

#RisingYouth Community Service Grants – Invasive Species Project Ideas

The [Canadian Council on Invasive Species](http://canadainvasives.org) has teamed up with TakingItGlobal to inspire young people to take-action through youth-led community service grants. Below, you will find three invasive species related project ideas to inspire you to apply for a #RisingYouth community service grant.

If you choose one of these projects, be sure to use this link:
<http://canadainvasives.risingyouth.ca/> - to apply.

Why choose to apply for an invasive species project?

Invasive species are plants, animals and micro-organisms that have been accidentally or deliberately introduced into areas beyond their native range. Their introduction or spread has a significant impact environment, the economy, and/or society including human health. In fact, according to the World Conservation Union, invasive alien species are the second most significant threat to biodiversity, after habitat loss!

Invasive species impacts are far-reaching. Do you like to hike or mountain bike? Invasive plants like dog-strangling vine and garlic mustard can be transported by recreational equipment to other nature areas and takeover, eliminating habitat for our native plants (plants that have been here for a long time and contribute greatly to our ecosystem by providing food for wildlife and support ecosystem services like helping to prevent flooding).

What about fishing or swimming? Invasive fish like Asian carp can alter habitat, compete with native fishes for food and habitat and can act as carriers for diseases or parasites that could spread to native fishes. Our native fish support a vast range of fishing opportunities for our communities, as well as support our local economies, and if disrupted, these opportunities could be destroyed.

Some invasive species can even harm people, impacting our ability to enjoy the great outdoors. Have you ever heard of giant hogweed? It is often featured in the news because if you get the sap on your skin and are then exposed to sunlight, your skin will be burned and blistered.

Invasive species impacts might seem overwhelming, but there are many positive actions that Canadians can take to stop the spread of invasive species and protect Canada's ecosystems and communities, with your help! See below three invasive species project ideas that you can use to support an application to the Rising Youth Community Service Grant program.

Host an Invasive Weed Pull

Did you know that you make a real difference by removing high impacts Invasive species from your local backyard or greenspace?

1. Research the top 5-10 terrestrial invasive species threatening the green spaces in your local area and how to remove them (contact the [Canadian Council on Invasive Species](#) for help if needed).
2. Identify a green space or community area that has been impacted by one of the top ten species (ex. your backyard, a school yard, or church yard, etc.) and speak to the property owner to get permission to host an invasive weed pull event.
3. Contact your local municipality, conservation authority, provincial/territorial government and/or the local invasive species council to seek their input and support for hosting the event - find a list of the invasive species councils across Canada [here](#).
4. Survey and identify the invasive species on the property and flag the identified invasive species for removal with stakes and/or flagging tape. You could also make a map or take photos of other plants to research and identify later.
5. Contact your local municipality to determine how you will properly dispose of the plant waste to prevent its spread.
6. Find a date that works for your volunteer friends, family, and/or community members. Advertise the date, time, location and remind people what they need to bring such as rakes, tools, footwear. Remind them that you will be practicing safety and hygiene at the event.
7. Purchase needed equipment, gloves, educational materials, signage, and print certificates for volunteers.
8. Host the weed pull event. Provide volunteers with snacks, equipment, and educational material, and make sure to take a before picture of the site. Ensure adequate measures are in place to follow social distancing rules.
9. Start your event by educating volunteers on the impacts of invasive species, the invasive plants in this area, why they need to be removed and how to remove the plants properly and safely. Demonstrate how to remove the plants, then have the volunteers remove and bag the invasive plants.
10. Celebrate your success: Take a picture of the group and the work completed on the site and put up a sign (if you have the landowner's permission) recognizing the work done.
11. Thank your volunteers! Provide them with certificates and ask them to spread their new knowledge on invasive species and their removal.
12. Responsibly dispose of removed plants afterwards.

Budget:

Planning Costs and Event Items

- Mileage to the event
- Covid-19 safety gear like masks and sanitizer
- Gloves, safety vests, shovels, picks, garbage bags
- Snacks, water, forms and certificates for volunteers, educational resources such as magnets, decals, signs, and posters, first aid kit.

Disposal Costs

If disposing of invasive plants at a landfill, there will likely be a cost, determined by weight. Some landfills may not accept invasive plants and might require them to be taken elsewhere. Call ahead and ask landfill for this information.

Keep in Mind:

Volunteers

Have volunteers sign a safety waiver to ensure that your volunteers are feeling well and have not recently returned from abroad, that they are responsible for their own safety during the event using the safety equipment provided, that they agree to have their photo taken and collect their emergency contact information. Check with your local municipality on Covid-19 related information to include in the waiver.

Hosting the Event

When planning with your volunteers, do as much communication online as possible. Ensure your group is compliant with Covid-19 precaution requirements. Keep in-person events to the max number of participants based on current local guidelines due to Covid-19. If you are meeting, ensure that you have space to be at least 2 metres apart from other people and wear masks if possible. Ensure there is enough equipment for each person attending your event to avoid the sharing of equipment. Sanitize equipment before leaving your event.

