



OKANOGAN

COUNTY

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

2015 Annual Report



Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board

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Our Mission and Purpose

To protect all lands in Okanogan County from the devastating influences of non-native noxious weeds. We will promote control efforts through integrated weed management, focusing on education and prevention as the best control practices.

A message from the Coordinator

2015 was an incredible year. Working with the Okanogan Conservation District, Department of Natural Resources and the Methow Forest Service we were able to get a lot of noxious weed control efforts accomplished for some of the landowners impacted by the Carlton Complex wildfire. Aggressive survey efforts resulted in a find of Hoary Alyssum in the Chiliwist area, which would have spread if left uncontrolled. We really appreciate the effort these agencies made in helping the landowners recover from the fires impacts and improve badly damaged landscapes.

We continued our successful Class A program, which is now a cost share effort. We also maintained our B-designate program, continuing landowner contracts. Even though we continued to be short staffed during the field season, we still were able to maintain our onsite consultations, survey activities, and educational efforts with updated brochures and handouts. We continued to work with the landowners and managers in the county on noxious weed control projects and related weed issues.

When the 2015 fires began and smoke clouds covered the valley, fieldwork slowed and then halted as staff went home to protect and prepare for evacuations. After the smoke cleared and we began to return to work, we were looking at a million acres scarred by wildfires. Sites of various known infestations of noxious weeds were not controlled as landowners were evacuated, or unable to endure the poor air quality. As we considered the impacts of the fires on our noxious weed programs and began to look for funding sources, we began to hear from many of those impacted by the fires requesting assistance. We began a rigorous fall program using Title II funds to provide some control, but were not able to reach everyone.

We continue to look ahead and seeking control funding is a high priority for the Noxious Weed Office. Discussions with WSU Extension Douglas County have resulted in massive quantities of biological controls being ordered, which will be distributed where needed. We will continue to provide what support we can.

More detailed information regarding our programs and activities is included in this annual report. I hope you read it in good health and find it informative. We look forward to 2016 (without wildfires!) and encourage you to contact us with any comments or suggestions that you may have for our office.

Anna Lyon, Manager

Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board Program

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An Overview of the 2015 Weed Control Season

The 2015 weed control season proved to be a very challenging year, meeting our contract and grant obligations and keeping up on the blooming weeds. Everything seemed to jump at the same time toward the end of June.

State and Federal agency contracts from the past few years allowed us to free up some funding to hire an additional Field Assistant this year. We were also able to work with the Okanogan Conservation District utilizing some legislative funding to assist landowners impacted by the Carlton Complex wildfires. While we were not able to provide weed control for everyone impacted, we were able to focus on sites of mandatory control species and geographic areas where multiple landowners requested assistance in controlling species such as Dalmatian Toadflax and Knapweed.

Again, Larry focused on our EDRR (Early Detection Rapid Response) and Class A noxious weeds. This has proved to be an effective plan, enabling him to focus on priority species, without the distraction of more widespread noxious weeds. Larry actively controlled several small or remote sites with chemical provided by the Noxious Weed Office and provided support, such as maps and survey information, to commercial applicators for the larger sites.

The continued increase of funding from the Colville Range Department/Bureau of Indian Affairs allowed for additional survey and control efforts on the reservation in 2015. This funding was originally allocated for a Scotch Thistle control hand pull crew but in recent years has been expanded to include EDRR species, such as Yellow Starthistle and Rush Skeletonweed, as well as chemical treatments. Janet and Joan were able to survey, provide support to commercial applicators, and get most of the EDRR sites controlled as well as a substantial portion of the Scotch Thistle sites. The additional funds for survey and control activities provided for a broader spectrum of control on the Colville Reservation.

Leafy Spurge control was provided to landowners by funding provided through the Conservation District from the State Legislature, as previous control efforts in 2014 were interrupted by the Carlton Complex wildfires. The lack of control in 2014 combined with nutrients provided by the fires resulted in an increase of plant size and infestation density. However, the lack of other vegetation also showed additional sites of Leafy Spurge that may have been missed in previous years, or were newly established through widespread seed dispersal.

Scotch Thistle was surveyed and voluntary control was achieved on almost all sites; others required enforcement actions to protect adjacent landowners. A majority of the Musk Thistle sites were surveyed and most were voluntarily controlled, but several enforcement actions did occur. Returning field staff made surveying for Musk and Scotch Thistles more effective as they were already familiar with infested areas and office procedures. Contracts provided by OCNWCB encouraged landowners to utilize commercial applicators in an effective manner and reduce overall costs.

We continued work with the Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Lake Osoyoos Association (LOA). A control plan has been established and implemented, DOE grant funding obtained, and control efforts are

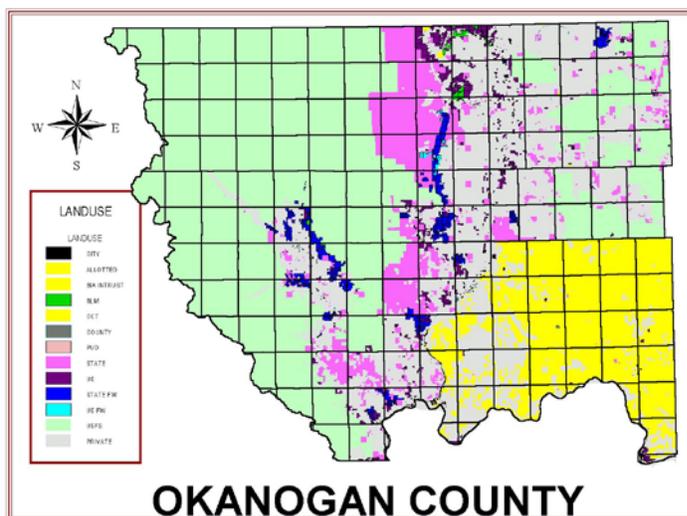
ongoing. DOE control funding is supplemented by funding from shoreline landowners to broaden control efforts.

Education efforts are also ongoing as we continue to update existing brochures and other handouts with better photography and the most current control recommendations. Increased educational efforts has resulted in ever increasing requests for on-site consultation and assistance in developing noxious weed control plans tailored to fit individual needs. We also continue to collect contact information from landowners, including email, in an effort to provide continual re-certification information, newsletters, meeting schedules, and other pertinent noxious weed information. Field Inspector, Joan Mason, continues to organize the collected data into distribution lists to provide needed information to local landowners and managers.

