

From: Liz Steele [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2026 2:14 PM
To: Susan Yates <syates@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Tobi Elliott <telliott@islandstrust.bc.ca>; northinfo <northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Draft OCP: Adding Management of Invasive Plant Species in the OCP

Dear Islands Trustees and Staff,

Please consider the text below as justification for an addition to the OCP.

Thank you.
Liz Steele and Terry Rollerson
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

In some Native languages, the term for plants translates to “those who take care of us.”
Robin Wall Kimmerer

We are concerned about the lack of commitment by many Islanders to remove invasive plant species from their properties.

Our concern about invasive plants is not about aesthetics. Invasive plants—many are toxic!—displace native plants on which every Gabriola creature, human or not, depend.

For several years GaLTT’s amazing volunteers have tried to lead by example, but still vast patches of invasive plants exist. While undertaking our own tansy ragwort removal along the sides of the lower part of Barrett Road, a person stopped by and said “there’s lots up on Moby Dick,” to which we responded, “maybe the people up there will pull it,” and to which her reaction was a grumpy face at our unwillingness to work—likely on an ongoing basis—on her behalf for free. Trying to get someone else to take care of the problem is not a new story. Broombusters told us they regularly had passers-by ask—in all seriousness—if the volunteers would come and clean up invasions on their property.

Just as the Freshwater Footprint report (page 7) emphasizes “changing individual lifestyles” for a sustainable supply of water; the RDN holds individuals accountable for mis-sorting items for garbage, compost and recycling bins; and RDN and IT bylaws on numerous other issues hold individuals responsible, so must individuals step up to eradicate invasive plant species. It is past time for individual owners to be responsible for their own property as well as the road allowance that exists alongside it.

Since invasive plants do not pay any attention to property boundaries, this is certainly an area in which neighbours must work together. If people do not adequately manage invasive plant species, those species easily and continuously force neighbours who are diligent on their property to unnecessarily do more removal, i.e., more work. This builds resentment that erodes our ability to remain civil. The OCP must have a policy for invasive species management that is enforced by a bylaw that applies to all Gabriola, not just individual DPAs as related to development.

Trustee Yates has requested of others more involved in this issue an answer to the question, “What are the barriers to having a by-law about removing invasive plant species?” The answers have not yet been sent to her. Could the barriers be:

1. *Administrative Expense?* There is no need for any administration of a database of plant species. Any Bylaw can simply refer to any plant species noted as invasive on the web site of the [Coastal Invasive Species Committee](#). No doubt, Bylaw Enforcement would have more work, but a three- to five-year grace period with a serious education program could significantly reduce the effect on the ongoing workload of Bylaw Enforcement. During the grace period, people could remove plants themselves, ask for help from family and friends, or even hire a contractor to do the job (economic growth!). At the end of the grace period and upon the usual complaint process, the fine to the landowner would be the full cost of removal by a contractor, just as is done for unsightly premises. **We share the environment, and we must act to be caring stewards on behalf of all creatures—apparently, by law, since we have proven so completely we cannot do it without law.**
2. *Responsibility for Parks and Shared Spaces?* People need to realize how important it is to keep our parks and shared spaces free of invasive plants. GaLTT’s education program could perhaps be repeated, with an emphasis on treasuring—and not recycling—the coloured identification handout. Or, how about species-specific, seasonal

ad campaigns to “Just pull one for Gabriola.” Imagine if everyone who walked Gabriola’s trails just pulled one Daphne or Tansy each time they were out: two seasons, and Tansy would be gone. It might take four or five seasons for Daphne, but eradication is a reasonable goal with an educated and community-wide effort. A “Just pull one for Gabriola” campaign could include a tag line “to reduce your taxes,” since tax savings is a benefit of volunteer work that would keep out invasive plants and reduce Bylaw Enforcement time. In such a campaign, it would be important to clarify step-by-step how to deal with each plant because confusion exists about what can and cannot go be left on-site to rot, what can into the RDN Organics Cart, and what must be taken to the Transfer Station.

3. *Not Our Jurisdiction?* Plants are fundamental to our environment and thereby the jurisdiction of all government levels. Local jurisdictions, such as the [Islands Trust](#), the [City of Nanaimo](#), and the [RDN](#), all very clearly acknowledge the serious problem of invasive plant species, as does the [Province](#). As reported on July 29, 2026, the [City of Surrey](#) is moving ahead with plans to ban the sale of invasive plant species **because they are a threat to local ecosystems, waterways and biodiversity**.

Since plants are the foundation of the environment we are responsible for stewarding, please include in the OCP management of invasive plant species as the mandated responsibility of everyone on our precious Island.