

**Skamania County**  
**Noxious Weed Control Board**

“Making a difference in Skamania County”

## **2011 Annual Programmatic Report**

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**Noxious Weed Control Program**

509-427-3941 [weeds@co.skamania.wa.us](mailto:weeds@co.skamania.wa.us)

<http://www.skamaniacounty.org/noxious-weeds/>



Class B noxious weed, Parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) located in Skamania County during aquatic weed survey. Parrotfeather is an ornamental aquatic plant used in aquariums. Infestations can alter aquatic ecosystems by forming dense mats that shade out native aquatic plants. It also inhibits water flow and recreational activities.

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## Board Mission

Our mission is to serve as responsible stewards to limit the economic loss and adverse environmental effects to Skamania County's agricultural, natural, recreational and human resources due to the presence and spread of noxious weeds on all terrestrial and aquatic areas in the County.

We believe that prevention of noxious weeds is the best approach and may be achieved through full implementation of the state noxious weed law. To further this approach, we strive for increased public awareness through improved



## Board Goals and Priorities

- 1) Annually adopt the Skamania County Noxious Weed List.
- 2) To improve countywide noxious weed education and public awareness about integrated pest management and biological control.
- 3) Continuously monitor and document the presence and spread of noxious weeds throughout Skamania County.
- 4) Nurture cooperative working relationships with county residents, landowners, land managers, tribes and local, state and federal agencies.
- 5) Seek and secure adequate funding to support continued success of the Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program.



## Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Program

P.O. Box # 790  
704-A SW Rock Creek Drive  
Stevenson, WA 98648

## Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board

The noxious weed control board members are appointed from five geographic areas within Skamania County. The appointed board member has a duty to represent their geographic area. Each board member serves a term of four years before seeking reappointment.

### District 1

#### Sally Newell, Chair

Underwood, WA  
509-493-3624

### District 2

#### Steve Hansen

Stevenson, WA  
509-427-5069

### District 3

#### Kenneth Cole

North Bonneville, WA  
509-427-8418

### District 4

#### Kenneth Bajema, Vice-Chair

Washougal, WA  
360-837-3273

### District 5

#### Larry Willson

Washougal, WA  
360-835-8115

### Ex-Officio Member

#### WSU Extension Director

#### Todd Murray

PO Box 790  
710 SW Rock Creek Drive  
Stevenson, WA 98648  
509-427-3931  
tmurray@wsu.edu



### Letter from the Chair

On behalf of the Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board, I thank you for taking a moment to read about our board and program. Noxious weeds are a serious threat to the health and safety of county residents, wildlife and habitat. Weeds are an economic threat to agriculture, recreation and forestry. They also impact public infrastructure such as roads and power lines.

Despite difficulties this year, significant progress was made toward attaining our goals and mission because of dedicated staff and the leadership provided by the weed board.

This report summarizes the wide scope of activities undertaken by the board and staff in 2011. It is an impressive body of work and clearly illustrates the commitment of our board to the citizens and resources of Skamania County.

We look forward to working with you again in 2012 as we continue our important mission.

*Sally Newell*

### 2011 Program Staff

#### Program Coordinator

Justin Bush 509-427-3941 bush@co.skamania.wa.us

#### Partnership Specialist

Cyndi Soliz 509-427-3942 soliz@co.skamania.wa.us

#### Natural Resource Workers

Matthew Weber	Curtis Musson
Kristi Walker	Thomas Mercil
Caylen Valentine-George	David Accetta

#### Summer College Laborers

Daniel Robinson	Austin Pfeifer
Nick Stevens	Kyle Ostergard

# Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board

“Making a difference in Skamania County”

## 2011 Program Overview

### Noxious Weed Control Program

509-427-3941 weeds@co.skamania.wa.us

<http://www.skamaniacounty.org/noxious-weeds/>

Benefitted the community by creating jobs, patronizing local businesses and enhancing recreational opportunities countywide.

