

Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control Program



2008 Annual Report

The **MISSION** of the Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control Board is to educate county residents, property owners and managers to be responsible stewards of the land and resources of Kitsap County by protecting and preserving all lands and natural resources of the county from the degrading impact of invasive noxious weeds.

Under the authority of the Noxious Weed Control Board, the program is to :

- Carry out the mandates of the State weed control law, Chapter 17.10 RCW;
- Identify the scope of the noxious weed problem in Kitsap County;
- Assist and educate landowners to be responsible stewards minimizing the degrading impacts of noxious weeds;
- Provide quality, timely and responsive service to the residents of Kitsap County

When first created the Noxious Weed Control Program was tasked with surveying the county for noxious weeds. To date 60% of the County has been surveyed and over 1500 sites have been identified. Many of the weed sites identified are in small populations that can be controlled now before they become more financially taxing to control in the future. It is the responsibility of our County to address these noxious weed problems, and provide landowners with effective solutions (RCW 17.10).

The Kitsap County Noxious weed Control Program has been effective in getting information out to over 6000 citizens. We have educated approximately 4000 citizens at local events and well over 1000 individuals through garden and environmental club presentations. We field 60-100 complaints each year about noxious weeds on neighboring properties or on County owned lands. To date, over 850 notification letters have gone out to citizens informing them of noxious weeds in their area or on their properties. There were 25 organized weed pulls organized by our staff. It is estimated that hundreds of acres in Kitsap County have been protected through the assistance and education our staff provides. Millions of seeds have been contained and thousands of vines have been cut throughout the county.



Hogweed Control
Bremerton



Weed pull
Old Mill Park



Knotweed Control
Bainbridge Island



Scotch broom pull
Chico creek



Ivy pull
Manchester

Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control (360) 307-4242

For information on other extension programs throughout WSU Kitsap County Extension, visit <http://kitsap.wsu.edu>.

Goals & Highlights

In 2008, we conducted roadside surveys focusing on North Kitsap and educated 300 new landowners of the noxious weed problems. We increased our follow up site surveys and targeted 20 percent of the previous years sites to determine if education leads to control. On 5 percent of the sites the weeds had been controlled. At many of the uncotroled sites, landowners expressed a desire to have control assistance.



One of 52 Giant hogweed sites treated in 2008

The hogweed eradication program continued and expanded to include 52 sites with more than 240 hogweed plants. All known sites were treated with County Funds and mature plants with seeds were disposed of in the trash.

During the field season, Staff partnered with The Kitsap Conservation district to implement year two of the Bainbridge Island “Knockout Knotweed” program. Over 360 sites of knotweed were controlled on the island using funds from WSDA, The City of Bainbridge Island and the County Noxious Weed Control Board. Through this program the Conservation District assisted with creating posters and mapping of sites. Posters along with other County noxious weed information was distributed to 343 landscape and lawn care businesses throughout the County.

Weed Board staff educated 380 park users about noxious weed issues at five parks throughout the County. We gathered noxious weeds from many parks and put them into an educational display that provided citizens with control recommendations.

Board staff conducted 43 presentations throughout the County. The audiences ranged from Master Gardeners to student groups. Staff also presented hands on ID classes to various County and City staff members who are actively involved in vegetation management.

Our office also targeted 15 real estate agencies and provided educational brochures about invasive noxious weeds for new County residents.

We participate in 10 public outreach venues throughout the County including The Kitsap County Future Fest and Fair.

Our program organized and participated 12 weed pulls around the county targeting Ivy, Tansy, and Scotch Broom.



One of 9 hands on ID classes

During 2008 staff worked diligently to prioritize projects, events, outreach and surveys. Documents were produced for the nursery industry and various posters were produced for County offices and County wide events. The Weed Board had a presence at the fair and multiple other public venues and community events. Staff also worked hands-on to reduce weed populations through herbicide treatments, weed pulls and the release of over 3000 species specific biological control insects.

In 2008 the program held weed walks and nine hands on identification classes that introduced landowners to invasives weeds in their area. Program staff gave 34 weed control presentations and worked with local governments and schools to educate individuals on the importance of preventing the spread of noxious weeds.

