

Yellow flag-iris on Baikie Island



Baikie Island is an area at the edge of the Campbell River, close to where it meets Johnston Strait, and was previously used as a log sort, and had an established sawmill. When the sawmill went bankrupt in 1998 it was torn down.

In 2001 the lands were renamed Baikie Island Reserve and under a conservation covenant held by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, restorative work has been done on the lands. Excavation of a new marsh and backchannel provide important habitats for the fish that use the area. It now houses rare stands of riparian forest and sensitive intertidal marshes and mudflats, as well as red-listed plant communities. These sensitive marshes are home to five species of salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout. Approximately 50% of Campbell River's juvenile salmon population depends on the nursery habitat within Baikie Island Reserve. Native aquatic and land vegetation has been planted and work is ongoing to keep invasive species out.

The yellow flag-iris was located on the north-west side of the island in the marshy area, next to the mudflats and river. It covered about 5000m sq. There were several smaller satellite areas along the edge and an extremely large expanse.



Yellow flag-iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) is an invasive plant originating from Europe and North Africa. It was brought to Canada in the late 1800s and has taken off. Yellow flag-iris is a bright, flashy plant that stands erect and can grow up to 1.5 meters. It colonizes in large areas through its horizontal root system and rhizomes that can break off and form new plants. These root systems create large thickets, connecting several hundred plants, making areas impenetrable and forcing out native species.

Removal Strategy

The best time to tackle Yellow flag-iris is when it is still in small, semi-contained stands, and is small enough to manage. Once it has taken over an area it is very difficult to remove.

It can be successfully removed manually but is extremely labour intensive, since its ability to spread through rhizomes. Digging disturbs the soil and can break off rhizomes, allowing the iris to grow back.

Deplete seedbank

- Collect all the flowers, for a year prior to removal, reduces amount of seeds that can sprout in disturbed areas

Remove

- Collect and bag seed heads
- Cut leaves close to ground and leave in sun to dry out
- Slice rhizomes to full length in 10-15cm strips
- Remove strips and ensure full depth
- Green stems and thin white roots can be cut off of root ball, corms
- Corms are bulbous plant stems that help iris reproduce
- Bag, remove, and landfill rhizomes and corms
- Revisit sites in 1-2 months, hoe or hand weed



What we accomplished

Through an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program with the Greenways Land Trust and the City of Campbell River we accomplished much in two days:

- Satellite infestations farthest from large infestation were dealt with first
- 2680 kg of mass was removed and sent to the landfill
- All of the flowering heads were removed
- 40% of the iris was removed from the whole area
- Satellite plants - 1500m sq removed
- Concentrated infestations - 400sq m removed



Future Plans

This area has such a large infestation, we plan on bringing in an excavator in the future to get rid of the large areas.



Thank-you to our partners:



Greenways Land Trust is a conservation organization that works to enhance recreational and ecological greenways for people and wildlife. Visit www.greenwaystrust.ca, phone 250-287-3785, or email greenways@greenwaystrust.ca for more information.

