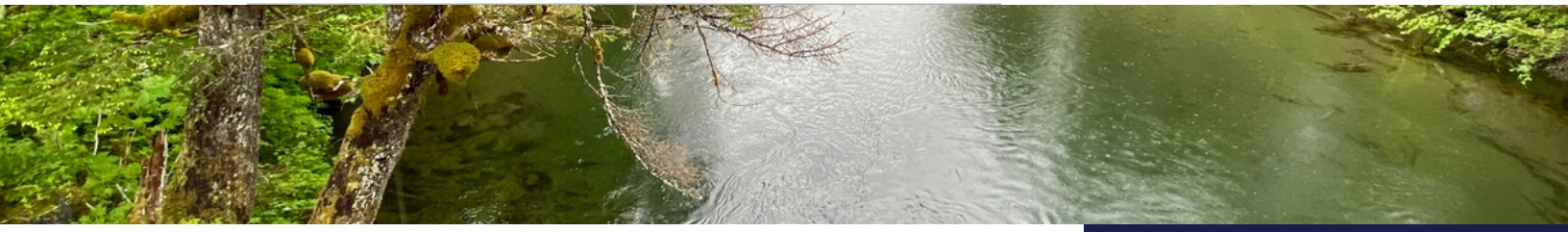
AKISP
ALASKA INVASIVE SPECIES PARTNERSHIP

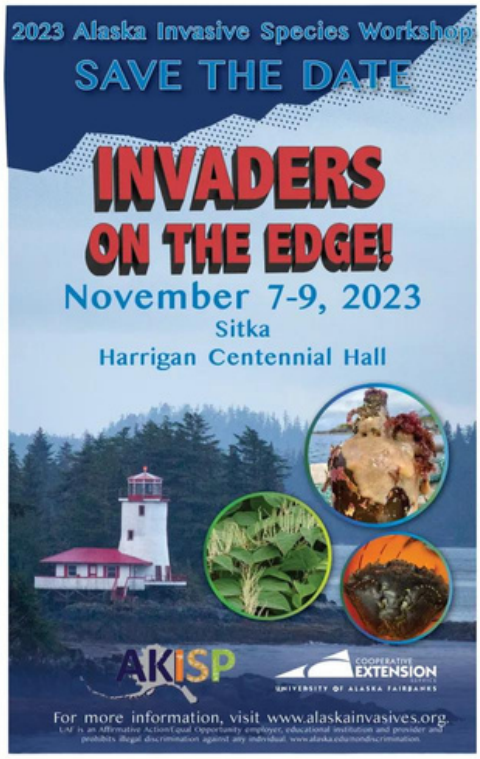
Fall 2023 Newsletter



2023 Alaska Invasive Species Workshop Registration Open!

November 7th-9th, Sitka, AK

The 2023 Alaska Invasive Species Workshop is right around the corner - November 7th-9th. Tune in remotely, or join us - in person - in Sitka for three days of presentations, panel discussions, and connecting with invasive species professionals concerned citizens from around the state.



Visit www.alaskainvasives.org for more information and to register ($100 virtual, $160 in-person). The draft agenda is now available!

We'll see you in November!

IN THIS ISSUE

Invasive European Green Crab in Southern Southeast Alaska Workshop

by Genelle Winter, Metlakatla Indian Community Department of Fish & Wildlife

Metlakatla Indian Community Department of Fish & Wildlife, in partnership with Alaska Sea Grant, were excited to welcome 33 visitors to Metlakatla on April 24th. They were part of a two-day Green Crab Workshop. The first day was held in Ketchikan, and the second day they came to Metlakatla via an Allen Marine charter.

The workshop included representatives from Alaska Sea Grant, Washington Sea Grant, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida, Ketchikan Indian Community, the SEATOR organization, NOAA-NMFS, ADF&G, USGS and private citizens, as well as MIC staff.

This interactive portion of the workshop allowed participants to get hands-on experience with green crab trapping. Participants were taught how traps are being set and had time to discuss the pros and cons of different traps.

Green Crab scientists led groups to help them learn how to look and where to look for green crab. This included a section on how to collect important data and discuss the different ways communities throughout Southeast Alaska will contribute to surveying for green crab.

The Metlakatla Indian Community was excited to co-host this event with Alaska Sea Grant. We thank Alaska Sea Grant for making this possible! We would also like to thank the Annette Island School District for providing transportation around the island and MIC Fish & Wildlife Department staff for their hard work!

