



2005 Japanese Knotweed Removal Review



Volunteers attacking the large knotweed stand on the southside of DeBoville Slough

This was the initial year of the Japanese Knotweed Management Program at DeBoville Slough. As this was our first attempt at controlling knotweed we weren't quite sure how to go about tackling the problem. After doing some research it was decided that we wouldn't use herbicides, due to the possible effect on the aquatic and riparian habitat. Digging probably would not be appreciated by the Diking Authority (rhizomes go up to 15 feet underground). Any broken rhizomes could start new plants. The plan was then to cut the knotweed as close to the ground as possible and do this a number of times over the growing season, hopefully starving the plants of energy and nutrition. This will have to be repeated over a number of years. As this would be a large job from a manpower prospect we realized that we would need a fairly large volunteer workforce. We were fortunate that Caresse Selk, City of Coquitlam, Parks and Open Spaces Services, was able to arrange a grant from the Province of BC, to help our efforts. These funds went to buying tools, renting disposal bins, advertising, incineration and new native plants.

The program consisted of three knotweed work parties and one planting work party. Before each work party the event was advertised in the local paper. We had a great response and averaged about 25 volunteers for each of the knotweed removal work parties including many Burke Mountain Naturalist and Riverview Centre Horticulture Society members. Some of these volunteers have now become FODBS members. We enjoyed sunshine and on two of the days, hot conditions. Wesbild supplied much support in additional manpower, food & beverages and heavy equipment.

The three work parties, May 30th, July 17th & Sept 10th, produced a total of 5,370 kg of removed material with the first removal being the largest at 1,940 kg. Large disposal bins were rented and boy did we need them. There was some confusion at first as to where the material was to be disposed of. Members concerns led to the use of the GVRD's Burnaby Incinerator. I don't think that most of us initially realized the scope of the project. Wesbild and their heavy equipment came in handy. It felt particularly good when we had cut all of the knotweed from the large stand on the south side of the slough. In all we worked on controlling all of the knotweed on the Southside and about 40% on the north side of DeBoville Slough.



Heavy equipment at work



Test shaded area

of the signs we placed in the area to inform the public of the work are still there. We will have to keep a close watch and if the plastic starts to deteriorate, remove it before it shreds and pollutes the surrounding area.

In a second area, on the north side, inside the dike area, we did a native planting. The purpose is to see if we keep the knotweed under control will the native plants then provide enough shade to further inhibit the regrowth of the knotweed. In total we planted just over thirty plants of seven different species. In addition we have another twenty or so plants held in reserve for more plantings, either on more knotweed sites, the protected triangle on the north side or with the new kiosk.



Drizzly morning for planting

Now for this coming year, we need to assess the success of last years work and plan for the upcoming year. I think that we started late with our first cutting. There are two thoughts on the timing of the cuttings. A. start earlier and cut often, B. wait till there is substantial growth. The advantage of A is by cutting early we won't have to deal with as large a volume as last year and by cutting often hopefully starve the rhizomes. B assumes that if we cut when the plant is large it will have put a lot of energy into the growth and will be weakened by cutting at this time. Perhaps we can treat two areas with each of these approaches and see which works best.

Thanks to all of the volunteers for all of their hard work, with out them what we have accomplished would have been impossible. Thanks to Wesbild for all of their help. A special thanks to Caress Selk from the City of Coquitlam for work above and beyond her job description.

