



What **SNOO** in the Park?

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

September was the official end of the Point Reyes Weed Watchers Season.

The Weed Watchers first survey of the month was in the south part of the park in **subwatersheds 18-6 and 16-10**, along the McKennan Gulch Fire Road and the Willow Camp Fire Road, just off Rt. 1. Unfortunately, the McKennan Gulch Fire Road was actually a glorified deer trail, rife with poison oak, so weed watchers only surveyed part of that trail. At the trailhead, in **subwatershed 18-6** along Rt. 1, there were lots of weeds, including **Pride of Madeira** (*Echium candicans*), **cape ivy** (*Delairea odorata*), **pennyroyal** (*Mentha pulegium*), **Himalayan blackberry** (*Rubus discolor*), **Jubata grass** (*Cortaderia jubata*), **Dallis grass** (*Paspalum dilatatum*), **Harding grass** (*Phalaris aquatica*), **periwinkle** (*Vinca major*), **iceplant** (*Carpobrotus edulis*), and **New Zealand spinach** (*Tetragonia tetragonoides*). Weed watchers found some **velvet grass** (*Holcus lanatus*) in **subwatershed 16-10**, but it was widespread along the “trail” so we didn’t map it.

On September 3rd, we did a 2-part survey, spending the morning on the Stewart and Greenpicker trails in **subwatershed 3-7**. The only weeds we found there were one patch of **Harding grass** and one patch of **English Ivy** (*Hedera helix*). Later, we found much more vigorous weed populations at Cheda Ranch in **subwatershed 1-43**. Since the hillsides nearby have lots of it, we were not surprised to find **woolly distaff thistle** (*Carthamus lanatus*), but there was also an astounding amount of **Himalayan blackberry**, along with **periwinkle** and **spiny cocklebur** (*Xanthium spinosum*).

After Labor Day weekend, we started the week with a survey of Randall Trail and Bolinas Ridge. Going up the Randall Trail in **subwatershed 18-1**, we found **Himalayan blackberry** and **pennyroyal**, and, by the dam, we found some **parrot's feather** (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) and **floating primrose-willow** (*Ludwigia peploides*). We also found **parrot's feather** and **floating primrose-willow** in a pond on Bolinas Ridge in **subwatershed 18-4**. Along the rest of the ridge, we found **English holly** (*Ilex aquifolium*) and **English ivy** in **subwatershed 1-30**, **Harding grass** in **subwatershed 18-2**, more **Harding grass**, **Himalayan blackberry**, and **pennyroyal** in **subwatershed 1-36**, and, at the very end of the survey in **subwatershed 1-38**, we found **capeweed**, **hyssop loosestrife** (*Lythrum hyssopifolia*), **pennyroyal**, and **Harding grass**.

We knew that doing Weed Watcher road surveys usually turns up lots of new weeds, but we weren't prepared for the weed onslaught we faced while driving along Rt. 1 on September 9th. First, in **subwatershed 16-14**, we found the usual roadside **Himalayan blackberry**, along with lots of **periwinkle**, a small bit of **silverleaf cotoneaster**, and **cape ivy**. The next area was **subwatershed 16-13**, which had **French broom**, **cape ivy**, **dallis grass**, **pennyroyal**, and **iceplant**. In **Subwatershed 16-12**, we mapped **Bermuda grass** (*Cynodon dactylon*), **jubata grass**, and **French broom**. Next came **subwatershed 16-11**, with **hyssop loosestrife**, **dallis grass**, **jubata grass**, **periwinkle**, **iceplant**, and more **French broom**. Then we skipped ahead to **subwatershed 16-05**, which we'd mapped most of the weeds in last month, but we found some new **iceplant** and **Harding grass** there. In **subwatershed 16-06**, we found more **Himalayan blackberry** and **New Zealand spinach**. But, when we hit the subwatersheds in Stinson Beach, it was weed central. In the tiny **subwatershed 16-2**, there was **Himalayan blackberry**, **jubata grass**, **cape ivy**, **English ivy**, **Pride of Madeira** (*Echium candicans*) and **Victorian box** (*Pittosporum undulatum*). Finally, in **subwatershed 16-1**, there was **English ivy** and **Himalayan blackberry** just about everywhere I looked, the biggest patch of **silverleaf cotoneaster** I've ever seen, some **capeweed**, **Pride of Madeira**, **jubata grass**, and **iceplant**.

