

# Noxious Weeds in Incorporated Parcels

## Tax Assessment Proposal

Lincoln County Noxious Weed Control Board 509-725-3646

In the interest of equal benefits and responsibilities relating to the control of noxious weeds, the Weed Board proposes that incorporated parcels should be assessed **\$15.00** per minimum parcel.

### Our Mission Statement:

The mission of the weed board is to educate landowners to be responsible stewards of the land and resources, to make Lincoln County a better place to live by protecting and preserving all lands and natural resources of the County from the degrading impact of invasive noxious weeds; and to provide quality, timely, and responsive service to the residents of Lincoln County.

The Lincoln County Noxious Weed Control Board has been active for 50 years in Lincoln County. The Board of County Commissioners activated the Lincoln County Noxious Weed Control Board on March 3, 1970. In 1985, the Board of County Commissioners passed a motion to have a weed assessment to fund the program. The rates are based on land classification and minimum per parcel rate. Incorporated parcels will be the minimum per parcel rate. **There are 25 assessed counties in our state and 4 counties that do not tax the incorporated parcels, Lincoln County is one of them.**



◀ Left, we have Salt Cedar growing in a Lincoln County town residents backyard. A single plant can absorb 200 gallons of water daily.

▶ Right, is hoary cress (whitetop) encompassing several city lots in Lincoln County. Whitetop can produce up to 4800 plants each year.



At present, **the only lands within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Weed Board that are not being assessed are the incorporated areas**, yet the incorporated areas are not exempt from noxious weed problems. The Weed Board persistently receives **complaints** of noxious weed infestations by landowners of the incorporated towns.

Uniform assessment within land classifications means that all incorporated areas within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Weed Board must be assessed. **Currently, the Weed Board treats incorporated parcel complaints sparingly. Field Technicians inspect very little in the incorporated parcels that lie within their respected area.** If they see an infestation that they interpret to be at a level that needs controlled, they will take appropriate steps to see it controlled. No thorough canvassing takes place of incorporated parcels.

**In 1999, the Weed Board stopped having the field technician's control noxious weeds in the incorporated towns and spend their time in the surrounding areas.** Only small areas of each town have been targeted for weed control since 1999. Not all of the complaints received are taken care of due to the lack of funding from these entities.



## In Lincoln County, incorporated parcels are infested with invasives.

### The following species can be found in our incorporated towns to date:

Salt cedar, Japanese knotweed, Diffuse and Spotted knapweed, Rush skeletonweed, Kochia, White top, Yellow toadflax, Puncturevine, Myrtle spurge, Common and Annual bugloss, Common tansy, Canada thistle, Scotch thistle, Perennial pepperweed and Houndstongue.

When it comes to weed control, it is important that we all be **Good Neighbors** because weeds know no property boundaries and easily spread in the wind, across fence lines, down ditches, and on animal fur and tire treads. **However, many people are still unaware of their weed management responsibilities. Thus, our first step is to educate landowners about the infestations and his/her responsibility to comply with the Washington State Noxious Weed Law, RCW 17.10.** We have found that most people will voluntarily take appropriate action to control the spread of invasive plants on their property once they become aware of the problem.

Over the years the Weed Board has been informed of some town maintenance staff not having their pesticide license and can not legally apply herbicides. Therefore, pulling and digging have been the mainstay for noxious weed control on town property. Pulling and digging annual noxious weeds results in reduction, if not, total eradication of populations. **However, perennial noxious weeds are not affected by these methods of control.**

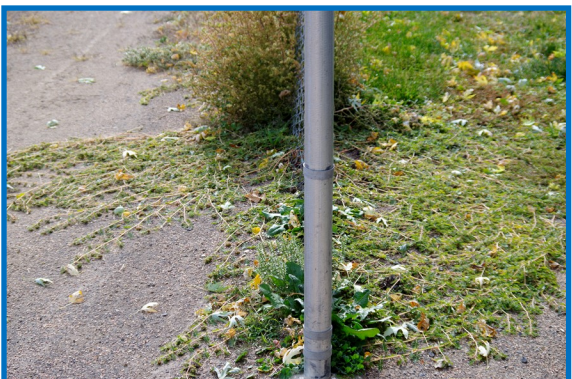
The current rate is **\$15.00 per minimum parcel**. Upon the Board of County Commissioner approval, this rate would be placed on every incorporated parcel, not just the unincorporated, as is the current situation. The municipalities would be responsible for their ownership and the privately owned parcels would be paid by each owner respectively.

We are in the very beginning stages of **educating** and presenting this proposal. We look forward to meeting with your respective councils and residents in the future. **We will be asking the Board of County Commissioners to approve the incorporated parcel assessment in the future and we hope we can get your support to clean up our incorporated parcels of damaging and invasive noxious weeds.**



Left is **Spotted knapweed** spreading from a residents lawn through the fence and into the alley way, for cars to spread by driving over it.

Right, **Japanese knotweed's** rapid growth can quickly reduce roadside visibility and take-over lawns, reducing property value.



**Puncturevine** is rapidly on the move in our towns! Left is a picture of a softball field where young people play. The burrs are extremely painful when stepped on, especially due to the chemical resin. The hard, spiny burrs damage bicycle and car tires alike. The foliage is also **toxic** to livestock, especially sheep.