Okanogan County Noxious Weed Mapping Program

Since 1999, the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board staff has been using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies to help us record, track, catalog, and relocate noxious weed infestations that we detect throughout the noxious weed control season. The introduction of GPS/GIS technologies into our program has enabled staff to be very accurate in determining property boundaries while in the field, which has helped ensure that we are contacting the correct landowners when noxious weed infestations are located during the field surveying process. GPS and GIS Technology has also enabled our office to better track the progress that is being made in controlling various noxious weed sites throughout Okanogan County. We are able to record the exact coordinates of noxious weed sites, and record information about the size, density and level of control that has occurred within the site throughout a given weed control season, as well as, over the past several years.

GPS and GIS technology has also enabled us to generate maps of the county that show the exact locations of the various noxious weed infestations that we have detected through surveying efforts. The next few pages in this report include maps of all of the: Class A, and Class B Designate Noxious Weed sites that are known to occur in Okanogan County and were generated thanks to the incorporation of GPS and GIS technology into our weed control program.



2015 Class A Noxious Weed Control

(It is mandatory to eradicate these species.)



Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*: Garlic Mustard was first detected in Okanogan County in 2012. The five acre site, found growing along the eastern shore of Palmer Lake, is the only known Garlic Mustard site in eastern Washington. In 2015, utilizing herbicide provided by the Washington State Noxious Weed Board, staff from the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board provided initial and follow-up herbicide treatments of the site at no cost to the landowner. Staff treated approximately 30 plants within the original infested area and continued monitoring the area surrounding the original infestation.



Mirabilis (aka Wild Four O'clock) *Mirabilis nyctaginea*: Most Mirabilis sites occur along the Okanogan River corridor, or near the town of Loomis. Approximately 5,000 acres were surveyed during the 2015 field season, with 17 acres being treated with herbicide. Most landowners with Mirabilis infestations on their property requested treatment, through a contract with OCNWCB. The contract provided assistance to Class A weed landowners by splitting all costs exceeding the \$100 minimum billing fee. A State Noxious Weed Control Board grant further reduced the cost to both the landowner and OCNWCB.



Syrian Bean-Caper *Zygophyllum fabago*: Syrian Bean-Caper has not been a big focus of Noxious Weed Office staff as the only private landowner in Okanogan County who has Syrian Bean-Caper growing on their property has been doing an excellent job of controlling it. In 2015, the Okanogan County Noxious Weed Board surveyed all of the known Syrian Bean-Caper infestations on that landowners property and no plants were found.

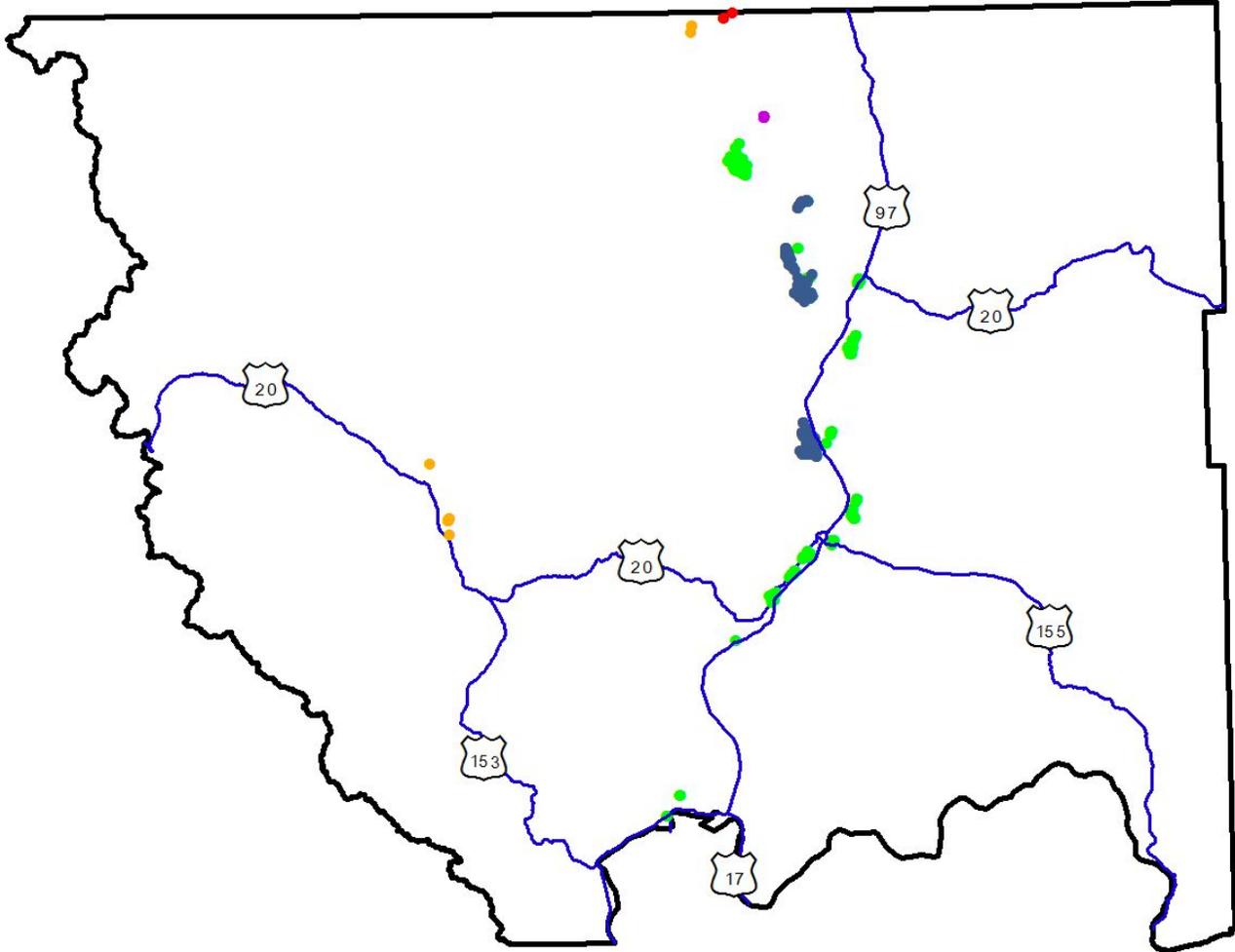


Meadow Clary *Salvia pratensis*: Prior to Meadow Clary being listed on the Washington State noxious weed list, it was sold in local nurseries, which means there is potential that Meadow Clary could infest several flower gardens throughout Okanogan County. Consequently, the Noxious Weed Office has taken the stance that we will only require landowners to control Meadow Clary infestations on their property if they have escaped an ornamental setting. Currently, Noxious Weed Office personnel only know of three sites in Okanogan County where Meadow Clary has escaped from flower gardens to become an issue. In 2015, the Noxious Weed Board provided for herbicide treatment of two of these sites at no cost to the landowner (the landowner treated his own at the third site). In total, ½ acre of Meadow Clary was treated in 2015.

