Invasive Species in Alaska

CHOKECHERRY

THE PROBLEM

- Invasive chokecherry trees (*Prunus padus* and *Prunus virginiana*) create **dense thickets** that displace native plants.
- This means **less browse** for moose and deer, **fewer berries** and other plants for people to harvest, and **fewer insects** for young salmon to eat.
- Moose, deer, cows and goats can **die from cyanide** produced by the trees.
- Invasive chokecherry trees can host diseases that may spread to valuable fruit trees, **threatening commercial and subsistence food production**.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- Alaska DNR Division of Agriculture implemented a quarantine in 2025 **banning the sale, transport, and import of chokecherry in Alaska**
- Individuals, organizations, and all levels of government are working to educate the public and remove invasive chokecherry trees.
- **$250,000/year** is being spent in four boroughs, the tip of the iceberg for a state-wide issue.
- Neighborhoods, Municipalities, Soil & Water and Tribal Conservation Districts, and NGOs treat **hundreds of trees** annually.
- We are planning **intensive survey and treatment** along the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers where invasive chokecherry is aggressively colonizing riverbanks.



Invasive chokecherry are new to wild places like the Chugach State Park subalpine. There is time to respond.



Moose afflicted by poisoning from chokecherry ingestion. Photo by Stephanie Sell, ©ADF&G, used with permission

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Vote YES on HB 191 and SB 174 to help:

- Support the creation of a **state-wide invasive chokecherry management plan** to strengthen coordination amongst government agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- Capacity is inadequate! Develop ways to **support invasive species programs** of state agencies as well as Soil and Water and Tribal Conservation Districts in their efforts to control invasive chokecherry.

CONSEQUENCES OF NO ACTION

Chokecherry trees are spreading! Without legislation and adequate resources, this invader will continue to impact native habitat important to people and wildlife. We lose time and money as **control and removal costs increase** and habitat is impacted.

LONG STORY SHORT

The aggressiveness of invasive chokecherry in Alaska is like nowhere else in North America. Invasive species like chokecherry directly impact Alaska's way of life and food security. By supporting legislation to manage invasive species, we can prevent these losses.

For additional information, contact the Alaska Invasive Species Partnership: akispboard@gmail.com

AKISP ALASKA INVASIVE SPECIES PARTNERSHIP