

SEA TO SKY
INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Prepared by:

Mica Anguita
Erin Galloway
Matthew Muller
Claude-Anne Godbout-Gauthier



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INTRODUCTION



Call it a lack of imagination or creative paraphrasing, but in so many words I tend to say more or less the same thing in these annual introductions. But here's the thing: however I put them, those comments are universally positive.

I always note the pride I feel at the organization's accomplishments, whether training new staff in the tenets of invasion science, in discovery and mapping of new invasive infestations, in early detection and rapid response, in ongoing management and monitoring, or in delivering outstanding education and outreach programs. I laud the obvious hard work and expertise that go into all of this, and make sure to comment on the creativity and thought behind the visual nature of an annual report that makes input and outcomes more easily understood.

What I don't say often or strongly enough is how well SSISC interfaces and collaborates with a wide range of other groups across the diverse landscapes of the Sea to Sky – whether industry, First Nations, government of all levels or other NGOs and invasive species organizations. Hackneyed as it may sound, it really does take a village to be successful in invasive species management, and SSISC has worked tirelessly to cultivate and participate in this village.

As you'll see in this report, the team's achievements are once again manifold. But our biggest news was hiring a new Executive Director, Mica Anguita, in April 2024. As a candidate, Mica brought a résumé of big-project NGO experience in the Sea to Sky that included a past stint with SSISC. She turned her deep understanding of the organization's mission and functions into an impressive quick start, launching directly into the 2024 field season and following that with a deep dive into accounting, bookkeeping and a range of funding proposals. I expect I'll have to find new words each year now to describe how SSISC has benefitted from her leadership in these areas.

If there's one last thing to add, it's this: don't forget to follow our much-praised socials accounts: @ssinvasives on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Youtube! I guarantee you'll find them as informative and entertaining as I do.

Leslie Anthony
Board Chair, Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council

OUR MISSION

To minimize the threat of invasive species that impact on the environment, the economy, and human health in the Sea to Sky corridor.



OUR GOALS


- 1 Raise awareness (focused on behaviour change) about invasive species, their impacts, and management strategies
- 2 Facilitate the flow of external information and provide a source of expertise on invasive species
- 3 Improve stakeholder communications, collaboration, coordination and information sharing
- 4 Prevent new invasive species from arriving and follow integrated management and early detection and rapid response (EDRR) protocol to prevent their establishment if and when they do arrive
- 5 Minimize or reverse the threat of existing invasive species through coordinated, integrated invasive species management efforts
- 6 Ensure program viability

WHERE WE WORK



 We humbly acknowledge that we live and work on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples including Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, as well as the unceded territories of the southern St'át'yemc communities of the Lil'wat, N'Quatqua, Samahquam, Skatin, and Xa'xtsa Nations.

learn more @ ssisc.ca/where-we-work

 SSISC is part of a network of Regional Invasive Species Organizations (RISOs) working to stop the spread of invasive species throughout B.C.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SSISC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. We are grateful for their time and involvement in our cause.



Leslie Anthony
Chair



Edith Tobe
Vice-Chair



Caroline Ashekian
Treasurer



Paul Beswetherick
Past Chair



Karlene Loudon
Director



Derek Jazic
Director



Penny Nelson Abbott
Director



Most of our team gladly posed with their new hats. The dogs were keen too!

OUR TEAM

What a team we had this year!
Thanks for all the hard work, everyone.

Mica Anguita, Executive Director

Claude-Anne Godbout-Gauthier,
Communications & Outreach Manager

Erin Galloway, Field Program Manager

Matt Muller, Invasive Species Program
Coordinator

Rebecca McDonald, Invasive Animals
Coordinator

Georg Nussbaumer, GIS Technician

Ellie Fox, Field Crew Lead Hand

Sam Thorne, Field Crew Lead Hand

Kate Hedley, Field Crew Lead Hand

Silvi Cafarella, Field Crew Lead Hand

Catherine Savard, Field Crew Member

Andrew Smart, Field Crew Member

Andrei Okunev, Field Crew Member

James McAllister, Field Crew Member /
GIS Technician

Becky Turner, Education & Outreach
Coordinator

Sara Tobias, Education & Outreach
Specialist

Bob Brett, Field Technician (contractor)

FIELD PROGRAM

- Surveyed 58 invasive plant species at 592 project areas.
- Discovered 22 new project areas.
- Surveyed or inventoried 2137.15 ha of land for invasive plants.
- Observed and mapped a total of 20,256.25m² of invasive plants.
- Uploaded 3,126 data records to the provincial database, InvasivesBC.



- Carried out 420 mechanical treatments at 201 project areas; removed 3,976.75 m² of 37 invasive plant species.
- Carried out 196 chemical treatments at 74 project areas; treated 11,235.23 m² of 7 invasive plant species.
- Carried out post-treatment monitoring of 64 mechanical treatments and 28 chemical treatments.