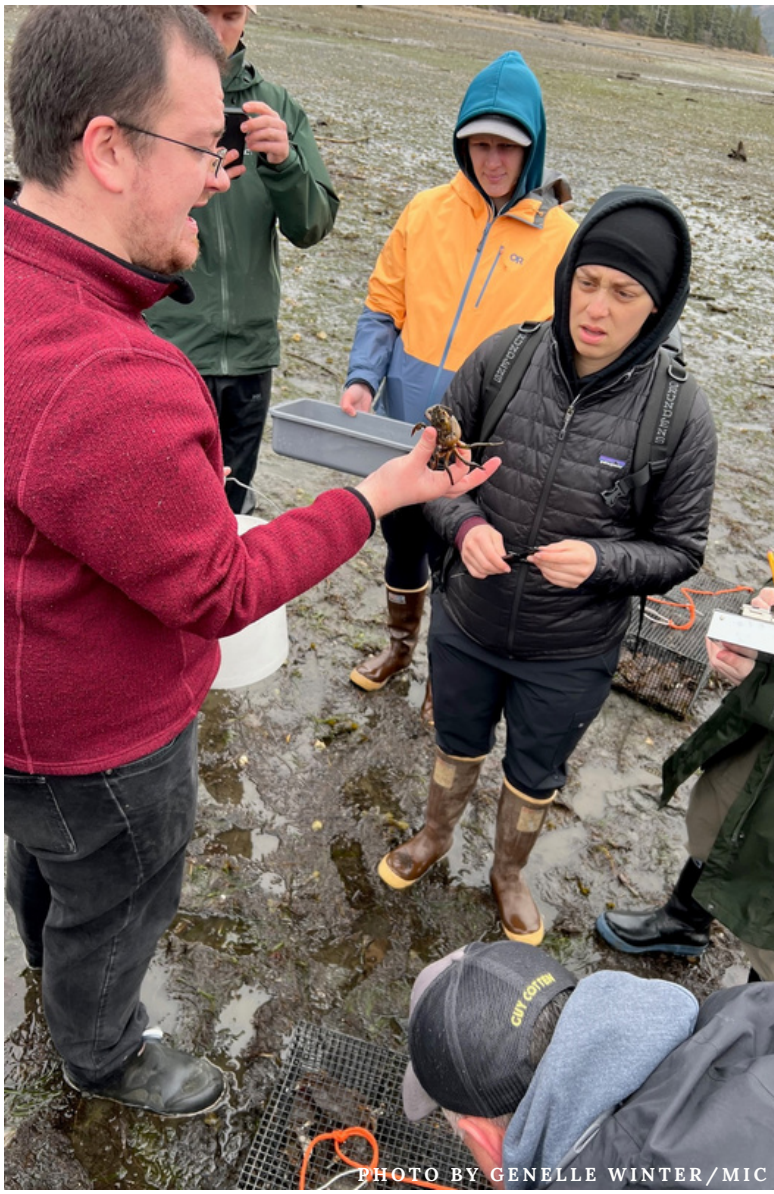


PHOTO BY GENELLE WINTER/MIC

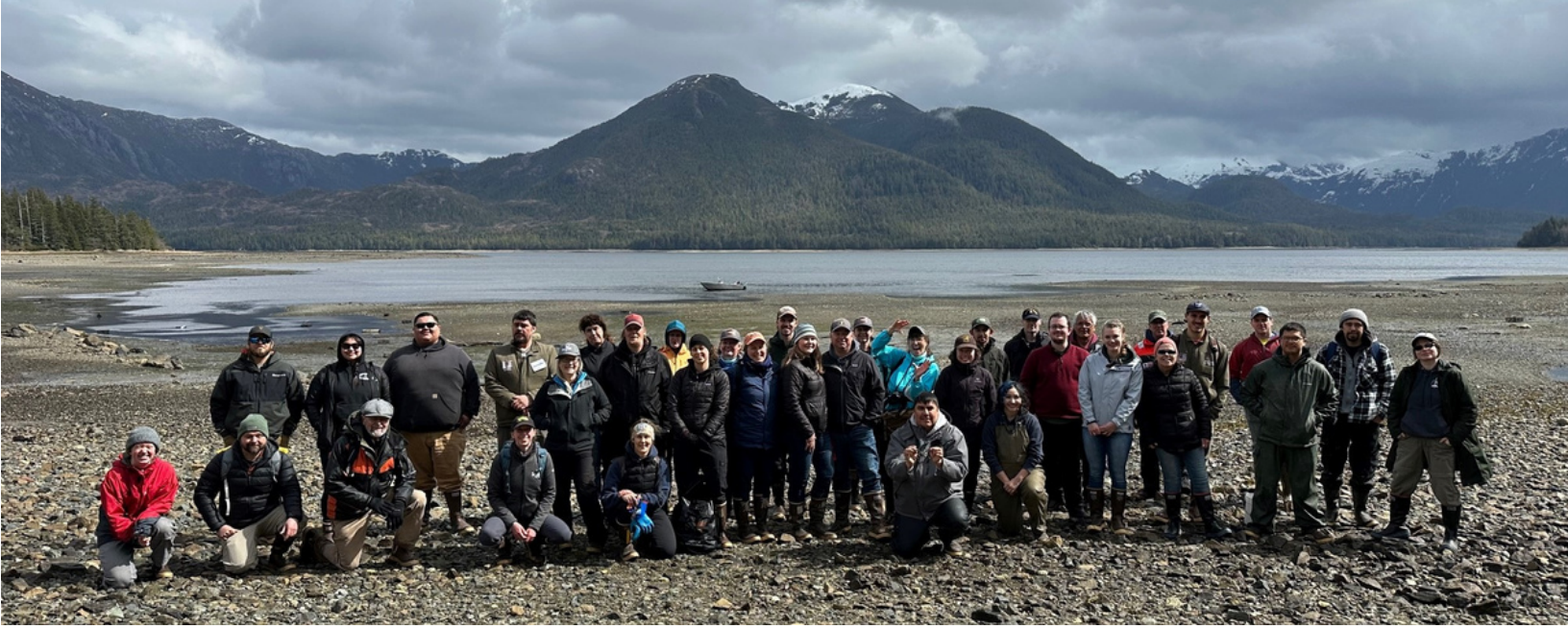
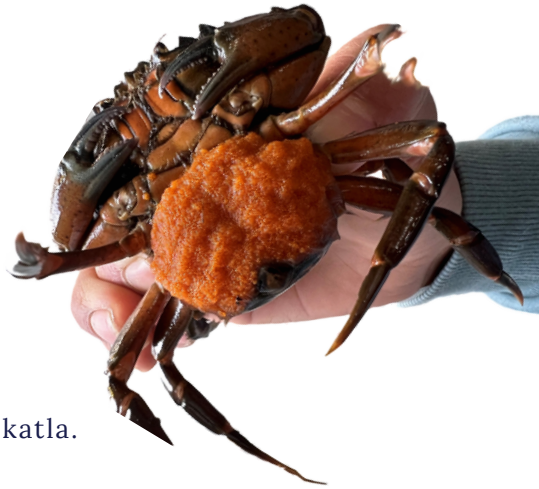


PHOTO BY GENELLE WINTER/MIC

Since this workshop, there have been others held in Prince of Wales and Sitka, as well as the Response Drill in Homer - we hope these efforts increase awareness of the threat of a green crab invasion.

Additionally, on September 18th-22th, MIC was pleased to host Emily Grason from Washington Sea Grant. She joined our team in the field, trapped crabs, evaluated habitat, and supported the team with data collection and evaluation. Her visit was greatly appreciated, and our team feels very appreciative of her insight and ongoing support.



As of Friday, October 6th, **2806** green crabs have been trapped in Metlakatla.

Pictured (right): gravid female caught in April 2023

Invasive Species News & Research

The Republic of Cows: When habitat loss is one of the biggest issues facing wild animals, why has Alaska given an uninhabited, remote island to feral cattle?, text by Jude Isabella - photos and video by Shanna Baker. Hakai Magazine, August 15, 2023.

Artist Invites Volunteers to Pull Invasive Plants from Vancouver Island Forest as an Act of Decolonization, Kathryn Marlow, CBC News, August 16, 2023.

Hanberry, Brice. 2023. Non-native plant species richness and influence of greenhouses and human populations in the conterminous United States. Ecological Processes. 12. 10.1186/s13717-023-00439-8.

Invasive Plants Brought to Maui by Colonists Helped Fuel the Wildfires, Jeffrey Kluger. Time Magazine, August 17, 2023.

Sweet, gooey poop and a taste for grapes: 7 wild facts about the spotted lanternfly, Marielle Segarra, NPR Life Kit. Also, download the cool Wild Facts about Spotted Lanternflies poster!

The Movement to Rename Species: Common names of some species have not aged well. Some scientists want to change them, text by Suzanne Goldsmith - illustrations by Zoe Keller, The Nature Conservancy Magazine, August 25, 2003.

