

Regional Invasive Species Program



2020-2025 Program Accomplishments

Capital Regional District | Environmental Protection

This report provides a summary by priority focus area of the Regional Invasive Species Program's collaborative efforts and accomplishments in 2020-2025. For more information about the program and to view all outreach material see www.crd.bc.ca/invasive.

Collaboration & Capacity Building

- **Coordinated the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP):** This intergovernmental working group meets bi-monthly and advises and supports the program. Current membership is approximately 60 representatives from 25 different government agencies and First Nations, with interest in, or management responsibilities for invasive species within the capital region. In addition, there are 11 partner agencies involved including Gulf Island Conservancies, Habitat Acquisition Trust, PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Foundation, Royal BC Museum, Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, and the Victoria Airport Authority.
- **Hosted workshops for CRISP members on the following species:** Canada geese, carpet burweed, English holly & hawthorn, European green crab, gorse, shiny geranium, yellow flag iris, and other topics.
- **Offered CRISP member agencies access to shared treatment and monitoring services** through a contractor through a Memorandum of Understanding, to manage high priority invasive species.
- **Received an annual grant of \$16,000** from the Province of BC to support invasive species communication and awareness in the capital region (2020-2025).
- **Strengthened and developed new relationships with partners in the region**, as well as the Province of BC's Invasive Plant Program and the Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC).
- **Hosted an online CRD Invasive Species Symposium** with ISCBC (2022) – Approximately 80 individuals participated.
- **Hosted the first Invasive Sooty Bark Disease Symposium** with the Pacific Forestry Centre and District of Saanich, to raise awareness and encourage regional collaboration on this invasive tree disease that kills maples (and other species) and has human health impacts. 80 individuals participated.
- **Hosted the first Coastal Invasive Forum** (2023) in collaboration with the Qualicum First Nation and the Coastal Invasive Species Committee, bringing together more than 75 staff from agencies around Vancouver Island to learn about new invasive species to the region, discuss current management success stories and to foster conversations on common regional invasive species issues. Staff will support this event again in 2026.
- **Participated in the BC Regional Invasive Species Organizations (RISO)** collaboration and the ISCBC's Local Government Invasive Species Network, attended the provincial Invasive Species Forum to stay current with new research and maintain and build networks.

- Shared invasive species information packages with all local First Nations to offer to learn more about their perspectives and needs related to invasive species and to offer support, if desired.
- Supported and promoted Pesticide Applicator Course at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, to train local government and private contractors in the management of high priority invasive species.
- Liaised with Tsartlip Nation regarding an infestation of toxic and invasive giant hogweed.

Early Detection Rapid Response

Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) is a province-wide proactive approach to managing new invasive species to prevent their establishment. The Regional Invasive Species Program:

- Provided coordinated treatment, monitoring, education and quick action for approximately 60 outbreaks of five high priority species including black knapweed, blessed milk thistle, giant hogweed, knotweed (four types), poison hemlock, policeman's helmet, scotch thistle, and shiny geranium for the following agencies: CRD Environmental Protection, CRD Regional Housing, CRD Regional Parks, City of Langford, City of Victoria, District of Metchosin, District of Sooke, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, Township of Esquimalt, and Town of Sidney. Some municipalities also treat priority invasives independently on public and private sites.
- Liaised with the Province of BC to verify and manage 15 sites of newly detected high-risk species (Egg Leaf Spurge, Flowering Rush, Goat's Rue, Shiny Geranium). The CRD is the first regional contact for verification of new invasive species reports.
- Worked collaboratively with T'Sou-ke Nation, District of Sooke and other CRD staff to arrange for provincial permission to manage highly invasive knotweed on the Sooke River.
- Led an extensive review to update the CRD Invasive Plant List to assist land managers in planning and prioritizing invasive species management and to highlight priority species for eradication.
- Conducted 10–20 field assessments each year to verify invasive plant reports, share management resources and disposal information.
- Liaised with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit each year regarding shared priority species and management in the region.

Regional Education & Outreach Program

- Supported five key behavior change programs to prevent the spread and harm of invasives, in collaboration with the ISCBC and other BC agencies:

Program	Audience
Buy Local Burn Local	Campers
Clean Drain Dry	Boaters, fishers, kayakers, paddleboarders
Don't Let it Loose	Pet stores, pet owners
Plant Wise	Nurseries, horticulture professionals, home gardeners
Play Clean Go/Work Clean Go	Outdoor recreation, outdoor staff

- Conducted outreach with local nurseries, pet stores, paddle board shops/rental agencies, and outdoor stores about invasive species and behavior change programs to reduce their impacts.
- Developed 10 new invasive species alert sheets for outreach and for use by CRISP member agencies.
- Distributed approximately 600 educational resources at community events and displays each year.
- Responded to approximately 200 public calls/emails each year regarding invasive species.
- Launched a social media campaign on invasive species as part of Canada-wide coordinated efforts for Invasive Species Action Month each May.
- Hosted displays and presented talks at community events (Seedy Saturdays, Swan Lake Native Plant Sale, Master Gardeners meetings etc.) taking invasive species awareness and action messages, reaching over more than 2,000 people each year.
- Responded to three media requests for information on poison hemlock and knotweed.
- Coordinated posting of 17 Clean Drain Dry signs at 10 local lakes – provided education about actions to take to reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species. 60 outreach packages were distributed.
- Collaborated to develop “Invasive Plants in Your Garden” booklet for outreach, with Habitat Acquisition Trust.
- Shared invasive species workshops with Indigenous youth, in partnership with Stewards of Scaí’new and Victoria Native Friendship Centre team (2022-2023).
- CRISP members report more than 22,000 hours at various agencies, working to manage established invasive species (such as English ivy, holly, Scotch broom, daphne laurel and others) in parks and natural areas in the capital region each year.

Disposal

- Coordinated a shared regional disposal bin (hosted by District of Saanich) for high-priority species.
- Purchased a mobile incineration unit (Burn Boss) to use for effective disposal of invasive species with CRD Regional Parks and Integrated Water Services.
- Conducted interviews and research on invasive species disposal practices in the region for future development of outreach material.

Inventory and Mapping

- Coordinated regional reporting, mapping and management for outbreaks and treatment sites; 15 new regional high-priority outbreaks were reported, mapped and verified.

Restoration, Research and Trials

- Promoted the UN Decade on Restoration with the University of Victoria, District of Saanich Parks, Habitat Acquisition Trust and others, to encourage focused efforts on ecological restoration in the 2021-2030 period.
- Supported researchers working on invasive species in the region.
- Continued collaborative relationship with the University of Victoria’s Restoration of Natural Systems Program.
- Worked with Camosun College to trial electrical treatment of shallow rooted invasive species.