



Native Plant News

Vol. 17, No. 4



www.npss.sk.ca



Winter 2012

Rare Plants and Ranchers

By CHET NEUFELD

NPSS Executive Director

Rare Plants and Ranchers is a joint project of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS) and Nature Saskatchewan that aims to build on Nature Saskatchewan's Rare Plant Rescue program by working with its 66 stewards and their combined 66,719 acres to develop site specific beneficial management plans for plant species at risk (SAR) using an ecosystem-based, multi-species approach.

How it works

The NPSS visits participating landowners and conducts a landowner interview to determine historical and present day factors such as grazing and fire regimes, invasive species threats, management issues or any other pertinent information that would give context to the current SAR situation on the land. Following the interview, a site assessment is conducted to gather information on the current condition of the land through a series of range and riparian health assessments, photo plots, invasive species assessments, visits to SAR populations and anything else that could contribute relevant information to-

Continued on Page 4



PHOTO BY TARA SAMPLE

Hairy prairie clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*).

A First Nation perspective on native plants

Register now for the NPSS
AGM on Feb. 8 and 9
DEADLINE Feb. 4

Our 18th Annual General Meeting and conference is quickly approaching and we invite you to join us!

This year it will take place at the German Cultural Centre in Saskatoon, Sask., on Feb. 8 to 9. The theme is **Native Plants – Native People**.

Our event will create awareness of Saskatchewan's native plants and ecosystems, and the long history that First Nations have had using them. It is hoped that our event will give you insight into how our natural world is woven into aboriginal culture, both in a historical and contemporary context, and what our modern society can learn from this.

As always, this will be an interesting and fun event with an exciting line up of speakers. If you've been to one of our events before, you know it's one of the highlights of the year for us.

If you've never been to one, why not join us this year. Hope to see you in Saskatoon in February! ✨

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Native Plant News is a quarterly publication of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS) and is one of the benefits of membership. Members are invited to submit articles, news, views, photographs and comments. Views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the NPSS.

Deadlines:

	Submission	Publication
Winter Issue:	November 1	December 15
Spring Issue:	February 1	March 15
Summer Issue:	May 1	June 15
Fall Issue:	August 1	September 15

Membership Dues (Year end November 30th)

Student \$15

Individual \$30

Family \$45

Non-profit Organization \$100

Corporate \$200

Life Individual \$500

Please contact the NPSS office for information about the lifetime membership instalment payment option.

NPSS wraps up a busy program year

Happy New Year everyone!

I hope that your Christmas season was merry and that Santa brought everything you asked for. Thank-you for renewing your memberships. Your continued support means that we can continue the good work that we do. I cannot

express how much I value our members – you truly make a difference!

Of course, 2012 was a year full of events and conferences. I personally organized or presented at five large conferences, starting in February with the Prairie Conservation Action Plan Restoration Workshop in Saskatoon and the Invasive Species Forum in Ottawa. July brought the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Invasive Species Conference in Saskatoon (Saskatchewan is a member of this economic region). In August, I presented at the North American Prairie Conference in Winnipeg, and most recently in November I gave a presentation for the Foothills Restoration Forum in Cowley, Alta. I've shared my experiences about two of the major events, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Invasive Species Conference and the North American Prairie Conference, on Page 5.

Jenalee Mischkolz, a Master's student at the U of S, has also contributed an article about her attendance of the Eco-Summit 2012 conference in Columbus, Ohio (see Page 5).

In addition, we had many projects on the go. Most of our projects were new initiatives, and two of these projects were very large in scope and budget. The one project, Native Plants in the Classroom, was highlighted in our fall 2012 issue of the *Native Plant News*, while our newest project, Rare Plants and Ranchers, is featured on the cover of this issue.

As you can see, we were very busy in 2012 and don't plan to slow down in 2013. I have put forth several proposals for new projects and it will be a waiting game now to see how we fared. I should know the fate of all of our new proposals by this summer, and will report back to you.

