



Washington State

Noxious Weed Control Board

2019-2021

Biennial Report



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Cover Photo Credit- Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control Board, Slenderflower Thistle 2020 Class A Eradication Project

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Mission Statement

To serve as responsible stewards of Washington by aiding in the protection and preservation of the land, water, and resources from the degrading impacts of noxious weeds.

We believe that the 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 educational efforts.

As the Board, we do not deal directly with control activities; rather, we work to achieve control through local county weed boards, weed districts. For that reason, we seek to improve communication, gain cooperation, and enhance coordination of the collective efforts of noxious weed control.

Finally, we believe that noxious weed control is best carried out by strong, adequately funded programs at the local level. Thus, we strive to build public support for local programs, and to empower those programs to be more successful.

Board Members and Staff

WSDA Director:

Represented by Dr. Brad White

County noxious weed control boards:

Position 1: Ken Bajema, Skamania County

Position 2: Jerry Hendrickson, Asotin County

Position 3: Dr. William Agosta, San Juan County

Position 4: Dirk Veleke, Chelan County

Weed Districts:

Position 5: Tony Stadelman, Grant County/
Allen Evenson, Grant County

Eastern Washington public interest:

Carey Caruso

Western Washington public interest:

Janet Spingath

Washington Association of Counties:

Commissioner Randy Johnson, Clallam County

Scientific Advisors:

Dr. Steven Seefeldt, WSU NW Research
and Extension Center

Jenifer Parsons, WA Department of Ecology

Rod Gilbert, DoD Fish and Wildlife Program
Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Staff:

Executive Secretary

Mary Tallman Fee

Education Specialist

Wendy DesCamp

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB)

The WSNWCB is comprised of nine voting members and three non-voting members. Four board members are members of and elected by county weed boards, and one member is elected to represent weed districts. An elected member of a County Commission or Council is appointed by the Washington Association of Councils (WSAC). The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Director appoints the WSDA representative, a public interest representative from Eastern Washington and Western Washington, and three non-voting scientific advisers.

The WSNWCB adopts the state noxious weed list, disseminates noxious weed information, and coordinates the educational efforts of the county noxious weed control boards and weed districts. The WSNWCB is a member of the Washington Invasive Species Council (WISC) and updates the noxious weed community about current events and pertinent legislative activity. It testifies before legislative committees and submits comments regarding draft rule-making and policy changes.

It is the strong cooperation and open communication between the WSNWCB, WSDA, and the county NWCBs and weed districts that maximize noxious weed management and control efforts statewide.

Introduction and Noxious Weed Law

Noxious weeds are non-native, invasive plants that often out-compete our native vegetation and agricultural crops. Noxious weeds are typically very difficult to control when established. Infestations threaten wildlife habitats, waterways, forest lands, agricultural productivity, and in some cases health and wellness of Washington state residents. For example, Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) can out-compete native aquatic plants, altering the aquatic ecosystem by providing predatory fish habitat, which reduces other native species. Some noxious weed species are toxic to livestock or humans. Hoary alyssum (*Berteroa incana*) a toxic perennial that invades pastures can cause birth defects in livestock. If not controlled properly, Washington State faces terrestrial and aquatic habitat degradation, loss of biodiversity, and economic impacts from these noxious weed infestations.

Washington State has seen successful control of specific noxious weed infestations due to the continued efforts and support of local landowners, local and state agencies, county weed boards and districts, and supportive legislation. The time, effort, and support given towards noxious weed control throughout Washington State is greatly appreciated. Integrated weed management practices, utilizing chemical, biological, cultural, and mechanical controls, combined with interagency cooperation and local support has proven effective against noxious weed invasions. Landowners can re-establish native vegetation or desirable crops by prioritizing infestations and utilizing the proper control methods and combining resources.

Washington State is the forerunner in noxious weed law and rule-making. Washington's first weed law passed in 1881 to fight the spread of Canada thistle. RCW 17.04 was enacted in 1929 providing for weed districts followed by RCW 17.06 in 1959 for intercountry weed districts. The first state noxious weed list was created by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Weed districts are assessment based and have 3 directors. Weed districts are given the authority to insure noxious weed regulations under these two laws. There are currently 12 weed districts in Washington. In the late 1960's, the state legislature established the State's Noxious Weed Control Board, and authorized counties to establish County Weed Boards. Currently, RCW Chapter 17.10 is the primary noxious weed law, and it is implemented at the state level by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB) and the WSDA, and at the county level by the County Noxious Weed Control Boards. The purpose of the weed law is to limit the economic loss and other negative impacts that noxious weeds cause in agriculture, natural resources, and human health and safety.