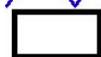


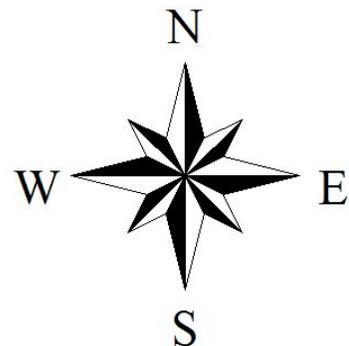
Spurge Flax *Thymelaea passerina*: Currently, Spurge Flax is only known to be present in four locations within the county: the Alkali Lake area west of Riverside, the Beeman Road area southwest of Tonasket, the Horse Spring Coulee area south of Spectacle Lake, and the Evans Lake area. Due to the multiple large wildfires that Okanogan County experienced in 2015, Surveying efforts for Spurge Flax were extremely limited. However, all of the known Spurge Flax infestations were treated with herbicides at least once, with many sites being treated twice, prior to the wildfires starting. In total, we treated 28 acres, much of which was paid for with Title II funds.

2015 Class 'A' Noxious Weeds



- Syrian Beancaper
- Spurge Flax
- Mirabilis
- Meadow Clary
- Garlic Mustard

 State Highways
 County Boundary



2015 Class B Designate Noxious Weed Control

(It is mandatory to stop seed production of these species.)

In 2015, contracts were sent out to all landowners who had Class B Designate Noxious Weeds on their property in past years, giving them the opportunity to be set up with a Commercial Applicator in advance, at the landowners expense. This made it more feasible for landowners to get their weeds treated at the best possible time (before seed production), and enabled the applicator to coordinate treatments within areas of close proximity. The contracts also allowed Noxious Weed Office staff to focus our attention on inspecting and contacting landowners of properties where the Class B Designates may have been left untreated or treated too late to stop seed production.

The following is information regarding individual species of Class B Designate Noxious Weeds.



Velvetleaf *Abutilon theophrasti*: Approximately 200 acres have been surveyed surrounding the three known Velvetleaf infestations, which are located in the following areas: near the town of Oroville, south of Malott, and a new site in Omak on the Colville Reservation (which was discovered this year). In total, ¼ acre of Velvetleaf was treated throughout Okanogan County during the 2015 field season. We will continue to monitor all of these sites as well as surrounding areas over the next several years to ensure that all plants and viable seeds have been eradicated.



Hawkweeds *Hieracium aurantiacum* & *Hieracium caespitosum*: In Okanogan County, we have a couple of different varieties of non-native Hawkweed species (Orange Hawkweed and Meadow Hawkweed), with most infestations being located in the northeast corner of the county. During the 2015 field season, the Noxious Weed Office oversaw the chemical treatment of Hawkweed for 34 private landowners, and also treated a substantial amount of Hawkweed through an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources.



Common Bugloss *Anchusa officinalis*: There are currently only three known sites of Common Bugloss that have been found in Okanogan County (one along Highway 20 near the Ferry County line, one just off of Toroda Creek Road, and one in the Frosty Creek area). Weed Office staff oversaw the treatment of one small site (less than ¼ acre) during the 2015 field season; no Common Bugloss was found at the other two sites. Due to a lack of time and personnel, Common Bugloss surveying efforts were confined to areas adjacent to known infestations, with about 600 acres actually being surveyed. Staff will continue to look for new sites.



Rush Skeletonweed *Chondrilla juncea*: Rush Skeletonweed is an aggressive perennial that grows in several different locations throughout Okanogan County. It seems like every year, Noxious Weed Office staff has been finding new Rush Skeletonweed infestations around the county. In 2015, we only had 1 landowner contract to have their Rush Skeletonweed treated through our contract program. However, all known sites (approximately 5,000 acres) were inspected to ensure control was performed.



Tansy Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*: During the 2015 field season, staff from the Noxious Weed Office inspected the Lemnasky Lake site (which was discovered and treated in 2010). Again this year, no Tansy Ragwort was noted. The Lemnasky Lake site is currently the only known Tansy Ragwort infestation growing on private lands within Okanogan County. Noxious Weed Office staff will continue to monitor this site over the next several years.



Yellow Starthistle *Centaurea solstitialis*: Noxious Weed Office staff have been monitoring and treating several known infestations of Yellow Starthistle in Okanogan County (Rufus Woods Lake area, Tunk Valley area, and Davis Lake in the Methow). During the 2015 field season, the Noxious Weed Office oversaw the chemical treatment of Yellow Starthistle for 3 private landowners (in the Methow area and on the Colville reservation). All areas where Yellow Starthistle had been found in the past were surveyed in 2015, which totaled 4,500 acres being surveyed. Progress continues toward eradication of the Tunk Valley site, where no Yellow Starthistle has been found for several years. The site continues to be surveyed and monitored every year.



Musk Thistle *Carduus nutans*: 2015 proved to be a challenging year for the control of Musk Thistle due to wildfires and smoke hampering control efforts. However, the Noxious Weed Office did have 112 landowners that signed our contract to allow Noxious Weed Office staff to oversee herbicide treatment by a commercial applicator and 14 landowners contacted a commercial applicator on their own. This freed our staff up to inspect and contact landowners of properties where the Musk Thistle may have been left untreated, or taken care of too late to stop seed production. The Noxious Weed Office also conducted herbicide treatments on Musk Thistle for the DNR thanks to an agreement with them. In total, Noxious Weed Office staff inspected over 60,000 acres for Musk Thistle during the 2015 field season. There were 25 certified posting letters sent out to landowners and a total of four enforcements performed.



