

# On the Right Track to Weed Control...

The Okanagan-Similkameen region is recognized nationally for its beautiful natural landscapes and outstanding recreational opportunities. Unfortunately, recreational activities - including mountain biking and road cycling - can contribute to the spread and establishment of invasive plants or 'weeds' that threaten the natural environment. This handout is intended to help you learn how to keep natural areas looking natural and maintain the quality of recreational spaces by biking responsibly.

## **KEEP TRAILS OPEN BY SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE MOUNTAIN BIKING**

### **What are Invasive Plants?**

Invasive plants are non-native plants that have been introduced to Canada, either purposefully or by accident. They lack the natural enemies that keep them in check in their native habitats and are therefore competitive, highly destructive and difficult to control.



Staying on designated bike routes is the easiest way to help prevent the spread of invasive plants. Bikes can easily pick up weed seeds or plant fragments along trail or road edges. Biking off the path in natural areas can also fragment habitats and open corridors for weeds to spread. If new trails are created, whenever possible make use of previously disturbed areas such as old roads, skid trails or game/livestock tracks. New trails and or parking/staging spots should not be created in areas prone to runoff or areas with established weed infestations.

Bike handling is also essential to maintaining the condition of existing trails. Side skidding, excessive braking and high speeds facilitate soil erosion and compaction. These conditions are ideal for invasive plants, which often have extensive root systems that allow plants to persist in the degraded soils that our native vegetation cannot. If allowed to establish, weeds can form dense infestations that undermine wildlife habitat, reduce available forage, increase fire hazards, interfere with recreational enjoyment and reduce the aesthetic appeal of the landscape.

# PREVENTION IS THE BEST SOLUTION

- **Control** your bike
- **Learn** to identify invasive plants
- **Report** new infestations to the Regional Weed Coordinator
- **Stay on designated roads and trails** and avoid crossing weed infested areas
- **Check** your clothing and bike for invasive plant fragments and seeds; place seeds into a refuse bin or bag and properly dispose of later
- **Organize a weed pull or grassland reclamation project** with club members in cooperation with the Regional Weed Coordinator

## Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*)

### REPORT SIGHTINGS



This mat-forming vine contains spiny seedheads that can damage the feet of humans, wildlife and domestic animals, and will readily puncture bicycle tires. 'Hitchhiking' is the primary mechanism for spread of puncturevine, so regularly check bike tires for seeds.

## Hound's-tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*)



Barbed seeds easily attach to clothing and fur. Remove seeds and dispose properly in garbage bins or at the seed source. Stay on designated trails and keep pets on a leash while passing through infested areas.

## Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*)



Also known as 'tumbleweed' – mature plants break at the base and tumble in the wind. Often caught in the undercarriage of vehicles or spokes of wheels.

Seedheads are extremely spiny and may scratch or cause a mild rash.

For further information on weeds in BC, check out the provincial website at [www.weedsbc.ca](http://www.weedsbc.ca) or for more information about the RDOS Invasive Plant Program and local weed alerts, call 250-492-0237 or toll free at 1-877-610-0237.

Information is also available on the RDOS website at [www.rdos.bc.ca](http://www.rdos.bc.ca)

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