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Alaska Weed Smackdown – a fun outreach opportunity for all communities

Beecher, Jessica

US Fish & Wildlife Service, Intern

In 2010 the Fairbanks Cooperative Weed Management Area, along with numerous partners, hosted the 1st annual Weed Smackdown at Tanana Lakes Recreation Area. This event attracted nearly 100 participants and helped bring a new level of awareness to invasive plant management in the community. The 2nd Annual Weed Smackdown in Fairbanks saw over 130 participants and volunteers pull 3,200 lbs of invasive plants. The competitive weed pull event was expanded in 2011 to include other communities in Alaska – Anchorage and Kenai.

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State of Alaska Update

Blackburn, Brianne

Alaska Division of Agriculture, Invasive Weeds and Agricultural Pest Coordinator

The Division of Agriculture has been working over the past two years to update and revise the regulations relating to noxious weeds, invasive plants, and agricultural pests. This process is nearing completion and the revised regulations should be out for public review by January 2012. In addition to the revised regulations, a Strategic Plan for invasive weed and agricultural pest management and prevention has been developed which includes an early detection and rapid response system for invasive plants. This document addresses prevention, policy, coordination, inventory and monitoring, education, and research and will be updated with timelines for the action strategies as they evolve. The strategic plan is now available online.

The Division of Agriculture is also working on a number of coordinated efforts for control, management and outreach for invasive plants and agricultural pests including:
• Canada Thistle management in the greater Anchorage Area
• Developing a invasive free cooperators program with the horticultural industry
• Early detection and rapid response inventory for Giant Hogweed and Purple Loosestrife
• Weed free certification for gravel pits
• Purple loosestrife replacement in Anchorage
Portage BioBlitz

Charnon, Betty
Chugach National Forest, Glacier Ranger District

On July 23 & 24 Chugach National Forest and Alaska Department of Fish & Game-Diversity Program brought you southcentral Alaska’s first BioBlitz. 2011 is the International Year of Forests and coincidentally (or not) we joined the ranks of BioBlitzes held around the world. The Portage BioBlitz was an intense period of biological surveys in an attempt to record all species (all taxa) within the Portage Watershed. Groups of scientists, naturalists and volunteer conducted an intensive field inventory over a 24 hour period throughout Portage. A BioBlitz is also a fun and exciting way for the public to learn about the biological diversity of our ecosystems. At the end of the event we had documented:

- Fungi-15
- Plants-243
- Aquatic Invertebrates-21 (and still counting)
- Terrestrial Invertebrates-55
- Birds-33
- Fish-5
- Bats-1

Restoring Refuge Islands through Control and Eradication of Invasive Species: Foxes, Marmots, Rabbits, Rats and Feral Cattle and Island-Hopping Caribou

Ebbert, Steve
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

One of the purposes of the USFWS Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge is to try to restore native island ecosystems by removing invasive species. Arctic foxes were stocked on Kanaga Island in 1927, hoary marmots were stocked on Sud Island in 1930, and European rabbits on Poa Island during WWII. In 2010, in cooperation with USDA Wildlife Services, the refuge employed 16 specialists to eradicate invasive species from these islands to restore nesting habitat for native birds. Invasive rats have been eradicated on one refuge island, and efforts to prevent their accidental introduction on other islands continue. The refuge is currently developing plans to remove approximately 1000 wild, abandoned cattle from two overgrazed refuge islands and weighing alternatives to prevent an introduced island caribou herd from invading a nearby refuge island. Management solutions to invasive species on refuge islands is as diverse as the species involved.
**Elodea nuttallii: Survey Results and Control Trials in Interior Alaska**

