

# OKANOGAN COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

## 2019 Annual Report



### Overview of the 2019 Weed Control Season

The 2019 noxious weed control season proved to be another challenging yet highly productive year for the Noxious Weed office. This year we experienced yet another long cool spring, slowing the growth rate for many of the noxious weed species, which meant that Noxious Weed Office staff were not able to start inspections until much later into the spring than when we had anticipated. Then, almost overnight, the weather turned from cold to hot which made the weeds grow at an accelerated rate, and left landowners with a shorter timeframe to effectively control them. Even with these weather challenges, when the weeds did finally get started growing we had sufficient field staff trained and ready to take on the season, which kept us from getting too far behind on inspecting for weeds and contacting landowners.

With the current noxious weed assessment (\$9.74 per parcel plus \$.01 per acre) we were able to hire four part time Field Technicians during the 2019 weed control season. The additional field staff greatly improved our efficiency in inspecting for noxious weeds throughout the county, and improved the speed to which we were able to respond to landowner noxious weed concerns. The additional field staff also allowed the Noxious Weed Office to cover several areas of the county that may not have received sufficient attention during past seasons due to insufficient staff.

Thanks to adequate funding and increased staffing during the 2019 field season, we were again able to expand upon our aquatic noxious weed control efforts throughout the county. This year we were able to contract with Lakeland Restoration to survey 7 lakes for the presence of aquatic and riparian weeds, and to treat a total of 5 lakes for aquatic noxious weeds. This year, we were also able to contract with Desert Bloom Consulting to oversee these aquatic surveys and treatments, freeing up time for noxious weed office staff to concentrate on inspection and control efforts elsewhere in the county. Noxious Weed Office staff were also able to conduct some initial surveys for Flowering Rush on Lake Roosevelt and Lake Rufus Woods (which were deemed necessary after infestations were detected in Lake Roosevelt near the confluence with the Spokane River). Over all, aquatic treatments in Okanogan County have served to improve water quality and habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms, restore native aquatic vegetation, and improve safety for everyone recreating on the lakes that were treated.

This year, we were able to again work with some of Okanogan County's state and federal land management agencies to complete several noxious weed control projects on state and federally managed land. Thanks to funding received from U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and Washington State Department of Natural Resources, we were able to treat many of the known mandatory control noxious weed sites within the various agencies jurisdictions. Treatments on these state and federal lands help to reduce the negative impacts that neighboring private landowners experience due to noxious weeds being spread from across the fence, saving them time and money that would need to be spent controlling weeds in future growing seasons.

**Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board**

**Phone:** (509) 422-7165, **Email:** [Noxiousweeds@co.okanogan.wa.us](mailto:Noxiousweeds@co.okanogan.wa.us), **Website:** <http://okanogancounty.org/nw>

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**Noxious Weed Office Staff:** Thanks to increased staffing levels in 2019, the Noxious Weed Office was able to inspect many areas of the county where we just haven't had time to get to for the past several seasons. We were also able to address landowner noxious weed concerns in a much more efficient manner, and able to follow up in problem areas where there were issues with noxious weeds not being controlled. Increased staffing also allowed the Noxious Weed Office to expand our aquatic program, leading to additional survey and treatment projects taking place in 2019.

**Anna Lyon** (Office Manager) continued to oversee the aquatic program, which expanded in 2019. She was also able to again participate as a member of the Washington State Invasive Species Council, where she encouraged awareness of Eastern Washington activities and invasive species concerns. Anna invited WISC to hold a meeting here in Okanogan County, and OCNWCB facilitated a short field tour for the WISC members to look at several ongoing projects in Okanogan County. These projects demonstrated the new green waste equipment at Public Works, highlighted continuing concerns about the Carlton and Okanogan Complex wildfires, and showcased work completed on an Aquatic Coordinated Weed Management project on that took place on the Okanogan River.

