

EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR CLEANLINESS OF EQUIPMENT FOR INDUSTRY SECTORS

WHEREAS: Farm and construction equipment can be purchased from any dealership and moved to any area;

WHEREAS: Equipment dealerships could play a better role in ensuring weeds and pests from one area stays out of another area;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry create an education campaign directed specifically at equipment dealerships that outlines their role and promotes the importance of moving clean, uncontaminated equipment.

SPONSORED BY: Cypress County

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

CARRIED: _____

DEFEATED: _____

STATUS: Provincial

DEPARTMENT: _____

BACKGROUND

Through the Canadian Council of Invasive Species there is a current program called “PlayCleanGo” which is an initiative created to stop or slow down the spread of invasive species directed at the recreation industry.

This initiative is widely recognized and would be beneficial if there was education campaign created to target equipment dealerships specifically.

From the Canadian Council of Invasive Species website:
(<https://canadainvasives.ca/programs/playcleango/>)

“What is PlayCleanGo?”

PlayCleanGo started as a Minnesota State, education initiative to stop the spread of invasive species in parks and natural areas.

The goal is to encourage outdoor recreation while protecting valuable natural resources. The objective is to slow or stop the spread of terrestrial invasive species (those that occur on land) through changes in public behaviour.

The Canadian Council on Invasive Species entered into an agreement with Minnesota in late 2016 that enabled Canadian Council on Invasive Species to adapt and implement PlayCleanGo: Stop Invasive Species in Your Tracks, as a national branded program across Canada.

Degradation of Our Natural Environment

Natural areas such as forests, prairies, wetlands and lakes provide many ecosystem services and benefits. Natural areas provide shelter and food for wildlife, remove pollutants from air and water, produce oxygen and provide valuable recreational and educational opportunities.

Invasive species threaten and can alter our natural environment and habitats and disrupt essential ecosystem functions. Invasive plants specifically displace native vegetation through competition for water, nutrients, and space. Once established, Invasive species can:

- *Reduce soil productivity*
- *Impact water quality and quantity*
- *Degrade range resources and wildlife habitat*
- *Threaten biodiversity*
- *Alter natural fire regimes*
- *Introduce diseases*

Invasive species threaten many rare and endangered species and now those species are at risk of extinction. Once established, invasive species become costly and difficult to eradicate. Often, the impacts are irreversible to the local ecosystem.

Impacts on Agriculture

Invasive plants can have a wide range of impacts on the agricultural industry. Invasive plants can act as new or additional hosts for new or existing crop diseases and crop pests, they can cause reductions in crop yields and may require increased use of pesticides to control them. This increases costs for farmers and reduces crop values. Estimated crop losses in BC agriculture industry of over \$50 million annually. Species such as knapweed infest rangelands and reduce forage quality. Many other species out-compete desired species in cultivated fields (Source: BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. 1998. Integrated weed management—an introductory manual). The estimated annual economic impact of invasive plants on Canadian agriculture is \$2.2 billion (Environment Canada, 2010).

Interference with Forest Productivity

Invasive species, specifically invasive plants, can interfere with forest regeneration and productivity through direct competition with tree seedlings, resulting in reduced density and slowed growth rate of tree saplings. Reduction in forest regeneration and productivity results in the loss of wildlife habitat, and decreases the diversity of a stand, making it more vulnerable to insects and disease.

Economic Impacts

*Invasive plants can have a large economic impact on individual landowners and municipalities. A recent study shows that property values for shoreline residences in Vermont affected with Eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) were down as much as 16.4 % (OMNRF, 2012). Due to the explosion of leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), Manitoba has experienced a \$30 million reduction in land values (CFIA, 2008). Leafy spurge infests 340,000 acres of land in Manitoba, costing taxpayers an estimated \$19 million per year to protect grazing land, public land, and rights-of-way (CFIA, 2008). In Ontario, the MNRF has been involved with invasive *Phragmites* control pilot projects since 2007 and to date control costs range between \$865 and \$1,112 per hectare (OMNRF, 2012). Invasive species have an impact on approximately 20% of Species at Risk in Ontario (OMNRF, 2012).*

Invasive plants directly affect municipalities with reforestation projects and recreational trails. They increase management costs (e.g. project planning and monitoring) and they increase operational costs (e.g. mowing, pruning and hand pulling). They also complicate reforestation projects as they need to first be removed, and then the gaps created through removal must be addressed by using large, potted plant stock, or additional site maintenance to prevent the risk of re-invasion.

The economic impact of invasive species in Canada is significant. According to Environment Canada and Climate Change:

- *The estimated annual cumulative lost revenue caused by just 16 invasive species is between \$13 to \$35 billion.*

- *Invasive species that damage the agricultural and forestry industries results in an estimated \$7.5 billion of lost revenue annually.”*

The PlayCleanGo is a widely recognized and highly successful initiative. The PlayCleanGo website contains resources and relevant information targeted for the recreation industry but could also be applied for other industries as well. With a successful campaign like PlayCleanGo, there should be another campaign to target other industry sectors to remind them the role they play in the prevention or spreading invasive species and diseases.