

## **Invasive Alien Plants Monitoring Protocols for NWT Communities**

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### **Contact information:**

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### **Introduction:**

*The North lags behind other jurisdictions in North America in preventing the introduction of, controlling and eradicating invasive alien species (IAS) that could threaten native ecosystems, habitats, or species. There is a general lack of knowledge and research on these species in the NWT.*

*With increasing development in the Northwest Territories, and an unprecedented increase in habitat changes expected in the Mackenzie Valley, all organizations, groups and communities are prepared to increase their awareness of the risks related to IAS and to help reduce that risk. Many communities have expressed concern over the potential effects of IAS in our northern ecosystems.*

*Still, there are missed opportunities to act early and to share resources now, to reduce future needs for large and expensive eradication/control programs in the North.*

*Benefits from this project include increased opportunities to act appropriately, cooperatively, and early on IAS issues. Communities, management authorities, and environmental assessment practitioners will have opportunities to learn more about IAS in a northern context, to develop the capacity and tools to monitor the introduction of alien plant species, to share information with other communities, and to use the most appropriate management practices to control introductions and prevent spread.*

### **Methods:**

- *ENR issued a contract to Dr. Dawn Bazely and her research group at the Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability, University of York. This group is participating in the IPY project GAPS (<http://www.ipygaps.org>) and the contract complemented well the work that was underway during IPY.*
- *Roles and responsibilities: Dr. Dawn Bazely (professor at York University and head of the Institute for Research and Innovation in*

*Sustainability) was the general manager of the project. Dr. Cecilia Tagliavia (Professor at York University) researched and developed evaluation criteria for community-based protocols; Tony Morris (Master's student at York U.) researched protocols already in place and determined applicability to the NWT; Milisa Elliot and Annette Dubreuil (Master student at York U.) travelled to the NWT and organized workshops on developing the protocols.*

- *Protocols were developed using these steps:
  - i. *Established a set of evaluation criteria for community-protocols*
  - ii. *Researched already existing protocols and rank using the criteria*
  - iii. *Organized workshops in three NWT communities in October 2008 with presentations on the criteria, and existing protocols, and a set of questionnaires on how they would like to report on IAS. The workshops provide a forum for community input on developing the protocols.*
  - iv. *Drafted a report on options for protocols development for IAS in the NWT, with proposed methods, data-sheets, and reporting mechanisms.**
- *The protocol options were developed during workshops with community member input. Workshops were organized in the evenings, supper was included. Participants were given an overview of the goals for the proposed protocols and then filled up questionnaires and had opportunities to provide input during open-discussions:
  - *Fort Simpson: 35 participated*
  - *Fort Good Hope: 35 participated*
  - *Inuvik: 21 participated.*Participants were all volunteers.*

## **Results:**

- *Monitoring and Research on Vegetation*

*IAS Community Monitoring Protocols will help empower communities to detect new plants and determine if they should take action on reporting and removal. When communities report plants that they have never seen before, we can build on our growing database on alien plant species in the NWT. By reporting new plants, responsible agencies can develop a better analysis of their invasiveness and potential impacts on NWT's ecosystems.*

  - *The Final Report by the Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability will be available on the ENR website in summer 2009. The report describes a set of standard monitoring protocols for detecting alien plants in each ecozone in the NWT.*
- *Capacity Building and Training on Vegetation*

*The Pamphlet (2000 copies) provide the tools to learn about invasive alien plant species and about how people can help in reducing the spread of these plants. A pamphlet on the main invasive alien species in the NWT with tips on how to stop spreading of these species (2000 copies)*

*All deliverables are in plain language, and designed to be easily applied in and around communities. As well, they are scientifically sound and valid for use by professional botanists and EA practitioners.*

### **Discussion / Conclusions:**

*The Protocols, pamphlets developed during this project, and the associated webpage to be developed in 2009-10, should provide the tools to learn about invasive alien plant species, about spreading mechanisms, and about how the vegetative composition of communities, cabin grounds, roads, cutlines, river access areas, etc, are changing. People can then learn about the cumulative effects of increased access on vegetation in the NWT.*

*The 2000 pamphlets have been distributed to all NWT communities.*

*“On-the-ground” testing of protocols will be conducted in summer 2009. Peer-review will be performed. Botanists (up to 3) from outside and inside NWT will form the roster of experts for this peer-review. One NWT Elder with experience in botany will be invited to participate as an expert.*

*This project is part of larger initiative called “RISK ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES IN THE NWT” partly (less than 50%) funded by Environment Canada’s Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program (IASPP). The Project described here one of 10 activities described in the larger initiative. The larger initiative is scheduled for 2007-2010.*