

2021 Weed Report

Submitted by Brian Stratuliak

On April 13 a zoom meeting was held with committee members, PRRD staff and directors to go over the Strategic Plan and Profile of Invasive Weeds in the Peace Region. Committee members gave updates on their year's work in treating and monitoring their area of responsibility. It was brought to the attention of the committee that the Ministry of FLNRORD was not doing any joint contracts for public lands across the Province. In the Peace Region it affected the contract it had with the PRRD and the Rancher's Contract with Sunset Prairie Livestock Association (SPLA). The committee expressed concern that the Province was not recognizing what costs would be incurred because of the non treatment of these invasive weeds on public lands and neighboring agricultural lands. There was consensus on the committee to draft a letter and forward it to the Ministries of FLNRORD and Environment and Climate Change emphasizing the economic benefits agriculture provides versus the detrimental costs of canceling treatment of invasive plants on public lands.

The SPLA also drafted a letter at the end of April to these ministries which also included Agriculture and the ALC. We also included local MLA's, Liberal critics of the ministries and the BCCA in our email of the letter. We also asked for a letter of support from the Peace River Regional Cattlemen's Association to help reinstate our funding. We also, with guidance from Judy Madden, came up with a resolution for the Regional Cattlemen's to put forward as an emergency resolution for the BCCA AGM which was happening in June. The resolution passed and the BCCA are still lobbying the Government to have permanent funding for spraying invasive weeds on Crown Lands.

On June 10, I received an email from Darlene Dresser of FLNRORD informing us that they were proceeding with our Rancher's Contract, with a slight increase in our funding. We were then able to continue our work this summer with controlling invasive weeds in our community pasture. This program has been a huge success, and we are treating less acres of invasive weeds every year. The SPLA would like to thank everyone who supported us in this important program for us.

The government funded portion of the Rancher's Contract pays for spraying high priority invasive weeds on crown grazing land. The SPLA also sprays Canada Thistle on the crown grazing land, but with the labor at their own expense. This year the government paid for surveying, spraying &/or hand pulling of weeds on 8 sites, all Scentless Chamomile. They sprayed .04 ha (.09 acre) with Clearview, and hand pulled 2 sites (40 plants). The SPLA sprayed 2 sites for Canada Thistle with an area of 46.1178 ha (113.9596 acres) and the chemicals used were Clearview, Milestone and Grazon XC.

Due to COVID, all outreach programs, promotions, pesticide applicator courses and First Nations partnerships were canceled or done by video conferencing or webinars. Weedy Wednesday posts were successful with 55 posts averaging 825 people reached for each post.

Free weed dumping was offered at the three landfills this season for residential and commercial users. Bessborough received 1829 kg residential, 1750 kg commercial; Chetwynd received 240 kg commercial; North Peace received 7543 kg commercial. In 2021 invasive weeds were received at local landfills, 8,680 kg from commercial/ industrial sources and 610 kg from residents, a decrease of 3,240 kg from last year.

Weed officers and inspectors for 2021 were Paulo Eichelberger and Kari Bondaroff (PRRD staff), Mike Pangman (Contractor) and a summer student Cathy Ashcroft. William Hamilton and Kyle Dayus were hired from May 1-November 30 to support the Invasive Plant Program. 91 actionable weed reports were received by phone, email or by the "Report-A-Weed" app. William and Kyle pulled 250 kg of invasive weeds in response to complaints.