



Washington State

# Noxious Weed Control Board

2021-2023

Biennial Report



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Cover Photo Credit- Rough Chervil Soos Creek. Provided by Erin Haley from King County’s Noxious Weed Control Program

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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

John Manguson, Spokane County

### **Weed Districts:**

Position 5: 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:**

Todd Palzer, WA Department of  
Natural Resources

Jennifer Andreas, WA State University,  
Integrated Weed Project

Ian Burke, WA State University

Kevin Hupp and Eric Bell,  
Coordinators' Association

### **Staff:**

#### **Executive Secretary**

Mary Tallman Fee

#### **Education Specialist**

Anne Schuster

### **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 11 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-designated 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.

There were no class A noxious weeds species added to the class A list for 2022 or 2023.

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.

The WSNWCB helped to fund a noxious weed survey throughout Douglas County. One outcome of this survey was to update class B designation to better match distribution of infestations in Douglas County. The survey found that the majority of noxious weed infestations identified in previous surveys, from 2008 and prior, have been reduced in size or at least have not spread, with the

exception of one particular infestation of knapweed. As a result of the survey, the Noxious Weed Committee recommended to the State Board that spotted knapweed and Scotch thistle, both of which are Class B weeds on the State List of Noxious Weeds, be designated for control in Douglas County. The State Board approved this recommendation at its November 2022 meeting.

#### 2022 Class B Additions and Changes

1. **Hanging sedge**, *Carex pendula*, *Carex pendula subsp. pendula* and *Carex pendula subsp. agastachys*: Additional as a class B noxious weed species designated in region 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and region 2 except for King County.
2. **Rough chervil**, *Chaerophyllum temulum*: Additional as a class B noxious weed species designated in region 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and region 2 except for King County.
3. **Wild basil/basil savory**, *Clinopodium vulgare*: Additional as a class B noxious weed species designated in region 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and region 3 except for Skamania County.
4. **Common tansy**, *Tanacetum vulgare*: Reclassification and designation change from a class C to a class B noxious weed designated in Clallam County of region 1, Kitsap and San Juan counties of region 2, Cowlitz and Lewis counties of region 3, and Adams and Lincoln counties of region 5.
5. Typo correction: Correcting scientific name of common bugloss from *Lycopsis officinalis* back to *Anchusa officinalis* and correcting scientific name of annual bugloss from *Anchusa arvensis*, to *Lycopsis arvensis*

#### 2023 Class B Changes (There were no class B additions for 2023).

1. **Common tansy**, *Tanacetum vulgare*; un-designate in Lewis County.
2. **Spotted knapweed**, *Cenaurea stoebe*: designate in Douglas County.
3. **Shiny geranium**, *Geranium lucidum*: un-designate in King County.
4. **Scotch Thistle**, *Onopordum acanthium*, designate in Douglas 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.

