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# Invasive Plant Strategy for British Columbia: Executive Summary

FRASER BASIN COUNCIL

#104 – 197 North Second Avenue, Williams Lake, BC, V2G 1Z5, Canada, email [gwallin@fraserbasin.bc.ca](mailto:gwallin@fraserbasin.bc.ca)

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The term “invasive plant” in this strategy refers to any invasive alien plant species that has the potential to pose undesirable or detrimental impacts on humans, animals or ecosystems. Invasive plants have the capacity to establish quickly and easily on new sites, and they have widespread negative economic, social and environmental impacts. Many invasive plants in British Columbia are “alien” to North America, and may also be referred to as “non-native,” “exotic” or “introduced” plant species.

The *Invasive Plant Strategy for British Columbia* is the product of a diverse group of contributors from:

- All orders of government—federal, provincial, local and First Nations;
- Land- and water-based user groups;
- Resource-based businesses and industries;
- Utilities; and
- Non-government organizations.

Led by the Fraser Basin Council, development of the strategy stemmed from the exponential increase in the damage and threats caused by invasive plants, exacerbated by inconsistent management across the province. The strategy is presented as a process-oriented document that complements and supports ongoing activities in invasive plant management.

The strategy’s goal is to build cooperation and coordination to protect British Columbia’s environment and minimize negative social and economic impacts caused by the introduction, establishment and spread of invasive alien plants. Implementing the strategy is expected to build commitment and “buy-in” throughout British Columbia from the many agencies, organizations and individuals concerned by, or associated with, invasive plant management. Integrated pest management principles will be promoted under the strategy when implementing invasive plant management programs.

The strategy identifies, and calls for action on, the “top ten” challenges to invasive plant management in British Columbia, which are the need to:

1. **Improve cooperation** among all orders of government, landowners and land users by establishing a body to provide province-wide leadership.
2. **Provide the necessary resources for provincial Crown lands** to increase the level of invasive plant management undertaken by the provincial government.

3. **Enact provincial legislation** to manage invasive species not classified as noxious weeds, and **federal legislation** to prevent the introduction of new invasive species to British Columbia.
4. **Improve compliance** with current legislation regarding the introduction, spread and control of invasive plants.
5. **Increase management of invasive plants on federal land**, with the provision of direct funding for First Nations reserve lands.
6. **Coordinate a system for the early detection and eradication** of new invasive species that arrive in the province, and monitor these populations' impacts and any expansion.
7. **Establish a comprehensive provincial inventory** of invasive plants in British Columbia.
8. **Ensure that all areas of the province implement a regional approach** to invasive plant management.
9. **Improve the management of invasive aquatic plant species** through the necessary technical expertise and funding resources.
10. **Identify and promote coordinated research** to increase knowledge and awareness about invasive plant biology, ecology and management options and ecosystem restoration.

Under the strategy, a new **Invasive Plant Council of British Columbia** (the "Council") will be established to coordinate invasive plant management province-wide. The Council will be formally established as a legal, non-profit society with members and bylaws. Its inclusive membership will work to improve compliance with legislated responsibilities, establish research priorities, coordinate public awareness and outreach programs, and conduct other related functions and activities. The Council will not be associated with the delivery of operational activities. Members of the Council will appoint a representative board of directors with comprehensive geographic and multi-stakeholder coverage.

The strategy identifies five key preliminary actions to be undertaken by the new Council:

1. Help ensure sufficient funding both for its province-wide coordination role and for operational invasive plant management.
2. Recommend changes to strengthen provincial and federal legislation.
3. Work towards improved compliance with current and new legislation.
4. Communicate and coordinate among its diverse membership.
5. Increase public awareness and outreach.

A number of key participants will be involved in implementing the strategy.

The **federal government** will manage invasive plants on all federal lands and conduct research on invasive plant bio-control and management.

**First Nations** will play a larger role in the management of invasive plants on reserve lands by working closely with the federal, provincial and local governments, and participating directly with local weed committees.

The **provincial government** will oversee all relevant legislation and will manage invasive plants on Crown land, as well as provide technical expertise on key species in British Columbia.

Regional management of invasive plants will be delivered through a cooperative approach at the local level, involving **local governments** and **regional weed committees**, to coordinate delivery of operational invasive plant management programs.

**Land occupiers** will continue to be responsible for noxious weed control, as specified in the provincial *Weed Control Act*, and will be encouraged and supported to manage all invasive species. Improved public awareness and outreach on the prevention of invasive plant establishment, along with options for management, are expected to assist with this.

**Industry** will continue to conduct management activities, including voluntary control of known outbreaks. The numerous industrial sectors affiliated with land management will be relied on to influence their employees, contractors and clients about the importance of invasive plant management.

**Non-government organizations** will provide vital support and far-reaching influence about invasive plant management, both within the Council and to their respective members.

Finally, the **academic and research community** will provide essential technical support by developing new management strategies utilizing sound integrated vegetation management principles. Research scientists will be relied on for their contributions to advancing control methods.

The strategy includes a **Memorandum of Support** for signing by a wide range of potential signatories whose representatives would become members of the Council. Implementation of the strategy began in 2004, with monitoring of its effectiveness, and the necessary modifications, made over time.

To obtain a copy of the Strategy, go to: <http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/news/index.html>