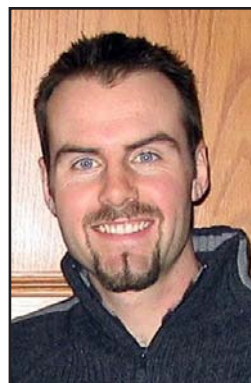
Of course, there are always so many things going on with the NPSS that I never have enough space to tell you all about them, so I encourage you to contact me with any questions you might have.

All the best in 2013!*

Correction

We'd like to make a correction regarding our last newsletter. Our cover story had contributions from Dave Biggs, but we neglected to credit Dave for his involvement.

Our sincere apologies to Dave and thanks to both for a great story!*



CHET NEUFELD

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
MESSAGE

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Invasive species task force struck

Government and industry leaders from Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest in the United States announced they will form a regional, bi-national invasive species council at the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) Summit that was recently held in Saskatoon.

State and provincial invasive species councils can only work within their own borders, but invasive species, such as quagga mussels, know no boundaries. They may inflict harm on local ecosystems by eating the phytoplankton fish need to survive, for example, thus depriving fishermen of their livelihoods.

“By forming a regional invasive species council, policymakers can share limited resources and better prevent invasive species from moving in to the region,” said Rep. Eric Anderson, the a co-chair of PNWER’s invasive species working group. “By forming these partnerships, we know who to turn to, whether it’s the neighboring state or across the border.”

The invasive species working group, responsible for the formation of this regional council, meets every year at the broader PNWER annual summit. This event brings together leaders from 10 jurisdictions (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Yukon) to address the pressing threats



PHOTO BY PNWER

Rep. Eric Anderson (R-ID) holds a license plate full of quagga mussels, one of the main targets of Pacific NorthWest Economic Region's new bi-national council.

to this “economic region.” The working group is co-chaired by Rep. Anderson and Mark Sytsma, Associate Vice President for Research at Portland State University.

Editor's note: The Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Invasive Species Council have been instrumental in national and international coordination on invasive species issues and were the key Saskatchewan organizers of this bi-national invasive species council. They were also instrumental in the recent formation of the Canadian Council on Invasive Species.*

National council finally a reality

In the summer 2012 issue of the *Native Plant News*, we had an article on the formation of the National Invasive Species Council. This council is the direct result of years of collaboration, and the NPSS has been a part of it since the start.

We're pleased to update that article with the announcement that our application has been approved by the federal government. The group is now officially known as the Canadian Council on Invasive Species, and will serve to co-

ordinate provincial and territorial efforts against invasive species, and to give us a stronger national voice.

As Chet Neufeld is part of the group that had lodged the application and helped to draft the bylaws, he is now one of its first directors (and also the current Treasurer).

NPSS involvement in this council will only help strengthen Saskatchewan's position regarding invasive species and will help keep our natural habitats beautiful for generations to come.*

Upcoming Events

February 2013

Native Prairie Speaker Series
Wednesday, February 6
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Boardroom, 350 Cheadle St. W.
Swift Current, Sask.
Results from the 2011 International Piping Plover Census – Nature Saskatchewan.
www.pcap-sk.org

March 2013

Native Prairie Speaker Series
Wednesday, March 20
University of Saskatchewan, Education Building, Room 1039
Saskatoon, Sask.
Burrowing Owl Habitat Associations – Troy Wellicome.
www.pcap-sk.org

June 2013

Nature Saskatchewan Spring Meet
June 14 and 15
Swift Current, Sask.
The next Nature Saskatchewan Meet will be held June 14 to 16 in Swift Current and will include a day long excursion to Grasslands National Park! Further details on the website.
<http://www.naturesask.ca>

2013 Saskatchewan Pasture School
June 18 to 19
Weyburn and Big Muddy, Sask.
The Saskatchewan Pasture School is back for the 10th season, and this year it's being held in conjunction with Native Prairie Appreciation Week and the Society for Range Management to celebrate its 15th annual tour. Attendees will have the option of choosing presentations and field exercises targeting either “producer/rancher and grazing managers” or “professional/agency staff and environmental enthusiasts.”