Upcoming Events

ALASKA

Alaska Invasive Species Workshop: November 7-9, Sitka

Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium: November 13-14, Palmer

Alaska Invasive Species Partnership monthly meeting: First Wednesday of the month. Partnership meeting at 9:00 a.m., followed by board meeting at 10:00 a.m. Next meeting will be Wednesday, November 1.

OUTSIDE ALASKA

National Firewood Month: October

North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) Annual Conference: October 16-19, Lincoln, Nebraska

2023 Pacific Regional Conference - Native American Fish and Wildlife Society: October 16-19, Worley, Idaho

Weed Science Society of America Annual Meeting: January 22-25, 2024, San Antonio, TX

National Invasive Species Awareness Week: February 26-March 3, 2024

23rd Annual International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species: May 12-16, 2024, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Experimental Trials with Chicken Tractors for Management of Orange Hawkweed

by Casey Greenstein, Homer Soil & Water Conservation District

In 2019 I had a yard full of orange hawkweed, in 2022 it was gone. I didn't dig it up, tarp it, or use chemicals. How did I get rid of it? I didn't. My chickens did.

Working with the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District, we applied for funding to see if we could recreate these results on a smaller spatial footprint, in a shorter amount of time, and controlling for variables that could skew the results. The Hickerson Cemetery on Diamond Ridge in Homer was the perfect laboratory. It has an even, flat, mowed carpet of 90% hawkweed with a handful of other species in the mix.

While it's well known that chickens will scratch and peck down to bare ground, there's little documentation of how long it typically takes, or what grows back the fastest and most abundantly.

This experiment tested different time intervals – two weeks, four weeks, and six weeks – to compare the impacts chickens have on plant regrowth. Chickens were housed in 8x3 foot tractors (mobile coops).

After two weeks in one spot, the vegetation was mostly gone, but once the chicken tractors were moved, the area regrew quickly with lots of grasses and dandelions. Happily, there was far less orange hawkweed.

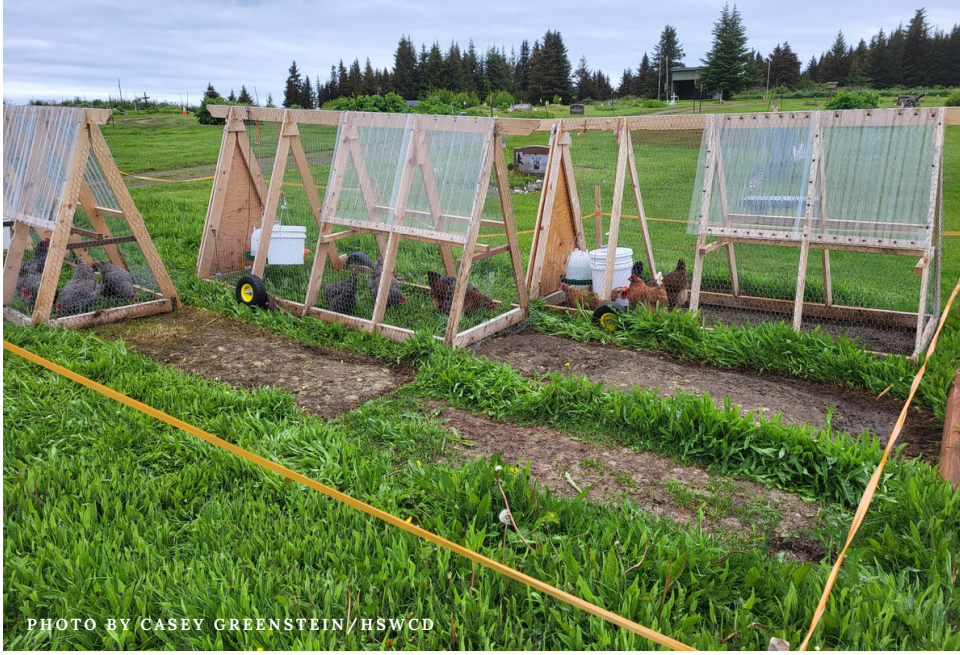


PHOTO BY CASEY GREENSTEIN/HSWCD

After four weeks in one spot, the vegetation was completely gone and didn't grow back for four weeks. This time only a few stems of grasses and dandelions emerged.

After six weeks in one spot, nothing reemerged in the following four weeks. Looks like our feathered friends ate up all the rhizomes and seeds in this amount of time.

These results are promising, showing that regrowth in the short term is mostly grasses and dandelions, with far less orange hawkweed. However, in time, rhizomes and stolons could creep back in, and seeds could arrive from nearby flowers. We'd like to do more controlled experiments in the future, for example to see if reseeding after chickens with native plants prevents hawkweed reestablishment.

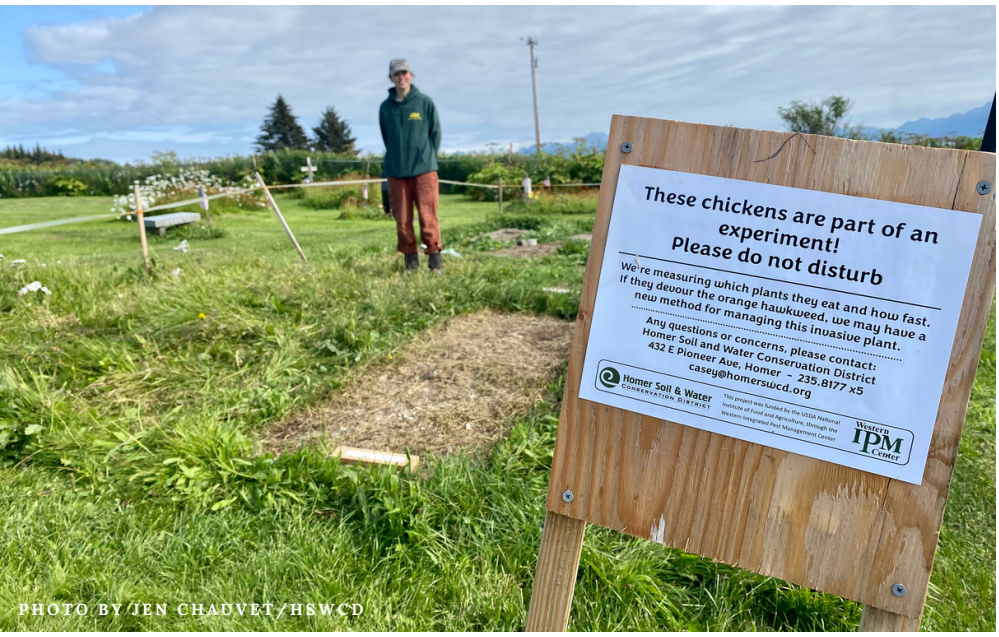


PHOTO BY JEN CHAUVET/HSWCD

We'd also like to study how chicken manure changes soil chemistry, and in turn, plant growth. Are there other soil amendments we can add to change species composition? What about rotational grazing, where chickens are moved on and off the same patch of ground multiple times? Stayed tuned for future studies diving deeper into the role chickens can play in invasive species management and environmental conservation.

