



Report #5

Summary of a Workshop on Funding Options for Invasive Plant Management

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Executive Summary

The Invasive Plant Council of BC hosted a “think-tank” workshop in Richmond, BC on November 30, 2007. The workshop’s main objective was to develop shared recommendations for long-term stable funding for invasive plant management in British Columbia. The specific objectives were to:

1. Provide background information on historic and current approaches in BC;
2. Examine funding models from the United States and Alberta; and
3. Develop a suite of tangible recommendations for funding coordination and management of invasive plants in BC from diverse sources.

Approximately 30 participants, consisting mainly of strategic thinkers from government and non-government, shared background and created ideas on funding options for invasive plant management in British Columbia. This report summarizes the workshop objectives, background, presentations, and recommendations.

Participants recommended the following four key actions to address the need for long-term stable funding for invasive plant management:

1. Meet with **environmental groups**, to build their support for invasive plant management funding, as they are successful and experienced in fundraising. Investigate their interest in supporting invasive plant management.
2. Approach some of the large foundations for **restoration funding** relating to invasive plants. Pitch the work as restoration (because that is currently a very useful term).
3. Use increased **public awareness**, as the IPCBC is doing through its communications plan, to build support for invasive plant management funding. Use the Invasive Plant Council’s **economic impacts** research for the economic argument. Tap into public concern for the environment.
4. Implement a **new funding strategy** for invasive plants:
 - More than Invasive Plant Council members and staff are required to assist and support.
 - In addition to the IPCBC’s Funding Committee, include the non-invasive plant sciences and related organizations and groups, such as First Nations, recreational equipment companies, local government, the private sector, World Wildlife Fund, Mountain Equipment Coop, BC Tourism, the provincial ATV group, BC Cattlemen’s Association, BC Nature/Federation of BC Naturalists, stewardship groups, professional associations for the land stewardship connection, and Nature Conservancy of Canada.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
Objective	1
Background	1
Presentations	1
Panel	2
Mechanisms for Long-Term Stable Funding	4
Summary of Key Actions	5



Introduction

The Invasive Plant Council of BC hosted a “think-tank” workshop in Richmond, BC on November 30, 2007. A diverse range of approximately 30 knowledgeable strategic thinkers from government and non-government shared background information and created ideas on funding options for invasive plant management in British Columbia. This report covers the highlights of eight presentations from guest speakers and panel members, followed by the recommended actions from participants.

Objective

The workshop’s main objective was to develop shared recommendations for long-term stable funding for invasive plant management in British Columbia. The specific objectives were to:

1. Provide background information on historic and current approaches in BC;
2. Examine funding models from the United States and Alberta; and
3. Develop a suite of tangible recommendations for funding coordination and management of invasive plants in BC from diverse sources.

Background

Invasive plant management is not the sole responsibility of any one agency or organization and, therefore, neither are solutions to funding issues. To date, the need for long-term stable funding has been identified as fundamental to help enable effective collaboration and operations and to support sound rapid responses to critical situations. Stable funding will need to reflect a collaborative model that helps share the responsibility across key parties and integrates the various aspects of invasive plant management, such as public awareness, reporting, and assessment.

This think-tank workshop was about the future and how to work together in a collaborative approach to find creative ways for the long term. The focus is not on funding for the Invasive Plant Council of BC but for effective invasive plant management, in general, across the province. The agenda opened with a review of provincial government support for invasive plant management followed by three guest speakers to describe stable funding models used in Alberta, California, and Montana. A panel of four BC speakers outlined their sectors’ current challenges in managing invasive plants. Following the presentations, workshop participants developed options and recommendations for BC.

Presentations

Leslie MacDonald, from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, gave an overview of invasive plant management funding in British Columbia.