For more information contact The Saskatchewan Forage Council
Phone (306-969-2666 or
office@saskforage.ca
www.saskforage.ca

To submit your native plant related event to our events list, send your information (including date, contact, phone number and location) to info@npss.sk.ca.

Developing SAR pasture plans

Continued from Page 1

ward the development of a management plan. Using the information collected, a site specific management plan is produced and given to the landowner.

These management plans contain all of the information collected through the oral interview and site assessment, and also list a series of recommendations to benefit SAR based upon the findings. All recommendations use the best available knowledge, follow Recovery Strategy recommendations, and are drafted in consultation with the landowners and SAR experts. Recommendations in the management plans are drafted using a holistic approach, taking the effects on the landowner's current operations and other SAR (including wildlife) into consideration.

Ongoing logistical support and dollar-for-dollar cost sharing from NPSS helps the landowner implement the plan's recommendations. For 2013, the NPSS has a total of \$10,000 available to participating stewards to implement recommendations from the plan. After the recommendations have been implemented, ongoing monitoring will reassess the land and SAR populations to determine the effects of the recommendations on the SAR populations and habitat, and management practices would be adjusted accordingly (adaptive management).

What are the benefits?

There are many benefits associated with this project, and include:

1) SAR and SAR habitat will benefit by reduced or eliminated threats, increased beneficial influences and more informed, and engaged stewards.

2) Landowners will benefit by having the latest information regarding their land and a customized, comprehensive management plan for SAR. They also have access to match-funding to help improve their operations to benefit SAR.

3) Data collected by our project will also update known occurrence data, contribute new SAR occurrence data and may address knowledge gaps such as identifying trends or factors that help explain the presence or absence of SAR in particular areas.

4) Our work with the landowners may also help secure additional SAR habitat in that they will receive information on



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Pin flags showing the boundaries of a population of Hairy prairie clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*) on steward land near Caron, Sask.

conservation easements along with their management plans and will be given logistical support in helping to establish an easement if they choose to do so.

What happened in 2012?

This past year the NPSS visited five properties: two were in the Caron, Sask., area and had hairy prairie-clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*) populations while three were in the Estevan, Sask., area and held populations of buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*).

We collected a great deal of data regarding SAR habitat and potential threats to these species. Healthy populations of buffalograss and hairy prairie-clover were relocated, and many new populations of buffalograss were found. One site in particular had healthy populations of buffalograss all over the place which was very encouraging to see. We also found a new location of American bugseed (*Corispermum americanum* var. *americanum*), a provincially rare plant (S1) adjacent to one of our sites.

Unfortunately we also found invasive plants such as leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*); this species occurred in three of the five properties, some with quite severe infestations. The sites with leafy spurge ranged from being very well managed, to one occurrence that was unknown to the landowner and if left unchecked would have spread into a nearby buffalograss population. It is very important that we found and addressed these invasive species locations as they will now be less of a threat to the SAR populations.

We are currently writing our man-

agement plans for our 2012 participants and are planning our 2013 field season. We will have between 5 and 10 new participants, and will follow up with current participants to help them implement our recommendations and deliver match funding for their eligible costs.

The NPSS is presenting preliminary results of this project at the upcoming Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference in Red Deer on Feb. 19 to 22, 2013. If you can't make it to the conference, the presentation will be made available after the conference.

How can you participate?

If you are currently participating in the Rare Plant Rescue program, all you have to do is call Laurie Johnson at the Nature Saskatchewan office at 306-780-9417 or Chet Neufeld at the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan office at 306-668-3940. The program is free and we do all the work!

If you're not part of Rare Plant Rescue, you can still join but you must have one of the following on your land:

- Buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*)
- Dwarf Woolly-heads (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*)
- Hairy Prairie-clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*)
- Slender Mouse-ear-cress (*Halimolobos virgata*)
- Small-flowered Sand-verbena (*Tripterocalyx micranthus*)
- Smooth Goosefoot (*Chenopodium subglabrum*)
- Tiny Cryptantha (*Cryptantha minima*)
- Western Spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*)

Editor's note: This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the federal Department of the Environment. *

Conferences to remember in 2012

By CHET NEUFELD
NPSS Executive Director

I was kept very busy in 2012 and attended an unusually high number of conferences. As I always try to keep the NPSS membership in the loop, here are the highlights from two of them.

North American Prairie Conference

For the first time ever, the North American Prairie Conference was held in Canada. The conference took place in Winnipeg from Aug. 6 to 10 and featured presenters from all over Canada, the United States and Mexico.

The presentations covered all of the prairie types and regions in North America, with topics such as grazing, fire ecology, conservation, restoration, education and everything in between. I delivered a presentation on the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, and the NPSS' role in it.

The conference also allowed us to stretch our legs by hosting a number of tours that highlighted Manitoba's beautiful prairie mosaic. The tour I took visited the Living Prairie Museum, a tallgrass prairie reserve and interpretive centre in the heart of Winnipeg, as well as local tallgrass restoration projects within the city. The highlight was a steam engine journey on the Prairie Dog Central. It's a short line railway that begins just outside of Winnipeg and ends at the small town of Grosse Isle, Man. What made it even more special was that the railway right of way has been restored to tallgrass prairie; waist high big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*). For more information on this conference, please go to www.napc2012.org.

Pacific Northwest Economic Region Invasive Species Summit

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) encompasses the northwestern United States and western Canadian provinces and territories, as far east as Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. Although this coalition has traditionally been focused on the economy, they have recently begun to focus on things such as invasive species as they realize the tremendous impacts that they have on our economy.

The conference was held in Saskatoon on July 18 and featured keynote speaker Reuben Keller, an economist from Loyola University in Chicago. He discussed the costs of not doing anything to control invasive species versus the initial (and sometimes high) cost of trying to control invasive species, as well as the future savings resulting from these efforts.

We also had several group discussions to help determine our action plan and invasive species goals for 2013, as we are required to report on our achievements annually. What came of it was even more than anyone had expected: a U.S.-Canada invasive species taskforce! Read more on Page 3.

On the last day, I lead a tour of invasive species projects in the Saskatoon area. Highlights included travelling to Young, Sask., where the NPSS is eradicating the only known population of invasive flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), as well as to the Beaver Creek Conservation Area, where shepherd Jared Epp is using his sheep to control invasive species in a more holistic way. ✱

Eco summit 2012 a 'diverse conference'

By JENALEE MISCHKOLZ
Master's Graduate Student,
Plant Sciences, U. of S.

I attended EcoSummit 2012 in Columbus, Ohio, which is an international conference linking the Ecological Society of America (ESA), The International Association for Ecology (INTECOL) and the Society for Ecological Restoration International (SER). At the conference I gained a global perspective on the state of environmental policy, economy, and ecology.

There was a symposium for "The use of native plants for large scale restoration in a changing world," where speakers discussed the difficulty in finding commercial sources of native seed to do large scale restoration projects and deciding on appropriate native species in a changing climate. Assisted migration – planting species beyond their native historical ranges that better reflect their environmental requirements in the new climate regime – was debated.

"Ecosystem Services" was a very hot topic at the conference and there were many presentations about giving value to the services our environment provides as a tool for policy and law makers to protect existing ecosystems and use as leverage for restoration of damaged ecosystems (i.e. oil spill clean-up costs).

Another central topic was the necessity to engage local people and culture at conservation sites. As many of the world's conservation efforts are in underdeveloped countries, they have been unsuccessful because local people have not been integrated into the conservation plan. Project success has increased where the researchers have made the local people stakeholders in the projects through education, incorporating them as project leaders, and creating jobs.

My favourite speaker was Dr. Mitsch, who talked about his life's work restoring wetlands, and the field station he helped to establish at Ohio State University. At the field station, two lakes were created. Both lakes had identical hydrological systems; however, one lake was planted with native species and the other was not planted. Interestingly, after 20 years the lakes are impossible to distinguish between. This indicates that in wetland restoration projects, it may not be essential to re-plant native species as long as the hydrology and exotic species invasions are controlled.

