

impact

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Fort Hall's UI Extension partnerships expand community noxious weed education

AT A GLANCE

Noxious weeds are one of the Fort Hall Reservation's most significant natural resource problems. Noxious weeds degrade tribal lands and significantly alter native ecosystems.

The Situation

The Fort Hall Reservation consists of 545,662 acres. Over 60 percent of this vast acreage is rich with pristine wildlife habitat, abundant range grasses and other native vegetation. Tribal members utilize this land for cultural practices and to hunt, gather and recreate. It is also an essential source of income to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and its' members. Much of this land is leased to tribal and non-tribal members for cattle ranching and other agricultural practices. Although most of this vast acreage is in excellent condition, noxious weeds continue to invade and threaten the health and value of these lands.

Noxious weeds have invaded an estimated 10 percent of tribal lands. Noxious weeds are plants designated by law that are known to have particularly negative impacts on natural resources. They can adversely affect human and/or animal health, the environment, forage quality, aesthetics, recreational activities, land values and tribal cultural practices. Noxious weeds also out-compete desirable native plants for water, light and nutrients. In the past, foreign or "introduced" plants, now identified as noxious weeds, were introduced into our environment to solve natural resource problems and to improve environmental conditions. Others were



The Farmer family learns about noxious weeds through educational posters that teach how to identify these harmful plants.

introduced as ornamental plants for homeowners. After several decades, land managers have since learned many of these introduced plants grow aggressively, spread quickly and degrade our native ecosystems. Many have extensive root systems, are often prolific seed producers and can be allelopathic (release chemicals into the soil) and/or even poisonous. Noxious weeds are very difficult to control and do not have natural predators to control their spread. If this serious problem is not managed, native ecosystems could potentially be rendered useless.

Our goal is to educate and teach the public, land managers and owners how to identify and manage the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe's top ten noxious weeds. Educational programming increases the probability

that existing infestations will be identified more quickly and managed with the most current, practical tools and technology available. As the community and natural resource managers work together to identify and solve this problem, new infestations can be prevented, and existing infestations can be controlled to prevent further spread. University of Idaho Extension, Fort Hall Reservation has collaborated with Washington State University, USDA, Tribes in the NW Invasive Species Project (TINWISP), Dan L. Fagerlie, TINWISP project director, Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Agricultural Resource Management (ARM) program and other tribal departments to develop educational materials for public education to help identify and control noxious weed infestations. Tribal education about noxious weeds is the first step in working with communities to find solutions to return our tribal lands to pristine, healthy conditions with significantly reduced noxious weed infestations.

Our Response

Fort Hall's agricultural Extension educator worked with Enoch Houtz, Tribal ARM compliance officer, to identify the top ten worst noxious weed species found on the Fort Hall Reservation. Then, we collaborated with the TINWISP project director to develop high-quality educational materials identifying our top ten noxious weeds. Materials included educational flyers, brochures and outdoor and indoor posters. All materials included high-quality photos, identifying characteristics and detailed weed descriptions to help people identify noxious weeds on the Fort Hall Bottoms and rangelands. Similar materials were developed to target the serious aquatic weed, flowering rush, which has invaded Fort Hall canals and portions of the Fort Hall Bottoms. Twenty-three outdoor posters were permanently posted at major roadways and access points to the Fort Hall Bottoms, rangelands and the Fort Hall Canal System. These posters educate and help tribal members identify and report noxious weed infestations in their tribal lands. Five-hundred noxious weed

mailers have been distributed to the community and 500 educational brochures have been distributed to tribal departments and businesses to educate the public about this serious noxious weed problem.

Program Outcomes

This program has resulted in over 1,000 community contacts that have the education and tools to identify, control and prevent noxious weed infestations on the Fort Hall Reservation. Over 100 people per day in the spring, summer and fall months travel these major access points and view outdoor posters. Near the end of 2019, over 25,000 people will have viewed some form of weed education through our efforts. Public awareness and knowledge of this problem have already increased. The tribal ARM department estimates a 25 percent increase in growth of work orders from community members to control noxious weeds on their lands. This problem has shifted from lack of awareness and education to increased awareness, knowledge and active efforts to report infestations to implement control measures.

The Future

Future campaigns will involve expanding noxious weed education to additional target audiences to educate more individuals about the serious threat noxious weeds have on our environment. Efforts will be increased to identify new infestations and control existing infestations. Plans will be developed to rehabilitate treated areas with native vegetation. The overall health of our natural resources will be improved. Weed infestations on acreages will be reduced from 10 to 5 percent to achieve more pristine tribal lands.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Washington State University Extension; USDA APHIS; Tribes in the Northwest Invasive Species Project (TINWISP); Dan Fagerlie, TINWISP director; Enoch Houtz, chemical compliance technician, ARM program; Shoshone-Bannock ARM program; Shoshone-Bannock Land Use Policy Commission; Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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