- 10,309 hours of total staff time
- Provided 7 full-time temporary positions
- Provided summer employment to 4 residents attending college
- Enhanced worker skills and marketability by providing specialized training and licenses
- Assisted 291 community members with noxious weed issues

Protection and enhancement of the land and resources through weed control.

- Manual & chemical control to 5,474.25 acres
- Release of 2,600 biological controls
- Prevention education to over 2,500 people

Leveraged funds to maximize county investment & program footprint

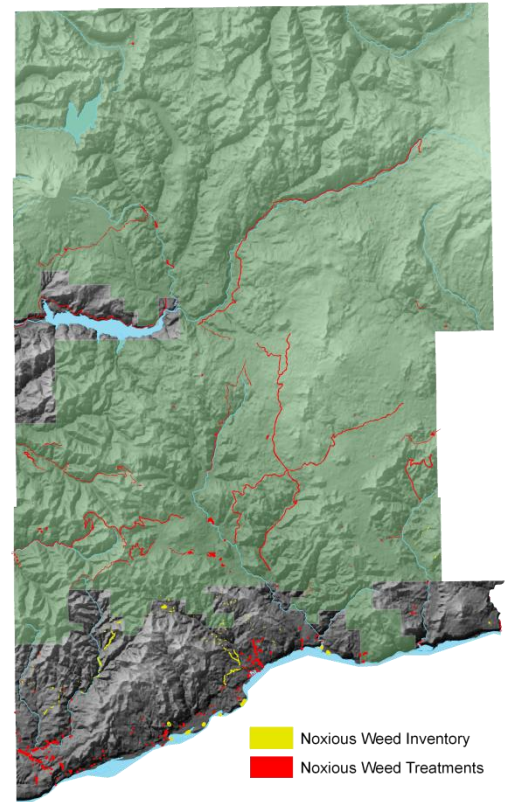
- Investment by Skamania County, \$66,589
- Leveraged over \$289,123 in grants and agreements

Partnerships & coordination with local, state and federal, private and non-governmental organizations.

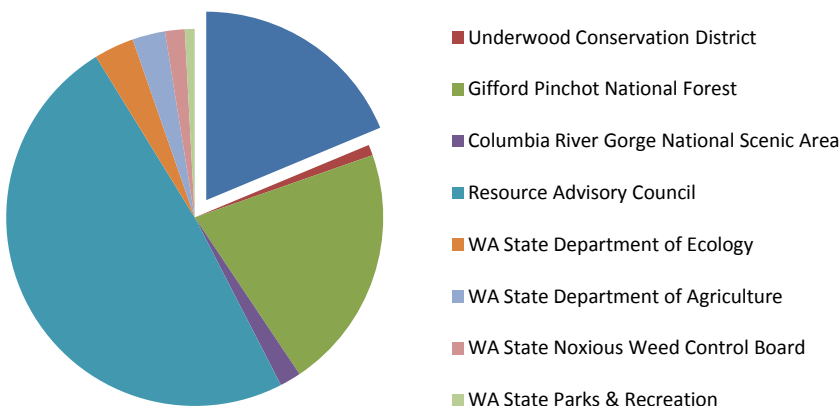
- Including 2 regional weed collaborative and 30 individual entities

Provided locally produced weed free hay through certification.

- 13 tons certified for use on National Forest System lands



### Program Funding Overview



## Overall Direction and Major Results Toward Programmatic Goals

In reviewing the progression of this program in 2011, one should begin with reviewing goals from the previous year-end. The themes of goals included: strategic planning, supporting ongoing projects, prioritization of species, and increasing awareness and collaboration.



**Photo 1. Program Coordinator presenting a watercraft safety training at Rock Creek Cove.**

Given the financial situation of the world and decreases in government services throughout Washington State, the creativity and dedication of staff has continued to move programmatic goals beyond all expectations. Only by operating strategically and in cooperation with partners has this program enjoyed success.

Although the program has found it more difficult to provide services due of a reduction of funding availability, the program has grown stronger and more prosperous in the spite of these challenges. There is no doubt that further challenging times are ahead, but with support from the County Commission, the weed board and dedication of its staff and cooperators it is certain that this prosperity will continue into 2012.