Thanks to the Western IPM Center for funding this project, to the City of Homer for their support and access to the Hickerson Cemetery, and the amazing staff at the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District for making this happen!

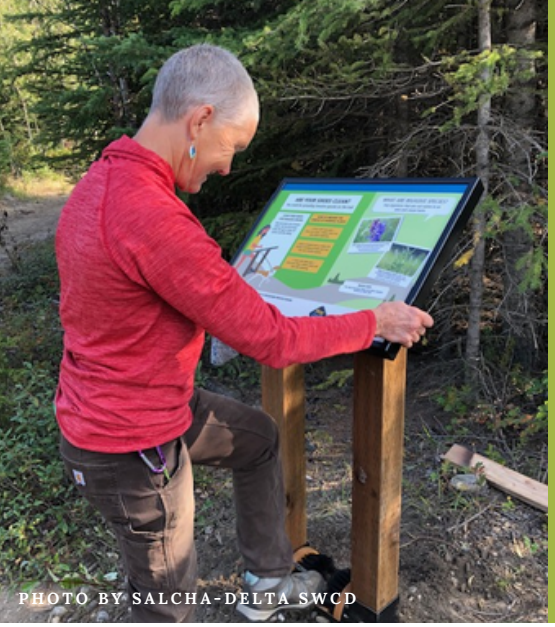


PHOTO BY SALCHA-DELTA SWCD

Delta Junction Boot Brush Stations

Contributed by Summer Nay, Salcha-Delta SWCD

Members of the Delta Junction Trails Association and a Delta Junction High School class helped the Salcha-Delta SWCD install PlayCleanGo boot brush stations and interpretive signs at the River Walk Park and Liewer Community trailheads in August. The signs inform trail users of common invasive and noxious plant species found in Alaska and remind them to think about the species they may be unknowingly carrying on their shoes.

Field Season Highlights from Around the State

Invasive Dame's Rocket Removal on Kodiak

Contributed by Blythe Brown, Kodiak SWCD

Morgan Polodna and Masumi Palhof from Kodiak SWCD pulled invasive dame's rocket at a remote setnet site on the west side of Kodiak Island. In partnership with Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge and the MV *Ursa Major II*, they participated in a 7-day trip along the remote west side of Kodiak Island, visiting refuge-owned and privately-owned setnet sites, old canneries, and other remote cabins and human footprint sites. Although dame's rocket is only rated 41 on the Invasive Plant Ranking System, we have observed this species regularly escaping from gardens around the Kodiak Archipelago.

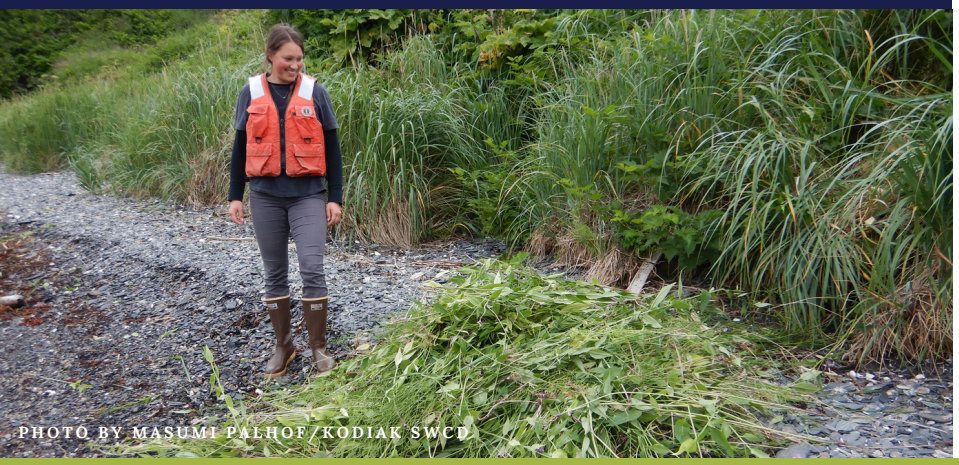


PHOTO BY MASUMI PALHOF/KODIAK SWCD

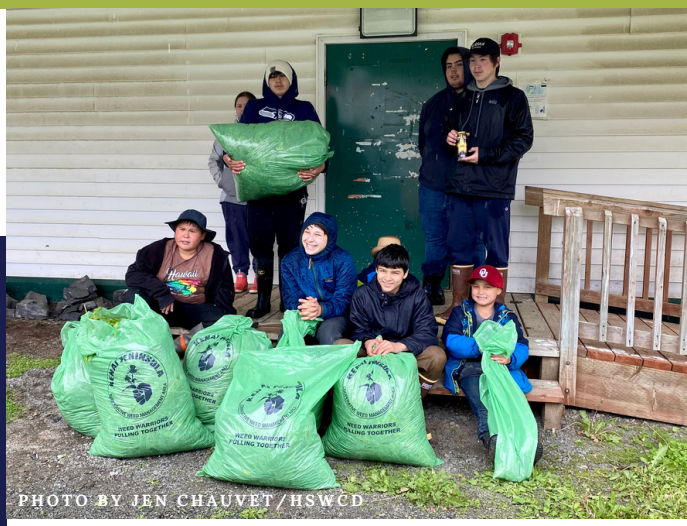


PHOTO BY JEN CHAUVET/HSWCD

Port Graham Invasive Plant Surveys and Workshop

Contributed by Jen Chauvet, Homer SWCD

In June, staff from Homer SWCD and Chugach Regional Resources Commission had the opportunity to visit Port Graham for invasive plant surveys and to lead a community workshop and weed pull. Over 20 community members showed up for lunch, the workshop, and a conversation about invasive plant priorities for the village. And a dozen hardy folks - including an energetic group of youths - came out in the rain to pull orange hawkweed. Thanks to the community of Port Graham for the hospitality!

