Preventing Noxious Weed Spread

Weeds, Neighbors and Cinnamon Rolls 2015

Sharon L Sorby

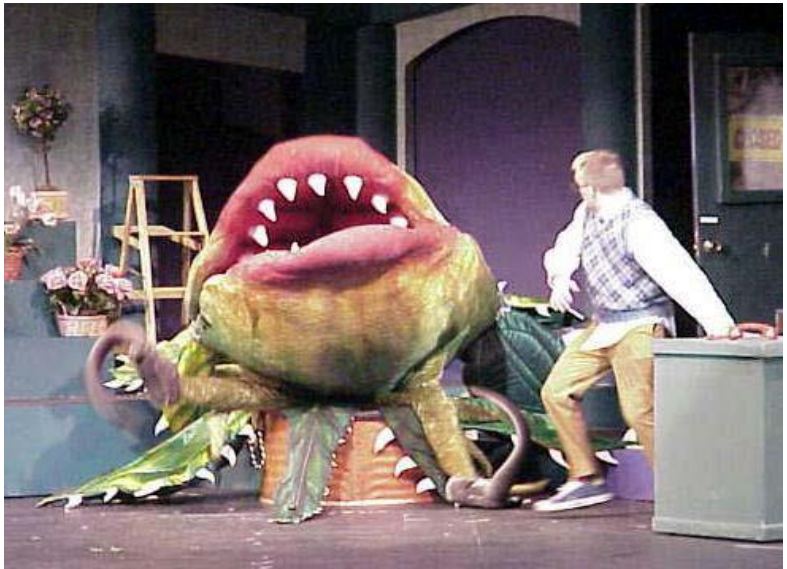
Coordinator

Pend Oreille County Weed Board

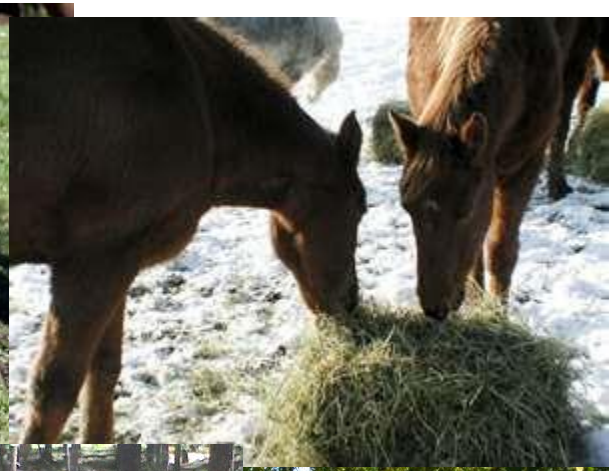
What is a Noxious Weed?

- It has nothing to do with its odor or personality!
- It is a legal term, meaning it is illegal to allow a noxious weed to grow on your property.

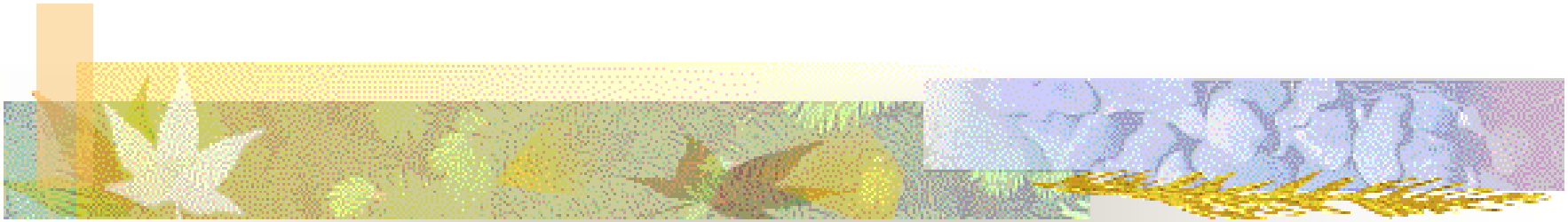
- They are not native.
- They are harmful to our resources – agricultural, human and natural.
- They are difficult to control.



Why Should We Care About Spreading Noxious Weeds?



