

The Healthy Lands Project

King County's **Healthy Lands Project (HeLP)** provides invasive weed control assistance and stewardship planning for open space and conservation lands. The goal is to reduce the impacts of invasive and noxious weeds in order to keep open space healthy for people and the environment.

The project is aimed at lands protected beginning in 2016 through conservation easements and current use taxation programs such as the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRS) or through open space acquisition. **HeLP** serves properties in cities and unincorporated areas of King County, and works on both public and private lands, in cooperation with landowners.

Why HeLP?

King County has embarked on a bold mission to save the last, great places in the county for future generations. Known as the Land Conservation Initiative, King County has joined with cities, businesses, farmers, community groups and non-profits to preserve the most important resource lands and open space opportunities that remain. Farmland, forests, natural lands, rivers, trails and urban green space are all being protected as quickly as possible before the opportunities are lost.

However, invasive plants can create a major challenge for conservation on these lands. They can overwhelm native trees and plants that provide habitat for wildlife, protect air and water quality, and provide natural places for people to enjoy. Working farms and forests can be overrun by invasive and noxious weeds that are costly and difficult to control. The significant impacts of invasive plants and noxious weeds can undermine the benefits generated by the region's investment in conservation.

In particular, for lands that are not currently in an open space or conservation program, the initial cost of controlling invasive weeds can be a significant hurdle for an individual, organization or agency considering conservation. **HeLP** lowers that hurdle by reducing invasive weeds to a manageable level and setting in place a long-term stewardship plan to sustain the benefits of open space protection for future generations.

"Dirty Dozen" Invasive Weeds Impacting Healthy Lands

English Ivy



Scotch Broom



Himalayan Blackberry



Butterfly Bush



English Holly



Clematis



Knotweed



Reed Canary Grass



Yellow Archangel



Spotted Jewelweed



Italian Arum



Yellow Flag Iris



HeLP is a project of the King County Noxious Weed Program. For information, contact Dan Sorensen, HeLP Manager, at 206-477-9333 or helpweeds@kingcounty.gov. To learn more about noxious weeds, visit kingcounty.gov/weeds.

How does HeLP work?

Trained crews map and control invasive plants in open space, trail corridors, riparian, and forestry lands in cities and unincorporated areas that are in the process of being protected (or have been recently protected) through acquisition, conservation easement or other property owner agreements. **HeLP** also controls infestations on immediately adjacent infested lands and rights-of-way to prevent weeds from re-infesting protected lands. **HeLP** controls both state-regulated noxious weeds and non-regulated invasive plants that impact natural areas. Control work is done in coordination and cooperation with property owners and public agencies and includes education and stewardship planning to ensure long-term maintenance and protection of the lands.



Invasive weed control team

What is the cost to the landowner?

There is no charge for **HeLP** services. The only expectation is that after the weeds are controlled, the landowner will work with **HeLP** or project partners to implement a stewardship plan to sustain the benefits of the invasive weed control. To help property owners achieve the goals of the stewardship plan, **HeLP** can provide assistance such as plants for restoration, training on weed control and restoration, permitting assistance, equipment loans and help organizing community volunteer events. The key to the success of any invasive plant control work is long-term stewardship.

How does HeLP achieve equitable outcomes?

Equity is a cornerstone of **HeLP**. Top priority is given to areas of King County where people have limited access to open space, a high level of poverty, or more pollution, all of which impact their health and well-being. Contractors are also required to find ways to improve access to jobs for people of color and underserved communities when recruiting crew members.

How is HeLP funded?

King County funds the Noxious Weed Control Program primarily through the Noxious Weed Assessment, a per parcel charge applied to all properties in the county, as authorized by the Washington Noxious Weed Law, RCW 17.10. In 2019, each parcel was assessed \$5.32 plus 38 cents per acre. A portion of the noxious weed fund supports **HeLP**, with the remainder going to other work of the Noxious Weed Control Program to implement the State Noxious Weed Law.

How can everyone help?

1. Plant native plants.
2. Volunteer to remove invasive weeds.
3. Report invasive species to stop them from spreading.



HeLP delivers significant short-term reduction in noxious weeds and a long-term legacy of stewardship to maintain benefits over time.



King County

Report weeds with [King County Connect](#) app!



Alternative formats available
206-477-4800 TTY Relay:711

Para la traducción de esta información en español, envíe un correo electrónico a noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov.