

From: [Joanne Sales](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Scotch Broom - A Call to Lawmakers to Take Action
Date: Thursday, May 19, 2022 5:07:10 PM
Attachments: [Broom. Call to lawmakers to take action. May192022.pdf](#)
[Flammable broom previously on OBladfill.JPG](#)
[Aerial powerlines mountain near Oceanside 2019.jpg](#)
[Aerialpowerlinesdense 2015doseup.png](#)
[We don't want that here-NewZealand Mountains.JPG](#)
[Aerial Parksville Powerlines2011.jpg](#)
[Aerial view Parksville powerlines 2017.jpg](#)

Hello!

Attached is correspondence and a follow-up on a Delegation presented by Broombusters earlier in the Spring. Thank you for sharing with Council Members. The photos were taken from the air by a local pilot of Qualicum Beach. Please feel free to contact me with questions, comments and suggestions.

With Appreciation,
Joanne

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Broombusters Invasive Plant Society
May 19, 2022

Dear Lawmakers,

You are receiving this document as an update to a delegation from Broombusters Invasive Plant Society in the spring of 2022. The key to my presentation was that while Broombuster volunteers are doing a great job of getting control of broom in the municipalities, there is a serious need for government bodies and representatives to take action or we will lose this fight about this dangerously aggressive invasive plant. Several directors and council members expressed interest in pursuing what could be done.

Request of local governments:

Endorse a resolution to be forwarded to the UBCM and member local governments requesting that the UBCM call on the Province of British Columbia to establish Scotch Broom as a noxious weed and establish laws to mitigate spread on lands controlled by crown corporations and lands within Provincial control.

Establish local bylaws to categorize Scotch broom as a NOXIOUS weed complete with regulations to mitigate the spread.

“Scotch Broom is the invasive species causing the greatest harm to species at risk in BC” according to an assessment study of Invasive Species Council of BC. In this case study of BC’s “Most Wanted” invasive species, Scotch broom is *the* top offender. Scotch broom is spreading over massive areas all over BC. Infested areas will not return to forests, meadows or farms.

Why is Scotch broom a problem?

- Scotch broom is an extreme fire hazard due to high oil content and naturally occurring dead branches. It is a volatile flash fuel, making forest fires more intense, more difficult to fight.
- Scotch broom forms dense monocultures, preventing regrowth of forests and native plants - a serious threat to biodiversity. It changes soil chemistry and is toxic to grazing wildlife.
- Scotch broom spreads rapidly, each mature plant produces approximately 18,000 seeds that are viable for 30-50 more years.

What is contributing to the spread?

- Scotch broom only grows in the sun, but quickly takes hold in large, cleared areas of land that are left without management or control measures in place.
- Cleared roadways, transmission lines and rights-of-way, and previously forested land (public and private) create an ideal environment for broom to flourish and spread across great distances. Seeds spread from land clearing, road building, gravel pits, and development.
- There are no government regulations to require control Scotch Broom.

Obstacles to Action:

- Scotch broom has spread so extensively that it will be difficult to eradicate.
- Scotch broom doesn't fit neatly into existing invasive species categories.
- The extent of its spread is often invisible to policy makers and residents. (I was told that BC Hydro only takes aerial photographs mid-summer when broom blends with other greenery.)

In 2021, **over 600 Broombuster volunteers cut broom for over 7000 hours**. In addition, there are other volunteer groups removing broom. But this problem cannot be solved by volunteers. We need the government on all levels to take action to remove and stop the spread of this aggressive, invasive alien species. The situation will just continue to get worse without the government action. We cannot leave this problem to our children.

Please feel free to get in contact with me with comments, suggestions or questions.

Sincerely,

Joanne

Joanne Sales

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ADDENDUM: The Spread of Scotch Broom on BC Hydro Transmission Lines

While BC Hydro recognizes that Scotch broom is a fire hazard, it can be perceived that the company benefits from Scotch broom growing in the transmission lines because broom prevents trees from growing. The company cuts down target species, mostly tall deciduous trees, but does nothing to remove broom. The company acknowledges that it will continue to let Scotch broom spread freely **because there is no pressure from government entities, and because broom is not classified as a noxious weed**.

This is an issue of great concern for those who live on and love the islands. Allowing a highly volatile invasive plant to grow densely over the extensive network of transmission lines from Campbell River to Victoria, creates a **dangerous pathway for wildfire to spread rapidly across the island**. In summer, dry Scotch broom burns like kerosene. Also, transmission lines go through forest and agricultural areas, spreading broom into newly cleared forest land and onto farms. The burden of removal then falls onto the farmers and has a serious detrimental impact on BC forestry industries. (In 2009, it was estimated that Scotch broom cost Oregon an estimated \$40 million per year in **lost timber revenue** and control efforts. A more recent estimate is closer to \$79 million. We don't know the loss in BC, but certainly the loss is substantial.)

Suggested Steps for BC Hydro to protect the ecosystem and reduce risks of wildfire:

- Seasonal workers could be employed to stop the spread of Scotch broom.
- Substantial sized, broom-free FIRE BREAKS should occur regularly along transmission lines.
- Aerial photos should be taken during Scotch broom blooming season to assess the spread.
- Scotch Broom should be removed near farms, urban areas and at least 30 feet from ecologically sensitive areas, recreational areas, and forest stands that will be harvested in the future.

*Report from ISCBC <https://bcinvasives.ca/news/new-report-on-species-at-risk/>