## Environmental Enforcement & Noxious Weed Law Compliance

2011 brought a newly elected prosecutor, Adam Kick, to Skamania County. Working with Prosecutor Kick's office, procedures were reviewed and strengthened from previous years.

A total of 19 private landowners in Skamania County were formally contacted about their noxious weed violations. With reinforced procedures in place, over 80% of violations were reconciled with no further law enforcement actions beyond initial survey mailer and follow-up survey to ensure compliance.

20% of landowners did not respond directly to an initial contact mailer and required further enforcement actions outlined within RCW 17.10. However, after receiving notice of the law violation and threat of further action, the landowners voluntarily became compliant. In summary, all 19-violation cases in 2011 were remedied without requiring citation or lien.

Parcel Number # <u>0123456789</u>
Date: <u>12/15/2011</u>
Dear Property Owner:
I am currently surveying for <u>Garlic Mustard</u> , a noxious weed that is known to be found in this area.
Skamania County's goal is to achieve control of this non-native plant before it reaches it's reproductive state.
Control of this plant is mandatory by Washington State Law (RCW 17.10) and IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE BE IN TOUCH SOON.
Our telephone is (509) 427-3941. I look forward to hearing from you.
Skamania County Noxious Weed Control Board Justin Bush, Program Coordinator.

**Photo 2. Initial contact mailer.**

## Washington Weed Free Hay and Forage

Effective January 1, 2009 all hay and forage brought onto the National Forest System lands in Washington State must be certified via the Washington Weed-free Hay and Mulch (WWHAM) certification program.

In 2011, oversight of this program transferred from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board to the Washington State Department of Agriculture Plant Protection Program. Through agreement, Skamania County staff became agents of the state in order to perform WWHAM inspection and certification. This agreement saves residents the cost of state inspection and provides locally available certified products. In all, 13 tons of hay were certified as weed free and went to market.

## Education and Outreach

Staff provided information to the public about noxious weeds and the problems associated with their infestations. The majority of this work is done through direct contact, letters and workshops. Staff participated in the Skamania County Fair, 2011 Trail Skills College and presented to schools and local groups in all areas of the county.



Photo 3. Skamania County Fair Booth

Free services, such as home weed inspection and identification are offered to all, as well as brochures, posters and handsome magnets with weed program information for their convenience to call for assistance in the future.

It is estimated that over 2,500 people received education via site visits, fair booth discussions and through various other venues.

## Collaboration

### Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area

In 2011, the Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) worked to create its first regional project. Chairpersons, Jordan Kim of the Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District and Skamania County's Justin Bush worked to receive a grant award from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation under their Pulling Together Initiative. This grant award is competitive nation-wide and this project has highlighted the gorge and its collaborative efforts.

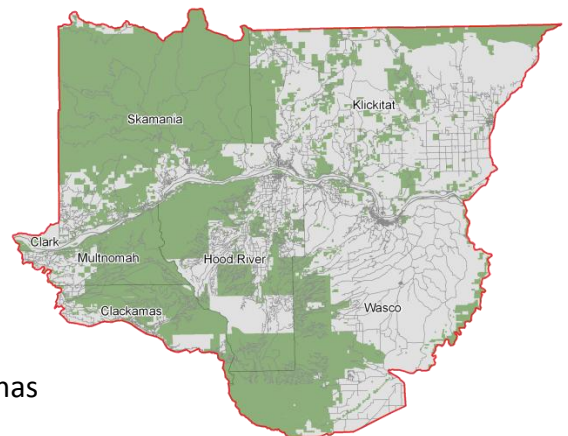


Photo 4. Columbia Gorge CWMA

With the assistance of this grant, a contractor is surveying lands within the five-county geographic area. This project will also provide trailhead boot brushes and a database of all known noxious weeds within the gorge in Washington and Oregon.

### **Southwest Washington Cooperative Weed Management Area**

With the success of the Columbia Gorge group, partners around the upper half of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest have initiated a collaborative to bring weed managers together in that geographical area. Initial planning phases have been completed and the group is seeking to secure funding for a collaborative coordinator in order to fully develop the long term priorities and management plan for upper Skamania, Clark, Lewis and Cowlitz counties.