Washington state noxious weed law recognizes the owner's duty to control noxious weeds, regardless of size, ownership, or political jurisdiction. Noxious weeds know no boundaries regardless of public or private land ownership. All landowners are responsible for noxious weed control on their lands. The WSNWCB adopts an annual noxious weed list per WAC 16-750, designating the noxious weed species for control throughout the state. County noxious weed boards may also select additional noxious weeds for control within their counties.

WA State Noxious Weed List

Every year, the WSNWCB updates the state noxious weed list. One of the strengths of Washington's listing process is its inclusiveness – anybody can request to have a new species added to the list, remove or reclassify an existing noxious weed, or change the designation of a Class B noxious weed. The WSNWCB formally solicits changes to the list from January 1 to April 30. The WSNWCB's advisory committee known as the Noxious Weed Committee (NWC) begins reviewing these proposed changes in May and continues deliberation through the summer, gathering additional information as needed, such as known distribution in Washington. For proposed new additions, the NWC may have WSNWCB staff produce technical reports known as Written Findings, which contain information about the distribution, biology, ecology, economic and ecological impacts (both detrimental and beneficial), and control of a proposed species. The NWC will make its recommendations in September, at which point the WSNWCB will vote on which proposed changes to move forward to a public hearing in November. After the hearing, the Board factors in oral and written testimony before voting on changes to the noxious weed list; those changes go into effect January 1 of the following year.

Once the WSNWCB has adopted the annual noxious weed list, county NWCBs then adopt their own noxious weed list. By law, they are required to add all Class A noxious weeds and Class B noxious weeds that are designated for control in that county. The county NWCB may choose to select Class B non-designates and Class C noxious weeds for mandatory control as they deem necessary. It is this flexibility of the state noxious weed list that allows the WSNWCB to prioritize the eradication and control efforts necessary from a statewide perspective, while allowing each county NWCB to further customize its weed list to best meet local needs.

Class A noxious weeds are nonnative, invasive species whose distribution in Washington is very limited. Eradication of these plants by all landowners is mandatory. The goal is to eliminate these populations before they gain a strong foothold in the state.

2020 Class A Changes

1. South American sponge plant, *Limnobia laevigatum*. Added as a class A noxious weed. South American sponge plant is an aquatic perennial that can form dense mats on the water surface. There is only one known infestation in Pacific County. The intent is to eliminate known populations while its distribution is limited, preventing this invasive species from gaining a foothold in Washington.

2021 Class A Changes

1. Turkish thistle, *Carduus cinereus*. Added as a class A noxious weed. Turkish thistle is a newly identified non-native thistle found close to Washington in northeastern Oregon and the adjacent area in Idaho. Listed as a noxious weed in Oregon and Idaho, Turkish thistle invades open habitats and can readily spread and crowd out native species.

Class B noxious weeds are nonnative, invasive species that are abundant in some areas of the state, but absent or limited in other areas. The statewide goal is to “draw the line” around and contain infested regions, to keep these noxious weeds from spreading into new areas. Class B noxious weeds are designated for control in those areas where they are absent or limited in distribution, or where they pose a specific threat to local agriculture or natural resources. Landowners in these designated areas are

required to control and prevent the spread of these noxious weeds. In those regions where Class B noxious weeds are already widespread, the WSNWCB does not require control, as it might not be economically feasible for landowners. However, county NWCBs have the option of selecting non-designated Class Bs for mandatory control if there is a local concern. Both the WSNWCB and county NWCBs encourage voluntary control and provide information on best management strategies to interested landowners.

2020 Class B Changes-Class B noxious weed species have been under reviewed. These species designation changes better match the known infestation distribution data.

