landowners easier and more regular disposal access. Ideally, each electoral area would also have at least one localized event per year where plant material is collected and the Burn Boss transported to the local electorate collection location to dispose of plant material on-site to decrease the risk of spread through transportation. For loads being transported, it is recommended that rules be put in place that require loads containing invasive species to be covered with a tarp and contained during transport.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Public Education and Communication Program	\$4,000 Year 1 and \$2,000 annually thereafter
Burn Boss Training Program	\$3,000 annually
Burn Boss Wood Base Supply for Operation	\$1,500 annually
Waste Bylaw Amendment	\$2,000 one time cost
Year Round or Spring & Fall Free Disposal	Approx. \$3,025 (60 tonnes) - 2,200 (40 tonnes)
Treatment Rebate/Subsidy Program	TBD

Using a multi-pronged approach based on best practices that encourages compliance, removes financial barriers, complies with policy and bylaws, will help qRD develop a responsible and effective management and disposal Plan for invasive plant species.

6.0 CONCLUSION

As identified in the qRD’s Invasive Plant Management Strategy, it is imperative to have an identified disposal program to assist, facilitate and remove barriers for the proper disposal of invasive plant material. If left unchecked, illegal dumping will persist. Invasive plant species require responsible disposal to help stop their spread, protect and preserve native ecosystems as well as to reduce risks to human health.