2015 Together in Action Award Winners for leadership on tackling invasive species

Nuxalk First Nation, Bella Coola, BC, Together in Action Government Award

Several years ago, through the Invasive Species Council of BC’s Hotspots Program, an inventory was completed of Japanese Knotweed in the Bella Coola Valley. The inventory revealed significant spread of this invasive plant beyond home gardens into natural areas. At this time, the Nuxalk Nation had a moratorium on the use of herbicides in their traditional territory, but they recognized that without a timely response, the knotweed could spread throughout the Valley. In 2011, through considerable consultation, a Band Council Resolution was passed to allow the use of herbicide to treat specific species as a last resort. Furthermore, the Band resolved to take the lead on invasive plant control within their territory. As a result, the Nuxalk Nation partnered with the Province and the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Invasive Plant Committee to receive training and support on invasive plant treatment methods. An invasive plant management program commenced in 2012 in the Valley and has continued every year since.

GardenWorks, Burnaby, BC, Together in Action Business Award

GardenWorks was an inaugural partner with the Invasive Species Council of BC in identifying and combating invasive species in the industry. Even prior to this partnership, GardenWorks voluntarily identified ten invasive plants that they were removing from their inventory. GardenWorks staff have volunteered significant hours in the development of both the Grow Me Instead and the PlantWise programs. They have been key spokespersons on their business commitment to removing invasive plants from their sales floor, and how this demonstrates success. Over the last two years, GardenWorks has also addressed invasive ants, working to identify and implement best practices for control, including investing in the removal of greenhouses and paving over at-risk areas to limit the spread of this invasive pest.

Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre, Kelowna, BC, Together in Action Business Award

The Delta Grand Hotel’s landscaping had a large number of invasive plants on the grounds and climbing trees, railings and walls. The hotel staff’s Green Team, a group of staff volunteers, chose to make the hotel an invasive-free property. To connect this work to the community, the Green Team held a special Earth Day event for community volunteers to remove the plants, including a barbeque. The hotel also changed its tendering packages for landscaping contracts to ensure that all replacement plantings were invasive free. The hotel also involves a boat lock to move boats into a marina, where they installed Clean Drain Dry signage to help educate boaters about transporting unwanted aquatic invasive species.
Friends of Devonian Park, Metchosin, BC, Together in Action Stewardship Organization Award

The Friends of Devonian Park is a long-time stewardship organization based in Metchosin, outside Victoria. This group of volunteers has worked every Sunday November to March since 2002 at Devonian Park, a popular oceanfront regional park in Metchosin that includes Douglas-fir, maple and Garry oak meadows and a creek. The volunteers have put in more than 3700 volunteer hours over the years – an amazing long-term commitment. They have removed over one tonne of invasives from the park, including Scotch broom, Himalayan blackberry, ivy and spurge laurel. This has allowed the return of a significant number of native species, the restoration of a beautiful Garry oak meadow, and the groups’ dedication has fostered a stewardship ethic that many others have embraced.

Andrea Eastham, Prince George, BC, Together in Action Individual Award

Andrea Eastham has been a major driving force in invasive plant management in northwestern BC, serving as the program manager for the North West Invasive Plant Council for the past eight years. Her involvement with the invasive species sector goes well beyond her work with the Council, as she has volunteered countless hours of her personal time. Her passion for the environment and enthusiasm is well known, and she is recognized as being a wonderful mentor, and inspiring teacher, teaching many workshops and mentored numerous students over the years. Andrea’s long-term commitment and contributions were recognized by several nominations from her peers, industry partners and provincial government associates. Her leadership qualities have resulted in many collaborations, and her efforts have had a major impact on the ground. Coordinating invasive plant management on nearly half the province’s land-base is no easy task. Andrea’s leadership, professionalism and dedication are recognized throughout BC, and she has been an exemplary leader in this field.

Jake Burton, Victoria BC, Together in Action Youth Award

Jake Burton is an unfailing, dedicated and generous volunteer at Parks Canada’s Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site outside Victoria. In the past year, Jake has contributed 97 hours of his time to restoration efforts and invasive species removal, and has begun to mentor new volunteers. Jake shows impressive personal commitment to his work, making the weekly 45-minute bike ride to the site in all weather, in between classes at the University of Victoria, where he is completing his degree in Environmental Studies and Geography. He is eager to help with any task and to gain new skills and knowledge in the restoration and conservation of rare ecosystems. Jake also donates his time to the City of Victoria Parks Department, the University of Victoria Environmental Restoration Volunteer Network, and with the Nature Conservancy of Canada at the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve.

For high resolution versions of these or other photos of the winners, contact communications@bcinvasives.ca.