NWIPC News

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Northwest INVASIVE PLANT COUNCIL

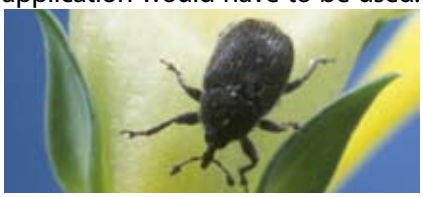
REPORT INVASIVE ALIEN WEEDS BY CALLING 1-866-44WEEDS 1-866-449-3337

Let the Bugs Do the Work

by: Amy Barnes

The NWIPC is always looking for new and better ways to eliminate invasive plants. One interesting way is bring in a natural predator of the weed to attack and control its growth and spread. This is called "biocontrol". This fall, the Ministry of Forests and Range (MFR) with help from the NWIPC released the weevil *Rhinusa antirrhini* on Dalmatian and Common toadflax plants at two locations within city of Prince George.

The weevil *R. antirrhini* is one of several biocontrol agents that have been through extensive testing to be sure that it will not attack native plants. Adult weevils feed on the pollen and flower parts of toadflax plants. Female lay eggs in the flowers and the eggs hatch in about two weeks. The emerging larvae feed on the toadflax seeds. After the weevils mature they feed for a short time on the toadflax stems before moving into the soil to overwinter. All this feeding reduces the number of seeds produced and lowers the survival of attacked plants. The two Prince George release sites will be checked in 2008 to see if the weevil survived the winter. The goal is to have the weevil reduce the number of plants and its seed production. The weevil is not expected to get rid of all the toadflax plants, only weaken them. To eradicate all toadflax plants other control methods like hand-pulling or herbicide application would have to be used.



This weevil is a Rhinusa antirrhini
Photo by Richard W. Hansen

Weed of the Month

Marsh Plume Thistle rosette ready to sprout

Cirsium palustre (Marsh Plume Thistle) is a biennial growing 1.5 meters tall with slender unbranched stems which have clusters of purple flower heads. Leaves are hairy on the under side and have prominent woody veins. It likes moist woodlands, riparian areas, roadsides, pastures and both disturbed and undisturbed areas. Currently the Robson valley between Prince George and McBride are infested. It dispenses light parachute like seeds that can spread by wind and water. It doesn't usually occur in well cultivated areas but can spread into pastures where it replaces desirable forage plants. It can invade most fields and meadows and block passage for wildlife and livestock. If the plant has not begun to flower, hand pull, cut or mow and leave the plant to decompose. If plant has flowered, pick flowers, put into a bag, and remove off site; then pull, cut, or mow the rest of the plant. Picture shows the best time to dig out the thistle, during the rosette stage.

NWIPC Fall Meeting - 2nd Announcement

Tuesday, November 20th, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Elks Hall, Vanderhoof

Come out and: **participate** in the Contractor Forum, **catch-up** on what happened this season on the ground, **hear about** our many projects including a presentation on the Corrections Program piloted in our area this year lots of discussion on the NWIPC single-agency pilot program, **help** give direction to where we go from here.

If you haven't let **us know** yet that you are coming,
please RSVP at 1-866-44WEEDS or e-mail nwipc@indforserv.bc.ca,
so we have enough food and for room set-up. Thanks!
See you there!

Program Manager: Andrea Eastham
Program Assistant: Amy Barnes
Newsletter: Luke Wichrowski, P.A.
Editor: Paul Glover, Director

In remembrance for Michael Cheney (IPMA Contractor) by: Berry Wijdeven

Michael Cheney, a great resource of information and inspiration to NWIPC

On November 2, 2007, Michael Cheney died suddenly after suffering a massive stroke. Mike was 50 years old. Mike's death is a tragic loss first and foremost to his wife and two sons, but also to his friends, to the Queen Charlotte Islands as a whole, and those involved with invasive weed issues. Mike has lived with his family in the Masset area on the Queen Charlotte Islands for the last 10 years and worked for the North-West Invasive Plant Council as well as completed contract work for the Ministry of Environment and Parks Canada. Whether checking out at an invasive weed patch or searching for rare plant species, going into the field with Mike Cheney was always educational, fun and an adventure. Mike's enthusiasm for what he might discover was only tempered by his excitement for what might lay around the next bend. Whenever Mike would call ? Got a minute? You know, I've been thinking...? you'd know you were in for a good yarn, some elaborate detective work and keen observations that sprang from a brilliant mind. Even though Mike had no formal education in botany (he held a PhD in Theology and taught religious studies at the University of Alberta and Athabasca University) he became recognized locally as one of the pre-eminent experts on rare plants and introduced weeds on Haida Gwaii. In 2002 he discovered a new plant on Haida Gwaii - Oxypolis occidentalis - whose closest relatives are found in Oregon. But it wasn't just his knowledge that made outings with Mike so worthwhile. It was his enthusiasm, his passion, and his wicked sense of humour. Mike could also be a stubborn man. Told by many that Japanese knotweed eradication was a lost cause, Mike took on the challenge and refused to let go, convinced that, over time, his energy would outlast that of the weed. And it did, for after years of mowing, covering and spraying with salt water (one of Mike's proud designs), he was gaining the upper hand. Even people who didn't know Mike personally knew him from passing him by on Highway 16 while he and his sons were pulling out thistles (another supposed lost cause). Mike will be missed. As a husband, father and friend to many, but also as someone who held an amazing amount of knowledge and possessed a tremendous energy and enthusiasm. Let's make sure his legacy remains. In lieu of flowers, you may wish to support one of the three interests that Mike pursued throughout his life: Christian agencies that focus on social justice; higher education and the environment - or plant a tree for Mike!

The Invasive Alien Plant Program Application (IAPP) Update

Since the last newsletter we have found out that the IAPP website address has been relocated to: http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/Plants/application.htm. If you booked marked the old address we published in newsletter Vol. 5, it will be phased out so update your favorites with their new address.