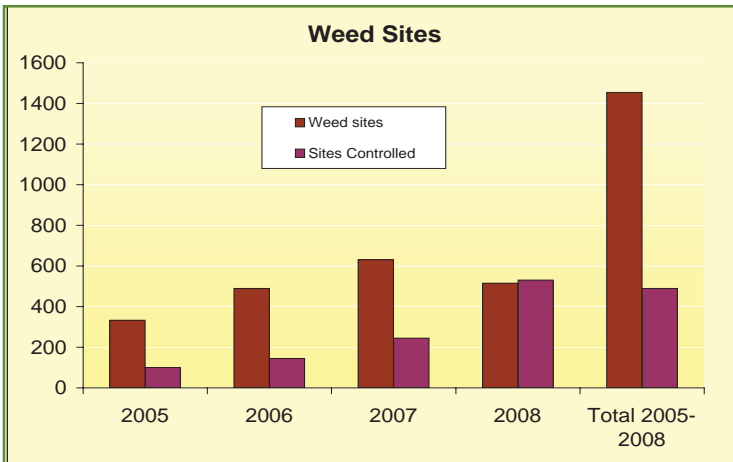
Projects throughout the County focused on plants like purple loosestrife and tansy ragwort. Each of these plants cause ecological damage in the habitats that they invade. Purple loosestrife changes the dynamics of shorelines and displaces native plants and animals. Tansy ragwort is an aggressive invader that causes death to horses and cattle when consumed. Each of these plants can produce millions of seeds per year. Control can start by just cutting off flowering plants and disposing of them in the trash.

The weed control program partnered with the Alternatives to Detention to remove purple loossestrife from County owned property. The crew also worked on removing some canada thistle seed heads from the Schold Farm property.



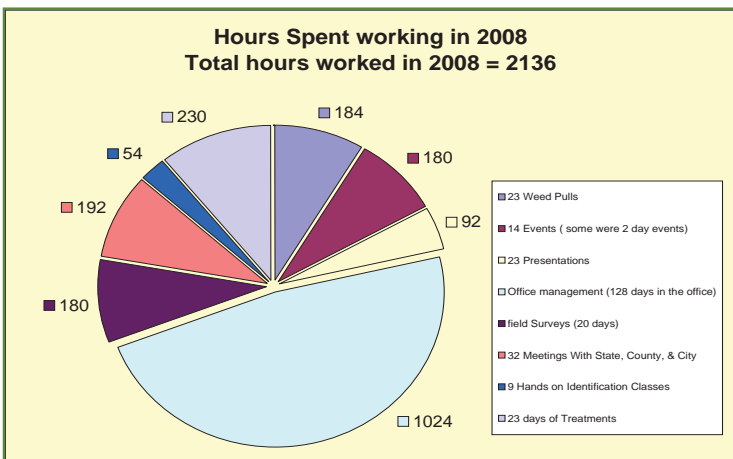
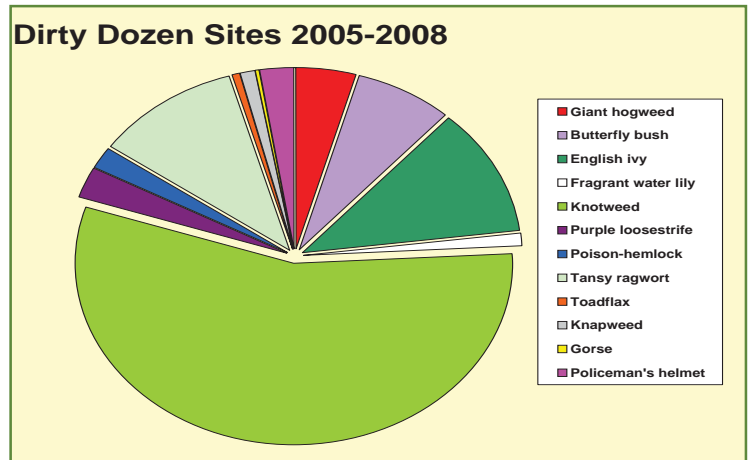
Weed Pull at Schold Farm

It is the responsibility of our County to address noxious weed problems, and provide landowners with effective control solutions (RCW 17.10). Left uncontrolled, noxious weeds will spread exponentially and do more ecological damage. Uncontrolled noxious weeds will become more costly and difficult to control in the future, negatively impacting our economy.



In the last four years we have surveyed approximately 60% of the county documenting over 1500 individual sites, and identified 40 different noxious weed species. We have provided information and assistance to over 6,000 residents and conducted 94 educational presentations and events for the public. Our program has communicated with landowners to create a coordinated effort to manage noxious weed infestations throughout the County. Through the enhancement of public awareness and education, more citizens in the County have identified and controlled noxious weeds on their properties.

The Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control Program focuses many educational efforts on 12 weeds that are designated as the “dirty dozen”. This list of 12 noxious weeds have been selected by the Board as plants of concern in the County. The most frequently identified noxious weed in Kitsap is Knotweed. This aggressive invader can cause structural damage to a property and ecological deviations to a stream side. Many of the weed sites identified are in small populations that can be controlled now before they become more financially taxing to control in the future.



