



Controlling Invasive Weeds: Exploring Opportunities for First Nations Forum and Workshop Summary November 19, 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The goal of the Northwest Invasive Plant Council (NWIPC) is to facilitate the identification and control of invasive plants in the Northwest region of British Columbia that includes many First Nations reserves and traditional territories. The NWIPC hosted a one day First Nations forum on November 19, 2013 with the goal of improving the working partnerships between the council and the First Nations communities. A steering committee was formed to deliver the forum that included First Nations and NWIPC members. We acknowledge the financial support from our sponsors: Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations; BCHydro; Conifex Timber Inc.; DWB Consulting Services Ltd., Industrial Forestry Service Ltd.; Spectra Energy; plus in-kind to promote the forum from Classis Rock CFNR and CFIS fm radio stations. The format for the forum was presentations on invasive plant issues, NWIPC, and current First Nations partnerships, followed by a facilitated interview process that identified issues and their priorities. Communication, funding, and the implementation of partnerships were the key themes highlighted by the First Nations. All input obtained at this forum was documented and the NWIPC board of directors reviewed, discussed and decided on what they would commit to do in the short and long term. NWIPC commits to: 1) find funding for more projects and events well in advance of the need, 2) host a First Nations forum every two to three years, 3) contacting all First Nations communities prior to organizing the next event, 4) improve regular communications by using phone more than email, and 5) initiating a First Nation Student Crew Inventory & Awareness Project in 2014 to increase education and awareness on reserves. NWIPC asks that each First Nation community do the same; that is review this document and decide how you will commit to increasing partnerships with NWIPC and improving the delivery of those partnerships.

INTRODUCTION:

The goal of the Northwest Invasive Plant Council (NWIPC) is to facilitate the identification and control of invasive plants in the Northwest region of British Columbia. The region of responsibility for the council is large and includes many First Nations reserves and traditional territories. Control of invasive plant species on these lands is a critical issue as many of these species can alter ecosystems processes, destroy wildlife habitat, and displace traditional medicinal and food plants. The position of the council is that identification and control of the invasive plants on reserve lands and in traditional territories will be the most effective if it involves partnerships with the First Nations peoples living in these areas. The council has partnered with up to eight First Nations bands since 2004 that included training in invasive plant identification, treatment methods, data collection, plus community awareness.

The NWIPC Board of Directors hosted a one-day First Nations forum to address the recent First Nations partnerships with the goal of improving the working partnerships between the council and the First Nations communities that fall within the council's management area.

PLANNING EFFORTS:

A steering committee (Appendix I) was formed to develop a tactical plan and specific forum objectives:

- First Nations representatives will say that they have increased knowledge and awareness of invasive plant species in their communities and ecosystems, and the impact that these plants may have on their traditional use,
- First Nations representatives will say that they have increased knowledge of the NWIPC and its role in addressing invasive plant issues,
- First Nations representatives will say that they have increased knowledge of the opportunities for partnerships being offered by the NWIPC and their role in ensuring the success of these partnerships,
- First Nations representatives and NWIPC members will say that they have increased knowledge of the key ingredients for success for future partnerships,
- NWIPC members will say that they have increased knowledge of the challenges and issues being faced by First Nations communities with these partnerships as well as potential solutions to address these challenges and issues.

NWIPC covers a large geographical area. Our objective was to include as many First Nations as possible, so it was decided that representatives would be offered reimbursement of travel expenses to attend the forum. Reimbursement of travel expenses and the conference registration fee only occurred with prior approval of travel costs and confirmed attendance at the Forum.

Sponsorships were solicited, and are listed in Appendix II.

FORUM DELIVERY

The First Nations forum was held on November 19, 2013 at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre. The agenda (Appendix III) contained presentations on invasive plants, NWIPC and the current partnerships. Attendees then participated in a discussion on how to improve the partnerships between the council and the First Nations communities. Twelve First Nations representatives from nine different communities attended the forum along with four other non-First Nations participants. Speakers, NWIPC board members, forum organizers, and others brought the attendance to 28 (Appendix IV).

The afternoon process was facilitated by Rhonda Cage from the BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training. The process to gather input on how to improve partnerships between NWIPC and First Nations employed an interview matrix with groups of four where each person in the group was assigned a question and conducted a one-on-one "interview" with each of the

other members in the group for their answers (Appendix V). This technique allowed us to gather information that would have taken over 19 hours to gather had we interviewed each person individually.

After the interviews were completed, each of the four question groups gathered to discuss and summarize what they heard from others in answer to their question. The summarized results were then presented to the whole group. Attendees were then divided into three groups to discuss funding, communication, and education and training.

SUMMARY OF FORUM RESULTS:

We had an excellent afternoon, in which everyone took part in networking and participating in group discussions with awesome facilitating!

The important themes were:

- Funding
- Communication, and
- Implementation.