Hoary Alyssum *Berteroa incana*: In 2015, the Hoary Alyssum buffer area was eliminated, making Hoary Alyssum a mandatory control noxious weed throughout Okanogan County. During the 2015 field season, Noxious Weed Office staff inspected over 25,000 acres for Hoary Alyssum. This year, we had a total of 42 landowners sign a contract with the Noxious Weed Office to have their property treated. There were a total of 15 certified posting letters sent out to landowners with un-controlled Hoary Alyssum on their property, and a total of 3 enforcements were performed. Hoary Alyssum continues to be a big concern.



Leafy Spurge *Euphorbia esula*: In 2015, 88 landowners took advantage of our contract allowing the Noxious Weed Office staff to oversee the herbicide treatment of Leafy Spurge. Most of the landowners who signed up to be treated owned property in or near the Carlton Complex Wildfire area and were able to get their Leafy Spurge treated at no cost to them, as costs associated with treatment were paid for with funds that we received from the Okanogan Conservation District. This year we saw a fairly large increase in the size and density of many of the Leafy Spurge infestations located within the Carlton Complex Wildfire area (this was due to the fire releasing many of the seeds in the ground and removing competitive vegetation within infested areas). In total, staff inspected over 15,000 acres for Leafy Spurge during the 2015 field season.



Scotch Thistle *Onopordum acanthium*: During the 2015 field season, most of the known Scotch Thistle sites in Okanogan County were inspected and treated. Funding was provided for treatments of Scotch Thistle on the Reservation, amounting to approximately 42.5 acres of Scotch Thistle control. Only 17 landowners signed our contract to have the Noxious Weed Office staff oversee herbicide treatment of Scotch Thistle on their property. This was down quite a bit from 2014, when 30 landowners signed the contract, but this lower number of signed contracts for Scotch Thistle control was largely due to the fact that there was a tremendous amount of control work already being done, or scheduled to be done in the Carlton Complex area for post fire herbicide treatment of mandatory control noxious weeds. Five landowners had let us know that they hired someone to treat the Scotch Thistle on their property, and 44 landowners said they would be using integrated pest management to control the Scotch Thistle on their own. We sent 32 notices to control, 18 legal posting letters, and also discussed control options with many landowners through email and phone calls. Only 5 Scotch Thistle enforcements were necessary for 2015. This year, the Noxious Weed Office also received funding from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which enabled staff to oversee the treatment of 2.5 acres of Scotch Thistle located on DNR lands. Between tribal, state, and private lands, staff inspected approximately 175,000 areas for Scotch Thistle during the 2015 field season.



Scotch Broom *Cytisus scoparius*: Scotch Broom hasn't been an object of our focus here in Okanogan County since it hasn't proven to be very aggressive here. We've concentrated on surveying for the Class A and Class B Designate noxious weeds that have proven to be more aggressive in our area.

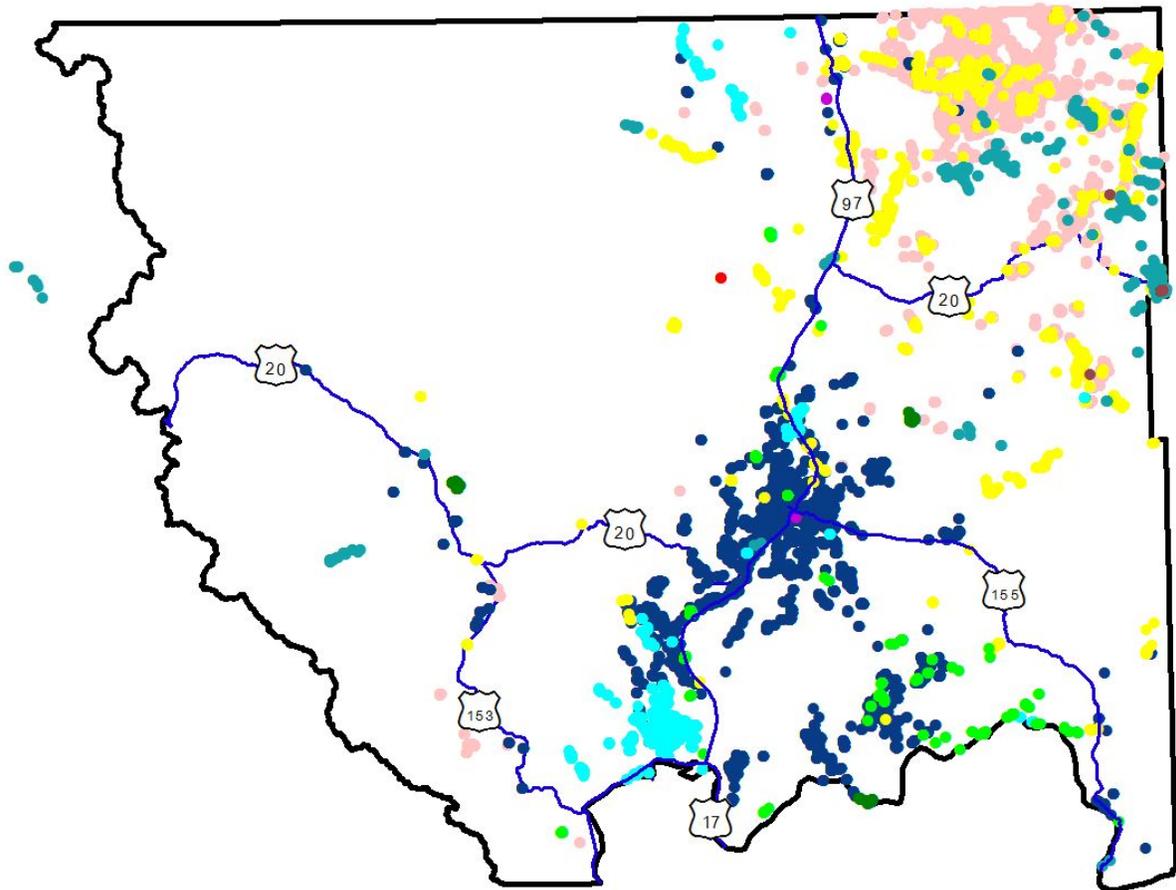


Perennial Pepperweed *Lepidium latifolium*: We haven't provided a lot of focus on Perennial Pepperweed since it doesn't seem to be very aggressive in Okanogan County. We've concentrated on surveying for the Class A and Class B Designate noxious weeds that have proven to be more aggressive in our area.