- Provincial government funding for invasive plant management has hovered around \$2 million annually

The Council is a registered society building cooperation and coordination to minimize the negative ecological, social, and economic impacts caused by the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive plants. The Invasive Plant Council’s Board of Directors, committees, and members are working to increase public awareness of invasive plants, secure long-term and stable funding for invasive plant management and the work of local weed committees, compile current legislation on invasive species, build linkages among invasive plant inventories and databases, and identify and promote coordinated research.

and has increased to \$4 million, for a total of \$5.279 million in 2006/07 from all sources.

- Program elements in 2005/06 were from different funding sources, which were supplemented with in-kind contributions. The provincial government is looking for better information from invasive plant managers; people need to gather accurate data on spending.
- Weed committees also leverage the funds from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands contribution, but this is not always clearly demonstrated. This could be discussed and improved for the future (possibly a topic for the regional weed committees’ annual meeting).

As Senior Environmental Research Scientist with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, **Steve Schoenig** has been involved in all levels of weed management in California, including the Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition which recruited over \$7 million for weed management areas, and coordination of weed management areas. He also provided input to the Congressional Committee in Washington, DC on the national weed funding bill.

Steve outlined how funding requests should show that the funding will address high-priority needs and not eradicate all non-native plants. Funding for Early Detection and Rapid Response shows a good cost/benefit analysis by focusing on the invasive plant outbreaks with the highest potential to cause harm. He advised participants to stick with a long-term plan and ignore any advice that now is not a good time to ask for money because funding will never be attained if there is no request.

One of the best tools to quickly show the need for funding is a flash presentation of weed spread with projections of future control costs after no control of early infestations. Some models give animated pictures of the spread with an accompanying graph.

Invasive plant management in the western States is funded by the following means:

- Base funding from state and large municipal governments, with occasional windfalls of additional funding.
- A trust fund amalgamated from (1) user fees—Montana taxes vehicles \$1.50 and Hawaii taxes everything coming in at a very low rate, but the aggregate is significant; and



(2) a herbicide mill tax to prevent a next wave of weeds (can also do for biocontrol agents). It is important to clearly distinguish user fees from taxes.

- Miscellaneous funds, such as the state lottery, which Oregon uses for environmental protection and anadromous fish.
- Other 'funding tsunamis' depending on unexpected circumstances.
- Forgotten bank accounts, which Colorado uses.

Other potential funding mechanisms include:

- Environmental license plates for different causes, although there are now 700 interest groups. Get a major environmental group onto invasive plants.
- Opportunity to check off a contribution on state taxes, although invasive plants are not currently on the list. Getting invasive plants onto the public and political agenda is key.
- Local taxes, e.g., at the county or municipal level.
- Mineral or gas exploration taxes since that activity promotes weed invasions.
- Real estate tax for weed control – the amounts are small (few dollars) but they add up.
- Tax incentives for farmers if invasive plant control priorities are included.

Development is the #1 primary impact on land, while loss of biodiversity is second. Protecting land and letting "mother nature restore it" is a mistaken belief. It is crucial to have strict performance measures for invasive plant management projects, with monitoring and widespread distribution of good reports. It is important to show the success of how the funding is spent to increase support and future funding. Tie a cost-share to any funding request, even in-kind contributions. Protect available funding and do not let it disappear.

Janet Clark is the director of the Center for Invasive Plant Management (Montana) and responsible for overseeing collaborative programs in the Western States.

- The Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund is a state program and anyone is eligible to apply. Total grants have reached almost \$38 million since 1985. It was established with a \$1 million initial investment and a 1 percent herbicide surcharge until it reached \$2.5 million.
- Other revenue sources include a vehicle fee (including snowmobiles) and additions from the state legislature.
- Grantees require a smooth payment process. Positive outcomes include a required environmental assessment, stabilized funding for projects, attention of the research community, incentives for working on weed issues, and increased awareness and support for all aspects of the state Weed Management Plan. However, programs need to succeed faster, and auditing and grant reviews can be frustrating.
- Montana has license plates for the Montana weed control association.
- Vehicles taxes from vehicles moving weeds along roadways and into the backcountry. Now there is literature on a recent review from Europe, which Steve will send to Gail for distribution.
- Long-term monitoring should be required. Projects are usually designed as multi-party and the advisory

committee for funding looks for that commitment as a project requirement. There is also the entire restoration component, not just weed eradication.