Field Season Highlights from Around the State

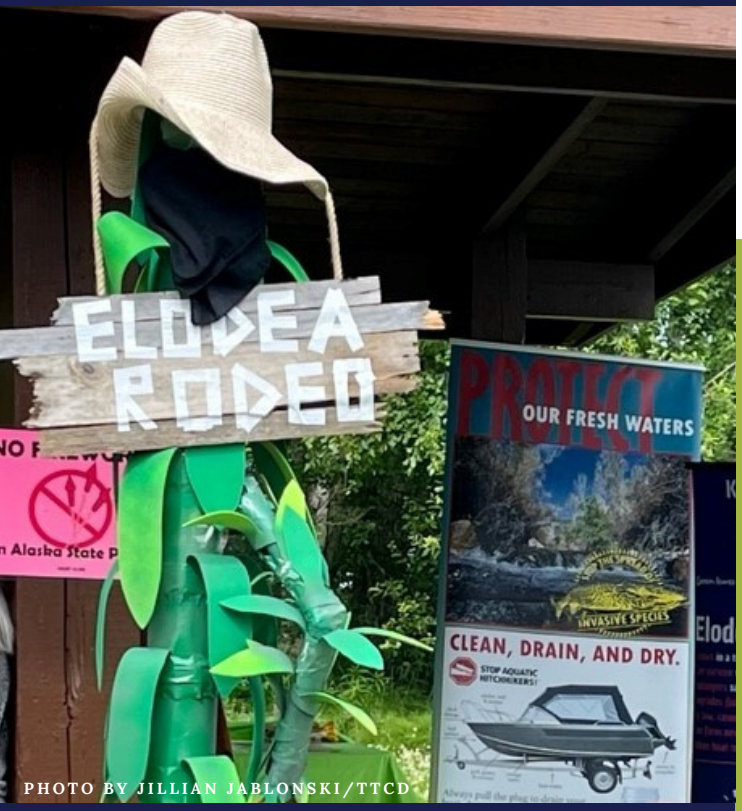


PHOTO BY JILLIAN JABLONSKI/TTCD

Elodea Rodeo

Contributed by Ashley Lutto, USFWS

Partners from US Fish and Wildlife Service, Tyonek Tribal Conservation District, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska State Parks, and the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership hosted the Big Lake Rodeo to raise awareness of the impacts of Elodea. There were crafts for kids, watercraft inspection and cleaning demonstration, Clean Drain Dry materials, Elodea rake throw sampling demonstrations, native vegetation identification, and several other stations. Plus, it wouldn't be a rodeo without a cowboy...in this case, a giant paper mâché Elodea cowboy!

You [Zebra and Quagga mussels] Shall Not Pass...

Contributed by Ashley Lutto, USFWS

The watercraft inspection and decontamination station (WID) crew at the Alcan Port of Entry had another busy summer. Seasonal biological technicians with US Fish and Wildlife Service searched for quagga and zebra mussel evidence on watercraft coming from the lower-48 and Canada. Alaska is one of only five western states not infested by invasive quagga or zebra mussels! From the end of April through the end of August, the WID crew inspected 653 watercraft coming across the border. Thankfully, there weren't any high-risk watercraft this year and no evidence of mussels found! However, the crew came prepared with a full-portable decontamination station in case it was needed.

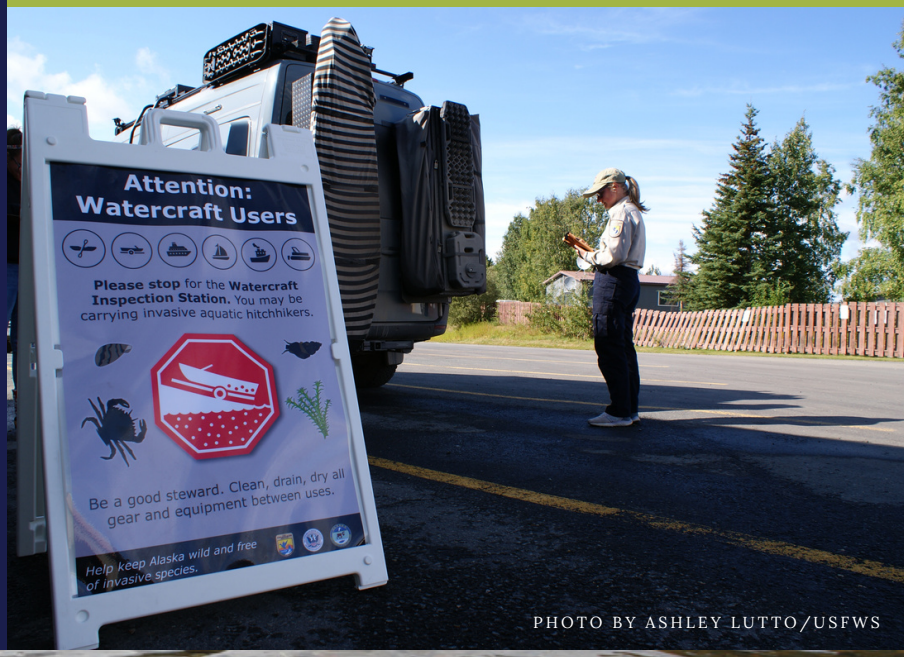
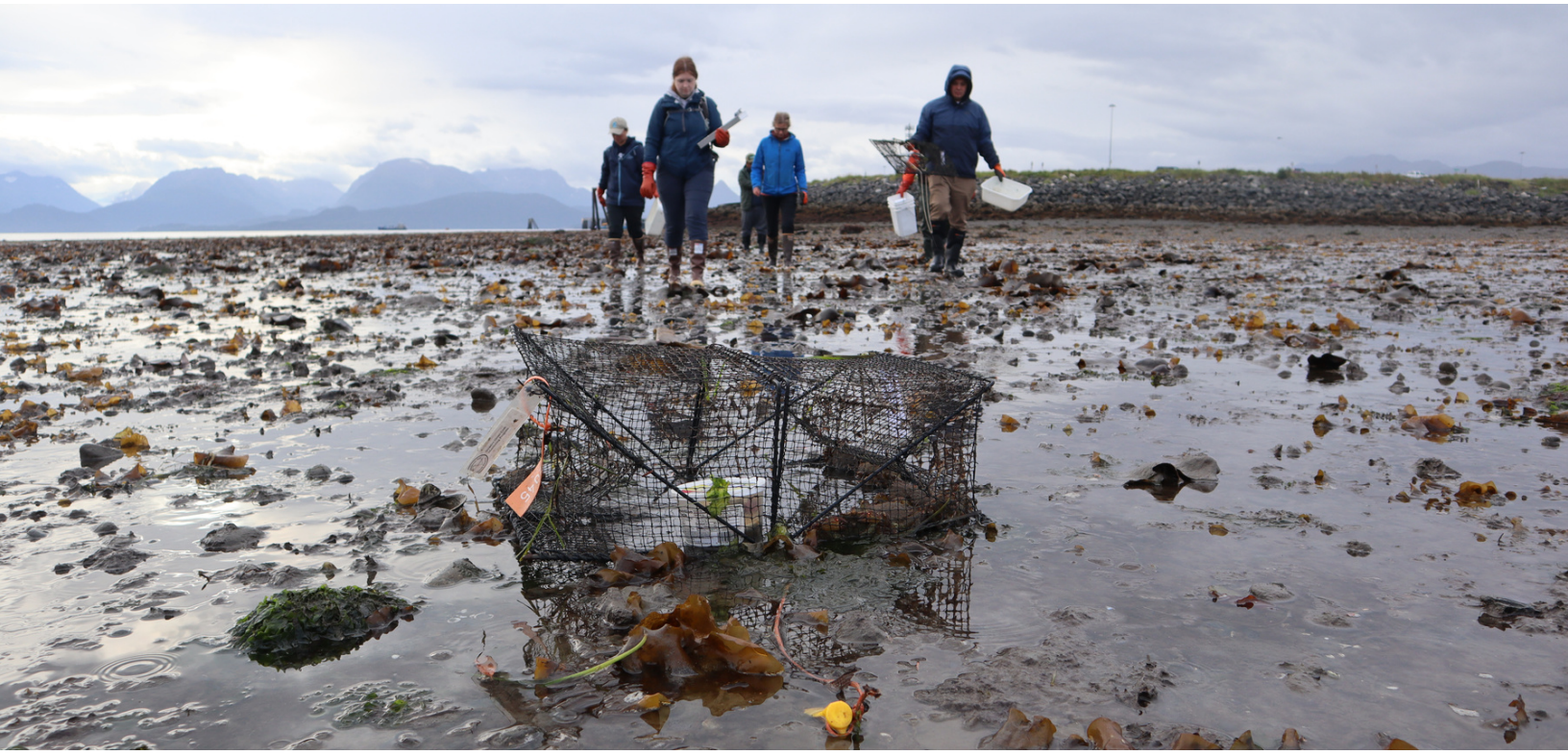