#### 2022 Class C Changes

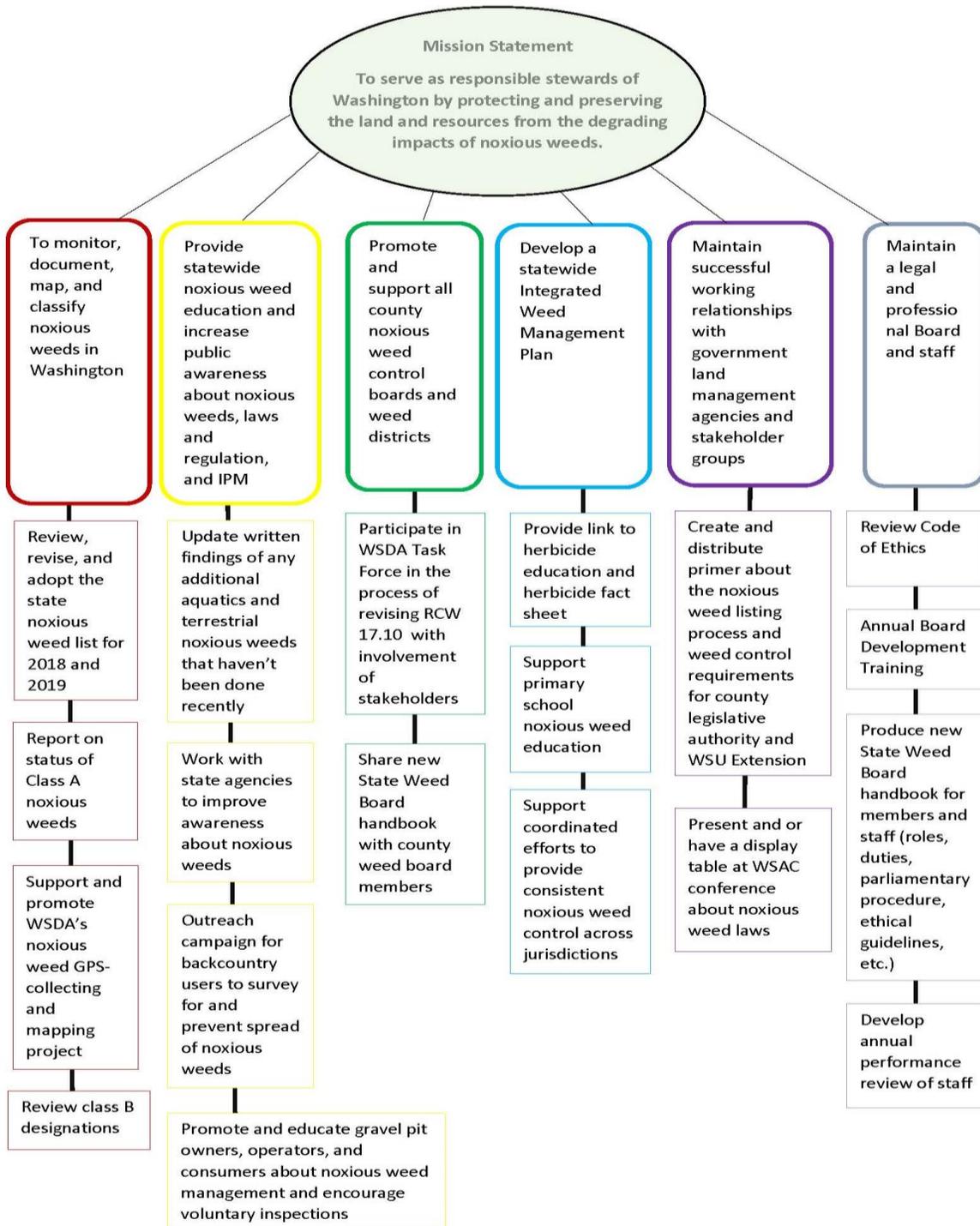
1. Common tansy, *Tanacetum vulgare*; un-designate in Lewis County.
2. Spotted knapweed, *Cenaurea stoebe*: designate in Douglas County.
3. Shiny geranium, *Geranium lucidum*: un-designate in King County.
4. Scotch Thistle, *Onopordum acanthium*, designate in Douglas County.

#### 2023 Class C Changes

None

# WSNWCB Strategic Plan & Accomplishments

## Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board 2021-2023 Strategic Plan



*The WSNWCB accomplished many of its targeted goals for the FY21-23 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 FY21-23 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, one full time 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**

<b>2021-2023 WA State Noxious Weed Board Expenditures</b>				
	Actual Expenditures	Allotted Expenditures	Biennial Total	Notes
	2021-22	2022-23		
Salary and Benefits	172499	183542	356041	
Travel	2066	5000	7066	Travel was impacted by covid-19 restrictions and utilized in other areas
Supplies & Materials	14124	1000	15124	Includes Bee-U-tify Seed Packets 2021-2022
Communications and Leases	5904	2000	7904	
Printing	27750	18600	46350	Includes Brochures and Publications
Professional Development and Trainings	250	500	750	
Equipment/ Herbicide	2920/13000	2898	18818	Includes new computer for Education Specialist and Herbicide for county projects
Pesticide Licensure	66	66	132	
Class A Grants	15000	20000	35000	
Integrated Weed Control Project (WSU Biological Control Program)	6200	5000	11200	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>259779</b>	<b>238606</b>	<b>498385</b>	

The actual amounts spent was used for 2021-2022 and predicted amounts budgeted for 2022-2023.

