

Fall Newsletter



Plagued by Mormon Crickets?

Mormon crickets are native insects to Western United States. However, when their populations reach large enough levels they can cause destruction on cultivated crops and grasslands. These outbreak populations can be associated with soil erosion, decreased water quality and substantial loss of crops.

Mormon crickets are not actually crickets but are in fact flightless, shield-backed katydids.

Mormon crickets get their name when their large numbers became infamous with Mormon settlers in Utah in the mid 1840's. The settlers became overwhelmed by crickets consuming their crops. According

to the legend thousands of seagulls descended upon the crickets and began consuming them in great numbers, therefore saving their crops.



Eggs are laid in the summer and emerge in spring. The nymphs go through several instars before reaching the adult stage. When they are ready to molt they fasten themselves upside down on a branch, molting takes about 10-20 minutes.

Most people do not report Mormon Cricket infestations until time for treatment is almost too late. The most successful times for treatments are early spring, the end of May– April.

If you have experienced a recent outbreak of Mormon crickets, we want to know. Potential funding sources are being sought out to provide bait, technical assistance and applicators in 2017. Please call our office and see how we may be of assistance to you. 509-634-2338

Land Operations/Range

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Invasive Weed Work in the Burned area

Status on weeds in the burned areas:

Land Operations staff were busy last fall and this winter seeking and applying for funds to help battle invasive plant species in the recently burned areas.

The primary goals of weed control in the burned area is to keep weeds from spreading from road shoulders into the recently disturbed soil, keep “new invader” species from gaining a foothold in the burned area and to keep previously known weed infestations from spreading.

Currently funds are primarily from BAR (Burned Area Rehabilitation), to treat invasive species along roadsides within and around the Buffalo Lake fire, St. Mary’s Mission Fire, Silver Creek Fire, Devil’s Elbow, 21 mile grade fire and our more recent fires Tunk Block and North Star.

Biological control releases (insects that feed on specific weed species) include insects to control; Canada thistle, common St. Johnswort, Dalmatian toadflax, diffuse and spotted knapweed. Field tests indicate that some species of biological controls did not survive the intense blaze of last year’s wildfire. Therefore releasing biological controls into these expanding weed populations is a very important step in controlling invasive weed species.



Pictured above: recently burned area within the North Star Fire. Pictured below: yellow star thistle in full bloom.

Invasive Plant Species Spot Light: *Yellow Star Thistle*

Yellow star thistle is actually not a thistle at all, but rather a member of the knapweed family. It has proven to be very aggressive and has invaded millions of acres of rangeland in the United States. It’s flowering right now (July-August), so be on the lookout.

Currently in Washington State, yellow star thistle is a Class B weed, meaning that its control is mandated at a county level. Here on the reservation we treat yellow star as a “new invader”, meaning its numbers are still low enough that management with the goal of eradication is still feasible.

This invasive weed prefers south-facing slopes with deep loamy soil. Populations over-winter as rosettes, as well as seed germination in the spring. Flowers are yellow with long spiny bracts.

Horses may be poisoned and can develop chewing disease when feeding on this plant.

Yellow star thistle is one of the most invasive weed species in the Intermountain West. On the Colville Reservation, Yellow star thistle has a very limited distribution. Infestations are currently being managed with herbicides.

Three known areas of yellow star thistle exist near Kewa, on the Reservation boundary near the Inchelium Highway, and in the Tumwater Basin area. If you find this plant please call our office at 509-634-2338.





Pictured from left to right: Pine grass recovering after the burn, fireweed is an important post-fire native plant species that quickly stabilizes the soil and eventually other native beneficial plants will follow, and an example of the monitoring plots established this summer.

NRCS Makes Grazing Recommendations for Tunk and North Star Wildfires

NRCS made assessments to evaluate recovery of vegetation on range units impacted by the 2015 Tunk and North Star wildfires during June of this year. Following their assessment they compiled recommendations for grazing that identified two strategies to be applied based on burn intensity and observed plant recovery.

In areas that experienced light burn intensities plants generally appear to have mostly recovered from damage sustained as a result of the wildfires. Although plants appear healthy and well developed it is likely that many of the plants have not yet fully recovered. Grazing strategy for these sites allows for the option of light grazing after August 1 in 2016 then rest the grazing unit the following May through July and then allow grazing August 1 in 2017. Grazing in 2018 would return to a normal grazing cycle of May through November.

The range units that fall into this above category

are range units; 31, 50, 81, 43 and those portions that burned in range units 36A, 36, 10, 22, the western portion of range unit 5, 16, 45, 48, and 80.

The Tribes entered into a contract with NRCS that will pay money to the Tribes to rest (not graze) for one year range units 31 and 50, so as a result permittees will not be able to graze after August 1 in 2016 on these units as provided as an option in the NRCS recommendations.

In areas that experienced high burn intensities NRCS recommends that no grazing take place in 2016 and that the units be re-evaluated in mid-June 2017 to determine if grazing should be allowed after August 1 of 2017 or rested until 2018. These recommendations apply to the eastern side of range unit 5 that was burned, the portion of range unit 6 that was burned and range units 15, 8, 4, 9, 67, 43A. Of these units that experienced high burn intensities the Tribes will receive money through NRCS to rest for one year, these range units are 15, 8, 4, 12, and 67.

The recommendations were presented to the Natural Resource Committee on August 16, 2016. The Range Program has accepted the recommendations and will be working with permittees to implement them.

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Upcoming Classes and Events

November 2-4, 2016

Wenatchee Convention Center, Wenatchee, WA

This is a 3 day event all about invasive plant species control, this is a great way to get credits for your Washington State Pesticide License. Registration fee is required to attend. To find out more information visit www.weedconference.org

December TBD, 2016

Okanogan Noxious Weed Office will be hosting a weed workshop in December, date has yet to be determined. Please call 509-422-7165 for more information

Sign up for our E-Newsletters

If you would prefer to be added to our e-mail list for distribution of our quarterly newsletters please e-mail:

Danielle.Blevins@bia.gov

Grass Seed

Grass seed is still available for victims of the recent wild fires on the Colville Reservation. Seed is available for help with erosion, invasive plant species and re-seeding of dozer lines.

Please call our office to make your request. A site visit to determine amounts and type of seed will likely be required. Grass seed will be passed out starting in October. Hand seeders and ATV seeders are also available for checkout.

Please contact Jackie Richter at Jackie.richter@colvilletribes.com or 509-322-4807 or the Land Operations Office/ Range at 509-634-2338

Photo Corner

Initial work on installation of the Reservation Boundary fence has begun and is slated for completion by 2017.



Land Operations/Range worked closely with WSU to develop metal signage to highlight invasive aquatic and terrestrial weed species. Signs are being installed at boat launches, campgrounds and other public areas.

A “new invader”, wild parsnip, (*Pastinaca sativa*) has recently been discovered in the Joe Moses drainage and the Nespelem River drainage. Be on the look out for this one as the sap can cause severe burns on the skin when exposed to sunlight.