Help Take-Action on Invasive Species

Did you know, that by taking small simple steps when you are outdoors, you and your friends can help stop the spread of invasive species? Let us help share simple tips and actions to protect our lands and waters.

1. Research and identify the top 5 to 10 invasive species in your local area (contact the [Canadian Council on Invasive Species](#) for help if needed).
2. Identify a key community group or business (ex. municipalities, nature reserves, marinas, naturalist club, garden centres, cycling clubs, etc.) that would benefit from greater awareness of invasive species and/or could help spread awareness and encourage people to take action against invasive species in your community. If possible, connect with the provincial/territorial government and/or the local invasive species council to help guide you - they may already have many community connections in place. Find a list of the invasive species councils across Canada [here](#).
3. Work with your chosen group to identify key resources that will promote awareness and commitment to take action on invasive species in your community (ex. a rack cards, pledge forms, fact sheets, posters, boot brushes, etc. to be put on display).
4. Work with the group to put together a resource kit (ex. pledge form, boot brush, sticker, chamois cloth, poster, sign, etc.) that will increase awareness and commit their members or clients to action on invasive species. Maybe they want a local tailored resource(s) (ex. a rack card or factsheet) to be included in the resource kit, about what invasive species are in your local area, the impacts of invasive species and why it's important to prevent their spread.
5. Determine how to share your resource kit with its intended audience. Contact and set a date with community groups to host an event(s) (virtually or by social distancing) or create a display at a local business or public facility (ex. garden centres, tourism centres, or community centres, etc.).

6. Host the event or set up the display to share your toolkit within the community.
7. Take and share pictures of your resource kit and event/display on social media and encourage others to take-action.

Budget:

Resource Materials and Event Items

- May include purchase of invasive species images, boot brushes, chamois cloths, printing costs, graphic design, sign making, display material, paid social media promotion, etc.
- Mileage to the event
- Covid safety gear like masks and sanitizer
- Snacks, water, printing forms and certificates for volunteers, educational resources such as magnets, decals, signs, and posters, first aid kit.

Event Materials

- Display stands or poster boards, snacks, and water for event attendees.

Keep in Mind:

Volunteers

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Hosting the Event

When planning with your volunteers, do as much communication online as possible. Ensure your group is compliant with Covid-19 precaution requirements. Keep in-person events to the max number of participants based on current local guidelines due to Covid-19. If you are meeting, ensure that you have space to be at least 2 metres apart from other people and wear masks if possible. Ensure there is enough equipment for each person attending your event to avoid the sharing of equipment. Sanitize equipment before leaving your event.

Be a Detective: Track and Report Invasive Species

Did you know that the earlier you find a new invasive species the better chance we have of stopping its spread? Help others 'see it, report it' too!

1. Research and identify the top 5-10 invasive species in your local area (contact the [Canadian Council on Invasive Species](#) for help if needed).
2. Identify the invasive species reporting tools available in your region and learn how to use them. Find reporting Information from the Canadian Council on Invasive Species [here](#).
3. Identify audiences (ex. naturalist groups, hiking and biking clubs, anglers etc.) that can help report invasive species in your community and determine how to engage them through an event (virtual or by socially distancing). If possible, connect with the municipality, conservation authorities, provincial/territorial government, and/or the local invasive species council to help guide you. Find a list of the invasive species councils across Canada [here](#).

4. Create a promotion resource (ex. presentation, sign, poster, factsheet, video tutorial, etc.) to teach community members how to report local invasive species, including how to take good quality identification photos. Also, put together a resource kit (ex. pledge form, boot brush, sticker, chamois cloth, poster, sign, etc.) that will increase awareness and promote community members to action on invasive species.
5. Organize a date and time for a virtual or in-person demonstration event. If in-person, find an area in your community (ex. your backyard, a school yard or church yard) and ask the property owners for permission to host a demonstration event. In advance to your event, survey the area and flag invasive species with stakes and/or flagging tape.
6. Promote the event: Contact friends, family, and community members to participate in your event and to promote your training resource and kit.
7. Host the training event (by live-streaming if virtual). If in person, ensure adequate measures are in place to follow social distancing rules. Start your event by educating volunteers on the impacts of invasive species, the invasive plants in the area, why they need to be reported and how to properly report. Demonstrate how to use the reporting tool on the flagged invasive plants on the site, then have volunteers report the plants.
8. Thank your attendees and provide each attendee with a resource kit and challenge them to share their learnings and report 10 invasive species on their own.
9. Celebrate your work! See how many more of that key species people can find over the next 2 weeks or month - you pick!
10. Keep in touch with your volunteers and celebrate when they complete 10 invasive species reports by posting on social media.

Budget:

Resource and Event Materials

- Possible purchase of invasive species images, boot brushes, chamois cloths, printing costs, graphic design, sign making, display material, video equipment, paid social media promotion, etc.
- Mileage to the event
- Covid safety gear like masks and sanitizer
- Snacks, water, printing forms and certificates for volunteers, educational resources such as magnets, decals, signs, and posters, first aid kit.

Keep in Mind:

Volunteers

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