

## **Creative Sentencing Project Final Report**

This report provides accountability and transparency to the Alberta general public on the value of penalty funds diverted to this project. As such, it will be posted on Alberta Environment and Park's external web page.

**Recipient name:** Alberta Invasive Species Council

**Primary project contact (name and title):** Megan Evans, Executive Director

**Affiliated prosecution:** City of Edmonton

**Project title:** Revisions to the Identification Guide for Alberta Invasive Plants, Update to the Be Plant Wise Brochure, and Using goats to control invasive terrestrial plants

**Date of report:** July 20, 2022

**Project term:** Final Report

**Project results:** *Please provide a description of the final results of the creative sentencing project. What was accomplished and how was it accomplished? Insert photos illustrating the project at the end of the report.*

### **Project 1 Revisions to the Identification Guide for Alberta Invasive Plants**

The newly titled Alberta Invasive Plants Guide (4th Edition) is now complete. The Guide is a resource to assist in the identification of invasive plant species in Alberta. The fourth edition involved a major overhaul to the content, species, features and overall look of the Guide. The digital version of the Guide was launched on May 20<sup>th</sup> through social media. That launch reached over 20,000 people linking them to the webpage and the [downloadable pdf](#).

The fourth edition included a more robust introduction to invasive species in general, an overview of legislation, integrated pest management, prevention activities, control options, and invasive plant life cycles. Invasive plant diagrams explaining key plant parts were drafted by Andre Lemay as an in-kind contribution. Also added were broad-scale distribution maps and icons that indicate habitat preferences for each species. Eleven new unregulated invasive species were added. These are invasive species that are commonly found in Alberta, that are particularly invasive and that invasive species managers target for control regardless of their unregulated status. A series of thumbnails of other common weeds were also included to assist those new to invasive plant identification.

The content was revised for all regulated species and drafted for the eleven new species, eliminating all technical jargon and bolding all key identifying features. Great care and attention were taken to maintain consistency among descriptions. The mode of reproduction was added to each species and similar native and non-native look-alike species were added when applicable.

The fourth edition showcases professional design work and mimics the provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Pocket Guide, making it an inviting companion guide to the aquatic version.

The AISC was able to secure an addition \$50,000 from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation and \$5,000 from Alberta Environment and Parks, Rangeland Division to put toward this project. These funds covered the substantial amount of AISC time devoted to this project over two years as the costs to print over 15,500 copies of the Guide. Staff from Wheatland County, who were involved in developing the original Guide were also involved in this revision and it's estimated that they contributed approximately \$10,000 in in-kind support to this project.

Several stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the Guide including members of the Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen, the Alberta Native Plant Council, members of the Realtors Association of South-Central Alberta, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development and the Alberta Invasive Species Council Board.

The digital launch was on May 20 and we have been distributing the print copies since early June through an invoicing process. Each Guide is sold for \$1 to help build a fund to be put toward a second printing that will take place in 18 to 24 months. AISC is working on adding the print copies to our online store and that will be finalized by the end of July.

The AISC is grateful to the Creative Sentencing project to have been offered the opportunity to lead this revision of the Invasive Plants of Alberta Guide. This is an incredibly important resource that is used by Albertans across the province to learn to identify, control, report and take action against invasive species.

### **Project 2 Update to the Be Plant Wise Brochure**

The Plant Wise brochure is an AISC product focused primarily on preventing the spread of invasive species that have been introduced through horticulture as ornamental species. The target audience for this information are gardeners and greenhouses that may not be aware of the issues and regulations associated with these invasive species. The AISC supplies municipalities and other organizations with these brochures to distribute at events and at greenhouses and nurseries in their jurisdictions.

The AISC has worked with a contractor to determine which invasive species and recommended alternatives to be included in this revision of the Be Plant Wise Brochure. This process involved polling our members to incorporate their recommendations into the revision. Based on the feedback from our members, yellow flag iris and flowering rush were removed, and oxeye daisy and creeping bellflower were added to the brochure. We also changed several of the recommended alternative non-invasive species and added a number of native wildflower species and a new icon that indicated if a species was native. This involved sourcing new photos to use in the brochure.

A total of 55,000 brochures were printed and we have been distributing these in bulk to organizations across Alberta and at all events that AISC attends. The pdf of the revised brochures is available for download on our website [here](#).

### **Project 3 Using goats to control invasive terrestrial plants**

It has been demonstrated that targeted grazing by goats can be a very effective and environmentally friendly method to control terrestrial invasive plants. Targeted grazing on invasive plants occurs before the plants go to seed. The goats can be trained to target specific invasive plants in areas where herbicides or other control methods cannot be used (i.e. near water, steep slopes or herbicide ban).

The AISC worked with the Edmonton & Area Land Trust to implement this project. The EALT was able to leverage the Creative Sentencing Funds to secure an additional \$20,000 in funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Grant to implement goat grazing for control of invasive plants on their Glory Hills and other properties in the summer of 2021. The goats went to work from June 28 to July 1 and then again from August 13 to August 16. The Edmonton & Area Land Trust Report is also attached.

See here for a video highlighting this important work:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1916845123525>, and here for a link to the Edmonton & Area Land Trust webpage that provides an overview of the project: <https://www.ealt.ca/blog/the-goats-are-back>.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this program. The AISC and partners were able to leverage the \$50,000 from the Creative Sentencing Fund and turn it into \$125,000 to put toward initiatives to protect Alberta from the impacts of invasive species. This highlights the increased magnitude of the benefit to all Albertans, our economy and the environment that were brought about by these projects through the Creative Sentencing Fund. It has been a pleasure working on these important projects, we hope you consider the Alberta Invasive Species Council as a potential recipient of Creative Sentencing Funds in the future.

### **Financial summary:**

*Please provide a high-level summary of how the creative sentencing funds were spent. The following subtotals can be pulled from your more detailed term financial reports.*

Labour: \$23,803.69

Materials: \$24,007.07

Overhead/administrative: \$2,240

Other: N/A

Total spent: \$50,050.76

*If there were any significant changes in the project from the original project description in the creative sentencing order, explain what they were and why they occurred. Similarly, if project results were not as expected, please explain why.*

AISC secured an additional \$50,000 from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation and \$5,000 from Alberta Environment and Parks to contribute toward the Weed ID Guide revision (wages and printing costs), as well as \$20,000 in funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Grant for goat grazing.