1. Eurasian watermilfoil, *Myriophyllum spicatum*, was designated in Kitsap, Kittitas, and Whitman counties.
2. Bohemian knotweed, *Polygonum x bohemicum*, was designated in San Juan, Stevens, Whitman, and Yakima counties.
3. Japanese knotweed, *Polygonum cuspidatum*, was designated in Stevens County
4. Himalayan knotweed, *Persicaria wallichii*, was designated in Clark and Stevens counties.
5. Lesser celandine, *Ficaria verna*, was designated in all of Washington State except for King and Whatcom counties.
6. Leafy spurge, *Euphorbia virgata*, was designated in Whitman and Garfield counties.
7. Purple loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*, was designated in Pierce and Benton counties.
8. Wand loosestrife, *Lythrum virgatum*, was designated in Mason, Pierce, and Benton counties
9. Poison hemlock, *Conium maculatum*, was designated in Douglas County.
10. Designate policeman's helmet, *Impatiens glandulifera*, was designated in Pacific and Pierce counties.
11. Ravenna grass, *Saccharum ravennae*, was designated in Grant County.
12. Rush skeleton weed, *Chondrilla juncea*, was designated in Kitsap County.
13. European coltsfoot, *Tussilago farfara*, was designated in Grant County.

2021 Class B Changes Two class B species designation changes were proposed by county noxious weed control boards as follows:

1. Non-native hawkweeds in the wall subgenus (*Hieracium*): undesignate in Snohomish County. Snohomish County Noxious Weed Control Board proposed to undesignate wall hawkweeds do to the distribution of infestations and the economic burden of required control.
2. Ravenna grass (*Saccharum ravennae*): designate in Chelan County. Chelan County Noxious Weed Control Board proposed to designate Ravenna grass in Chelan County due to the limited distribution and invasiveness of the species.

2021 Class B Changes Continued- The following Class B noxious weed species have been reviewed. These species designation changes better match the known infestation distribution data.

1. Myrtle spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*), was designated in Stevens County.
2. Salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*), was designated in Benton and Franklin counties.
3. Spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola*), was designated in Skamania County.
4. Tansy ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), was designated in Klickitat County.

5. Velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasit*), was designated in Franklin County.
6. Water primrose (*Ludwigia hexapetala*), was designated in Cowlitz County.
7. White bryony (*Bryonia alba*), was designated in Garfield County.
8. Wild chervil (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), was designated in Cowlitz, Clark, Island, and Skamania counties.
9. Yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*), was designated in Cowlitz County.
10. Yellow floating heart (*Nymphoides peltata*), was designated in Cowlitz County.

Class C noxious weeds meet the criteria of a noxious weed but are often so widespread that there is no realistic hope of eradicating them from the state. Other times, noxious weeds are added to the Class C list when the distribution is not fully known at the time of listing. The WSNWCB provides educational information about Class C noxious weeds, but does not mandate control. County NWCBs may require landowners to control Class C noxious weeds if they pose a problem to local agriculture, natural areas, human health, or cause economic harm to tourism, recreation, or infrastructure.

2020 Class C Changes

None.

2021 Class C Changes

None.

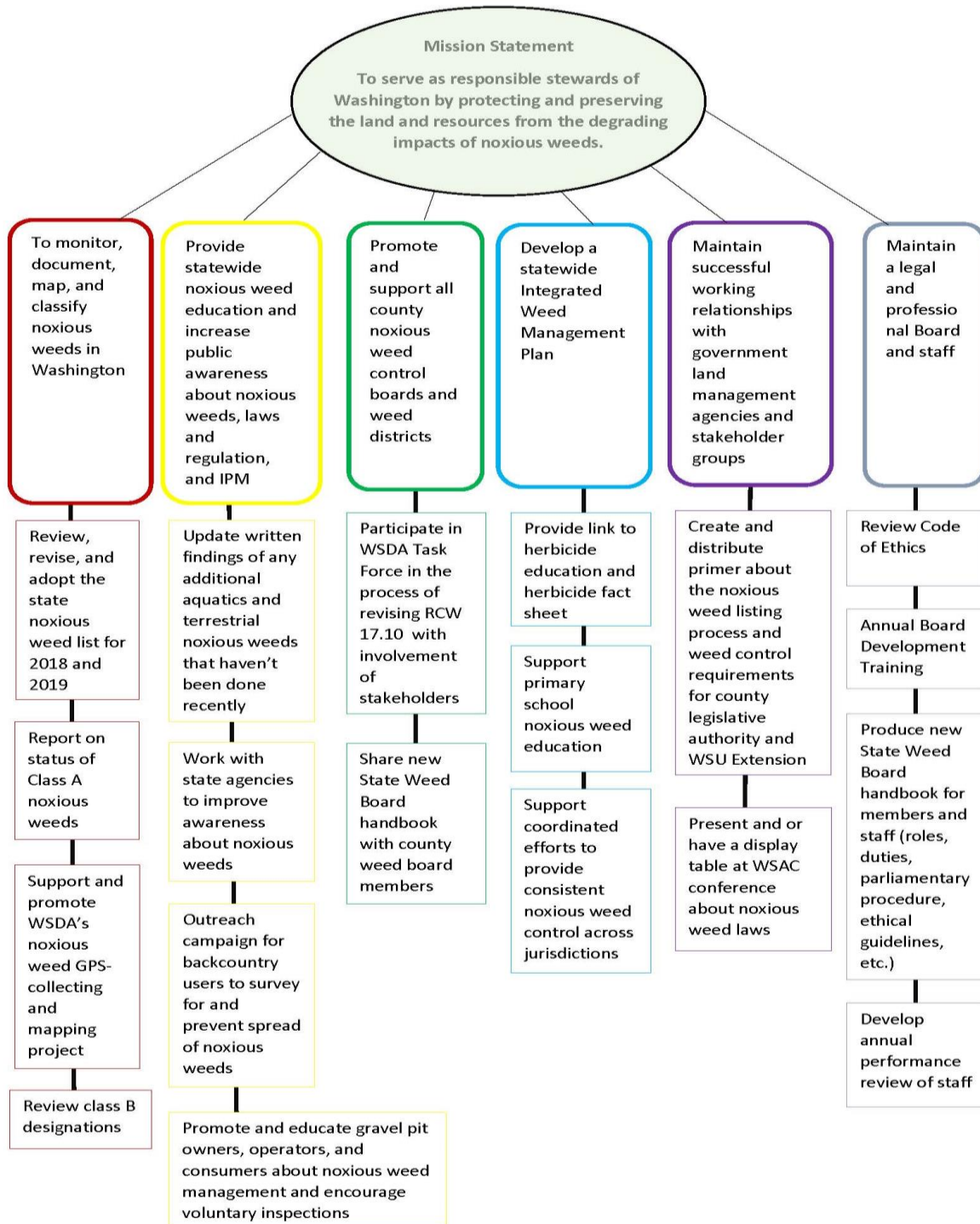
2020 Other WAC 16.750 Changes

The Board reviewed WAC 16.750 and made the following changes:

1. WAC 16-750-140 Adding a standing legislative committee.
2. WAC 16-750-142 Creating a new section for the State noxious weed control board—Executive secretary and Education specialist—Hiring and dismissal.
3. WAC 16-750-145 Editing the State noxious weed control board—Executive secretary—Definition.
4. WAC 16-750-146 Creating a new section for the State noxious weed control board—Education specialist—Definition.
5. WAC 16-750-150 Repealing section on State noxious weed control board- Executive secretary Hiring and dismissal. Moved to section 142.

WSNWCB Strategic Plan & Accomplishments

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board 2019-2021 Strategic Plan



The WSNWCB accomplished many of its targeted goals for the FY19-21 biennium. Although staff were unable to complete a few of the tasks, they tackled additional projects aligned with the WSNWCB mission statement.

The State Noxious Weed Board provides a strategic plan including goals and tasks for each biennium. The FY19-21 strategic plan includes monitoring and classifying noxious weeds, education and increased public awareness, supporting county programs, maintaining successful relationships with other entities, and maintaining a legal and professional board. The State Noxious Weed Board employed one full time employee (FTE) as the executive secretary, a 0.8 FTE education specialist, and a 0.1 FTE Administrative Assistant to meet the needs of the board. Outreach and education help to achieve the goals outlined in the strategic plan. Along with educational and technical support, the WSNWCB also offers additional support to counties and other agencies in the form of class A eradication project funding.

Expenditure of Funds

2019-2021 WA State Noxious Weed Board Expenditures				
	Actual Expenditures	Allotted Expenditures		
	2019-20	2020-21	Biennial Total	Notes
Salary and Benefits	169742	163679	333421	
Travel	13290	15600	28890	Travel will not be expended in 2020-2021 and may be used under other items.
Supplies & Materials	29495	8613	38108	Includes Bee-U-tify Seed Packets 2019-2020
Communications and Leases	22194	30287	52481	
Printing	13849	20400	34249	Includes Brochures and Publications
Professional Development and Trainings	1499	2940	4439	
Equipment	960	2898	3858	Includes new projector 2019-2020
Pesticide Licensure	66	66	132	
Class A Grants	15000	10000	25000	
Integrated Weed Control Project (WSU Biological Control Program)	7000	5000	12000	
Totals	273095	259483	532578	
The actual amounts spent was used for 2019-2020 and allotted amounts budgeted for 2020-2021. This does not include a predicted reduction due to Covid-19 for 2020-2021.				

Funding is allocated by the legislature to the Washington State Department of Agriculture budget for the administration of the WSNWCB. The WSNWCB biennial budget for FY 2019-2020 was \$274,499 and for FY 2020-2021 was \$259,483. This does not include a total biennial reduction of 15% predicted to be compensated for in the second year due to covid-19. The budget allows for staff, office space, insurance, equipment, storage, and supplies. The budget provides for many benefits throughout the state and counties. Class A eradication projects, printing, outreach, education, and social media are also provided in the budget. Funds were also available for herbicide purchases for county weed programs and for the WSU Extension's Biological Control program, the Integrated Weed Control Project. Due to Covid-19 the Noxious Weed Control Board Meetings have been hosted via WebEx reducing travel expenditures. These funds can then be used to enhance resources for other items.

Outreach and Education

An informed public is an empowered public, which is why education and outreach is such a high priority for the WSNWCB. More people will voluntarily control noxious weeds on their property and will be alert for new introductions of invasive plants when they understand how devastating noxious weeds can be. The WSNWCB serves as a central hub of information, education, and outreach for county weed boards and weed districts by helping to provide them with the materials they need to educate residents and landowners. The WSNWCB staff also strives to directly educate Washington residents through its own outreach efforts.

The WSNWCB received an increase in inquiries from the general public, often requesting assistance identifying plants, controlling noxious weeds, or seeking publications. With Covid-19 many people are home and are more aware of the vegetation on their lands. The interest in and demand for the Bee-U-Tify non-invasive, pollinator-friendly seed packets increased drastically through 2021. Facebook and our online publication request form provide effective means for promoting educational material and information about state and county weed board activities. Public education and outreach tasks are described below.

Website

The WSNWCB website is a vital hub for the public to learn about noxious weeds, the noxious weed law, integrated weed management and pollinator-friendly weed control, available publications and how to request them, and the WSNWCB and upcoming meetings. It also provides links and contact information to the county weed boards and weed districts. Because it plays such a key role in disseminating information to a wide audience, it is critical that it be as accessible and navigable as possible. The website is continually being updated.

Presentations and Outreach

The WSNWCB staff gave many presentations throughout Washington and regionally. During the beginning of the biennium, presentations were often in person. Due to Covid-19, presentations were moved to digital platforms shortly after March 2020. Staff continued the annual tradition

of sharing the WSDA/USDA-APHIS booth at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in 2020 just prior to the Covid-19 restrictions, where they and county weed board staff provided publications and seed packets and answered questions from attendees. Additionally, a booth was staffed at the yearly Washington State Weed Conference again prior to Covid-19 restrictions. Staff continued to present at many pesticide recertification classes as well as other educational venues via WebEx, Zoom, and other webinar hosting platforms.

2019-2020 Presentations and Outreach Venues

- Columbia Basin Transboundary Conference Sept. 12th-14th, Kimberley, BC, Canada.
- Forest Protection Association Sept. 20th Olympia, WA.
- National Right of Way Workshop Oct. 1st, Zillah, WA.
- WA Salmon Coalition Oct. 8th, Aberdeen, WA.
- WA State Vegetation Management Weed Conference Nov. 5th-8th, Wenatchee, WA.
- Olympia Invasive Working Group Meeting Nov. 13th, Olympia, WA.
- Innovations in Invasive Species Management Conference Dec. 9th-12th, Coeur d'Alene, ID.

2020-2021 Presentations and Outreach Venues

- Idaho Association of Weed Control Superintendents Annual Meeting Jan. 13th, Boise, ID.
- 23rd Annual Noxious Weed Conference Grant County Feb 12th, Moses Lake, WA.
- Northwest Flower and Garden Show Feb. 26th – March 1st, Seattle, WA.
- WA State Coordinators Conference March 11th-13th, Chelan, WA.
- University of WA Class Discussion May 8th, Seattle, WA.
- Mt. Rainer Presentation, June 2nd, Webinar.
- Scotch Broom Symposium Jun 2nd – 4th, Webinar.
- Washington Weed and Invasive Species Conference Nov. 3rd-6th, Webinar.

* This is not an all-inclusive list of presentations and outreach venues attended by staff.

Bee-U-Tify Seed Packets



In FY15, the WSNWCB launched an outreach campaign to remind the public that pollinator conservation and noxious weed control did not have to be mutually exclusive and to stress the importance of replacing noxious weeds with non-invasive and/or native pollen and nectar-rich species.

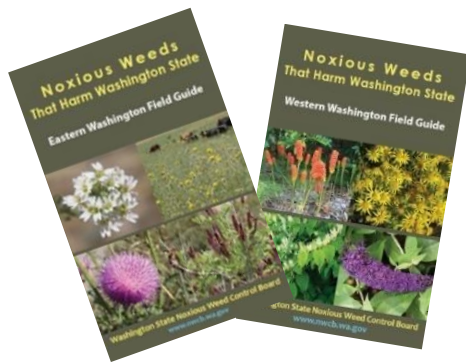
2019-2020

County Noxious Weed Program Contributions	6900
WA Invasive Species Council Contributions	800
WA State Noxious Weed Control Board Contributions	15000
Bee-U-Tify Seed Packets	22700

The Bee-U-Tify seed packets have been very successful and are still in high demand. 2020 provided for a record year in Bee-u-Tify seed packet requests. The combination of Covid-19 stay-at-home order and social media posts created a high demand. Over 12,400 individual seed packets have been requested in this biennium and an additional 11,000 requested for groups and events, not including packets given to county noxious weed boards for distribution. The WSNWCB, along with several county weed noxious weed boards and the Washington Invasive Species Counsel, provided funding for seed packets in 2019-2020. The seed mixes for both Eastern and Western seed packets have been modified to only include native pollinator friendly species. Approximately 60,000 packets were produced.

FY19-21 Printing

In the first year of this biennium, the State Board provided funding for the reprinting of Bees and Noxious Weeds Brochure. This new brochure is about supporting bees and other pollinators when controlling Noxious Weeds.



Noxious Weeds That Harm Washington State pocket-size field guides describes many of the troublesome noxious weeds of Washington. Two versions are available, one for Western and one for Eastern Washington. Photos, impacts, and methods of control are listed for each weed. This publication also includes a brief introduction that explains how weeds spread, weed laws, and landowner responsibilities. Both were reprinted with additional updates in the first year of this biennium.



The WNWCB has produced a series of “Washington without noxious weeds is a wonderful sight” magnets. 2019’s magnet featured wildflowers and Rattlesnake Mountain. These magnets along with past magnets are a reminder that keeping Washington free of noxious weeds is a high priority. This has been a great education and outreach tool, providing the WSNWCB Website information.



Class A Eradication Projects

Class A eradication project funding is provided as pass-through money to county NWCBs and other agencies towards Class A eradication efforts. Funded programs are required to provide a final report as part of the deliverables to track progress of the funded projects. Although funding amounts are modest, the WSNWCB feels that supporting eradication projects is critical in making progress in Washington. Moreover, since the WSNWCB does not fund overhead costs and many applicants are able to provide in-kind matching funds (though not required), each dollar the WSNWCB invests yields greater on-the-ground results. Many programs are able to leverage additional funding from local, state, or federal governments or through collaborative partners.

Due to covid-19 related budget needs and re-scheduling the availability of funds for all year use, funding was not offered for the spring of 2021 for class A projects. Most previously funded projects, reported that covid-19 impacted the projects by complications in staffing and transportation, and in community events and involvement.

The eradication projects that the WSNWCB supported during the FY19-21 biennium are summarized below.