**Larry Hudson** (Assistant Manager) was once again able to focus his efforts on controlling our Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) and Class A noxious weeds, which are priority species. He actively controlled several small or remote sites with chemical provided by the Noxious Weed Office and provided support to commercial applicators for the larger sites. Larry also oversaw and managed many of the various grant (and other outside funding source) projects that the Noxious Weed Office partook-in in 2019, including: USFS noxious weed treatments, DNR noxious weed treatments, and BLM noxious weed inspection and treatment projects. Thanks to increased seasonal staff, Larry was also able to survey several new areas of the county, including an aquatic survey for Flowering Rush on portions of Lake Roosevelt and Lake Rufus Woods.

**Janet Nelson** (Field Supervisor) kept busy working on noxious weed survey and treatments within the Colville Reservation area during the 2019 field season (thanks to funding from the Colville Range Department and Bureau of Indian Affairs). This funding was used to control Scotch Thistle and other priority noxious weed species, such as: Yellow Starthistle, Mirabilis, Hoary Alyssum, and Hawkweed. This funding also provided for noxious weed control treatments within right of ways and post wildfire noxious weed control on the Colville Reservation.

**Erin Quinlan** (Field Technician) spent most of her field season working in the Methow Valley area, which has never had a full time inspector assigned to it. Erin was able to inspect several areas in the Methow Valley which have not been looked at for several years (if ever). Erin also worked with several landowners to develop noxious weed control plans on their property for non-mandatory control weeds, which helped to develop positive working relationships with Methow Valley landowners. Erin also covered inspections for Puncturevine and Longspine Sandbur throughout the Okanogan Valley, and (as time allowed) provided assistance to other field staff within their areas of the county.

**Joan Mason** (Seasonal Field Technician) concentrated most of her efforts on providing administrative assistance in the office during the field season. Joan spent much of her time answering and directing office visits, telephone calls, and emails. Joan also helped to ensure that the office stayed up to date on its very large workload of paperwork and reporting, freeing up time for other staff to concentrate their efforts on inspections for noxious weeds and ensuring compliance with RCW 17.10.

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### Noxious Weed Office Staff continued:

**Mike Slattery** (Seasonal Field Technician) started off his season focused on inspecting for Scotch Thistle and other priority noxious weed species in the Omak/Okanogan area of the county. As the season progressed, Mike covered inspections in the Wauconda/Toroda Creek area, and assisted with inspections in other areas of the county. Mike also covered inspections in the Loomis area (where many of our Class A and high priority Class B Designate noxious weed infestations are located).

**Darla Dolph** (Seasonal Field Technician) started off her season assisting with Rush Skeletonweed inspections in the Pateros area, then started working her way north up the Okanogan River corridor, primarily focusing on inspecting the Okanogan Valley from Riverside north to the Canadian Border. As the season progressed, Darla moved on to cover inspections in the Tunk and Aeneas Valley areas, as well as the Oroville to Chesaw area. Darla also spent a little bit of her time assisting Janet on the Reservation.

**Angelee Nanamkin** (Seasonal Field Technician) started off her season assisting with inspections for Rush Skeletonweed in the Pateros area and scotch thistle inspections in the Omak, Okanogan, and Chiliwist areas. As the season progressed she focused most of her effort on inspecting for Musk Thistle and Hoary Alyssum in the Molson and Chesaw area. As time allowed, Angelee also provided assistance to other field staff in various other areas of the county.

**2019 Class A & B Designate Noxious Weed Control:** In 2019, Okanogan County had a total of 145,074 acres of privately owned lands that were known to be infested with Class A or B Designate noxious weed species. From those infested acres, there were 2,062 landowners who were impacted by these mandatory control noxious weeds on their property. This year, contracts were again sent out to those impacted landowners, giving them the opportunity to be set up with a commercial applicator in advance. Under the Class A Contracts: OCNWCB paid the first \$100 toward the cost of treatment plus one half of all costs over \$100 (we had 12 landowners return their Class A Contracts in 2019), while under the Class B Designate Contracts: landowners were responsible for paying all costs associated with treatment (210 landowners returned their Class B Designate Contracts in 2019).



