

Outdoor Recreation

Invasive Species Are Moving Across Bc And Canada At a Rapid Pace:

- » In Canada, invasive species include at least 27% of all vascular plants, 181 insects, 24 birds, 26 mammals, 2 reptiles, 4 amphibians, several fungi and molluscs, & 55 freshwater fish.

Outdoor recreation is a major pathway for the spread of invasive species

- » **CampWise** - Outdoor activities such as camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, biking, and 4x4ing have become pathways for the spread of invasive species: many invasive species attach to clothing or equipment using specialized seeds (burrs) or are spread in mud and debris.
- » Invasive species impact outdoor recreation by affecting human health and forcing park and trail closures: e.g. **Eurasian watermilfoil** (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) can clog a lake so it is not safe to swim in, and **Puncturevine** (*Tribulus terrestris*), found in the Okanagan, has spines that can pierce shoes and bike tires. **Giant hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), an escaped ornamental plant contains a clear, watery, highly toxic sap that if touched, can cause hypersensitivity to sunlight resulting in burns, blisters, and scarring of the skin.
- » **Play Clean Go** is an international campaign that targets outdoor recreationists with the message: Give Invasive Species the Brush-off – Stop Invasive Species in Your Tracks: <https://www.playcleango.org/>.
- » When using equipment and vehicles, arrive with clean gear, and clean off any mud or debris before leaving a site; remember your boot treads and pet's fur as well. When hiking or biking, staying on designated trails and walking areas can prevent the spread of hitch-hiking invasive species.
- » **Buy Local, Burn Local:** <https://bcinvasives.ca/resources/programs/buy-it-where-you-burn-it/> Firewood is another way that invasive species are spread. Transporting firewood from one location to another can introduce forest pests such as the Emerald Ash borer and Longhorned beetle. The introduction of species such as these has led to a cost of \$165 million per year in prevention and management costs. Burning or leaving firewood where it is purchased or acquired can prevent the spread of these costly forest pests.



Campfire, Porteau Cove Provincial Park. J. Leekie

Cost of invasive species:

- » BC is home to more species of living things than any other province in Canada, including 72% of Canada's mammal species, 70% of Canada's nesting bird species and 50% of Canada's amphibian species. Invasive species are the second biggest threat to this biodiversity after habitat loss and fragmentation.
- » Through damage to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other human enterprises, introduced species inflict an enormous economic cost, estimated at \$137 billion per year to the U.S. economy alone.
- » In Canada, the estimated annual lost revenue caused by just 16 invasive species is \$13-\$35 billion.
- » Invasive species impact outdoor recreation by damaging native ecosystems and wildlife, clogging lakes, impacting fish populations, causing park closures and increasing maintenance costs.