PHOTO BY ASHLEY LUTTO/USFWS


PHOTO BY USFWS

Alaska Prepares for European Green Crab Invasion at Rapid Response Exercise in Homer

by Tammy Davis, ADF&G; Jasmine Maurer, KBNERR; and Ben Wishnek, USFWS



Prior to the discovery of EGC in Alaska in 2022, AKISP partners saw European green crab (EGC) on the horizon and wanted to mobilize to prepare for an invasion of EGC before it showed up in the State. In late 2020 and early 2021, partners developed a proposal to fund revision of the State's rapid response plan for the species and conduct a rapid response drill that would inform the final revisions of the rapid response plan. After two attempts to secure funding from different USFWS funding sources, a third attempt yielded funds to begin the process of plan revision in Fall 2022 that would culminate in drill implementation and plan finalization in Fall 2023. The importance of the issue was highlighted by additional matching funding to a portion of the project by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

After European green crabs were confirmed by Metlakatla Indian Community in summer 2022, many AKISP Marine Committee and EGC Subcommittee conversations have highlighted the importance of preparedness. The discovery of EGC in Alaska made the rapid response drill feel more meaningful to be able to sit down with Partners and invited participants to spend two and a half days discussing the

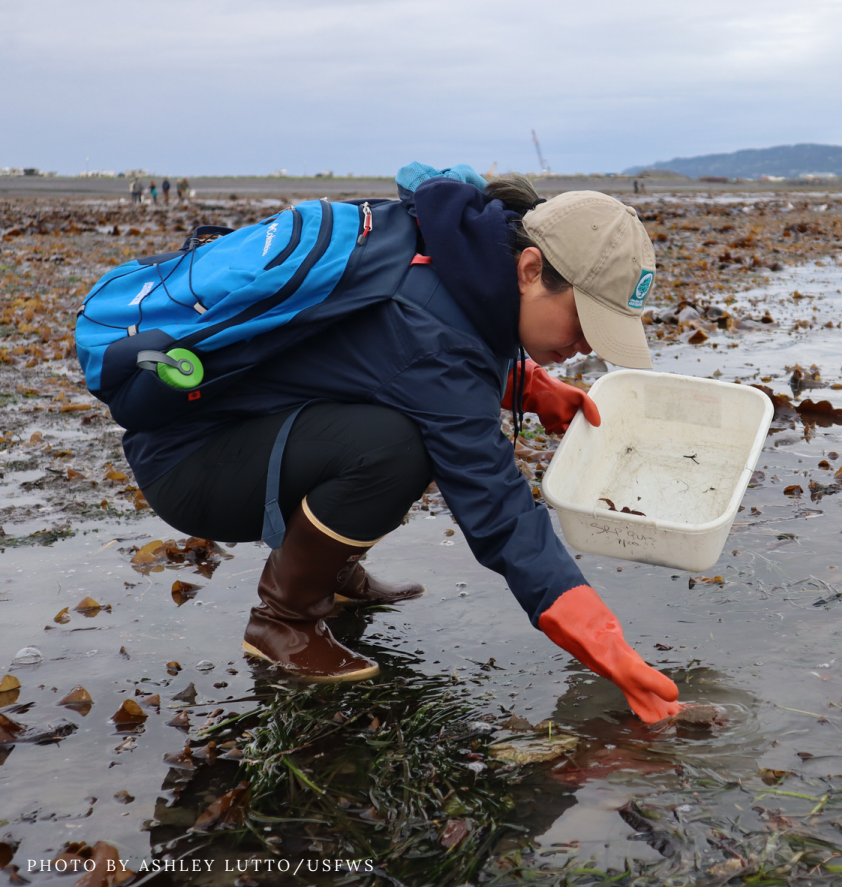


PHOTO BY ASHLEY LUTTO/USFWS

actions we can do to protect nearshore resources from invasive EGC by pulling together. During the European green crab rapid response exercise in Homer, August 29th-31st, participants learned about the invasive crab, grappled with data gaps, roles and responsibilities, resource needs, and identified existing capacity. Our goal was to consider all the variables as if a new detection of EGC had recently occurred in different scenarios. Participants also heard from the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife on how WA has managed their Emergency Response. Washington's governor approved $8.8 million in emergency funds to respond to the exponential increase of European green crab in their local waterways.

The project planning team homed in on having a diverse cross section of tribal, NGO, local, state, and federal partners, and a limited number of participants from each entity for a balanced approach in participation. Some participants have monitored for EGC, and others were new to the subject. All were engaged and contributed to increasing preparedness to respond to this new invader. One participant said, "The rapid response exercise exceeded my expectations." Many coastal communities are vulnerable to EGC in Alaska, so choosing the location of the drill was difficult. Ultimately, Homer was chosen for a multitude of reasons, some of the primary ones being a diversity of habitat types in Kachemak Bay that are representative of the Alaskan coast, legacy of a well-established monitoring program (Kachemak Bay NERR), and diversity of local interests (e.g., traditional cultures, ecology, subsistence, fisheries, tourism) that will be negatively impacted by EGC.

After the completion of the drill, the project team is currently working on final revisions to the rapid response plan which will be ready by the end of 2023. A 10-minute video is also in production that highlights the situation in Metlakatla and will then discuss the rapid response drill and planning efforts. Ultimately, this project and video will help to protect our coastal resources and serve as a blueprint to follow for collaborative response to other invasive species that threaten Alaska's natural, cultural, and economic resources.