The answer…



Conservation of agriculture, fish and game habitat, safety and aesthetics. The math is easy…

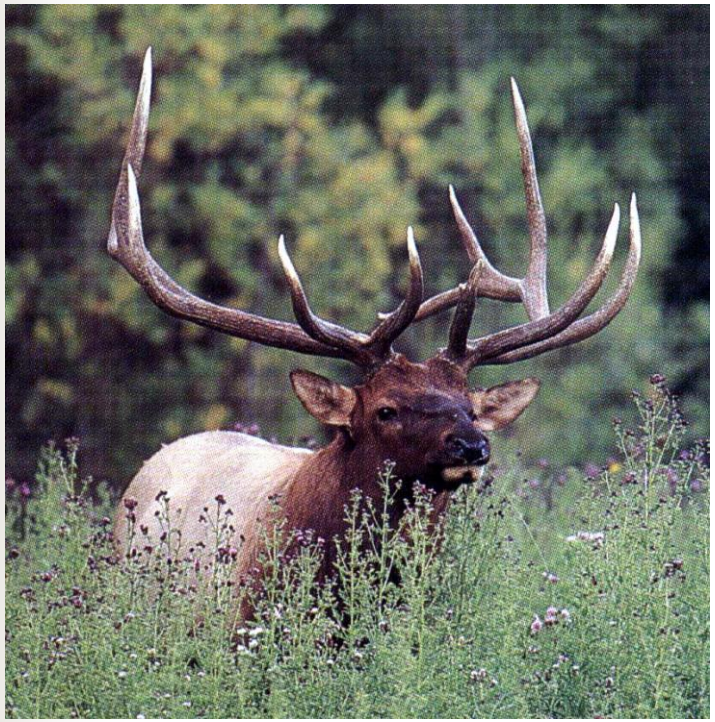
More Weeds = Less Value

(the inverse is also true:

less weeds = more value)

How do weeds have such an affect on wildlife habitat?

They displace forage and habitat structure.



Knapweed infestations diminish forage and can reduce elk usage of an area by over 75%.

Dense milfoil infestations can deplete oxygen and alter pH levels to the point of causing fish kills.

What can we do about noxious weeds?

- We can prevent them from growing on our properties.
- **We can prevent spreading them through our activities.**
- We can manage them if they are growing on our properties.

How do we accomplish these tasks?

- We can prevent them from growing on our properties by managing the property to optimize desirable vegetation.
  - Appropriate irrigation and fertilizing schedule.
  - **Do not bring weeds onto the property with our vehicles, equipment, forage, or fill products.**
  - Keeping a watch for invaders and pulling them if they show-up. Your local Weed Board office is a good resource for helping with plant identification.

How do we accomplish these tasks?

- We can prevent spreading them through our activities.
  - Know your weeds – carry a Weed Identification booklet in your vehicle and keep one at home.
  - **Keep vehicles and equipment clear of plant materials.**
  - Do not intentionally plant a noxious weed – some nurseries still sell them!
  - Use weed free forage for stock.
  - Use weed free fill materials, mulch, topsoil and manure products.

If seeing is believing…

- Scotch broom is a pervasive noxious weed on the west side of the Cascades.
- It grows in open areas and along right-of-ways – road, gas and power lines.

…then check this out!

- Except for a few gardens, the primary place it has been found in the county is in association with the BPA power lines. Populations occur –
  - between Calicoma and Tacoma Creek Roads
  - above West Side Calispel Road on Priest River Land Company's properties.
  - On the recent spur remodel between Boundary Dam and the BPA substation.

This is how we spread weeds

- Seeds get caught on vehicles or equipment, are transported to a new area where they fall off, sprout and grow.
- Seeds from these new plants are spread with further vehicle travel, work or wildlife.

Right up the road…

How do we accomplish these tasks?

- We can manage noxious weeds if they are growing on our properties.
  - Small infestations can often be pulled, dug or hoed out.
  - A mowing and fertilizing program can be effective with some weeds.
  - Mulching can be effective in small areas.
  - Planting competitive vegetation can work with some weed infestations.
  - Larger infestations can be treated with herbicides.
  - Some weeds have biocontrol agents – insects that cause damage to the weeds, sometimes preventing seed production resulting in containment.
  - Join our Neighborhood Cooperative Cost-Share Program!

Remember - Noxious weeds can

- Crowd out native and desirable vegetation in aquatic and on terrestrial lands.
- Replace habitat structure and food sources for fish and wildlife.
- Reproduce rapidly and spread aggressively.

Everyone Can Help Manage Noxious weeds…

Only **You** Can
Prevent Weed
Spread!