



INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Bear Creek, the most urbanized watershed in southern Oregon, is lined by dense colonies of invasive plants with sparse areas of native vegetation; it experiences chronic water quality issues such as low summer flows, high summer water temperatures, and high nutrient and bacteria loads. These conditions negatively impact native fish and wildlife, and create safety issues for users of the 25-mile long Bear Creek Greenway, and increase the risk of fire. In the face of these conditions, Rogue Valley organizations, municipalities, and advocacy groups remain committed to increasing the ecological and recreational value of Bear Creek and its riparian corridor.

A consequence of fire on an urban greenway is the invasion of unwanted exotic plants. These plants, also known as invasive or noxious weeds, are non-native species that can reproduce quickly and often outcompete native plants for resources such as water, nutrients, and space. To keep these invasive plants in check to allow for native plants to establish themselves along the Bear Creek corridor we will use an integrated pest management (IPM) strategy.

IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on the long-term prevention of invasive plants and their damage through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices, and the use of native plant varieties that are resistant to invasive species encroachment.

Herbicides are used only after monitoring indicates they are needed according to established guidelines, and treatments are made to remove only the target organism. Herbicides are selected and applied in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, beneficial and nontarget organisms, and the environment. We will use methods such as hand pulling, mowing, and selective use of grazing to control invasive plants in sensitive areas where herbicide treatments cannot be implemented.

Common invasive plant species found near Bear Creek

- **Himalayan blackberry**
- **Poison hemlock**
- **English ivy**
- **Japanese knotweed**
- **Puncturevine**

BEAR CREEK RESTORATION INITIATIVE (BCRI)

In 2018, in response to a large number of fires along Bear Creek, several organizations started a partnership to improve conditions in and along the creek. These groups developed the Bear Creek Restoration Initiative (BCRI) to assess current conditions and envision a desired future outcome by considering ecological, recreational, social, and public safety (including fire) goals. In 2020, the BCRI released their ten priority sites for restoration and started to develop and implement several of those efforts.

The devastating Almeda and Table Rock fires of September 2020 created additional pressure to address community, social, and natural landscape concerns along Bear Creek. The BCRI is intent on working with the public sector, social service organizations, and restoration practitioners to increase public and community safety, combat invasive species, increase water quality, improve fish and wildlife habitat, and encourage the establishment of native plants along Bear Creek.

Keep current on Bear Creek Restoration Initiative's work and collaborative efforts in the Rogue Valley. Visit us to learn more!

RVCOG.ORG/BEAR-CREEK-RESTORATION-INITIATIVE