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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations  
and Rural Development

### **More funding earmarked for invasive species projects**

VICTORIA – The B.C. government is providing \$575,000 to help address invasive aquatic plant impacts in a lake system near Mission, fund research on an invasive plant that affects grasslands and provide additional support for the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia.

This funding is in addition to the \$7.7 million in multi-year grants that were distributed provincewide in 2018 to 34 regional invasive species organizations, local governments, environmental groups and researchers.

“Addressing invasive species issues is a key component of our government’s land management strategy, and these additional funding allocations support that important goal,” said Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

The three funding recipients are:

#### **Fraser Valley Regional District**

- \$262,600 will support the development of a remediation and management plan for Hatzic Lake, with input from stakeholders and various levels of government (local, provincial, federal and First Nations).
- A primary focus of this project is to implement containment and control activities related to the invasive aquatic plant known as flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*).
- The remediation and management plan will address water quality and invasive species issues in the lake. The plan will identify ways to reduce the current effects of flowering rush, prevent further impacts, improve aquatic habitat and protect species at risk.
- A two-year Hatzic Lake Aquatic Invasive Plant Action Plan was created in 2016 to target flowering rush and more generally assess and control the spread of invasive aquatic plants in the lake and connected sloughs.

#### **University of British Columbia (Okanagan campus)**

- \$137,400 will assist with a multi-year research study by Jason Pither, a University of British Columbia associate professor, and PhD candidate Kayleigh Nielson.
- This work will explore factors affecting the growth of spotted knapweed, the success of biocontrol insects that feed on the harmful plant’s seeds and how wildfires, nutrient availability and moisture levels affect that relationship.
- This study will provide guidance for how the B.C. government can best manage spotted knapweed populations in the face of a changing climate.

#### **Invasive Species Council of British Columbia**

- \$175,000 will support the delivery of invasive species awareness sessions with Indigenous communities and provide opportunities for participants to share and build their knowledge of the topic. The goal is to contribute to the effectiveness of invasive plant management in British Columbia.
- This work will help address invasive plant issues in areas that have previously not been addressed, and help the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development identify new populations of invasive plant species.
- This work supports the Ministry Service Plan’s goals of sustainable natural resource management and building resilience to natural hazards in a changing climate.

The Invasive Species Council of British Columbia, regional invasive species committees, local governments, provincial government ministries, First Nations and other stakeholders work closely together to raise awareness of invasive plants, identify and map them, and treat high-priority sites to control the spread of these harmful organisms.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Jason Lum, chair, Fraser Valley Regional District —**

“This funding is a significant step forward toward addressing the long-term health of Hatzic Lake and developing a multi-jurisdictional management plan. We look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders, including First Nations, as we collaborate and ensure a healthy future for this valuable resource.”

##### **Jason Pither, associate professor, University of British Columbia —**

“Keeping invasive plants in check is crucial to maintaining the health of B.C.'s ecosystems and rangelands, particularly as the impacts of rapid climate change are becoming evident provincewide. With the generous funding provided by the provincial government, our research will determine how the management of spotted knapweed must adapt to changing wildfire regimes and more severe droughts in B.C.”

##### **Dave Bennett, chair, Invasive Species Council of B.C. —**

“Thanks to this support from the provincial government, the Invasive Species Council of B.C. is pleased to expand its partnerships and initiatives with Indigenous communities throughout British Columbia. Working closely with the Indigenous Invasive Species Network, the council will facilitate training and outreach efforts to provide First Nations with new tools to help reduce the impact of invasive species on traditional values.”

#### **Quick Facts:**

- The B.C. government manages high-priority invasive species (through the work of staff or contractors) and provides ongoing financial assistance to a variety of organizations to contain and control invasive species.
- The B.C. government’s Invasive Plant Program identifies sites where new invasive plant species have been found and responds quickly to contain and eradicate them before they become established and start spreading.
- The Invasive Species Strategy for British Columbia 2018-2022 was released in 2018. It includes recommendations for the management of problem species, habitat restoration,

monitoring programs, regulation and policy, funding and research.

- Members of the public can report sightings of invasive plant species anywhere in B.C. by calling 1 888 WEEDSBC (1 888 933-3722) or by using the Report-A-Weed or Report Invasives BC smartphone apps that are available at: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species>

**Learn More:**

Province of BC invasive species website:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species>

Invasive Species Council of British Columbia: <http://www.bcinvasives.ca>

Invasive Species Strategy for British Columbia 2018-2022 is available on the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia website:

[https://bcinvasives.ca/documents/Invasive\\_Species\\_Strategy\\_for\\_BC-2018-180117-WEB.pdf](https://bcinvasives.ca/documents/Invasive_Species_Strategy_for_BC-2018-180117-WEB.pdf)

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