Overall, it was a very diverse conference, with the main message of: "the world is in trouble," largely due to the over use of environmental resources – in particular water – and damage to ecosystems. Dr. Lester Brown, suggested three priorities: 1) More efficient water use, specifically in irrigation and waste management; 2) Population stability, increased access to family planning especially in less developed countries; 3) Cutting carbon emissions, via wind and solar energy.

For more information visit: www.ecosummit2012.org ✱

Considering peripheral plant populations for conservation

By SARAH VINGE
Habitat Stewardship
Coordinator,
Nature Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is home to a number of plant species that are considered rare in Canada; however, globally they are not considered to be at risk because they are much more common and widespread further south.

Buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*) is an example of such a species.

In Canada, it is listed as Threatened because it only occurs in a few small areas in south-western Manitoba and south-eastern Saskatchewan and these populations are isolated from southern populations; however, it is common in the United States, and globally it is ranked as G4G5 or “apparently secure.”

If such a species is globally secure, why then are energy and resources expended to conserve it in Canada?



PHOTO BY CHET NEUFELD

Buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*) female flowers.



PHOTO BY DAVID FREEMAN

Buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*) male flowers.

To understand the Canadian population's significance, we must first understand peripheral populations.

What is a peripheral population?

Although definitions vary, a peripheral population can be considered a population on the margin of a species' range (the term “population” has a very specific meaning in ecology, but is used colloquially here to describe a group of individuals in a specific area).

In contrast, a core population occurs in the middle of a species range, and has sometimes been considered more important for conservation because it often represents the most suitable environmental conditions for the species.

Canada houses many peripheral populations of prairie species, because the Great Plains reaches its northern extent in Canada. This area north of the Canada-U.S. border provides habitat for many prairie species also found in the south, but these populations experience a slightly different climate (for example, earlier frosts or a shorter growing season) than would be found closer to the central portion of their range. These different conditions are often less suitable for the growth of the species; therefore, these peripheral populations are forced to adapt in order to survive.

As a result of this adaptation, peripheral populations may exhibit unique life history traits, or even contain unique alleles (variants of a gene), that could

be important for survival in the future (especially in the face of a changing climate). Such adaptations may include earlier bud set to avoid damage by early frosts, or faster seedling growth to succeed in a shorter growing season, or they may have unique species interactions in the ecosystem.

Although many of these variations may be plastic (not genetically inherited, but occurring only under certain environmental conditions), some may indeed be genetic. Genetic diversity is very important for long-term species conservation, as it provides the variation for adaptation to occur and guards against inbreeding. In addition, such adaptations and their genetic underpinnings can lead to the formation of new species over long periods of time, so peripheral populations can play an important role in plant evolution.

When considering the long-term conservation of a species, peripheral populations should be conserved, no matter where they fall within jurisdictional boundaries. This will help ensure that genetic diversity and unique adaptations are conserved, giving the species the best chance for long-term survival.

In the case of Buffalograss, some may argue that it does not deserve attention in Canada because it is so common in the south, but because it is a peripheral in Canada it is still worth conserving for the long-term benefit of the species. 🌱



The Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, Inc.

is pleased to present its 18th Annual
General Meeting and Conference:

Native Plants – Native People

Feb. 8 and 9, 2013
German Cultural Centre
160 Cartwright Street E.,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Agenda

Friday, February 8th

- 5:45 p.m. Registration
- 6 p.m. Presentation of Volunteer of the Year awards
and member slides
- 7 p.m. **Book reading:** *A Geography of Blood* by
author Candace Savage
- 7:45 p.m. **Story telling:** by Joseph Naytowhow
- 8:30 p.m. Wine and cheese reception