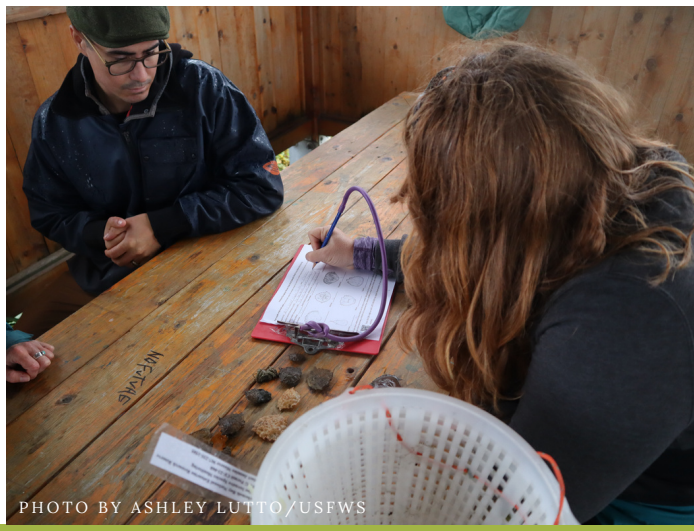


PHOTO BY ASHLEY LUTTO/USFWS

Opportunities & Resources

Call for abstracts - Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium: Deadline October 12th, 2023

Funding - Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund 2024 Request for Proposals: NFWF is soliciting proposals to further conservation of species and habitats in Alaska through the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund. This program invests in projects that achieve or substantially lead to measurable on-the-ground conservation outcomes and fill key information gaps through assessments and strategic monitoring that result in improved habitat or population management actions. Deadline for proposals is October 26, 2023.

Webinar - Nature Out of Place? Brainstorming Best Practices for Communicating About Invasive Plants - January 16, 2024, 8:00 a.m. Alaska Time

Funding - Western IPM Center: 2024 funding cycle for annual grants opens October 2023

For educators - Invasive Species Council of B.C.'s Invasive-Wise lessons and activities

Outside Alaska

In each newsletter, we highlight an invasive species issue beyond Alaska's borders to broaden our understanding of invasive species management on a global scale. This time... creative efforts to reduce invasive Lantana in India's forests by crafting it into furniture.

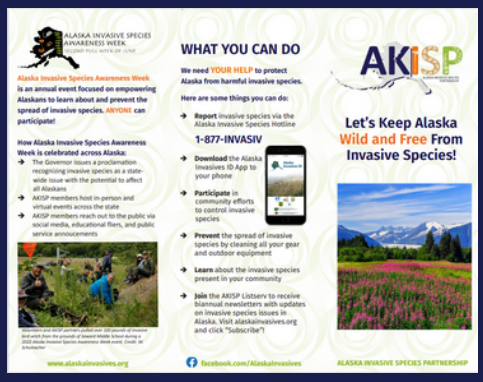


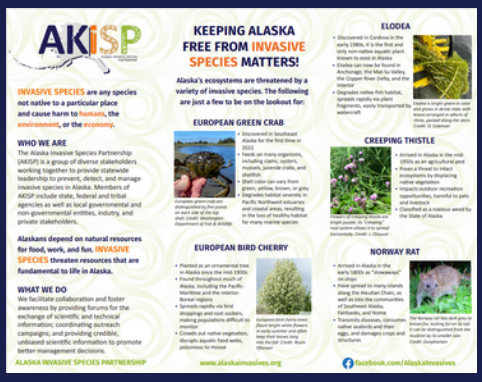

Brought to India in the early 1800s, *Lantana Camara* has since invaded more than 40% of India's forests. The plants form dense thickets that smother native plants, restrict movement of and make food inaccessible to wildlife, and can be toxic to livestock. Large-scale efforts to control *Lantana* have been unsuccessful. But some have created opportunities out of the *Lantana* problem by crafting the branches into furniture, controlling localized populations of the invasive plant and bolstering locals' livelihoods in the process.

PHOTO CREDITS: LANTANA FLOWERS AND LEAVES BY ALVESGASPAR, CC BY-SA 3.0, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; TIGER IN LANTANA, CC/PEGGY BRIGHT; WOMAN COLLECTING LANTANA BY CIFOR VIA FLICKR; MAKING LANTANA INTO FURNITURE, THE LANTANA COLLECTIVE

New Outreach Tool!

In 2023, the AKISP Outreach and Education Committee developed an informational tri-fold, explaining the work of AKISP and highlighting several species of concern. Find a downloadable/printable version on our website!





Get Involved: Join an AKISP Committee!

The AKISP forms standing committees to address specific topics of concern. No matter your interest, there's a committee for you!

Annual Workshop Planning

This committee works throughout the year to plan and prepare for the Annual AKISP Workshop. Contact: Gino Graziano (gagraziano@alaska.edu)

Elodea

The Elodea Committee strives to protect and rehabilitate freshwater ecosystems in Alaska by improving the effectiveness of actions such as research, prevention, early detection, rapid response, outreach, and education through collaboration and resource sharing among partners. Explore the Alaska Elodea Survey Map Viewer to learn more about the status of Elodea in Alaska. Contact: Lisa Dlugolecki (lisa_dlugolecki@fws.gov)

Government Relations

The AKISP Government Relations Committee is dedicated to engaging with governmental entities about invasive species and the AKISP, and to support and inform policies to promote prevention and management of invasive species in Alaska. Contact: Tammy Davis (tammy.davis@alaska.gov)

Marine

The Marine Invasive Species Committee provides a forum for community-based stakeholders to discuss and problem-solve early detection monitoring, education, research, and new detections together with identifying and working to mitigate events that could facilitate the spread of marine invasive species. The committee meets via TEAMS the second Tuesday of each month at 10am and welcomes participation by all interested. A subcommittee focused on European green crab in Alaska meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 11am. Contact Tammy Davis (tammy.davis@alaska.gov) or Danielle Verna (dverna@pwsrcac.org)

Ad Hoc Bylaws

This committee has been meeting in 2023 to update the AKISP Board Bylaws, a requirement every four years. The AKISP membership will vote on the updated bylaws at the 2023 Workshop. Contact: Katherine Schake (kschake@alaska.edu)