Liz's last Weedwatcher hike was on September 10th. She found some hard-to-spot baby **English ivy** in the undergrowth along the Rift Trail in **subwatershed 18-17**. In the Horse Camp, we had 3 huge **English holly** trees, along with some **foxtail**, which we swiftly excised. In the driveway to the horse trail in **subwatershed 18-14**, there was **Harding grass**, **French broom**, and **English ivy**. The rest of the day, we spent on the Rift Zone trail in **subwatershed 19-15**, where we found patch after patch of **Himalayan blackberry** along with a small spot of **spiny cocklebur** and **hyssop loosestrife**.

In spite of thunderous, forbidding weather on September 12th, we had record turnout from the Association of Yale Alumni for the weed watcher training. We hiked along Laird's Landing in **subwatershed 7-2**, where we detected and rapidly responded to a small patch of **English ivy**, only to find the motherlode of it covering the buildings near the beach.

We started out a day of road surveys on the quiet and lovely Via Del Vista in Inverness in **subwatershed 4-10**, where we found **English holly, English ivy, silverleaf cotoneaster, foxglove, dallis grass, and Himalayan blackberry**. In nearby **subwatershed 4-11**, we found more **English holly** and **English ivy** on Via del Vista. Further on in **subwatershed 4-10**, on Pine Hill Drive, we found **capeweed, cape ivy** along with more **cotoneaster** and **foxglove**. Along Sir Francis Drake and the beaches just off the road, there was **Scotch broom, iceplant**, and more **Himalayan blackberry**. We also surveyed Sir Francis Drake in **subwatershed 4-9**, where there was **Scotch broom, English ivy, giant reed (*Arundo donax*), pride of Madeira, fennel, iceplant, cape ivy, periwinkle, Harding grass, Himalayan blackberry, and blackwood acacia (*Acacia melanoxylon*)** this season. The last section of Sir Francis Drake we surveyed was in **subwatershed 4-6** where we found some **oblong spurge (*Euphorbia oblongata*)**, along with more **blackwood acacia, English ivy, periwinkle, jubata grass, Himalayan blackberry, English holly, and orange cotoneaster**.

On September 15th, Weed Watchers undertook another road survey of Rt. 1. **Subwatershed 18-1**, we found the usual suspects, **French broom, Harding grass, periwinkle, Himalayan blackberry, and dallis grass**, and **pennyroyal**, along with some more unusual finds: **Pride of Madeira** and **cape ivy**. Next, in **subwatershed 17-4**, there was more **French broom, periwinkle** and **Himalayan blackberry**, plus some **English ivy, English holly, capeweed** and **silverleaf cotoneaster**. **Subwatershed 17-2** had some **everlasting pea, dallis grass, cape ivy, Himalayan blackberry** and **periwinkle**. The last part of the day was spent investigating two hikes where earlier, I had failed to find the trailhead. This time I found them, though there were periods of bushwacking. On the Willow camp trail in **subwatershed 16-4**, there was **Pride of Madeira, black locust, Himalayan blackberry, Harding grass, English ivy, and French broom**. Along the McKenna gulch 'trail' (which is not maintained) in **subwatershed 16-5**, we found **silverleaf cotoneaster, jubata grass**, and of course, **Harding grass**.

The last Weed Watcher survey of the year was a road survey of more of Rt. 1 on September 16th. In **subwatershed 18-12**, we found **dallis grass, iceplant, Harding grass**, and lots of **Himalayan blackberry**. The same day, Weed Watchers also surveyed an unnamed trail and powerline corridor in **subwatershed 17-4**. Along that 'trail' (a road that seems to have fallen out of frequent use, except by deer), we found **French broom, Himalayan blackberry, horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), periwinkle, and hyssop loosestrife**. Finally, we surveyed Vision Rd. in **subwatershed 4-9**. There, there was **Himalayan blackberry, silverleaf cotoneaster, English ivy, milkflower cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster lacteus*), Scotch broom, and Dallis grass**.

Thanks to all the volunteers who came out this weed watching season!
September Stats:
44 Volunteer Hours, 40.1 miles surveyed

If anyone would like more information, please contact Natalie at
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