**Aquatic Noxious Weeds:** In 2019, OCNWCB continued to expand on our aquatic noxious weed education and control programs. This year, a total of 7 different lakes were surveyed for various aquatic and riparian noxious weeds. The 2019 surveying efforts led to 5 different lakes being treated for various aquatic noxious weeds, with a combined total of 325.84 acres of aquatic weeds being treated within those 5 lakes (77.87 acres on Conconully Reservoir, 82.22 acres on Palmer Lake, 53 acres on Leader Lake, 69.02 acres on Osoyoos Lake, and 43.73 acres on Spectacle Lake). Due to the discovery of Flowering Rush in Lake Roosevelt in 2019, Noxious Weed Office staff also began inspecting for Flowering Rush in the lower Lake Roosevelt and Upper Lake Rufus Woods reservoirs. Unfortunately, one small infestation was detected in Okanogan County just above Grand Coulee Dam in Lake Roosevelt, as well as five other infestations just upstream in Ferry County.



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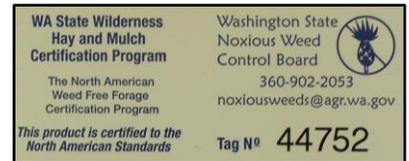
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**Grants and Other Outside Funding Sources:** In 2019, OCNWCB was able to facilitate work on 5 different grants or other outside sources of funding, which enabled us to spend \$124,176 on a variety of different noxious weed control projects. These outside sources of revenue were used to pay for several different noxious weed control projects, including: noxious weed treatments on US Forest Service lands (in the Tonasket Ranger District), noxious weed treatments on Washington State Department of Natural Resources lands, noxious weed inspection and control projects on and near US Bureau of Land Management lands, aquatic noxious weed control projects, and noxious weed control projects on the Colville Reservation.



**Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch (WWHAM) Inspections:** In 2019, OCNWCB was once again able to provide WWHAM crop inspection and certification services to local hay producers who wished to sell WWHAM certified products (these products meet US Forest Service requirements for certified weed free hay and mulch). In 2019, OCNWCB staff inspected 3 fields for local growers.



**Coordinated Weed Management Areas (CWMA's):** In 2019, OCNWCB was once again able to maintain its obligations and commitments to all three of the CWMA's that it participates in. These CWMA's include: the Okanogan County, the Weeds Cross Borders, and the International Control of Invasive Aquatic Vegetation for the Upper Columbia River System. These CWMA's allow multiple agencies across many jurisdictions to collaborate & coordinate weed control efforts across jurisdiction boundaries to achieve weed control goals.



**Biological Control Releases:** 2019 was another great year for getting biological control agents out to landowners in Okanogan County. This year we had 28 landowners submit request forms for bio-controls, resulting in a total of 140 acres being treated with biological control agents in 2019.



**Radio Reports:** In 2019, the Noxious Weed Office prepared 51 weekly radio reports, which were broadcast on the KOMW and KNCW radio stations. These radio reports covered a wide variety of noxious weed related subjects ranging from maintenance and calibration of pesticide equipment, to noxious weed control methods and timing. Each week, the most current report is made available on our website under the "Latest News" tab.



**School Camps & Other Youth Events:** In 2019, Noxious Weed Office staff again presented noxious weed classes for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Camp Progress and Camp Disautel, as well as, at Earth Day events, helping to educate our local youth about identification of noxious weeds.



**Pesticide License Recertification Opportunities:** Recertification credits were again made available for those who attended our monthly Noxious Weed Board meetings, or our spring and fall Recertification Classes (a combined 213 people were in attendance at the spring and fall classes).



**Other Communication Efforts** (these are app. numbers): Emails sent/received, 22,500; phone calls in/out, 8,500; website visits, 3,500; outgoing mail, 23,000 (including every door direct mail); office visits, 900; events and meetings attended, 95; and landowner onsite consultations provided, 75.



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