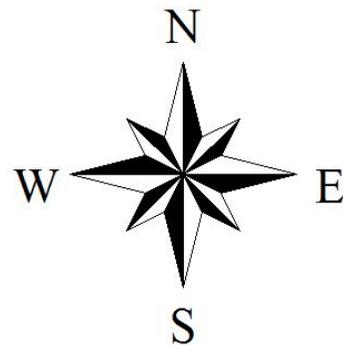
Plumeless Thistle *Carduus acanthoides*: There are locations of Plumeless Thistle in Okanogan County, but the sites are limited to State and Federal land, so as of the present time, we haven't focused on looking for Plumeless Thistle in Okanogan County.

2015 Class 'B' Designate Noxious Weeds



- Common Bugloss
- Yellow Starthistle
- Velvetleaf
- Tansy Ragwort
- Rush Skeletonweed
- Leafy Spurge
- Hawkweed
- Hoary Alyssum
- Scotch Thistle
- Musk Thistle

- State Highways
- County Boundary



2015 Noxious Weed Statistics

In 2015, Okanogan County had a total of 170,471 acres of privately owned lands that were known to be infested with mandatory control noxious weed species. From those infested acres, there were 2,147 landowners who were impacted by mandatory control noxious weeds on their property.

Noxious Weed Species	Landowners Affected	Acres known to be infested
Garlic Mustard	4	5
Spurge Flax	37	5,355
Mirabilis	31	3,100
Syrian Bean Caper	1	808
Meadow Clary	6	260
Hawkweed	99	7,436
Common Bugloss	5	324
Yellow Starthistle	8	1,617
Rush Skeletonweed	25	4,020
Tansy Ragwort	1	40
Hoary Alyssum	321	22,384
Leafy Spurge	173	10,243
Musk Thistle	892	72,256
Scotch Thistle	541	42,617
Velvetleaf	3	5.80

Aquatic Noxious Weeds



Aquatic noxious weeds are a rapidly growing topic in Okanogan County. The Noxious Weed Office has had several different organizations and private citizens approach our office for assistance in controlling Milfoil and various other aquatic noxious weeds on several different water bodies throughout the county.

The surveys performed in 2014 and 2015 have resulted in an Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan for Okanogan County. While currently the only waterbodies included in the plan are the ones that were surveyed, other lakes will be added as we continue survey efforts. The plan outlines possible control options for the various species of noxious weeds that we may find in our survey efforts, and is available on the Noxious Weed Office website.

While at this time, we do not require control of aquatic species, we encourage people to educate themselves in identifying the native species and become aware of possible invasive species that may affect their favorite lake or river. Awareness of these issues can prevent or limit further spread, and notification to the appropriate agency may result in necessary control actions.

To further public awareness regarding aquatic invasive species, the Noxious Weed Office has begun to add an aquatic component to our recertification classes. While these classes are typically promoted for those with a pesticide license, the aquatic sessions are open to the public.

Grants and Other Outside Funding Sources

Over the past several years, the Noxious Weed Office has been very successful in applying for and receiving grant and other outside funding sources, which have greatly helped to supplement our noxious weed control budget. In 2015, the Noxious Weed Office was able to secure two grants, and six interagency noxious weed control agreements, which enabled our office to spend approximately \$322,965 on weed control projects in 2015. These outside sources of revenue were used to pay for several different noxious weed control and educational projects that took place throughout Okanogan County. Projects included:

Title II Grant: The Noxious Weed Office received a \$25,000 Title II Grant in 2014, however, due to the late awarding of the funds, we did not have much time to complete weed control work in 2014. The Title II funds were instead spent in 2015 following the Okanogan Complex fires for Spurge flax and Hoary alyssum control in areas impacted by the fires. We also conducted a general weed control project in the Mineral Hill area to limit the spread of large infestations of common St. Johnswort.

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB) Class A Noxious Weed Control Grant: The Noxious Weed Office received a \$2,000 Class A Noxious Weed Control Grant from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, which was used for our Mirabilis (aka Wild four o'clock) eradication project.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Scotch Thistle Control Contract: The Noxious Weed Office received \$10,000

from the BIA, which was used for the control of Scotch thistle growing on the Colville Reservation and within BIA allotted parcels off of the reservation.

BIA Survey: Approximately \$13,465 was received from the BIA to continue a noxious weed survey of the Colville Indian Reservation. Several species of noxious weeds were found, notably, Leafy spurge, Hoary alyssum, and Rush skeletonweed. Several sites of Spotted knapweed were also found in new areas and a new site of Mirabilis, a Class A weed was found.

BIA Weed Control: \$42,000 was spent to control noxious weeds found during the survey process. Species included for treatment were: Leafy Spurge, Hoary Alyssum, Rush Skeletonweed, Spotted knapweed, Diffuse knapweed, St Johnswort, Puncturevine, poison hemlock, and black henbane.

