

Snoqualmie River Garden Loosestrife Eradication Project



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Introduction

In 2007 the King County Noxious Weed Control Program (KCNWCP) received an early infestation grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology to attempt to eradicate the noxious weed garden loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*) from the Snoqualmie River over five years, before it spreads beyond control.

Garden loosestrife is a class B noxious weed with control required in King and Snohomish Counties. It is extremely aggressive and invasive and has the potential to cover the entire river bank. It provides little benefit for wildlife and outcompetes even the most aggressive native plants such as cattails and spirea. These impacts can reduce the availability and quality of fish habitat and adversely affect recreation on the river. This weed is extremely mobile and could easily establish anywhere along the river from plant fragments deposited during flooding. If left alone, garden loosestrife could also spread into adjacent wetlands, oxbows and pastures, causing significant damage.

Garden loosestrife is growing in patches around the ordinary high water mark along the river and on sand and gravel bars in the river between Fall City and Snohomish County. In 2007 we also found a few small patches in the lower Raging River. We will continue to survey the river each year to locate and control new plant infestations.

To control garden loosestrife, this project is spot-spraying the plants with an approved aquatic formulation of triclopyr TEA (Renovate3™). We will be seeking permission from all shoreline property owners in the project area to control any infestation of the weed that may be found on their property on the banks of the Snoqualmie or Raging Rivers. Any property owner who does not wish us to control the weeds for them will be required to do so themselves in accordance with the Washington State weed law (RCW 1710). We will offer assistance in determining the best alternative strategy for controlling garden loosestrife on a case by case basis. We have secured permission from the Washington Department of Natural Resources to control garden loosestrife below the ordinary high water mark in the river, and the Washington Department of Agriculture Organic Food Program has assured us that this project will not affect any farm's organic status.

Results from 2007

The project was very successful in the work that it accomplished in this first year, controlling 100% of the garden loosestrife in the area surveyed. We found a total of 116 sites averaging about 200 square feet in size, for a total of just over ½ acre of garden loosestrife along the Snoqualmie River between Fall City and the King County line, a distance of about 27 miles. That comes to an average of about 800 square feet of garden loosestrife per river mile, which is a manageable amount to control.