There was a point made of the benefit of having someone from NWIPC geographically close to the First Nations partners so that there is an opportunity for the NWIPC representative to provide hands-on guidance, answer questions and solve problems as the partnership programs are being developed and implemented.

FORUM EVALUATION:

- We had 28 people attend the forum with 12 First Nations participants representing nine First Nation communities from across the region.
- Of those who attended, sixteen people provided their feedback forms to us.
- Of those sixteen people, thirteen people (81%) said that the forum was very worthwhile, or worthwhile to them.
- Ten (62%) strongly agreed or agreed that the forum increased their knowledge of invasive plants
- Fourteen (88%) strongly agreed or agreed that the forum increased their knowledge of the NWIPC and their role.
- Ten (62%) strongly agreed or agreed that the forum increased their knowledge of the partnership opportunities available.
- The most commonly cited useful parts of the forum were Merci Harris's presentation and the facilitated sessions, honourable mention to Ben Haizimque's and Claire Watkins' talks.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the evaluation results, it can be concluded that the First Nations forum was successful in meeting the desired outcomes as specified in the tactical plan. The forum was a good start with nine First Nations communities of the 33 invited being represented.

The First Nations forum invitation specified that the forum was intended for the chief councillor and the councillor in charge of the community's environmental portfolio. These are the same people that would be involved in the other requests. Due to this it is suggested that concern regarding invasive plants and partnership opportunities may be fairly low on the First Nations community's radar and this was reflected in the lower than anticipated attendance at the forum.

A comment from the forum evaluation submissions included a suggestion that more of these forums be held, with an additional comment that the next forum be held in a more central location of the area covered by the NWIPC, such as Terrace. For future forums it is recommended that First Nations communities be contacted by telephone prior to the onset of the organization of the forum to determine their level of interest in attending such an event if it were organized and the preferred time of year and location for such an event. Email communication does not seem to be the most effective method to communicate with the majority of First Nations communities.

Other minor issues experienced during the forum included,

- Managing the logistics regarding the collection of a refundable deposit to encourage attendance,
- Travel claim reimbursement (claim form submission delays), and
- Lack of attendance of some forum registrants and a speaker.

Attendees actively participated in the facilitated session at the forum and provided the necessary input to help the NWIPC move forward to increase the number of NWIPC-First Nations partnerships and improve the delivery of those partnerships.

NWIPC COMMITMENTS:

The NWIPC directors reviewed the original 31-page report on the forum. They met on January 28 & 29, 2014 and discussed what NWIPC is able to do now, and what we could consider doing in the long term.

1. NWIPC commits to looking for funding well in advance of the need for invasive plant management, forums, projects, etc.
2. NWIPC commits to having a First Nations Forum every two or three years, alternating the location across the NWIPC area; suggested next forum be spring of 2016 in Terrace, B.C. NWIPC will begin planning now in 2014 in order to obtain funding for the costs of such events. It is important to build a personal relationship with sponsors in order to obtain funding, and to meet funding application deadlines such as Government funding applications that have deadlines in the previous fiscal year.
3. NWIPC commits to contacting all the First Nations communities prior to the organization of any forums/events to determine level of interest in attending, preferred time of year and location.
4. NWIPC commits to improving our communications with the First Nations by using telephone rather than email or mail. This will allow us to connect with the appropriate person in each community.

5. NWIPC commits to increasing the education and awareness need expressed at the Forum by starting a First Nation student crew Inventory & Awareness project in 2014. This project will hire small student crews to do invasive plant inventory on Reserve lands to increase the knowledge of the extent of invasive plants on Reserve as well as have the student crews educate residents while doing inventory.

NWIPC appreciates the time and effort invested by forum participants. We ask that you take this report to your council for review and discussions on what each of you will commit to doing now and in the future.

Please communicate directly with Merci Harris, NWIPC First Nations Partnership Assistant. Contact information is: 250-842-0593, and firstnations@nwipc.org. Merci will collect all input from First Nations communities wanting to pursue partnerships, work with NWIPC on addressing needs identified through the forum, and/or commit to partnership delivery improvements.



NWIPC'S FIRST NATIONS WORKSHOP: NOVEMBER 19, 2013

Appendix I

Steering Committee Members

Member	Affiliation
Merci Harris	NWIPC First Nations Assistant
Claire Watkins	City of Prince George
Carolynn Lane	Bulkley-Nechako Regional District
Myrtle Muldoe	First Nations
Kristy Palmantier	First Nations Relations (FLNRO) and Williams Lake Band member of the Northern Shuswap
Evelyn George	Lake Babine First Nation
Gail Wallin	Invasive Plant Council
Nicole Pressey	Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) (First Nations Liason)
Nalaine Morin	Tahltan Heritage Resources Environmental Assessment Team (THREAT)
Norm McLean	THREAT