Debbie Oyarzun is the Supervisor of the Provincial Agricultural Service Board (ASB) of Alberta Agriculture and Food. The Board is part of a province-wide interface that provides funding for cost-shared programs and services to address legislated responsibilities carried out by municipalities. Alberta has funded weed management through a longstanding relationship with municipalities. This legislated partnership allows for the delegation of authority, integrated as part of a larger program of the ASBs, and funded through a committed \$10.5 million (not guaranteed, but an historic level) from Alberta Lottery funds.

- The structure and relationship in Alberta starts at the top with Alberta Agriculture and Food, then moves down to rural municipalities and the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, through an integrated program as part of a bigger package within the agricultural industry.
- The Agricultural Service Board, established in 1945, is at the level between municipalities and the Agricultural Fieldmen. Each board is a branch under the municipality and must hire a qualified Agricultural Fieldman. Funds come from Alberta Lottery Fund (whose purpose is to improve quality of life for Albertans). This is a fairly secure funding source.
- The Agricultural Fieldmen implement policies and programs, manage agricultural resources, serve as a designated officer and municipal inspector, and conduct communication and liaison. Their own association certifies them through continuing education requirements. Under the *Weed Control Act*, they conduct inspection and enforcement, weed control, special weed projects, urban partnerships, and extension and awareness; and they also license seed-cleaning plants.
- The Agricultural Service Board grant program priorities relating to invasive plants are: weed inspection, weed control on public land, extension (workshops), and pest surveys, and now roadside mowing is increasing. There is cost-sharing through weed inspection, weed control, and public lands (always cost-shared because a priority for Alberta agriculture), then sometimes for extension.
- Eligible expenses are clear and the budget cycle has dates for a precise process, including a proven active Agricultural Service Board.

Panel

Tom Wells, from BC Transmission Corporation, talked about how BC Hydro, BC Transmission Corporation, private companies, and oil and gas pipeline groups have different roles in invasive plant management. This is based on their lack of legislated requirements to manage invasive plants and their status as publicly traded or shareholder-driven. They occupy a very small proportion of the landbase which they do not own but on which they have only legal right-of-way. The utilities recognize that their rights-of-way can be vectors for invasive plants, and they participate in invasive plant management when they can.



- Support mechanisms that some utilities may bring include operational funding: (1) annual base level funding and (2) additional support to regional weed committee to leverage more funding and to ensure more effective treatment over a defined area.
- New construction and line refurbishing often include a budget for capital programs to mitigate activities with respect to invasive plants, which doubles what BCTC spends annually from the base funding.
- Other small amounts come from sources like graduate student research, along with in-kind support, such as utility representatives serving on regional committees or the Invasive Plant Council.
- Downloading of invasive plant management by the legal land occupier is a concern. It is difficult to convince their senior management that invasive plant management is a core function when invasive plants do not affect the powerline or pipeline. Early Detection and Rapid Response is critical, but is a provincial responsibility because everyone benefits from it.

The range of **Judy Guichon**, of the BC Cattlemen's Association, includes a major highway, seven powerlines, a pipeline, and forestry roads which provide many vectors for invasive plants. Invasive plants are a major problem and concern but often ranchers are limited in what they can achieve. With these many other vectors, stewardship efforts can be undermined by actions undertaken by the other users, from utilities to recreationists.