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 2021-2022 was \$282,100 and for FY 2022-2023 was \$267,100. The budget also 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 were then 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 were home and 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 2021-22. 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. Due to Covid-19, presentations were moved to digital platforms. Early in 2023, many covid restrictions were being lifted. Staff continued the annual tradition of sharing the WSDA/USDA-APHIS booth

at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in 2023. Staff continued to present at many pesticide recertification classes as well as other educational venues via WebEx, Zoom, and other webinar hosting platforms.

### **Outreach and Education – section addition**

The Education Committee was reinstated, made up of Janet Spingath (chair), Bill Agosta, Ken Bajema, Jerry Hendrickson, Ian Burge, Jennifer Andreas, and Justin Bush. The committee met two times in 2022, to brainstorm and prioritize audiences, messages, goals, and projects. A large, completed project undertaken by the committee was a free online 3-credit pesticide recertification course given on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Staff from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, King County Noxious Weed Control Board, Yakima County Noxious Weed Control Board, and the Washington Invasive Species Council presented on various weed control topics. There were 171 registrations, 66 of which received course credits.

### **March 2021-December 2022 Outreach and Presentations**

- Green River College – May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021
- Washington State Conservation Corps, pesticide course – September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021
- Washington Invasive Species Council, Tree-of-Heaven webinar – November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021
- Washington Weed and Invasive Species Conference, webinar – November 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Asotin County, pesticide course – November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021
- Thurston County Noxious Weed Control Board, meeting – November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021
- Chehalis Basin Cooperative Weed Management Area, webinar – November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- Idaho Weed Superintendents, webinar – January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Grant County, pesticide course – February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Northwest Flower and Garden Festival, in Seattle – February 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Invasive Species Week, riparian species webinar – February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Washington County’s Noxious Weed Coordinator Conference, Chelan – March 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Environmental Homeschool class, Lakewood – March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022
- Washinton State Conservation Corps, pesticide course – March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Invasive Species Course, webinar – April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Bellevue STEM School, interview – April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Environmental Rotary Club of Puget Sound, webinar – July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Wilburton and Lake Hills Elementary Schools Presentations, Bellevue – August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Washington State Master Gardener Conference, Olympia – September 28<sup>th</sup>-October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022
- Washington Weed and Invasive Species Conference, webinar and Wenatchee – November 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Thurston County Master Gardeners, Olympia – November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Washington State University, pesticide course – November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Free Pesticide Recertification Course, webinar – December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Washington State University, pesticide course – December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Chehalis Basin Cooperative Weed Management Area meeting, Tumwater – December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **Bee-U-Tify Seed Packets numbers distributed (individual/single packets)**

- Eastern – 5,191
- Western – 20,606

### **Printing**

- 5,000 magnets
- 5 boxes of scotch thistle postcards (reprint)
- 12,500 Western and 12,500 Eastern Garden Wise
- 7 boxes of tree-of-heaven brochures (reprint)
- 1,500 common name and 500 scientific name for 2022 weed list
- 15,000 Western and 6,000 Eastern field guides



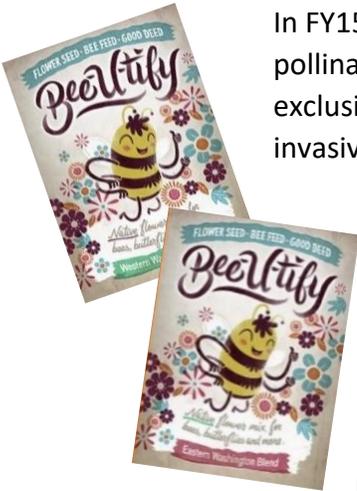
### **Publication Requests Made to Survey Monkey (January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021-December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022)**

- A County or District Weed Board in Washington State – 97
- Another type of government agency in the United States – 31
- A government agency from outside of the United States - 3
- A non-profit organization, gardening club, 4-H club, master gardener's group, homeowner's association, or other community organization – 46
- A local business – 13
- Requesting publications for themselves or their household– 197
- Other – 26
- Total - 413

### **Social Media**

- Facebook followers as of December 29, 2022 – 3,966
- Instagram followers as of December 29, 2022 - 191

## Pollinator Seed Project



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.