Appendix II

First Nations 2013 Forum Sponsors

Name		Position	Organization
Ken	Shields	Chair, President and CEO	Conifex Timber Inc.
Rick	Girard	RPF	DWB Consulting Services Ltd.
Rob	Schuetz	President	Industrial Forestry Service Ltd.
Tom	Wells	Vegetation Manager	BC Hydro
Denise	McLean	Invasive Plant Specialists	Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources Operations Admin Grant
NWIPC		Directors	NWIPC Pooled Funds
Ron	Bartlett	Sales Manager	Classic Rock CFNR radio (in-kind)
Tara	Evans	Promotions Director	
Rhonda	Cage	Regional Manager	Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation (in-kind)
Dan	Tisseur	RP Bio	Spectra Energy
Reg	Feyer	Station Manager	CFIS fm Prince George community radio station (in-kind)
Al	Wiensczyk	Owner	TCC Solutions (in-kind)

Appendix III

First Nations Forum Agenda

Time	Item	Who
8:00	Morning coffee	
8:30-9:00	Welcome	Andrea Eastham – Northwest Invasive Plant Council Chief Dominic Frederick – Lheidli T'enneh First Nation Mayor Sheri Green or designate (Did not attend forum)
9:00 – 9:30	Invasive Plants – why should you care?	Claire Watkins – Northwest Invasive Plant Council
9:30-9:45	Northwest Invasive Plant Council – who we are and what we do, partnership opportunities	Merci Harris – Northwest Invasive Plant Council
9:45-10:15	Successful Partnerships The Gitksan Story	Merci Harris
10:15-10:45	Coffee break	
10:45-11:30	Successful partnerships (con't) Managing Invasive plants along highway 113 within Nisga'a lands THREAT – Dealing with multiple developments in our traditional territory.	Ben Haizimque, Project Manager – Lisims Forest Resources Limited Partnership Annita McPhee – Tahltan First Nation (Did not attend forum)
11:30-noon	Integrated pest management regulatory framework	Denise McLean – BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
12:00	Lunch	
1:00-1:20	From No to Yes, the Haida Gwaii story	Alvin Cober – BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
1:20-1:40	Introduction to the afternoon process	Rhonda Cage – Facilitator: BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation
1:40-4:00	Afternoon facilitated process	Rhonda Cage
4:00-4:30	Wrap-up and closing	Andrea Eastham – NWIPC

Appendix IV NWIPC Forum Registration/Attendance

Name	Affiliation	Attended
Erica Austin	Lake Babine	No
Allan Davidson	Haida Nation	Yes
George George Sr	Nadleh	Yes
Eleanor Lowe	Nadleh	Yes
Elke Lepka	Takla	No
Tammy Roberts	Kitsumkalum	Yes
Barry Seymour	Lheidli T'enneh	No
Rosaline Starr	Kispiox Band	No
Marek Waszkiewicz	Nisga'a	Yes
Robert Williams	Skidegate	Yes
Mel Azak	Sik-e-dakh	Yes
Kevin Paul	Haisla Nation Council	Yes
Kevin Koch	Gitanyow Fisheries Authority	No
Vicki Prigmore	Cooper Beauchesne and Associates	Yes
Allan Carson	Cooper Beauchesne and Associates	Yes
Erin Geisbrecht	Reaps	Yes
Lisa Wood	Spectrum Resource Group	Yes
Annita McPhee – Speaker	Tahltan	No
Ben Haizimsque – Speaker	Nisga'a	Yes
Claire Watkins – BOD/Speaker	NWIPC	Yes
Merci Harris – BOD	NWIPC	Yes
Andrea Eastham – BOD	NWIPC	Yes
Denise McLean – Speaker	NWIPC	Yes
Alvin Cober – BOD/Speaker	MFLNRO	Yes
Marc Schuffert – BOD	MFLNRO	Yes
Rhonda Cage – Facilitator	Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation	Yes
Carolynn Lane – BOD	Regional District Bulkley-Nechako	Yes
Al Wiensczyk – Organizer	Trout Creek Collaborative Solutions	Yes
Matt Harder + wife	NWIPC implementation contractor	Yes
Angel Robbestad – Recorder	NWIPC	Yes
Myrtle Muldoe – BOD	NWIPC	Yes
Gordon Howard	Gitsequkla	Yes
Stephanie Woods	ISCBC	Yes
Eric Swanson – BOD	BC Hydro/NWIPC	Yes
Dan Tisseur	Spectra Energy	No

Appendix V

Interview Matrix

Journalist Interviews

Question #1: What are 3 to 5 things that need to happen for partnerships to be successful?