With this crew, invasive species don't stand a chance!

2024 by the numbers:



52% of **Japanese knotweed** project areas surveyed showed no regrowth.



64% of **yellow flag iris** project areas surveyed showed no regrowth.



68% of **Scotch broom** project areas surveyed showed no regrowth.

New Field Initiative in Whistler

We piloted a community science program on Alta Lake to monitor for zebra and quagga mussels, in collaboration with the Whistler Lakes Conservation Association.

We installed 8 substrate samplers at private docks. These substrate samplers were then checked by volunteers throughout the summer.

We are happy to report that no invasive mussels were detected!



Thanks to the Whistler Lakes Conservation Association volunteers for their help!



Our field crew removed yellow flag iris from 5 lakes. It's a dirty but satisfying job!

Wins for 2024:

2910
kilos of invasive plants removed



330
project areas showed no regrowth



ZERO
flat tires!



for the first time in many years... maybe ever!?

EUROPEAN GREEN CRAB MONITORING



SSISC monitored for European green crab in Howe Sound for the fourth year in 2024. This year, we monitored at Furry Creek, Cattermole Slough, the Mamquam Blind Channel, and added a fourth site at Porteau Cove Provincial Park, in collaboration with BC Parks.



16
volunteers

including 5 who returned from 2023!



20
sampling events, from May to September



ZERO
European green crabs found in Howe Sound so far!

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

BANISH BURDOCK IN WHISTLER

Our Whistler volunteers are making life difficult for invasive burdock in the area!

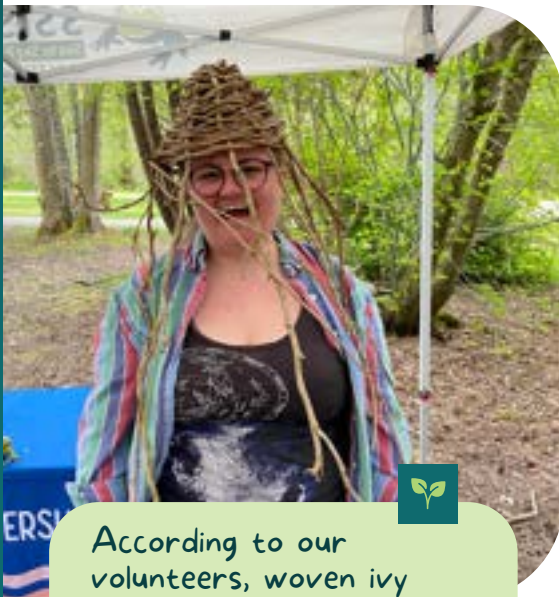
In 2024, 19 participants from 11 parties looked after 21 burdock patches all summer. We also experimented with making the program more 'social' by organizing meet-ups.



15
weed pulls



842
kilos of invasive plants removed by volunteers



According to our volunteers, woven ivy baskets make great hats!

EARTH DAY AT ROSE PARK

We worked with the Squamish River Watershed Society to organize a weed pull that also included some crafts. After removing English ivy from Rose Park, volunteers tried their hand at using the ivy to create small baskets and pencil holders.

Common questions from the public:

"How can I be sure I'm not buying invasive plants at the garden centre?"

"What can we do about the goldfish in local lakes?"

"Doesn't Himalayan blackberry provide food for the pollinators and wildlife?"

OUT AND ABOUT

We attended 12 events (1210 visitors) in the 4 corners of the region, including:

- Lions Bay Bird Friendly City celebrations
- Plant sales and seed swaps in Squamish and Pemberton
- BC Rivers Day (organized by Stewardship Pemberton)
- Lílwat Community Fun Day in D'Arcy/N'Quatqua

LinkedIn badges: new in 2024

We created completion badges for each of our online courses. Upon completion, participants are automatically set a badge that can be displayed on their LinkedIn profile, thus demonstrating their interest and commitment to environmental preservation.



So far, our course badges have been displayed on 14 LinkedIn profiles.



Our Education & Outreach team showed no fear of public embarrassment in their attempt to create the most engaging, entertaining and educational content possible.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS WE PROMOTED



Outreach by the numbers:

Social media

1138
 2765
 412
 155



Follow us! We're @ssinvasives

29,000 website users

1035 newsletter subscribers, 13 editions

@ 21 mentions in 12 external newsletters

7 news articles

1 article authored by SSISC

1 radio interview

COORDINATION, CONSULTATION & ADMINISTRATION

A NEW ERA

- We welcomed Mica Anguita as Executive Director in April 2024.
- Under her leadership, we applied for and secured diverse funding, as detailed in the Financial Report on p. 13.
- Once again, we provided meaningful employment, training and professional development for three full-time (year-round) employees, and 16 seasonal or part-time employees.