Etchevery, Darcy

Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District

Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*) was found growing in large infestations in Chena Slough in the fall of 2010. After that discovery a group was formed, as part of the Fairbanks CWMA, to address management of the aquatic invasive plant, *Elodea nuttallii*, found growing in the Chena Slough. The Elodea Steering Committee worked over the winter to prioritize projects and seek funding for the 2011 field season. The main goal for the summer was to survey water bodies for *Elodea* to discover the plant’s local distribution. To that end, the Fairbanks Soil & Water Conservation District hired a four person crew that worked from July to September. This crew surveyed a variety of water bodies where *Elodea* was most likely to be found: all road crossings of anadromous streams, boat launches, known float plane ponds, and several road accessible lakes. At 29 different water bodies 235 data points were collected. *Elodea* was found growing in the Chena River, Chena Slough, and Chena Lake. Several small control trials were conducted near the end of the field season to see how the plant would respond to hand pulling, clipping, and installation of a weed barrier. The results of those projects will be seen more clearly in 2012. The Elodea Steering Committee will be meeting over the winter to again create a management plan and prioritize projects for the upcoming field season.

**Additions to the Alaska Weed Ranking Project**

Flagstad, Lindsey

Alaska Natural Heritage Program / University of Alaska Anchorage

The Invasiveness Ranking System for Non-native Plants of Alaska was developed in 2008 as a mechanism to quantify the potential impacts of species to the natural areas of our state. This system scales a species’ invasiveness with respect to its potential ecological impacts, biological attributes, known distribution and feasibility of control. The resulting invasiveness ranks are one tool to help land managers prioritize infestations for control and in this way, maximize their limited resources. Through the Alaska Weed Ranking Project, a collaboration of weed scientists and land managers evaluated 50 additional species in 2010-2011. To date, 164 non-native plant species known or expected to occur in Alaska (approximately 58%) have been ranked. Here I review patterns of invasiveness, the relationship of distributions to invasiveness ranks, and discuss the intent and current applications of this system towards weed management in Alaska.
Panel Discussion- Weed Free Products

Gino Graziano- Facilitator

Invasive Plants Instructor, UAF Cooperative Extension Service

Weed free forage and gravel certification programs are one important tool in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive plants. The panelists represent purchasers and organizers of weed free certification products in Alaska. Conference attendees and panelists are encouraged to discuss with panelists requirements for certification, improvements to the program, and how to increase availability of certified products. Panelists are:

Mark Nordman- Iditarod – Purchases certified weed free bedding straw for the Iditarod dog sled race.

Phil Kaspari – An Extension agent and Farmer worked with others to initiate the Weed Free Forage certification program, and conducts certifier trainings.

Tom Healy – Alaska Rock Products Association President – Discusses the potential for a weed free gravel certification program with the Division of Agriculture and gravel miners.

Garden Clubs are Your Ally

Hinchey, Debbie

Pacific Region Director of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Local garden clubs affiliated with National Garden Clubs, Inc. have been involved in environmental issues throughout the country for decades. They have partnered with other like minded organizations like the Nature Conservancy, National Forest Service youth programs, and many local and state specific groups to protect or reclaim natural environments. They have raised funds and awareness on a broad range of issues.
“Can Herbicides Be Considered a Tool in Vegetation Management Integrated Pest Management (IPM)?”

Lee, Richard D.
USDI-Bureau of Land Management, National Operations Center

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) has been defined as a “decision support system for the selection, and use, of pest control tactics singly or harmoniously coordinated into a management strategy, based upon cost-benefit analysis that take into account the interests of and impacts on producers, society, and the environment.” The successful management of vegetation requires the careful selection of the appropriate management tool, often; the tool may be as simple as a pair of gloves, or as serious as a hydro-axe. Are there biological control options available for the particular invasive species? And how will mechanical operations, such as mowing, affect the infested site and how will the targeted species respond the mechanical operation? Each management tool has its strengths and its weaknesses; each has its place in the total vegetation management planning process. But where does the use of herbicides fit into the process? Are there times when the use of an herbicide may be the most environmentally friendly option, or are there times when the environmental conditions would dictate a different choice? What is it that makes the difference between those two situations? Are there environmental factors and characteristics associated with a particular herbicide that play a role in the decision making process? There are many factors which need to be considered when developing an IPM plan for the management of invasive vegetation. Another group included the phrase, “deliberate selection, integration, and implementation” when defining IPM. By understanding the factors associated with the use of herbicides, a more knowledgeable decision can be made when considering the use of herbicides in vegetation management.