- Early detection and eradication is very important. For example, most people ignored the early warnings by Lawrence in 1930 to remove knapweed, and now the battle is just to keep knapweed at bay.
- Following widespread clearcutting after the mountain pine beetle epidemic, invasive plant spread by cattle must be mitigated. Instead, there is usually insufficient attention or action.
- Judy's range also hosts ATVs; 50 vehicles/day from logging, fishing and hunting; the Pacific Northwest rally; and natural wildlife travel—all of which make range management for invasive plants very difficult. In particular, the Coquihalla Highway has started the march of weeds onto her range, as the area has become a recreational playground.
- What she spends on knapweed control approximately equals her taxes.
- She asked youth trespassers on ATVs to join her in weed pulling. They did not know the risk they posed to the forage, but they got into the job and were terrific. It proved to be an opportunity to show people the risk of invasive plants from their activities. Invasive plant management is really an energy crisis, not just a funding crisis.
- Since the province is counting on tourism for economic development, we have to become more weed-centric and maybe use tourism dollars or a gas tax for invasive plant management.

Ken Day, from the UBC/Alex Fraser Research Forest, consulted with forest industry representatives about invasive plant management. They told him their pockets are empty for this role due to various economic and market factors. This leaves

only two options: (1) do more with current resources and (2) do more with external funding. Some of the actions that could be undertaken include:

- There are many well-trained people on the ground before harvesting who can identify plants and mark locations with GPS units; they could be asked to report incidence of a key number of plants, which would require little training.
- Invasive plant control is critical to grassland restoration. Forest companies harvesting encroached trees to restore grasslands need to ensure that invasive plants are considered.
- Develop tighter practices, to reduce the transport of invasive plants to new areas, at little cost, e.g., clean equipment before moving, manage vegetation in gravel pits, and upgrade seed certification.
- Incentives could be through forest management certification as criteria and indicators (which are in Alberta for Forest Management Agreements), basic measures to prevent spread included as allowable costs to licensees in the stumpage system, and doing more with external funding by adding it to required activities.
- Industry is focused on vegetation management to reach the free-growing stage, so expand the spectrum for brushing treatments to include invasive plants. Use sheep and goat grazing for vegetation management in forestry; grazing is not used much because of environmental pressures with respect to disease transfer, so few contractors are currently available to bring in a herd.
- Spend more on research on invasive plants and forestry. There is nothing much on the web about shade and drought tolerance of invasive plants, or spread vector.
- Need more information on the economic impacts of invasive plants on forestry and the efficacy of different control methods.
- The delivery model in BC for incremental activities is the Forest Investment Account, which could add incentives for companies to include invasive plant management in their activities. Some licensees have done inventory and planning work under FIA. The Ministry of Forests and Range is pursuing this issue internally.
- The barriers to progress on this issue are definitely costs. Whether a real or perceived cost increase, it is considered "someone else's problem." The pesticide application process can be difficult and there are few applicators available to do the job.
- Individual company foresters have a stewardship role and are trying to squeeze in invasive plant management to their operational budgets.

In summary, the skilled people already working in the field need to see invasive plants as a problem. Use incentives to reduce vector opportunities, and explore the existing model of delivering funding by licensees.

According to **Duncan Barnett**, the Cariboo Regional District's invasive plant management model is similar to Alberta's, but Alberta municipalities have a mandatory obligation to manage invasive plants and BC does not. BC municipalities are only enabled, which means that invasive plant management is optional and currently not mandatory.



- The regional district can have an agricultural program or its own invasive plant program with a weed control officer.
- Local government delivery methods range from doing the work itself to contracting out and actively partnering with local/regional committees, which many local governments are moving towards from the IPCBC’s work.
- The forestry, agriculture, and mining industries are in tough economic times and local government is aware of tax levels on its constituents.
- Local government commitment to invasive plant management depends on the directors’ interest and support, e.g., agricultural areas will probably have the program because the elected director knows about invasive plants and wants to address.
- The UBCM convention may have one resolution about invasive plants, then there could be four or five from “green communities” wanting an outright ban on herbicides. Herbicides are generally not supported in urban areas by elected directors.
- It is challenging to convince taxpayers of programs for optional requirements, especially when not enforced on adjacent Crown land. The Cariboo Regional District takes a soft compliance role.
- An invasive plant program for local government needs to be back-stopped with mandatory legislation that engages everyone and creates a level playing field. We must clarify who enforces.
- Optional programs are cut when funding is limited, and then the leveraged funding is lost soon after.