2020	WSNWCB Funding	Match Funding	Area Controlled
Common Crupina, Asotin County	\$500	\$1,260	14 Acres Spot Treated, 104 acres Protected
Mediterranean sage, Asotin County	\$1,500	\$1,890	176 Acres of spot Treatment
Mediterranean sage, Columbia County	\$4,020	\$799	5 Acres treated, 350 Protected
Milk and Slenderflower Thistles, Cowlitz County	\$2,562	\$2,642	13.8 Acre Treated, 5,000 Protected
Garlic Mustard, Skamania County	\$2,000	\$7,358	55 Acre Spot Treated
Mediterranean, Yakima County	\$4,020	\$2,642	250 Acre Surveyed and Spot Treated

Class A Project Highlights

Columbia County Mediterranean Sage Project



In 2015, the Columbia County Weed Board contracted with the Washington Conservation Corps to survey the Mediterranean sage in Columbia County. Four sites were identified as having Mediterranean sage including a new infestation in the Baileysburg area. Crews were hired to hand dig the Mediterranean sage in 2014 and 2015. In 2016, focus was on the Baileysburg area, because it was out of the historical boundary, and treated it with herbicide. In 2017, the weed board contracted with another survey team to survey additional acres on the northern side of the

historical area (Hatley Gulch) and found another site containing Mediterranean sage. Both the Baileysburg and Hatley Gulch sites were treated with herbicide in 2017. In 2018, all sites were surveyed with handheld GPS units. The Baileysburg and Hatley Gulch areas were spot sprayed. Due to limited funding, only the Baileysburg and Hatley Gulch areas were treated in 2018.

All sites within the 350 acres and any new sites found were treated with herbicide in 2020. Approximately, 5 acres were treated spread across the whole 350 acre project. The area was thoroughly surveyed and plants were spot sprayed.



Photo Credit: Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board.
Upper right: Med Sage on Wolf Fork.
Lower Left: 13 days post treatment.

Cowlitz County Milk and Slenderflower Thistle Project

The Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control Board has been working with property owners to control populations of milk thistle since 2010. In that time, the infestations started small, grew to roughly 500 plants at its peak as more extensive surveys were performed, and has shrunk to less than 150 plants in response to treatments and monitoring.

Slenderflower thistle was present at project areas one and three but has been eliminated from project area three (defined in final class A report). Slenderflower thistle was cut and bagged near the end of last June to prevent seed dispersal. For 2020, a total of 13.8 acres was treated for both milk and slenderflower thistles, protecting over 5,000 acres. Thirteen landowners, 2 government entities, and on 1 commercial business took part in this project.



Photo Credit: Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Board. Before and after treatment comparison of slenderflower thistle.

County Noxious Weed Control Programs

County noxious weed control boards (NWCBs) and weed districts have the task of ensuring that landowners in Washington comply with the noxious weed laws. Each county NWCB is responsible for surveying for noxious weeds, educating landowners on how to control them, and, when necessary, enforcing the laws that require landowners to control or eradicate certain noxious weeds. Currently, 38 of the 39 counties have noxious weed control boards. Douglas County still lacks a NWCB. The WSNWCB thinks that every county in Washington should have an activated county noxious weed control board.

County weed boards are financed through one of two sources: a county's general fund or through a moderate special use assessment on properties. The assessments are typically levied on each parcel of land, with an additional few cents per acre for larger landholdings, and exemptions for certain land uses. Ten counties are currently funded by general fund, and one by grants and contracts only. All others are funded by assessment.

Some programs are well-funded and have permanent full-time and seasonal staff to carry out these duties. Others are more modestly funded and can only afford to employ a part-time coordinator to implement that county's NWCB top priorities. This disparity in funding, along with local priorities, helps explain why county NWCBs vary widely. Some counties focus exclusively on education and persuasion and rarely or never actually require landowner compliance with the law, while others focus on infestation control and compliance with the law.

Several county noxious weed control programs have gone through some level of restructuring this biennium. Several programs have employed a new coordinator. Some have had a turn-over in board membership. Some boards are part of a department-division-program structure. Others are a standalone department. RCW 17.10 allows for flexibility in program structure to best meet the needs of the county and noxious weed program. As programs evolve and change, the WSNWCB can offer technical assistance and guidance pertaining to the requirements of RCW 17.10 and the roles and responsibilities of county noxious weed control boards.

In the 2019-2021 biennium, counties have been faced with covid-19 related difficulties. Technical issues have been overcome through using webinar platforms for meetings, hearings, and educational webinars. Other issues have been related to using staff and crews for noxious weed control during social distancing requirements. Many counties have developed new protocols for traveling and site management such as: 1. Limited the number of personnel per vehicle 2. Spacing of applicators in the field or on site, and 3. Use of masks, sanitizer, and other personal protective equipment for covid-19 risk management.

