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Invasive Plant Strategy for British Columbia targets the spread of alien, non-native plant species that are invading our grasslands, forests, lakes and communities!

The Fraser Basin Council has just released the ***Invasive Plant Strategy for British Columbia*** – a groundbreaking document that targets the rapid spread of invasive, non-native plants in British Columbia. Without natural enemies to control their populations, alien plant species such as knapweed, Scotch broom and purple loosestrife are taking over large tracts of land throughout the province. These aliens threaten fragile ecosystems, reduce biodiversity and cost our economy untold millions of dollars each year. The strategy was developed with support and expertise from the provincial government, First Nations, regional districts and many non-government organizations.

As recommended in the strategy, a non-profit **Invasive Plant Council of British Columbia** will be established to coordinate invasive plant management province-wide, improve compliance with current and new legislation, establish research priorities and coordinate public awareness programs.

“The economic, environmental and social costs of these destructive invasive plants are staggering,” said Patrick Reid, Chair of the Fraser Basin Council. “Before joining the Council in 2003, I never fully realized the negative impacts alien plant species have on ecosystems, animal and human health, and the economy. Since our Directors were first made aware of this issue during a Board field trip to the Cariboo in June 2001, the Council has worked with business sectors, government agencies, First Nations, conservation organizations and community groups to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with the spread of invasive plants. *We must* address this issue. The costs of doing nothing are just too great.”

“British Columbia is being attacked by foreign invaders. They are destroying our environment, impacting our economy and we are losing the battle,” said Yale-Lillooet MLA Dave Chutter who heads the provincial government’s natural resources sub-committee on noxious weeds. “The Fraser Basin Council has played a pivotal role in bringing this little known but important issue to public attention, and has spearheaded the development of a comprehensive strategy to address the issue. The strategy is an excellent plan to fight back and defeat invasive plants.”

“Annual economic losses from invasive plants cost ranchers, farmers, utilities, forest companies, government and the general public tens of millions – and perhaps even hundreds of millions – of dollars each year in lost productivity,” said Duncan Barnett from the BC Cattlemen’s Association, one of the industry sector representatives who helped draft the strategy. “Development of a comprehensive invasive plant strategy is certainly welcomed by everyone who battles daily with these undesirable and destructive plants.”

To obtain a copy of the Strategy, go to: <http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/news/index.html>

For information on the Strategy, contact:

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