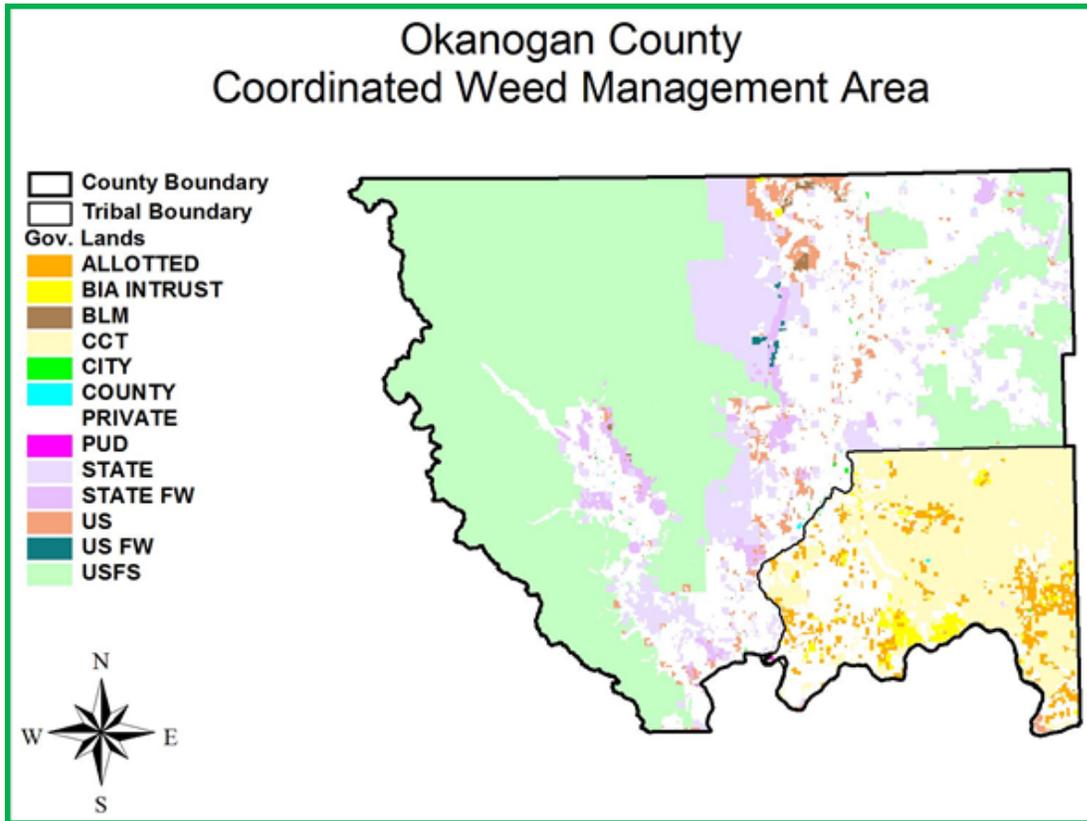
Bureau of Land Management Mineral Hill Weed Control Contract: The Noxious Weed Office received \$2,500 from the Bureau, which was used to survey and control various noxious weeds in the Mineral Hill area on BLM lands.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Weed Control Contract: OCNWCB received a contract from the Washington State DNR to provide \$62,000 worth of noxious weed control (primarily for Class B Designates) on DNR lands in 2014. \$31,500 was utilized on spring, summer and fall treatments in 2014, with the remainder rolling over into spring treatments in 2015. Designated species were prioritized through this project, but it also included biological control releases and chemical treatments to non-designated species.

Okanogan Conservation District: The Okanogan Conservation District provided \$200,000 to the Noxious Weed Office to assist landowners impacted by the Carlton Complex wildfires. We used this funding to treat sites of mandatory control species, as well as more common weeds where multiple landowners sought assistance and treatments went across property boundaries.



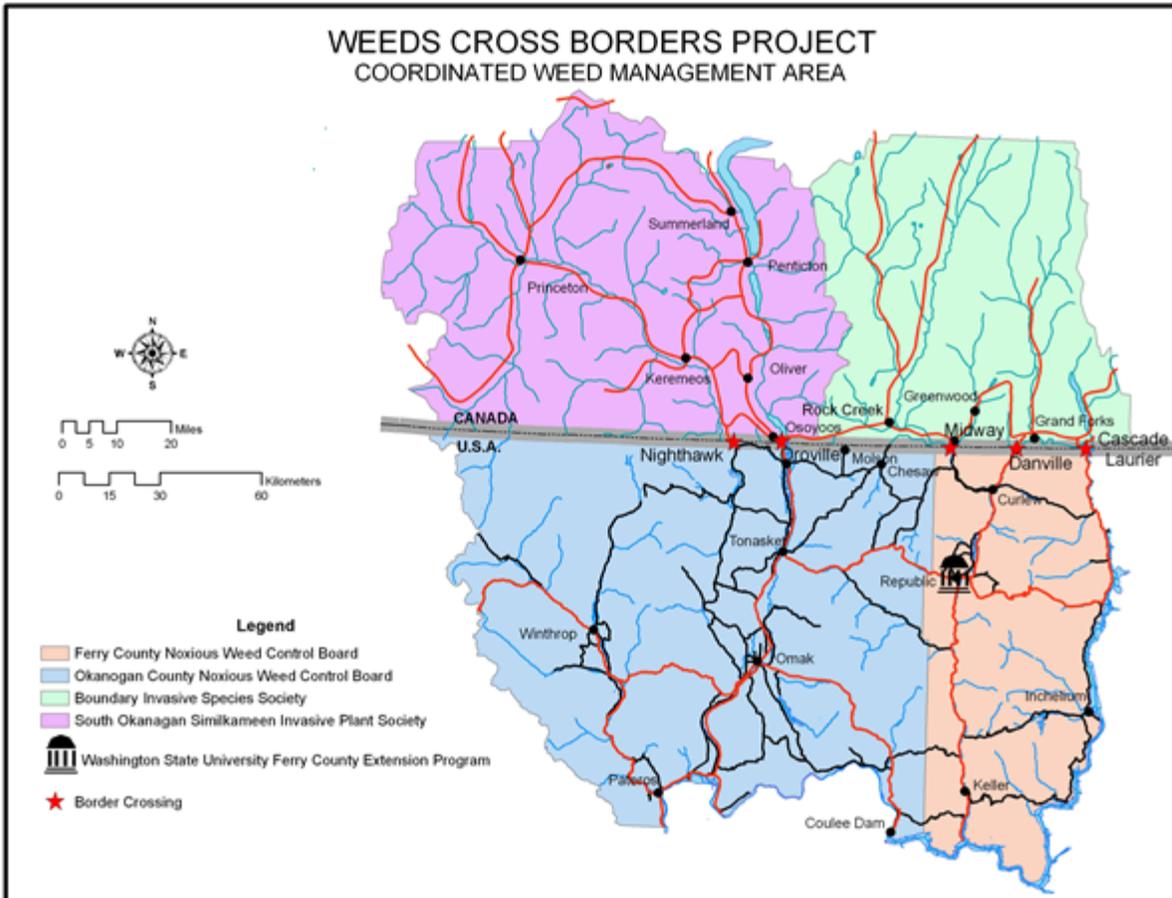
Coordinated Weed Management Areas (CWMAs)



Okanogon County CWMA: The Okanogon County CWMA is a formal partnership with USDA Forest Service, Okanogon-Wenatchee National Forest, USDI Bureau of Land Management, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Transportation, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Okanogon Conservation District, Colville Confederated Tribes/Bureau of Indian Affairs, WSU Okanogon County Extension, and State Parks, with the Okanogon County Noxious Weed Office performing the duties of Lead Agency. We have agreed to work together, providing education and performing noxious weed control efforts in geographical areas rather than individual property lines.

Through this partnership, we have been able to seek and implement grant dollars for educational efforts and on the ground noxious weed control. Title II Revenue Advisory Committee (RAC) funds (in particular) have allowed us to select various project areas and priority noxious weed species throughout the county. Project areas have been very successful, making the best use of control dollars, allowing partners the opportunity to focus on noxious weed control issues in a given area instead of individual efforts. We meet quarterly to discuss projects, provide agency updates and look at issues pertaining to noxious weed control. All the partners bring their ideas and concerns to the table and we are able to effectively communicate options and provide possible solutions.

With ongoing budget concerns and noxious weed control receiving less and less funding, the CWMA allows us a format to be able to work together, assisting in weed control efforts, providing education, and the means to apply for and receive grant funding.



Weeds Cross Borders CWMA: The Weeds Cross Borders CWMA is a formal partnership with Ferry County Noxious Weed & WSU Extension, Okanogan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society, and Boundary Invasive Species Society (weed districts in Canada). We are the lead agency for this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This CWMA addresses the fact that weeds know no boundaries and an international boundary is no different from a property line between neighbors. The Weeds Cross Borders CWMA is a benefit to both the US and Canada in that it allows for mutual projects, education and cooperation between all parties involved. Through our Weeds Cross Borders CWMA, we highlight areas of international concern, including: the use of biological control agents, the spread of noxious weeds across borders, and the implementation of agency rules that restrict international cooperation.

This partnership has also led to the development of international educational events to educate policy makers in the U.S. and Canada about the need to fund and support noxious weed control efforts. In 2015, CWMA partners hosted an international noxious weed educational seminar in Osoyoos, BC. Seminar attendees had the opportunity to learn about the control efforts within the CWMA area and the successes that have occurred due to those efforts.

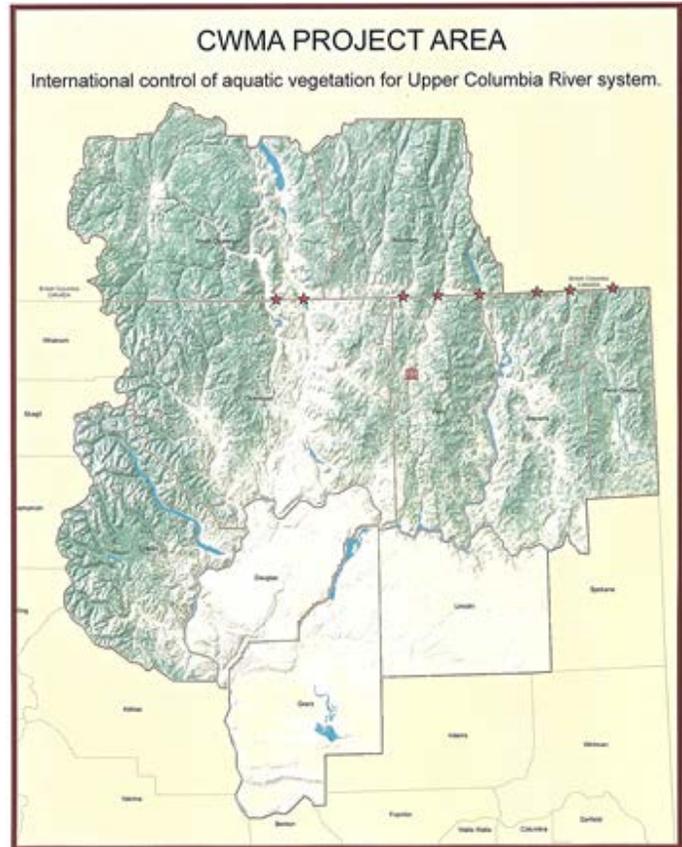
Our Weeds Cross Borders CWMA partners meet twice a year to discuss projects, provide updates, and learn about potential issues that we can address to make our international partnership a working model for other areas. We maintain constant contact and strive to support each other in our noxious weed control efforts on both sides of the border.

The International Control of Invasive Aquatic Vegetation for the Upper Columbia River System Cooperative Weed Management Area:

The purpose of this partnership is to develop an integrated approach to invasive aquatic vegetation prevention and control in the Upper Columbia River System CWMA project area. Participants include County Weed Boards, State and Federal agencies, and two weed districts in Canada.

We encourage: the development of scientific research, education with training and awareness being raised at all levels, the development of regional policies and practices, and the sharing of information and knowledge by establishing region-wide coordination.

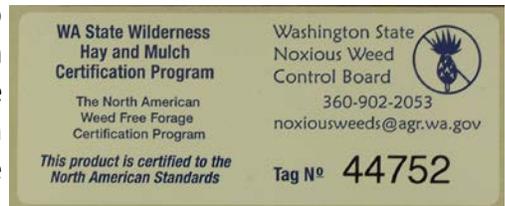
Meeting formally once a year, we manage to touch base frequently regarding issues in our individual areas. We keep others informed of control projects in our areas, what is working, what is not, and changes that need to be made in addressing invasive species on such a broad scale.



Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch (WWHAM) Inspections:

The Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch program was put into place to provide a way for Washington State hay and mulch producers to certify their products as being noxious weed free. The WWHAM Program uses the standards and procedures of the North American Weed Management Associations (NAWMA) Weed-Free Forage Program. That way, hay and straw certified in Washington will meet the standards of the US Forest Service and other agencies that require noxious weed-free forage and mulch products on the lands that they manage.

During the 2015 field season, Noxious Weed Office staff inspected fields for 6 local hay producers under the WWHAM Program. Of the 6 producers, all met the WWHAM Program standards and were certified for sale as a noxious weed free product. WSDA is also inspecting fields.



Biological Control Releases:

2015 was another great year for getting biological control agents out to landowners in Okanogan County, with a total of 15,500 acres being treated through the Regional Integrated Weed Control Project. However, county wide, it is likely that we will see a substantial decrease in the number of biological agents that are present due to the many large wildfires that we experienced this past summer. 2016 should give us a little better idea as to how many of the bugs actually made it through the fires, and we can then begin the process of getting bugs back out in those areas that experienced losses. Prior to this year’s wildfires, we had been seeing some fairly significant changes in the landscapes around our county, with native forbs and grasses starting to take the place of noxious weed infestations, thanks to the incorporation of biological controls.

On a positive note, after the Tunk Complex Fire was under control, we were able to go and check out the area where we had previously released *Jaapiella ivannikovi* (the Russian Knapweed Gall Midge) and were able to determine that the midges did make it through the fire relatively unscathed. The Russian Knapweed Gall Midge was first introduced to the area in June 2012, and we have finally built up large enough numbers to begin moving them to new areas of the county. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness and viability of this midge, and have plans to distribute them to even more locations over the upcoming years.