Best noxious weed management practices continue to be early detection and rapid response along with biological, chemical, cultural, and mechanical controls. Early detection and rapid response must be a priority when it comes to noxious weed invasions. Once a noxious weed infestation is identified, integrated weed management (IWM) is the best form of control. Utilizing several different control methods helps eliminate the possibility of creating herbicide resistant species and helps to control already herbicide tolerant plants. An example of an IWM plan would be utilizing biological control in the middle of a large established knapweed infestation, while controlling roadsides infestations with herbicide, and hand-pulling in sensitive areas. Each tool has its place in the noxious weed control toolbox. If this infestation had been detected early before it was established, the resources needed to control it would be minimal compared to resources needed in this larger infestation.

Just as noxious weed infestations can span across political boundaries, so too do weed control efforts. One popular approach to regional weed problems is the formation of Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs). These are multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional groupings that may include federal, tribal, state and county government agencies, and non-profit citizen organizations in a particular watershed or region. Some CWMAs are formal organizations with bylaws and memoranda of understandings (MOUs) among members, while others are much more informal groupings of people who simply want to share resources, knowledge, and enthusiasm, to improve their effectiveness. The flexibility of the CWMA model allows for customized efforts to make the most of limited resources and this is what makes them so successful. The WSNWCB supports the creation and coordinated efforts of CWMA's throughout the state and has partnered in several including but not limited to the South Eastern WA CWMA, the Columbia Gorge CWMA, the Weeds Cross Borders CWMA, Douglas County CWMA, and the Chehalis River Aquatic Weed Management Area.

Long-Term Weed Control Recommendations

Noxious weed control is a continuous component of a healthy and productive Washington State that saves us all money in the long-term. Our noxious weed laws are considered some of the best in the nation. An adequately funded county weed board can be very effective at helping landowners control their noxious weeds and comply with the law. Unfortunately, the disparity continues between local funding levels of county weed boards, and many lack the resources to perform the duties outlined in Chapter 17.10 RCW. Through a 2019 county noxious weed coordinator survey, only 55% of the respondents indicated that they were properly funded to fulfill the duties under the weed law. Over 60% agreed that if more funding was available that their program would utilize it for on the ground noxious weed control work. The WSNWCB offers publications, funding for Class A eradications and other special projects, and logistical support to counties, particularly to those programs with smaller operational budgets. Due to lack of WSNWCB funding, some of these resources for counties are limited.

Many county weed boards and county governments have contacted the WSNWCB seeking clarification about sections of Chapter 17.10 RCW. The WSNWCB legislative committee has reviewed the noxious weed law and made recommendations for changes. The WSNWCB legislative committee has taken an all-inclusive approach to its review process. The committee continues to gain input from counties, other state agencies, public entities, and stakeholders. While change can be difficult and the unknown disconcerting, there appears to be confusion in how county weed boards should operate within counties, along with issues about whether noxious weed assessments can be collected on state-owned land, with the way Chapter 17.10 RCW is currently written. The hope is that these issues will be clarified once the recommended changes are ratified through legislation.

The noxious weed community has continued its mission to help protect Washington's precious resources from the devastating and costly impacts of noxious weeds. Every noxious weed population controlled now will save money in the future, and Washington's citizens, agriculture, ecosystems, and natural resources all benefit from this long-term perspective.

It can be difficult to measure success in the noxious weed world. We often forget about old infestations, and work steadfastly to eliminate current noxious weed problems. Many quiet victories go by unannounced. However, when we see vast and productive agricultural fields or expanses of natural areas untarnished by noxious weeds, we know we are succeeding.

A Noxious Weed Success Story

In 1987 Dyer's Woad, *Isatis tinctoria*, was found along I90, ten miles west of Cle Elum, WA. Dyer's Woad is a class A noxious weed and very invasive. It outcompetes native vegetation, is unpalatable to livestock and wildlife, and has allelopathic properties. This infestation was located near the railroad and John Wayne Trail. Dyer's Woad seeds could have potentially been

transported via the railway. This infestation was detected early and a coordinated rapid response treatment was conducted. The infestation was treated for the following 2 to 3 years. Monitoring continued for over a decade to insure that no new plants were missed or infestation established. This infestation has been deemed eradicated. This is just one success story in the noxious weed world.



Photo Credit: Jennifer Andreas, WSU Extension