Reed Canary Grass Management on the Kenai Peninsula: A Spatial View

Maupin, Brian
Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

The Kenai Peninsula currently has 110 identified species of exotic vascular plants. Of these, reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) is considered to be one of the most invasive and dispersed, and potentially the most injurious species, certainly to anadromous fisheries. To date, reed canarygrass has been recorded at 749 locations in 30 watersheds on the peninsula. Efforts to treat infestations are underway by several agencies and organizations. However, the treatments vary greatly in their goals (*i.e.*, eradication, control or containment) and efficacy (*e.g.*, glyphosate, “tarping”, or mechanical removal). Although the strategic plan for the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area has identified reed canarygrass as one of its target species, the plan does not provide guidance on how best to coordinate well-intentioned but disparate efforts. In February 2011, the KP-CWMA developed a spatially-explicit plan for a coordinated approach to managing reed canary grass on the Kenai Peninsula.
Panel Discussion – Herbicide Considerations: When & How

Nelson, Brett
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

This panel discussion will cover such topics as – how to determine whether herbicides would be an effective treatment option, how to select the right herbicide and application methods, experiences with the DEC pesticide permitting process (from an applicant’s perspective), and much more. This panel discussion will be geared towards open discussion and questions/answers regarding Alaskan situations.

Panel members include:
- Dr. Richard Lee, Bureau of Land Management – Integrated Pest Management/Pesticide Specialist
- Phil Kaspari, University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service – Agricultural Extension Agent/Certified Pesticide Applicator course instructor
- Matt Kelzenberg, Alaska Railroad Corporation – Environmental Operations Manager

Invasive Plant Management at Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge

Pyle, Bill
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge

Orange hawkweed (Hieracium aurantiacum) and a few other highly invasive plant species pose a significant threat to the integrity of native rangelands and of Kodiak Island including Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. To address this threat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District took initiative and coordinated action including planning, surveys, outreach, and control with a variety of IPM methods. Effectiveness of management improved as outreach incited interest and action of citizens; survey results revealed the type and extent of problem, and knowledge gained of plant responses to IPM practices. Here I report on the Refuge’s progress to date, describe lessons learned, discuss future management needs, and recommend tactical considerations regarding conservation partnerships and IPM methods.
Ecological effects of invasive European bird cherry on salmonid food webs in Anchorage, Alaska streams

Roon, David
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Invasive species are a concern worldwide as they can displace native species, reduce biodiversity, and disrupt ecological processes. European bird cherry (Prunus padus) (EBC) is an invasive ornamental tree that is rapidly spreading and possibly displacing native trees along streams in parts of urban Alaska. The objectives of this study were to: 1) map the current distribution of EBC along two Anchorage streams, Campbell and Chester creeks, and 2) determine the effects of EBC on selected ecological processes linked to stream salmonid food webs. Data from the 2009 and 2010 field seasons showed: EBC was widely distributed along Campbell and Chester creeks; EBC leaf litter in streams broke down rapidly and supported similar shredder communities to native tree species; and EBC foliage supported significantly less terrestrial invertebrate biomass relative to native deciduous tree species, and contributed significantly less terrestrial invertebrate biomass to streams compared to mixed native vegetation, but riparian EBC did not appear to affect the amount of terrestrial invertebrate prey ingested by juvenile coho salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch). Although ecological processes did not seem to be dramatically affected by EBC presence, lowered prey abundance as measured in this study may have long-term consequences for stream-rearing fishes as EBC continues to spread over time.

