



**Council Member Motion**  
**For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of July 27, 2017**

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**Date:** July 21, 2017

**From:** Councillor Ben Isitt

**Subject:** Regional Coordination on Invasive Species Removal

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**Background:**

The Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) is a working group comprised of staff ranging from Parks, Public Works, Planning and Environmental Services departments of all local governments within the CRD, and has been working since 2010 to create a more unified, efficient and coordinated response to invasive species management in the region.

The success of this working group led to the Province offering regional funding to enhance facilitation and coordination. With this the local governments have come to rely on the activities performed by CRISP including:

- Information-sharing between local government staff;
- Focused species management through the development of a regional specific Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) program;
- Staff training for plant identification, treatment application, and Provincial database site entry;
- Invasive species treatment contractor vetting and treatment coordination;
- Disposal systems;
- Annual regional reporting required by the Province;
- Public outreach and education.

The Provincial funds are used to cover administration expenses including having a part-time staff member that is the Regional Invasive Species Coordinator. As CRISP is a working group and not an entity that can receive and administer funds, contracts or payroll, CRISP has had to rely on a model where it partners with outside organizations to perform these duties. This model unfortunately has been inefficient and resulted in a heavy turnover in the CRISP Coordinator position, due to a lack of clear supervisory oversight (working for CRISP but as an employee of the partnering organization) and lack of job security.

In 2017, CRISP has entered the invasive-species treatment season with dedicated funds from the Province, but no Coordinator to implement the program. This poses the risk of forfeiture the funds designated for the region, as well as loss of momentum in a treatment and reporting process that has become refined over several years. Without a Regional Invasive Species Coordinator, member local governments will have to take on many of the specialized tasks that have been performed by CRISP, thus impacting local governments at both a capacity and cost level.

CRISP requires a new model in order to function effectively. It is therefore recommended that the City of Victoria join the District of Highlands and other local governments in the Capital Region in calling on the Capital Regional District to examine the feasibility of assuming administrative responsibility for the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership, including disbursement of Provincial funding and annual reports on invasive species removal.

### **Implications**

If the region loses the services of a Regional Invasive Species Coordinator, it leaves the region at risk of increased spread of invasive species, both through a lack of treatment programs as well as a lack of knowledge-sharing and coordination with our local and Provincial partners. The costs to infrastructure, public health, economic assets and the environment would increase and thus bear more costs on the individual local governments and ratepayers – costs that can be mitigated through coordinated regional efforts.

### **Recommendation**

That Council endorse the following resolution and direct staff to forward copies to the Capital Regional District Board and local governments in the Capital Region, requesting favourable consideration:

#### ***Resolution: Regional Coordination on Invasive Species***

WHEREAS the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) has served the needs of local governments in the region to coordinate invasive species planning, monitoring, treatment, provincial mapping and reporting, training, public engagement, contractor management, and disposal;

AND WHEREAS the success of the inter-governmental CRISP team has led to consistent Provincial funding to aid in the coordination of efforts for the region;

AND WHEREAS the existing administrative model (an ad-hoc working group of staff from various municipalities) has required CRISP to partner with outside organizations to administer the funds, resulting in conditions of unstable and insecure employment with high turnover and low retention for the Provincially-funded position of Regional Invasive Species Coordinator – creating a situation where the region risks losing this Provincial funding and having local governments assume responsibilities, services and activities currently provided by CRISP.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Victoria request the Capital Regional District Board direct staff to a report on the implications, feasibility and recommendations to house the duties of a Regional Invasive Species Coordinator within the CRD.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Isitt

Attachment 1: District of Highlands Report re: Regional Invasive Species Coordinator