Mecinus janthinus

Biological control releases for 2015 included:

- Chrysolina spp. (*St. Johnswort*)
- Cyphocleonus achates (*Diffuse Knapweed*)
- Larinus minutus (*Diffuse Knapweed*)
- Mecinus janthinus (*Dalmatian Toadflax*)
- Jaapiella ivannikovi (*Russian Knapweed*)

This program has been highly successful and is a very valuable component of our program.

Public Outreach and Education

Radio Reports:

In 2015, the Noxious Weed Office prepared 53 radio reports, which were broadcast on the KOMW and KNCW radio stations (the reports were also posted on the Noxious Weed Offices website). Topics ranged from invasive species legislative issues to control methods for specific species of noxious weeds. We have been doing these weekly reports for about 15 years and have built up a very large archive. We are getting more people listening to the reports all of the time, and frequently we receive comments from listeners letting us know how much they appreciate them. These radio reports are heard from Wenatchee to Osoyoos BC, providing the Noxious Weed Office a unique opportunity to reach and educate a large audience each week.

Okanogan County Fair:

The Colville Confederated Tribes sponsored our booth at the fair again in 2015. Tribal employees were not able to be there to help staff the booth, but they provided us with some interesting displays and posters with valuable information. Our booth was in the Agriplex this year, and we had quite a few people stop by (in spite of the fact that the fair was scheduled right around the time of the 2015 fires). We gave out several hundred brochures about various noxious weeds, Weed ID guides and Garden Wise booklets (which list alternative, non-invasive plants for people to plant in their landscapes), as well as about 300 pamphlets full of information and puzzles to grade school students. We also gave out quite a few postcards with pictures and information about noxious weeds (these are supplied to us by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board). We talked to close to 600 people who stopped by our booth.

Milfoil Meetings:

OCNWCB met with landowners along Spectacle Lake and Lake Osoyoos throughout the year to discuss control activities and provide education regarding aquatic noxious weeds. The Lake Osoyoos Association hired a licensed aquatic pesticide applicator to conduct follow-up applications on Lake Osoyoos.

We also met with cabin owners along Salmon Lake to discuss potential control efforts. While there were no applications in 2015, the process is underway to conduct aquatic treatments in 2016. In the meantime, cabin owners are working with OCNWCB to perform terrestrial applications to a lowered lake bed.

School Camps:

Throughout the month of May, Noxious Weed Office staff taught noxious weed classes for the sixth graders at Camp Progress, Camp Disautel, and Camp Tokawanee. During the classes, staff provided educational materials to the students and discussed the negative impacts that noxious weeds have, mentioning at each class the particular noxious weed species that the students may find in their area, how to identify them, and how to help stop their spread.

The sixth graders had fun looking in our Weed ID booklets and the Range and Pasture guide to see who could be the first to identify a particular noxious weed. It helped spark their interest and made the classes more interactive. They were surprised to hear about the overwhelming amount of seeds most noxious

weeds can release. They always enjoy trying to spit Sunflower seeds as far as a Leafy Spurge can spit its seeds, which is 15-20 feet.

Pesticide License Recertification Opportunities:

Monthly Weed Board Meetings: Recertification credits were/are available for those who attend our monthly Board Meetings. Meetings are open to the public and all are encouraged to attend.

Spring Recertification Class: The Spring Pesticide License Recertification Class took place in March, with 75 people attending to receive their pesticide license recertification credits. We were able to provide four credits, on various noxious weed subjects, for a minimal five-dollar fee. We received assistance from Okanogan County Coordinated Weed Management Area partners in receipting individuals at the door as they showed up at the class.

Fall Recertification Class: The Fall Pesticide License Recertification Class took place in November, with well over 125 people in attendance. At this class we did not charge for admission. We were able to provide this class at no charge, thanks to the 12 Tribes Resort Casino who donated the use of their Conference Room and provided free beverages at the class. At the class, we were able to offer eight pesticide license recertification credits, which covered a variety of subjects. The Pesticide License Recertification Class was well attended and we again received assistance from Okanogan County Coordinated Weed Management Area partners in checking people in at the door.

Events and Meetings Attended:

January: Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) Taskforce meeting, Weeds Cross Borders Meeting, Washington State Weed Association Meeting

February: Okanogan County CWMA Meeting, Washington State Department of Wildlife Citizens Advisory Group Meeting, Chelan County Noxious Weed Control Board (CCNWCB) Workshop

March: Coordinators Conference, Okanogan County Spring Pesticide License Recertification Class, Washington State Weed Board Meeting, Washington State Weed Coordinators Association Meeting, International Milfoil Coordinated Weed Management Area (CWMA) Meeting, Washington State Department of Wildlife Okanogan Valley Wildlife Area Meeting

April: Earth Day (at Bridgeport State Park), Department of Transportation Meeting, Nespelem Recertification Class, Okanogan County CWMA Meeting, Eden Project Management Training

May: ShoreTel Training Class, Heat Related Illness Training, Multiple 6th Grade Camps, Washington State Weed Association Meeting

June: Weeds Cross Borders Luncheon, Heat Related Illness Training

July: Master Gardener Training Class, Washington State Weed Association Meeting, Spectacle Lake Landowners Association Meeting

August: No events attended

September: Montana Level 1 Noxious Weed Management Workshop, Okanogan County Fair, Okanogan Complex Wildfires Public Meeting, Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds Meeting, Washington State Invasive Species Council Meeting

October: Spectacle Lake Landowners Association Meeting, Osoyoos Science Forum

November: Washington State Weed Association Conference, Glyphosate Training Class, Washington State Noxious Weed Board Meeting

December: Okanogan County Fall Pesticide License Recertification Class, Okanogan County CWMA Meeting, (CCT) Taskforce meeting, Washington State Invasive Species Council Meeting

***Monthly Weed Board Meetings

***Quarterly Commissioner Updates

Other Interesting Communication Efforts:

Emails Sent And Received: 16,880 sent/received

Newsletters emailed out: 1,108

Recertification Class Notifications emailed out: 554

Washington State Weed Conference Announcement Emailed out: 277

Phone Calls In and Out: Approximately 5,163

Website Visits: 2,999

Outgoing Mail: 937

Every Door Direct Mail: 20,325

Office Visits: 1,842

Landowner Onsite Consultations Provided: 137



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2015
Annual Report

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