## **Projects**

### **US Forest Service Projects**

2011 was a successful year for work done on and adjacent to National Forest Service lands. Skamania County weed staff treated over 5,200 acres on National Forest System lands on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Of note, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest supplemented Resource Advisory Council (RAC) funds to the program for 4 projects. Staff treated weeds at the Smith-Muddy River Confluence, at the Wind River Nursery prior to a prescribed burn and within timber sale units. Skamania also received funding for restoration of Skookum Meadow, site of the 2011 Rainbow Family of Living Light National Gathering.

Additionally, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area continued to provide direct funds to the program. Projects included protection of western pond turtle habitat, knotweed control at an oak restoration site and indigobush control on the Columbia River shoreline.

### **Knotweed Control Project**

The knotweed control transition project funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation began in July of 2011 and will be ongoing until 2012. Staff filled two roles, one of treatment and also of educating landowners. Staff members treated 142.36 acres of invasive knotweed countywide. They assisted 42 landowners within Water Resource Inventory Assessment area (WRIA) 28 and 68 landowners within WRIA 29. In total, 219

### **2011 Gifford Pinchot National Forest Invasive Plant Treatment Results**

<b>Cooperator/District</b>		<b>Sites</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Skamania County	Manual	107	3956.8
Cowlitz County	Manual	2	8.5
Lewis County	Manual	82	132.8
Klickitat County	Manual	10	134.5
Mt Adams District	Manual	9	29.7
Cowlitz District	Manual	9	171.4
Vancouver	Manual	6	6.6
MSH NVM	Manual	2	7.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>227</b>	<b>4448</b>

<b>Cooperator/District</b>		<b>Sites</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Skamania County	Chemical	79	1305.1
Cowlitz County	Chemical	121	310.9
Lewis County	Chemical	183	1380.4
Klickitat County	Chemical	12	34.4
Pierce County	Chemical	4	2.3
WSDOT	Chemical	14	2.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>413</b>	<b>3036</b>

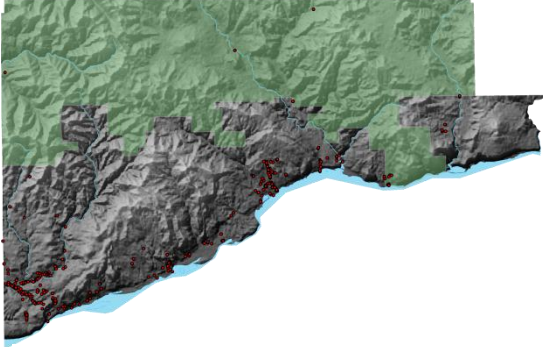


Photo 5. Knotweed treatment locations.

landowners received a packet containing best management practices for controlling knotweed and notification that control of knotweed is required by state law. In conjunction with knotweed treatment, project staff also engaged landowners in dialog on-site. Staff provided assistance with plant identification, site-specific location, weed management techniques and information on riparian ecosystem health.

The information has been well received and landowners are thankful for assistance. A workshop was held in a local park on July 17th, and staff was available for five days during the Skamania County Fair, held August 10th- 14th, in which time approximately 300 residents received information. To date, 24 landowners have assumed control of their own sites at this time, and 48 landowner agreements have been received by landowners acknowledging responsibility for their sites following this project.

### **Class A Eradication Projects**

In 2011, Skamania County partnered with Klickitat County and Beacon Rock State Park on a project to address all known Class A species within their areas. Skamania County acted as lead entity and reimbursed Klickitat County \$2,545 for its work on Johnsongrass as well as Mediterranean sage. Skamania County staff treated false brome for Beacon Rock State Park and also treated all known infestations of garlic mustard and shiny geranium.



Photo 6. Controlling shiny geranium on a forest road near Stevenson.