Mechanisms for Long-term Stable Funding

David Marshall of the Fraser Basin Council led the afternoon session to list and discuss mechanisms for long-term stable funding for invasive plant management. The list was grouped and prioritized as follows:

Mechanism	Description	Recommended Actions
Public donations and fundraising	Solicit public support through major awareness work on invasive plants and their risks and impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install park kiosks for donations. • Approach environmental groups to add invasive plant management to doing something good for the environment. • Provide an opportunity to contribute with a purchase at the cash register of retail outlets such as Tim Horton’s, Starbucks, Canadian Tire, Mountain Equipment Coop and others. • Investigate the opportunity to people to purchase ‘green gifts’ as for The Nature Conservancy and The Land Trust. • Tie invasive plant management fundraising into climate change and Species at Risk.
Environmental levies or levy on recreational equipment and vehicles	Address potential for levies on tires, recreational equipment, license plates and lottery revenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the Ministry of Environment about using some of the tire levy, which is already collected, for invasive plants. • Ask the Mountain Equipment Coop about donating \$1 with a purchase of recreational equipment. • Approach David Robinson, former MEC executive director and now with the David Suzuki Foundation, as well as VanCity and Canadian Tire. • Show how a mill rate is also an environmental levy because of the invasive plant source. The province needs to take the lead through long-term, legislative change. • Encourage tax-shifting instead of a GST decrease; use the “decrease” for invasive plant management. • Approach the federal government to allocate a portion of the gas tax to invasive plant management.



Mechanism	Description	Recommended Actions
License plates	Invasive plant funding could be part of the environmental levy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach ICBC to investigate how the 2010 license plate is managed. This may be feasible after the Olympics. Make it an environmental/invasive plant license plate for "Supernatural BC."
Lottery revenue	Use a small portion of lottery revenue towards invasive plant management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with BC Lotteries.
Government contributions	<p>Use the fiscal year surplus and other potential funding sources for invasive plant management.</p> <p>Show what a good job is done with the government funding currently granted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with deputy ministers (e.g., Larry Pedersen from Ministry of Agriculture and Lands wants to meet with IPCBC twice a year). Solicit support from Jim Snetsinger (Chief Forester) regarding the Future Forest Ecosystems initiative. Ask Andreas from WWF-Australia to talk about what worked really well in Australia. Get allies in environmental groups to build influence. Talk about invasive plants with the Climate Action Team in BC. Address the First Nations Leadership Council about invasive plants. Contact other ministries, both provincial and federal (energy and mines, transportation). Offer unique solutions stemming from the municipalities and find expanded solutions within other organizations, e.g., Communities in Bloom. Work with the climate change agenda, along with Species at Risk through invasive plant impacts and risks. Contact environmental group key staff (executive director and government liaison specialist). Identify a "patron" at the 2009 UBCM conference.
Foundations	Downplay for now, since most funds are in U.S. foundations.	Nothing now.

Summary of Key Actions

Participants recommended the following four key actions to address the need for long-term stable funding for invasive plant management:

1. Meet with **environmental groups**, to build their support for invasive plant management funding, as they are successful and experienced in fundraising. Investigate their interest in supporting invasive plant management.
2. Approach some of the large foundations for **restoration funding** relating to invasive plants. Pitch the work as restoration (because that is currently a very useful term).
3. Use increased **public awareness**, as the IPCBC is doing through its communications plan, to build support for invasive plant management funding. Use the Invasive Plant Council's **economic impacts** research for the economic argument. Tap into public concern for the environment.
4. Implement a **new funding strategy** for invasive plants:
 - More than Invasive Plant Council members and staff are required to assist and support.
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