Impact of snowmachine use on the spread of white sweetclover seed

Seefeldt, Steven; Craig, Timothy; Carr, Erin; Kapla, Jennifer
US Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service-Subarctic Agricultural Research Unit

White sweetclover is a rapidly expanding exotic plant that can colonize disturbed areas and glacial flood plains, where it out competes native plant species. There is concern that white sweetclover seeds could be picked up on snowmachines if the plants are run over by them in the winter and transported large distances. A preliminary trial with one snowmachine driving through one patch of white sweetclover in March, 2011 was conducted. White sweetclover seed was found on the snowmachine after it was loaded on the trailer and more were vacuumed from the snowmachine after it was placed in a warm garage where the snow could melt and the water evaporate. A total of 584 seeds were counted and 11 of 381 seeds readily germinated on wet filter paper. The results of this trial indicate that further research is needed to understand if snowmachines are a potential problem in the spread of white sweetclover and to develop management strategies, such as autumn mowing of white sweetclover, to reduce the chance for seed spread of this invading plant species.
Managing Invasive Weeds on Alaskan Public Right-of-Ways

Blaine Spellman
Previous affiliation: Alaska Association of Conservation Districts
Current affiliation: USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

This presentation discusses the process the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts took towards successfully gaining DEC permits to apply herbicide along state owned road right-of-ways in Interior Alaska. Our goal in presenting this information is to help managers better understand the DEC permitting process and to outline required time and capital resources to successfully complete a permit.

Engaging Rural Alaska—Bringing new Stakeholders and Ideas to the Table

Spellman, Katie V.
University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks

This afternoon workshop emphasizes the importance of enhanced engagement of rural Alaskan communities to the prevention of invasive plant spread throughout the state. The workshop will highlight several existing projects that are working to engage rural Alaskan communities in Alaska’s coordinated invasive plant management activities. The workshop will then launch into guided table discussions to promote idea-sharing, brainstorming, and innovative thinking to help guide future actions of the Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management.

Speakers highlighting projects in this workshop include:

- **Blythe Brown**, Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District-- Monitoring and control in Kodiak villages
- **Genelle Winters**, Metlakatla Indian Community—Monitoring, education and eradication programs in Metlakatla Indian Community
- **Heather Fuller**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-- Research on Cooperative Weed Management Areas and implications for rural Alaska
- **Jennifer Robinette**, Bristol Bay Native Association and Alaska Association of Conservation Districts-- Bristol Bay area village invasive plant surveys, community outreach, and invasive plants program institutionalization
- **Katie Spellman**, University of Alaska Fairbanks-- Subsistence berry and invasive plants vulnerability assessment
- **Nicholas Lisuzzo**, U.S. Forest Service-- Yupik-English guide to invasive species for Southwest Alaska
Alaska Weed Smackdown – a fun outreach opportunity for all communities

Stallard, Tim
Anchorage Park Foundation. Invasive Plant Program Coordinator

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Partnerships for Weed Management

Stringer, Scott

Municipality of Anchorage – Parks and Recreation

The presentation is a history of Anchorage invasive plant management including funding resources and opportunities to create and maintain an invasive plant management program. Projects will be presented that have utilized partnerships to not only complete the work but also to leverage the grant funds that support the projects.
Weeds and Roads – Preventing the spread along Highways in B.C.

Wheeler, Crystal

British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Due to the ongoing potential for new introductions and disturbances associated with roadside maintenance, transportation corridors can be one of the first areas that new invaders establish. Once they have arrived, roadways can be an important vector of spread for invasive plants, if they are not managed correctly. In British Columbia, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is working cooperatively with other land managers, impacted stakeholders and Maintenance Contractors to prevent the spread! In recent years, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has been able to maintain stable funding for invasive plant management along highways and in gravel pits, and has developed an effective, multi-faceted “Weeds and Roads” training program for staff and contractors. Managing invasive plants along thousands of kilometers of road across an extremely varied landscape is not without challenges however. Creative solutions are helping to improve invasive plant management across the province, and with continued partnerships and ongoing education on the impacts and biology of these unwanted aliens, invasive plant management along highways is sure to improve into the future.

Juneau Invasive Plant Program

White, Dana
Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), Juneau Cooperative Weed Management Area

This presentation will highlight what’s been going on in 2011 with the Juneau Invasive Plant Program including: local Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) Projects, and the “Knot-Head Adoption Agency”.

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