- Communication, steady and constant (six checks)
 - Active participation from both sides
 - Interest from Bands – mutual interest
 - Appropriate funding (three checks)
 - Ongoing training and leadership (three checks)
 - Regular monitoring
 - Regular evaluation (three checks)
 - Community involvement and buy-in (two checks)
 - Mutual benefits and goals (five checks)
 - Clear contract/agreement (two checks)
 - Effective risk sharing
 - See the end results
 - Understanding of wants and needs of each party (two checks)
 - Get someone to stay for multiple years
 - Identify champions
 - Promote programs
 - Keen, open minded individuals to do the work
 - Awareness in the band office and in the community
 - Administrative infrastructure
 - Good relation, good understanding
 - Need more than one first nations assistant
 - Each partnership built to be unique
 - Capacity building
 - Jurisdiction workshop – education
 - Have a vision for the future
 - Annual first nations forum (regular basis)
 - Clear expectations from funding partners on criteria
 - Building a respectful relationship
 - Familiar with the particular first nations group you are working with
 - Common goals to be successful
 - Following up with bands on a consistent basis
- **Top three summary:**
- Maintain clear, concise, effective, consistent and face to face communication between both parties
 - Need keen open minded individuals who are willing to do the work for multiple years. Also identify champions on a regular basis.
 - Obtain funding to develop human capacity through education and training initiatives.

Question #2: What are 2 to 3 examples of what's done right that you'd like to see more of?

- Reaching out to bands
 - Assessing different methods of treatments on a small scale before going big
 - Trials
 - Opportunity to value in community input on method
 - Eg: manual, mulching, herbicide, digging
 - Hiring locals and local programs and training
 - First nations assistant (**three checks**)
 - Informing of issues
 - Personalized contact
 - More awareness
 - Eg: report a weed, carabineers
 - Clear goals and expectations, consistent
 - Using first nations as IPMA contractors
 - Eg: Tahltan
 - More forums
 - Treatment
 - Sending first nations reps to invasive species council yearly conference
 - Engaging tribal councils, to act on behalf of their communities
 - Results based assessments
 - Before and after pictures
- **Top three summary:**
- More Merci's – clone her for the east
 - hiring locals for local work
 - More awareness, more training and evaluation
 - more events
 - Treatment
 - educating on the history, why we do the current methods
 - what is already been tried that hasn't worked

Question #3: What are 3 to 5 partnership opportunities you would like to see/take advantage of?

- Increase scope and capacity of current contract
- Multi-year contracts
- Partnership between band and closest municipality/other local government and groups (**two checks**)
- Increase involvement bands and Aboriginal Affairs Northern Development Canada (AANDC)
- Hire crews form those with developmental disabilities
- Education in our schools, public
- Community involvement and volunteerism, public (**two checks**)
- Build case for why if control should be funded from new sources
- Collectively find money (**three checks**)
 - New sources

- Assist existing crews be a business
 - Support/encourage contractors to develop IP control into broader business opportunity
 - Eg: WL group buying hydroseeder
 - Relationship between first nation and resource industry
 - Capacity building with private sector
 - First nations and BCIA
 - Opportunities for learning from weed committees
 - Local community groups
 - Scouts/girl guides
 - Neighborhood watch
 - Special needs
 - Eg: Aim-Hi
 - Identify and partner with stakeholders in high risk/problem areas
 - Reporting on successes and sharing
 - First nations and consultants
 - more communication between them
 - More events to bring partners together
 - Eg: First Nations forum
- **Top three summary:**
- Collectively finding new sources of funding
 - Partnerships between First Nations communities and local governments (Regional districts and municipalities)
 - Education and awareness job #1

Question #4: What are 2 to 3 challenges to new partnerships and one idea to overcome each?

- Finding the right person to communicate with
 - Develop a model in your partnership to determine the correct person to contact
 - Eg: council or administrator
- Cultural differences between NWIPC and contractors and different nations
 - Communicating directly – research who you are communicating with
- Lack of trust or familiarity between potential partners
 - More engagement in smaller groups to establish personal connections
- Lack of funds
 - Find a way to access federal funds (which isn't always possible) – hiring grant writer to locate funds/leverage funds
- Capacity in First Nations and resultant prioritization of these IP management partnerships
 - Education; knowledge building leverage success close to home
- Not having the same vision
 - Pre work meetings – bringing IP management for area into AGM for area
 - Maintain contact – keeping everyone involved – continuity
- Having all departments in office (eg: finance, band manager) involved and being reported to on IP operations

- Having all forms and data entry
 - Overwhelm with components
 - Begin with the basics
- Incremental contract development to build capacity in new partners
 - Assess and based on current capacity and build from there
- **Top three summary:**
 - Funding – Balance need to spread opportunity and address needs with effective fund management
 - Communication – internal communication within band administration and external between NWIPC and Partner
 - Implementation – how program is run – making sure everyone shares the same vision in project deliverables – know what the work that needs to be done is, expectations of NWIPC and expectations of First Nation partner to ensure communication is clear and regular between them.