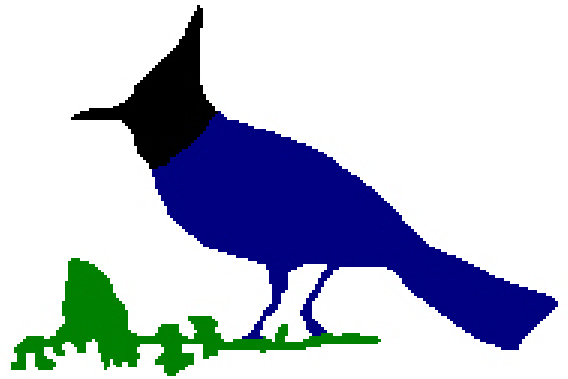


Nature Notes

Invaders of the Park



Invasive plants, otherwise known as noxious weeds, are non-native plants that have been introduced to an area either purposefully or by accident. Unfortunately some of these plants have made their way into the Kimberley Nature Park (KNP). These plants arrive without natural enemies which gives them a competitive advantage over native species. Destructive to the native plant community and difficult to control, invasive plants are a major threat to biodiversity. In fact, invasive plants are second only to habitat loss as a threat to Canada's biodiversity.

Although not a factor in the KNP, a major cause of invasive plant spread is seed distribution via the undercarriage of motorized vehicles. In the KNP seeds with burrs can be caught on clothing or pets and



Dalmatian Toadflax (L Duncan)

dropped further down the trail. Bikes can also easily pick up weed seeds. The potential for weed spread can be reduced by all users staying on established trails to prevent habitat fragmentation and opening of corridors for weeds to spread.

Besides knapweed and toadflax, which can be found almost anywhere in Kimberley, there are some other plants to watch for. Vipers Bugloss or blueweed is rather pretty with its bright blue flowers but can produce 500 to 2000 seeds per plant. Cheatgrass is a prolific weedy annual that takes advantage of disturbed areas,

chokes out native grasses and has very low nutrient value for grazing animals.

Prevention is the best solution to this growing problem. Users of the KNP can assist in preventing the spread of invasive plants in the park by learning to identify these plants and reporting sightings to the Nature Park Society. Checking your clothing and pets for plant fragments and disposing of the seeds, staying on designated trails and participating in organized weed pulls are things we all can do. If we all do our part the KNP can be kept as weed-free as possible.



Blueweed (L Duncan)