



Invasive Species in the Williams Lake Watershed



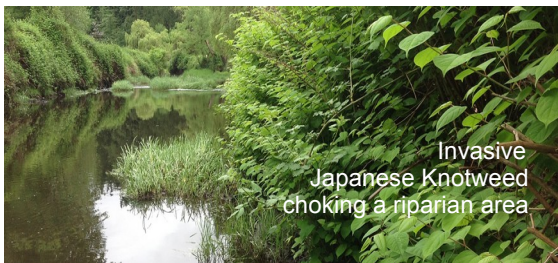
The watershed is the area that supplies Williams Lake with all its water. This land includes a variety of diverse habitats, from wetlands and meadows to local streets and homes.

The great cycle of life

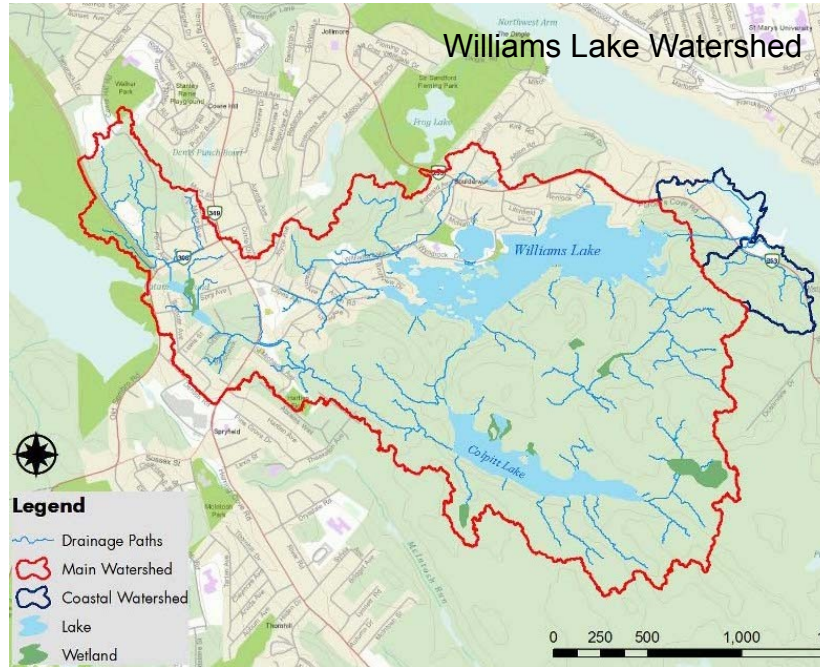
For tens of thousands of years plants and animals have adapted to the unique environment of the watershed. From the high granite barrens with their sparse soil and harsh conditions to the woodlands and seasonal wetlands, a wide variety of plants have created thriving ecosystems that support a rich diversity of bird, insect and animal life. Plants of the watershed are uniquely suited to withstand cycles of drought and rainfall, and to regrow after periodic burns from forest fire. They form a community that is self-sustaining over time.

The problem with invasive species

What happens when plants or animals from far away regions are introduced? Such alien species can damage local habitats where animals nest, and the food sources they rely on. Some invasive species multiply rapidly to crowd out native species. They compete at the level of roots to steal nutrients and moisture. They also interrupt the relationship of plants with the fungal soil organisms that help them access food.



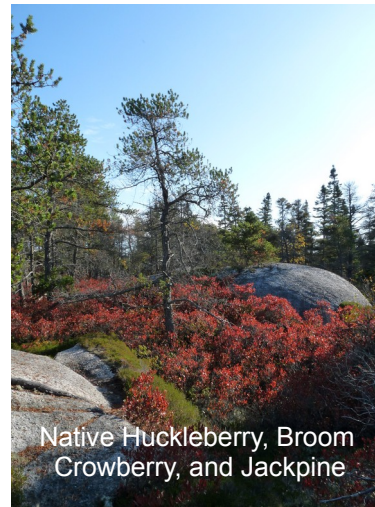
Invasive Japanese Knotweed choking a riparian area



Four steps to fighting invasives

How you can help

- 1. Learn to identify invasive species**
Find helpful information at the Nova Scotia Invasive Species Council: NSInvasives.ca
- 2. Remove or cut invasives back**
Some invasive species must be handled carefully.
- 3. Avoid buying or planting species known to be alien or invasive**
Ask at garden centres or check Latin names before purchasing.
- 4. Be a native plants ambassador**
Share your knowledge about invasive species with friends and neighbours.



Native Huckleberry, Broom Crowberry, and Jackpine



Why worry? These are the types of damage that may be caused by invasive species

Loss of biodiversity

Diversity is when healthy habitats support a wide variety of plants and animals, with living things in balance. If native trees and bushes are replaced by an invasive species like Multiflora rose, that is a loss of biodiversity.

Degradation of natural habitats

Serious environmental effects include loss of food sources, soil depletion and erosion, loss of water quality and arrival of new diseases.

Economic impacts

Invasive plants can cost huge amounts to eradicate once established. Negative effects can be felt on recreation, tourism, public utilities, and even property values.

Dangers to health

Some invasives are toxic to eat, or poison the soil, threatening the health of wild animals, pets and also people.

The best time to deal with invasive species?

As soon as you spot an invasive species, that is the best time to deal with it effectively. Waiting allows the invasive species to grow stronger, to become more entrenched in the landscape, to spread to neighbouring areas, and to do more damage.

Many hands make light work

Funding: HRM Community Grants Program
Map provided by Patricia Manuel
Photo courtesy of David Patriquin
Graphic design: pmh-Interworks

Find out more – get involved!

Visit us at WilliamsLakeCC.org
Or see our partner organization at BacklandsCoalition.ca



Helping to Protect Nature's Delicate Balance