



Volunteers In Parks

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**Volunteer &
Park Updates**



All photos: Sean Rangel

Invasive Species Action Month

By Colleen Long

Did you know that May is Invasive Species Action Month in BC? Established in 2017 by the Government of British Columbia and the Invasive Species Council of BC, this initiative was created to help raise awareness of the impact of invasive plants and animals in British Columbia and the resulting environmental and economic damage that they cause. An Invasive Species Strategy for British Columbia was first established in 2012. Work done in that first strategy along with feedback from stakeholders, formed the basis of the most recent strategy [Invasive Species Strategy for British Columbia \(2018-2022\)](#).

So exactly what are invasive species? Invasive species are non-native plant and animal species that have a negative impact on the diversity and health of ecosystems within BC. Many invasive plant and animal species are introduced unintentionally to areas where their natural predators or pathogens are not present, so there is nothing to keep their numbers in check. Invasive species are also referred to as “non-native,” “exotic,” “alien,” or “introduced species.” Not all non-native species are invasive. There are many non-native, exotic plant species used in gardening and landscaping that are non-invasive.

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Regional Invasive Species Program

In 2018, the Capital Regional District (CRD) created a half-time coordinator position to help establish a Regional Invasive Species Program to coordinate and support invasive species management and outreach across the region. This program built on the earlier work of the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP), a collaborative partnership of local governments, First Nations and other stakeholders within the (CRD). The CRD chairs and coordinates this active working group.

The CRD with CRISP has developed a [Regional Priority Invasive Species](#) ranking list for the capital region to help guide collective efforts to manage these species. Invasive plants are categorized according to the management categories prescribed for each species: **Prevent, Eradicate, Contain and Control.**

Group	Description	Name
P	Species not known to occur in the region, but likely to establish if introduced. Eradicate if found.	Prevent
E	Priority species known to occur in limited distribution and low density. Eradicate if found.	Eradicate
CN	Established infestations found in portions of the region. Contain existing infestations and prevent spread to un-infested areas.	Contain
CL	Established infestations common and widespread throughout the Capital Region. Focus control in high value conservation areas.	Control
	Human health hazard	Toxic
	Animal health hazard	Toxic

Plants in the **Prevent** and **Eradicate** groups are given the highest priority as they are invasive species that pose the greatest threats or impacts, or are species that are new to the region and haven't spread too far to control or eradicate. These species are managed according to an **EDRR: Early Detection Rapid Response** protocol.

What you can do?

There are many things that you can do at your home to stop the spread of non-native invasive species. One of them is to remove invasive plant species from your gardens and replace them preferably with native species or non-invasive alternatives. For more information, you can download for free, or order a copy of the [Grow Me Instead Booklet \(2018\)](#) from the [Invasive Species Council of BC](#) website, which includes 26 of BC's most "unwanted" plants in horticulture and recommended non-invasive native or exotic plant alternatives.

If you are removing invasive species from your property, it is important to dispose of them properly to help reduce their spread. It is best to check first with your municipality to find out about appropriate disposal in your area. You can also contact your local waste service provider for further information on collection and disposal options. Importantly, don't compost invasive species as many of them can continue to spread.

The Invasive Species Council of BC has a number of resources on their website about ways you can "Commit to be Invasive Free." A couple of great apps to help with the early detection of invasive species is the BC Government [Report-Invasives BC Mobile App](#) and their [Report-A-Weed BC Mobile App](#).

On the [CRD Invasive Species](#) webpage, you can find out more information about the high priority invasive species in the region. There is also an [Invasive Species Alert Sheet](#), which gives you a snapshot of the top priority invasive species in the region. As well, there are fact sheets for each of the priority invasive species with more on the way soon.

You can report these high priority species through the Report-A-Weed App and you can also report a sighting to the CRD's Regional Invasive Species Program Coordinator at 250.360.3302 or by jeastman@crd.bc.ca.

So take action this May and together we can help stop the spread of invasive species.

Invasive Species Photos on Front Cover:

Top Row (L to R)

- Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)
- Daphne (*Daphne laureola*)
- English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

2nd Row (L to R)

- Black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*)
- Bachelor's button (*Centaurea cyanus*)
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- Policeman's helmet (*Impatiens glandulifera*)



Volunteer Profile

Sue Schaefer has been a Volunteer Naturalist at the Nature Centre at Francis/King Regional Park since August, 2013.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

There are several things I enjoy about volunteering with Regional Parks, firstly having these parks is such a treasure that I am so happy to contribute in some small way. Secondly the people I get to work with and the folks I get to meet. The park naturalists do a fantastic job with the programs they run. My time at Francis/King is time to just focus on nature, something that sometimes gets lost in the busyness of life.

What is your favourite volunteer experience or memory?

Oh my absolute favourite is the gentleman who came into the Nature House one very wet windy day where few were venturing out. He was from New York State, he said "I've come all this way to see the big trees"! He was not disappointed! My other favourite is the families who make a trip to the nature house part of their family routine, the kids race in to see the bees or to say hello to the newts. Then they bundle onto the couch and get read a story by their parents! Perfect way to spend some time.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I grew up in Victoria. I trained as a nurse in Calgary and have worked in Alberta and BC for 35 years specializing in diabetes education. I spent the last 15 years working with First Nations communities on the South Island. I am married to a lovely man, Kim who is also recently retired. We have no children but do have a dear little welsh terrier named Daric! My entire family lives here much to my husband's chagrin. So there is much hilarity when the clan gathers! I retired in 2017 and now fill my time with volunteering, gardening, cycling, hiking and learning french at UVIC. I love to watch the birds, tramp about seeing what's out in bloom and generally take in all that this great region has to offer.



Staff Profile

Brent Wyman is our Outdoor Recreation Specialist and began with us in January, 2020. A brand new position for us, Brent has been tasked with working on a recreation strategy, recreational assessments and recreation policies.

What do you most enjoy about working at Regional Parks?

I love that I get to take my passion for the outdoors and incorporate it into the work I do. So many people are passionate about parks, it's great to talk to these people, share their passion and know that the work I do goes into something that can benefit the community.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Well, I just immigrated from Alberta. Professionally, I was in the oil field servicing business for 12 years before I went back to school taking Landscape Architectural Technology. I then worked in consulting before joining Alberta Parks where I planned and designed a number of facilities and then managed a team. Personally, I enjoy hiking and fly-fishing on my weekends and holidays with my wife Janelle and our two Shiba's (Bertie and Winston). I also play hockey, enjoy puzzles and Lego and am getting into bread baking. I'm looking forward to settling into island life and making this my new home.