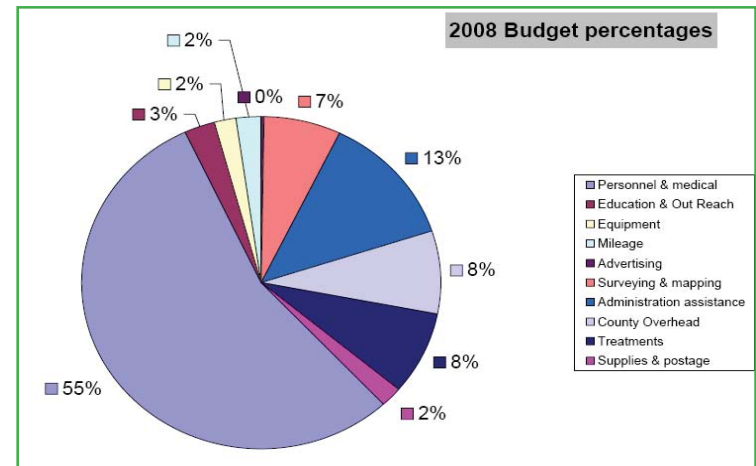
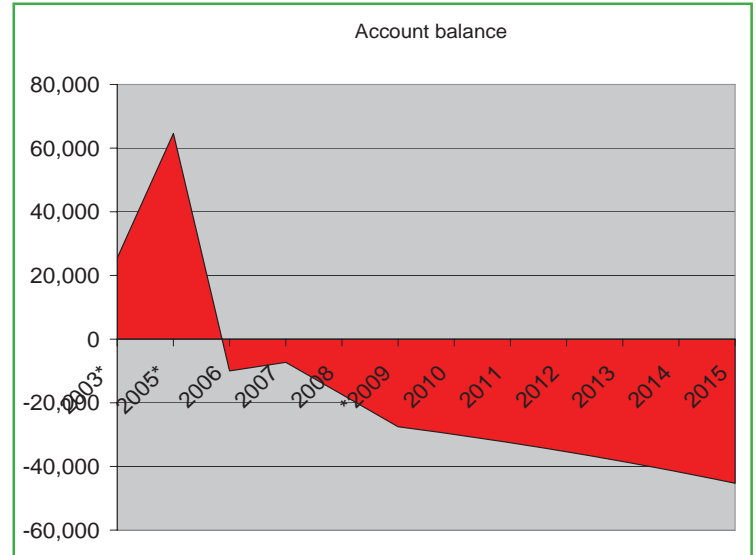
The Noxious Weed Control Program provides important services that are legally mandated by the State of Washington. In 2008 staff spent time sending letters to over 700 landowners to provide them with information about noxious weed infestations that had been spotted on or near their properties. Staff responded to over 600 phone calls from concerned citizens and conducted 300 site surveys to assist landowners to effectively control invasive plants problems. During 2008 staff participated in 23 weed pulls and provided 245 landowners with on the ground control.

Funding

In 2003 it was estimated that the County Noxious Weed Control Board would collect approximately \$116,000 annually through the \$1 per parcel assessment. The actual 2005 year the revenue generated was approximately \$99,000, and during 2007 the revenue increased to \$104,125. The proposed budget for 2003 included \$20,000 for funding extensive education and outreach that was never implemented due to lack of funds.

The inflated projected revenues of 2003 and the increased costs of the program have thus created a budget shortfall for the noxious weed control program of approximately \$15,000 per year that will continually increase due to inflation. Based on the County standard of an annual 3.9% inflation increase, by 2010 our program will have a \$37,000 deficit.

Under our current budget structure we are limited to one staff member to survey the county, provide technical assistance and create and disseminate educational materials. Over the last year the board has had to cut back on educational outreach and on support staff. With the current national economic status the Weed Board will be stretching the budget and cutting back in coming years. Our offices will be closed a minimum of one day each month. On the ground control will be reduced or eliminated. Assistance to landowners will be conducted via the phone, and information on our web. The number of community presentations will be reduced and requested educational materials will cost citizens.



Proposed Goals For 2009

The Weed Board will strive to carry out the mandates of the State Weed Control Law
RCW Chapter 17.10

The Noxious Weed Control Board believes that prevention and education are the keys to a successful noxious weed management program.

The weed control program will strive to:

- Participate in 6 public outreach venues throughout the County
- Organize or participate in 6 weed pulls around the County
- Follow up on 10% of current noxious weed sites
- Provide Giant hogweed control on all known sites
- Complete a County wide Weed Management Plan and Standard Operating Procedures for reducing the spread of noxious weeds in the County.
- Educate park users about noxious weed issues at five parks throughout the County through displays.
- Declare August 2nd – 8th “Noxious Weed Awareness Week”