

## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

# Call to Action Against Invasive Species

*City roads and pump stations infiltrated by knotweed?*

*Water systems clogged by parrotfeather?*

*City parks inundated with hawkweed or toxic giant hogweed?*

*Playgrounds swarming with European fire ants?*

*Knotweeds in Robert's Creek, BC*

## Invasive Species cause significant economic impacts in our communities including agriculture, recreation, and other industries.

Public awareness and pressure is growing to reduce the impacts of invasive species. In some areas, landowners are threatening legal action against neighbours who allow invasive species to spread onto their land. Urban and rural local governments need to be vigilant and pro-active to avoid long-term risks to infrastructure, lands and biodiversity. Investing today in prevention and early control avoids significant ongoing operational costs in the future and long term impacts on ecological health.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TAKING ACTION

Local Governments are at the front line for invasive species identification and management. They are frequently the first to detect or be notified about invasive species on public or private lands. Local governments have responded to the growing threat through dedicating funding, establishing management plans and enacting bylaws to mitigate impacts within their communities.

As an important first step, local governments can assess their readiness:

1. What dedicated funding and skilled staff does your organization provide to tackle invasive species?
2. How are you managing priority species on local government lands (i.e. parks, roadsides, drainage channels)?
3. How do you record and monitor the progress of on-the-ground operations?
4. What partnerships has your government established to address invasive species?
5. How are you engaged with provincial and federal governments, private landowners, regional invasive species organizations and others?
6. How do your current bylaws, policies or plan(s) address invasive species?
7. How do your plans coordinate across departments (i.e. Parks, Environment, Planning, Engineering, Public Works)?
8. What actions are being taken to manage specific 'pathways' of spread such as soil movement, pet and aquarium trade, mowing, disposal, etc.

To maximize efforts and outcomes, close collaboration with provincial and federal authorities is vital along with neighbouring jurisdictions, private land and right of way owners. Non-government organizations such as the Invasive Species Council of BC, regional invasive species committees, local stewardship and youth groups help contribute to success in reducing the spread.



**Knotweed is a top-ten invasive species in BC. Governments in BC are spending millions annually to reduce the risk to roads, bridges and foundations.**

*Help your local government be a leader in BC. Protect your communities and assets by planning for, preventing and managing invasive species.*



The Invasive Species Toolkit for Local Governments is a valuable resource for local governments initiating or expanding their programs.

The Resort Municipality of Whistler’s Environmental Protection Bylaw No. 2000, 2012 gives the municipality a clear mandate to manage invasive species and implement development permit conditions for the protection of the natural environment.



Parrot’s feather clogs waterways that are necessary for flood prevention and drainage in the City of Richmond.



Removal of ivy from the City of Port Moody.



Cariboo Regional District controls invasive hawkweeds on private lands and roadsides.

## INVASIVE SPECIES REGULATIONS

The Forest and Range Practices Act, the Controlled Alien Species Regulation, the Weed Control Act, and Community Charter enable local governments to take action to control ‘invasive species of high concern’ within their boundaries.

In addition, municipal bylaws, such as the Resort Municipality of Whistler’s Environmental Protection Bylaw, can provide further clarity and consistency for land managers. Many local governments compile invasive species inventories and actively control invasive plants—both on crown and private lands. Although historically focused solely on invasive plants, some local governments are broadening to “invasive species” due to increasing concerns about emerging species such as European fire ants, feral pigs, invasive mussels and nutria.

*Help your local government be a leader in BC.  
Who are your eyes and ears for detection of new invaders?*

This ‘Call to Action’ was identified as a high priority by members of the Local Government Invasive Species Network and was developed with the guidance and expertise of local government advisors across BC.

Get involved with the Local Government Invasive Species Network, established with the support of the Invasive Species Council of BC. A local government listserv, meetings and workshops are available to support municipal leaders and staff in reducing the threat of invasive species to their communities.

To find out more or to join the Local Government Invasive Network, contact Danielle Toperczer, *Invasive Species Council of BC* at [dtoperczer@bcinvasive.ca](mailto:dtoperczer@bcinvasive.ca) or go to [bcinvasives.ca](http://bcinvasives.ca) for more resources.

*The Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC) is a registered charity that coordinates and supports stakeholders in the struggle against invasive species in BC. The ISCBC focuses its actions on outreach, education, training, and inter-agency and cross-border collaboration for strategic planning and rapid response.*