Instead of Beautify seed packets, in 2022 the WSNWCB partnered with Washington State Department of Agriculture's Pollinator Health program to provide 25# bags of native pollinator seeds. The intent of this project was to promote noxious weed control and replacing invasive species with pollinator friendly alternatives in large spaces.

Approximately, 10 projects were approved and supported through this project. These project varied in type from areas along driveways, to open lots, to pollinator plots. This was a very successful project and supported by both WA state landowners and agencies.

## Legislative Seed Packets

Pollinator friendly seed packs were hand created, filled, and distributed to legislators. The intent of this project was to educate legislators about the negative impacts of noxious weeds and the positive impacts of native pollinator plants. Each packet has a small information sheet attached. This project may lead to a more in-depth event during future legislative sessions.

## **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.

Funds are available from July 21 thru June 30 of each fiscal year.

The eradication projects that the WSNWCB supported during the FY21-23 biennium are summarized below.

2021-22	WSNWCB Funding	Match Funding	Area Controlled
Mediterranean sage, Columbia County	\$4,000		5 Acres treated, 350 Protected
Milk and Slenderflower Thistles, Cowlitz County	\$2,900	\$3500	13.8 Acre Treated, 5,000 Protected
Garlic Mustard, Skamania County	\$2,500	\$15500	7 Sites 22 Landowners
Mediterranean, Yakima County	\$5600	In-Kind	250 Acre Surveyed and Spot Treated

For 2022-23, the WSNWCB provided funding for both class A eradication projects and high priority class B projects.

2022-23	WSNWCB Funding	Match Funding	Area Controlled
Mediterranean sage, Columbia County	\$4,000		360 acres of scattered plants
Dalmatian Toadflax	\$3000	In-Kind	20 Acres High Priority
Garlic Mustard, Skamania County	\$5000	\$14000	11 Sites
Mediterranean Sage and Oriental Clematis, Yakima County	\$8000	In-Kind	Project includes infestations for both Med Sage and Oriental Clematis

### Class A Project Highlights

#### Yakima County Mediterranean Sage Project

Mediterranean Sage was first identified in Yakima County in 2015. It infests the rangelands and fields east of the Simcoe Mountains, foothills of the cascades. The following spring, a cattleman notified us of finding it in his fields. Outreach was extended to owners further out; five of the six known sites are privately owned deeded lands. The 6<sup>th</sup> is Tribal land. The five landowners of deeded lands are working with us, the sixth parcel is tribal owned.



In 2020 approximately 260 acres were spot sprayed. 96 condensed acres were treated.

As of 2021, 392 area landowners, several with multiple parcels have been contacted. An early treatment spot spray in June has been conducted, spot spraying 135 gallons GrazonNextHL Solution over 260 acres.

IPM Methods used during the 2021-22 season included spot spraying field sites with herbicides in both fall and spring.



Photo Credit: Yakima County Noxious Weed Control Board.

## 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.

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. The results of a 2023 county weed board structure indicated that 4 county noxious weed boards (CNWB) were partnered with the County Conservation District or Natural Resources, 3 under Public Works, and 16 NWCBs are stand alone.

The stand-alone structure was explained by Julie Sanderson from Chelan County as follows:

“We are “in” the county in the sense that we are considered county employees for payroll/benefits etc. and even though our funding is entirely from assessment, we are in the counties financial system as far as paying our bills and that kind of thing. But we are the noxious weed department, not part of public works or natural resources depts.”

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.

## Continued Integrated Weed Management Best Practices

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. The WSNWCB offers publications, funding for Class A eradications and class B high priority 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.