Saturday, February 9th

- 8 a.m. Registration and breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. Opening remarks and annual general
meeting (during breakfast)
- 9:30 a.m. **Presenter #1** – NPSS Project Update –
Chet Neufeld, NPSS
- 10 a.m. Coffee break and networking
- 10:15 a.m. **Presenter #2** – BEAHR Environmental Monitor
Training Program – Carol Crowe, Indigenous
Visions, Inc.
- 10:50 a.m. **Presenter #3** – Establishment of the Healing
Garden – Kjelti Anderson, Allen Sapp Gallery
- 11:25 a.m. **Presenter #4** – The First Nations Medicinal
Garden – Fidji Gendron, First Nations University
of Canada
- Noon Lunch
- 1 p.m. **Presenter #5:** – Ethnobotany – Anna Leighton
- 1:30 p.m. **Presenter #6:** Current Projects at Carry the
Kettle – Corina Rider, Carry the Kettle First
Nation
- 2 p.m. Coffee break and networking
- 2:15 p.m. **Presenter #7** - Species at Risk Management on
Blood Lands – Kansie Fox, Blood Tribe Land
Management
- 2:50 p.m. **Presenter #8** - Current Initiatives at Beardy's &
Okemasis – Conrad Gamble, Beardy's &
Okemasis First Nation
- 3:20 p.m. Native drumming demonstration

Please note: Due to allergies of staff and attendees, this is a
fragrance-free event.

Registration Form

Registration deadline is Feb. 4, 2013.

Mail or fax this form and mail payment by cheque to:

Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan
P.O. Box 21099
Saskatoon, Sask. S7H 5N9
FAX: 306-668-3940

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Registration fees:

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\$ _____

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your membership on our website (www.npss.sk.ca) using your
credit card and our online store. It's fast, easy and secure.
Also, the member rate is applicable only to PAID members.
Memberships purchased at the time of registration entitle you
to membership rates.

As a reminder, the board decided at a meeting in the spring of
2006 that resolutions that are sensitive and pertaining to complex
issues, including any directive not strictly that of the NPSS or per-
taining to its activities, must be submitted in writing to the NPSS
Board of Directors a minimum of two weeks prior to the AGM.
The resolution must include adequate background information for
Board review and a clear indication of why the proposed resolu-
tion should come from the NPSS.

For more information contact:

Chet Neufeld, NPSS Executive Director
Phone and fax: (306) 668-3940
email: info@npss.sk.ca
Website: www.npss.sk.ca

The effect of invasive species on native ones

By *ABEBE BIRATU*
Environmental Scientist

An invasive species is generally considered to be any aggressive alien species introduced to a new ecosystem or out of its natural habitat, either deliberately by human intervention or unintentionally because of increased trade, travel and tourism. These are species whose introduction or spread threatens native species and, more broadly, the environment.

Invasive species come in the form of plants, animals, insects and microbes, which potentially displace or inflict major negative impacts on indigenous species. This threatens the delicate balance that native species have evolved within an ecosystem and harmoniously co-existed for millennia. Globally the problems of invasive species are well recognized with different magnitude in most of the continents.

Once established, invasive plants alter nutrient availability, disrupt pollination, cause extinction of native species and act as ecosystem engineers by altering energy and nutrient flows.

Invasive plants:

- compete for resources with native flora and fauna, including species at risk,
- alter and destroy natural habitats and ecosystems
- change water chemistry and hydrological regimes
- reduce biological diversity and genetic diversity
- reduce agricultural production and increase weed control costs

As a scientist who has recently immigrated to Canada from East Africa, I have noticed similarities between invasive species issues in both parts of the world, although the species differ.

In East Africa there are many invasive plant species that also invade natural habitats and affect the health and diversity of ecosystems. The most notorious invasive plant species there are *Parthenium hysterophorus*, *Prosopis flora*, and *Lantana camara*, among others. Some of the major threats these species have on native species are as follows:

- allelopathic effect on plants in the vicinity
- competition for resources
- health problems with other organisms
- interference with the food web

Posing these threats to native species, the invasive species have infested rangelands, road sides, yards, footpaths, crop fields and watering points. Their threats are made worse since they don't have natural enemies and are not used for any purpose by locals. Though the invasive species are different in Saskatchewan, the threats are the same.✳

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