



What *SNOO* in the Park?

Point Reyes National Seashore Weed Watchers Invasive Species Early Detection Significant **N**ew **O**bservations and **O**ccurrences May 2009

Importance of Early Detection of Invasive Species

Aggressive non-native plants threaten to change the landscape of our national parks. These plants can alter entire ecosystems, reducing habitat for the unique plants and animals of the San Francisco Bay Area in the very places set aside to protect them. Often, by the time a plant is noticed as a problem it has spread throughout an area. The Weed Watchers help patrol the park for some of the newest invaders—and find them when they can still be prevented from becoming a permanent part of the landscape.

May was a great month for the Weed Watcher program here at Point Reyes! We had invaluable assistance from our interns, Richard Wong and Jessica Chappell.

On Mother's day Weekend, Weed Watchers had glorious weather for a hike on Tomales Pt. (**Subwatersheds 7-7 and 7-1**) and saw with about 40 elk lingering around a watering hole. While there were not any new Priority 1 or 2 plants to map, at the end of the point, there was a huge **iceplant** (*Carpobrotus edulis*) infestation to cushion us for a picnic.

While the Habitat Restoration Team was removing a patch of **cape ivy** (*Delairea odorata*) on the Coast Trail on May 11th, Weed Watchers surveyed the Lake Ranch Trail in **Subwatershed 3-2**, where no new infestations of Priority 1 or 2 plants were found. While surveying the **Coast Trail** through **Subwatershed 3-1**, a patch of **St. John's wort** (*Hypericum calycinum*) was mapped.

On May 12th, Weed Watchers surveyed the fire road between **Mt. Vision Rd.** and **Vision Rd.** in **Subwatershed 4-10**. We arrived just in time to remove over 50 flowering plants of **purple foxglove** (*Digitalis purpurea*). We also found and removed several **Scotch broom** (*Cytisus scoparius*) patches and mapped a patch of **English ivy** (*Hedera helix*).

At a training on May 16th, one new volunteer was introduced to the 13 priority species, and then led on an introductory survey along the Earthquake and Woodpecker Trails in

Subwatershed 4-1. Luckily, the trails were free of Priority 1 and 2 plants, but unfortunately vast expanses of **Italian thistle** (*Carduus pycnocephalus*) were found.

During a hike up the McCurdy trail to Bolinas Ridge on May 18th, Weed Watchers found **English holly** (*Ilex aquilifolium*) in **Subwatershed 17-4**. The Habitat Restoration Team also helped in early detection that day and found one **silverleaf cotoneaster** (*Cotoneaster franchetii*) in **Subwatershed 17-2**.

Weed Watchers found several weeds including more **foxglove** and **English holly**, **jubata grass** (*Cortaderia jubata*), **panic veldt grass** (*Ehrharta erecta*) and **perennial pea** (*Lathyrus latifolius*) during a survey on May 22nd on the Fire Lane Trail in **Subwatershed 5-3 and 5-4**.

While working with the Fire Effects Monitoring Team reading plant community change plot on May 25th near Pierce Point, the Weed Watchers found a substantial infestation of **tocalote** (*Centaurea melitensis*) in **Subwatershed 7-3**.

To finish up the month of weed watching, on May 29th, on the way to White Gate Trail, Weed Watchers found and mapped a population of **butter and eggs** (*Linaria vulgaris*) in **Subwatershed 5-6**.

May Stats:

29.5 Miles Surveyed, 38 Volunteer Hours

If anyone would like more information please contact Natalie at 464-5201 or Natalie_Howe@nps.gov.

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