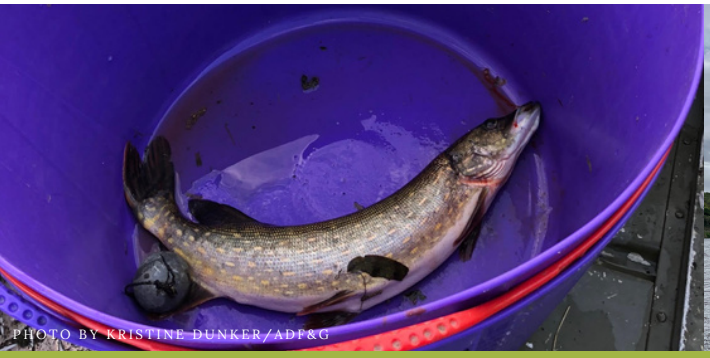


PHOTO BY KRISTINE DUNKER/ADF&G

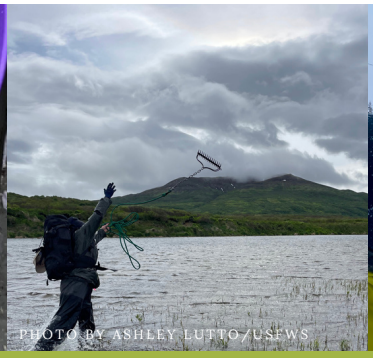
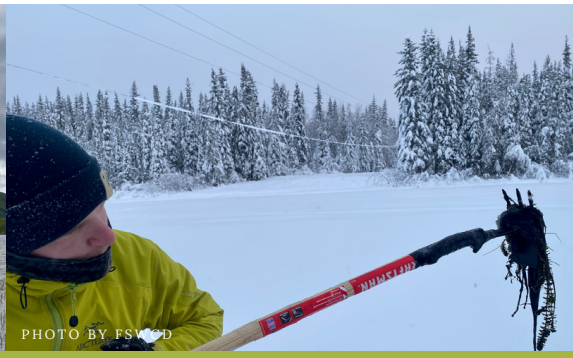


PHOTO BY ASHLEY LUTTO/USFWS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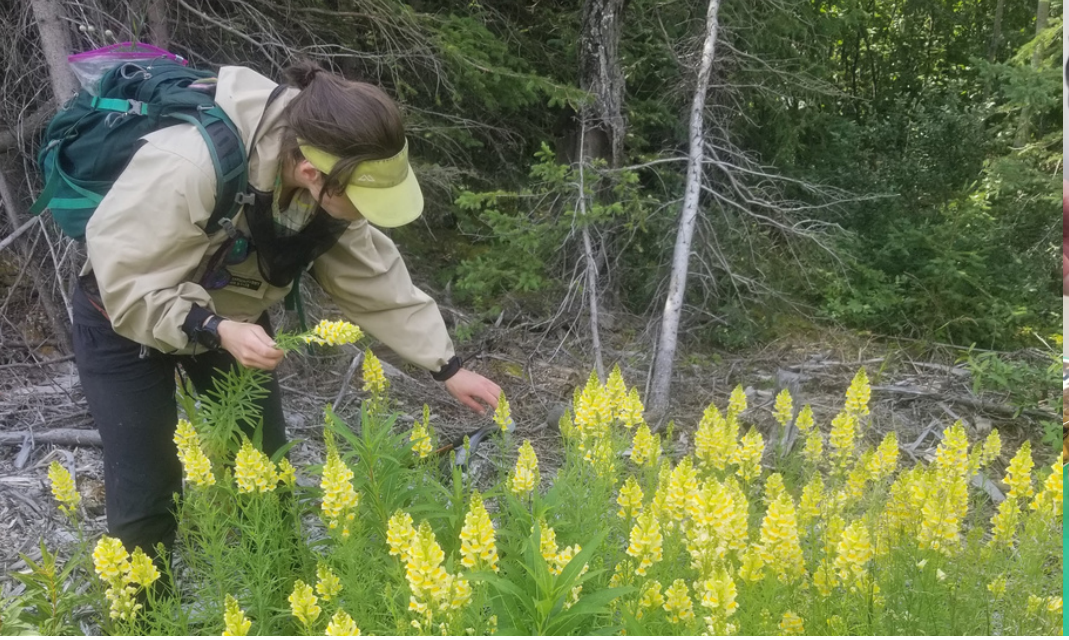

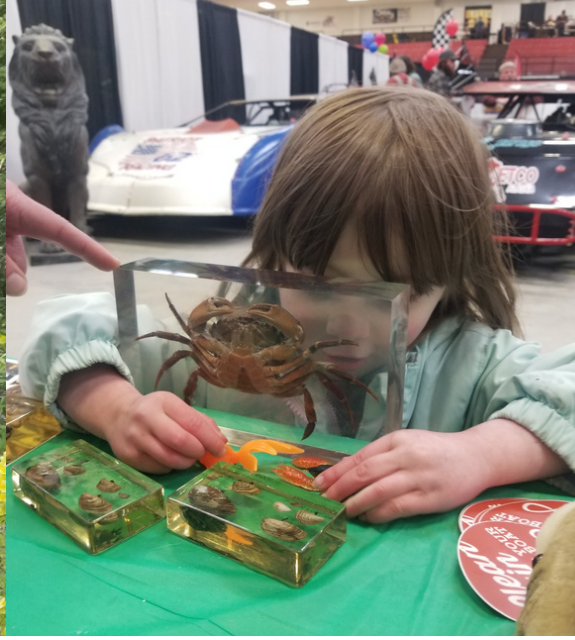

PHOTOS BY MAURA SCHUMACHER

Outreach & Education

The Outreach and Education Committee meets at least once a month, generating discussion and content as it relates to invasive species outreach in Alaska. The O&E Committee also maintains the AKISP Facebook Page - follow and "like" us to stay up to date on all things invasive species in Alaska and beyond! Interested in joining our committee? Reach out to Ashley Lutto at ashely_lutto@fws.gov.

Ad Hoc First Detector

This committee is collaboratively defining communication and best practices for cross-agency collaboration during detections of novel invasive species infestations. Contact: Gino Graziano (gagraziano@alaska.edu)

Northern Pike

The Northern Pike Committee engages in multiple efforts to prevent new introductions of northern pike and control existing populations to benefit native fisheries and ecosystems. Members are actively engaged in outreach on this topic and the committee also maintains the *Technical Guidance and Management Plan for Invasive Northern Pike in Southcentral Alaska: 2022-2030*. This is a living document and serves as the foundation for the committee's collaborative work to prevent northern pike from spreading, remove their populations where feasible, and restore impacted fisheries. Contact: Krissy Dunker (kristine.dunker@alaska.gov) or Parker Bradley (parker.bradley@alaska.gov)

Weed-free Gravel and Forage Certification, Division of Agriculture Program

This committee meets quarterly to provide a mechanism for managing and optimizing the Alaska Weed Free Forage, Straw, Gravel, and Mulch Certification Program. The program's objective is to reduce the potential for transport and dispersal of listed weed species in Alaska through the movement of forage, straw, gravel, and mulch products. Contacts: Summer Nay (summer.nay@salchadeltaswcd.org) or Dan Coleman (Daniel.Coleman@alaska.gov)