We were happy to **provide advice and support** to collaborators, partners and community members.

51

enquiries from community members
(via phone and email)

97

messages on social media

PROJECTS OF NOTE INCLUDE:

- Innergex
- Garibaldi Springs development (Polygon Homes)
- Centennial Gravel Pit (Coast Aggregates/LaFarge)
- Britannia Mine reclamation project
- Nature Trust of B.C.
- Whistler RV Park.

We managed spatial databases and verified **public sightings**:

93

public sightings

50% of those came from current or past SSISC staff and board members

We also carried out regular extracts from external databases to ensure we were logging in any new sightings of high-priority species.

 iNaturalist



PARTNERSHIPS AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

- We maintained and improved existing partnerships with municipal, regional, provincial and federal governments.
- We continued to build and expand partnerships with Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Nation and Lílwat Nation; developers, industry and private landholders.
- We maintained membership as an affiliate partner with the Invasive Species Council of B.C.



We participated in the B.C. Regional Invasive Species Organizations (RISO) working group, including an in-person meeting and field tour on Vancouver Island in September. We were soggy but happy!

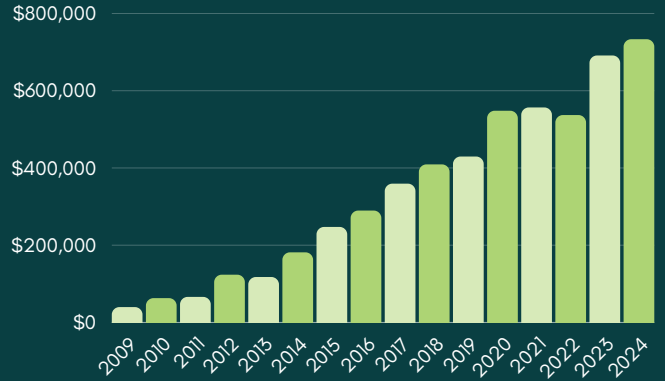
A very special thanks to the local businesses that donated prizes. They were extremely generous; the in-kind donations we received totaled over \$600!



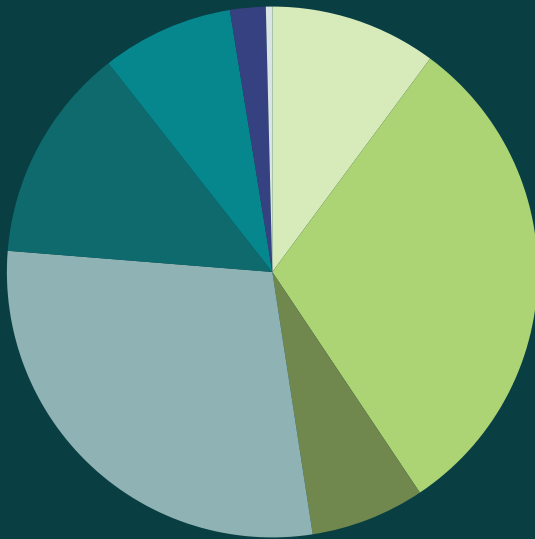
FINANCIAL REPORT

Total funding secured for 2024 was \$733,397.

SSISC's funding has significantly grown since the organization was founded in 2009.



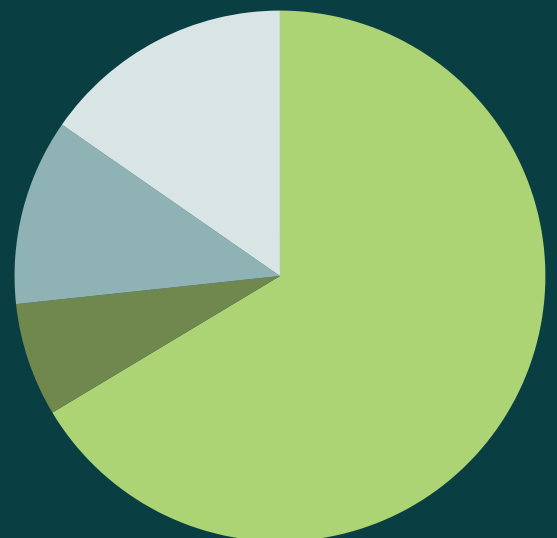
FUNDING BY TYPE



- Federal government (10%)
- Provincial government (30%)
- First Nations (7%)
- Local & Regional governments (29%)
- Industry & developers (13%)
- Granting bodies (8%)
- Earned revenues & sales (2%)
- Donations (0.01%)
- Interest (0.39%)

BREAKDOWN BY PROGRAM

- Field program - plants (66%)
- Field program - animals (7%)
- Education & Outreach (15%)
- Coordination, Consultation & Administration (11%)





Thank you to our funders



And to our in-kind donors, program participants, private land owners, donors, collaborators, customers and volunteers!