To supplement project funding for garlic mustard control, Skamania County partnered with Clark County and the cities of Camas and Washougal. Through interagency agreement, Clark County was reimbursed \$2,020 for work on garlic mustard. The cities of Camas and Washougal received herbicide and application equipment.

Although an ongoing process, all known locations of Class A noxious weeds within Skamania County were prevented from propagating in 2011. Ongoing efforts toward eradication are estimated to produce ultimate success by 2014.

### **Wind River Weed Control Project**

As part of the Wind River restoration and enhancement project, the Underwood Conservation District (UCD) is performing on behalf of the Bonneville Power Administration; UCD staff contracted Skamania County for assistance in their expertise of weed control.

At three locations along the Wind River, Skamania County staff assisted with weed control operations on both public and private lands under Interagency Agreement (IA) with the Underwood Conservation District and liability waivers obtained from landowners.

### **Aquatic Weed Early Detection-Rapid Response Project (EDRR)**

After a successful 2010 pilot project controlling yellow flag iris, Skamania County gathered support from the Yakama Nation Fisheries Project, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, US Fish & Wildlife Service and Skamania County Chamber of Commerce to expand efforts. A project was submitted to the Washington State Department of Ecology for 2011-12.



**Photo 7. Yellow flag iris control, White Salmon River.**

The Department of Ecology awarded Skamania County a grant for \$12,198 for treatment of yellow flag iris and purple loosestrife on the Columbia River, Drano Lake, the Wind River, Rock Creek Cove, Ice House Lake and adjacent small lakes. Later, Skamania County modified the project scope with the Department of Ecology to also include the White Salmon River. This modification was an important addition that allowed weed control of these aquatic species prior to the breaching and deconstruction of Condit Dam.

This project has been well received by the public and adjacent land managers. Skamania County combined treatment efforts with an expanded aquatic weed survey in order to further inventory aquatic vegetation. Treatment of target species will continue until June 30, 2012 with the expiration of the project agreement.

### **Indigobush Control Initiative**

Expanding on the success of previous indigobush control projects along the Columbia River shoreline, Beacon Rock State Park in partnership with Skamania County were awarded a grant for treatment of indigobush and knotweed in 2011.

Based upon prior control results observed by Skamania staff, Beacon Rock State Park brought work crew inmates on site to clear indigobush from the shoreline. The plants were piled and burned on site. Following



**Photo 8. Staff clearing indigobush on Columbia River shoreline.**

mechanical treatment, cut plants were allowed to regrow for approximately two months. Skamania staff members then applied a foliar herbicide treatment on plant regrowth, killing the plant.

This project was successful in clearing ten acres of Columbia River shoreline in 2011 and will be continued in 2012 with the goal of removing all indigobush from the Shoreline of Beacon Rock State Park. The success of this project was shared with weed specialists in Washington and Oregon along the Columbia River and Snake River for use elsewhere.

## **Future Directions**

- Finish transition of remaining knotweed sites back to landowners. Develop long-term plan for ensuring landowner law compliance with adaptive management.
- Increase focus on Early Detection/Rapid Response (EDRR), class A species and species of limited distribution in Skamania County including false brome, shiny geranium and garlic mustard. Increase awareness of ecological impacts of invasive weeds.
- Increase awareness of aquatic noxious weeds and seek funding to assist with continued control. The weed staff will seek to create working groups and collaboration of interested parties to facilitate control.
- Support research and development of biological control, and continue to educate the public of their benefit in providing long-term weed management of widespread species.
- Strengthen relationships with adjacent weed boards and programs. Coordinate activities in order to actualize efficient comprehensive control and enact Early Detection Rapid Response efforts.
- Initiate compilation of best management practices for a countywide comprehensive management plan. Staff will collaborate with county land managers to implement this systematic, planned approach to weed management.
- Expand resources and efforts in stewardship activities and trainings to private and public land managers in order to build local capacity for ongoing weed control. Cooperate with WSU Extension to provide continuing education.
- Increase the capacity and capabilities of program staff and regional projects through collaboration and the pursuit of funds to provide further opportunities for noxious weed control in Skamania County and beyond.