



Knot in Hyde Park

Season 4

Notes from the Field

November 4, 2024

Another Knotweed Management Season has come to a close in Hyde Park

It's been a productive season. The big news is that we hired a part-time employee for the summer to scale up our work. In addition to maintaining the 49 sites we started in prior years, we were able to add 15 new ones, which is great! We continue to see compelling evidence that mechanical control of KW works: the sites we started managing in 2021 are all smaller and very much easier to tend. We just need to keep showing up. One new observation: we were shocked to see how aggressively some yet-to-be-managed KW patches had expanded. The hot, wet, greenhouse-like weather that made everything lush this spring likewise made the KW thrive. It left us with a real sense of urgency that even a year makes a difference and the sooner we can bring a patch of KW under management the better. Which is why there is ...

A Job Opportunity for Season 5 (2025). We believe strongly that having a part-time paid employee is the way forward. We know what work needs to be done to keep KW at bay; it's just a question of dedicating sufficient resources to doing it. We will be actively looking to find someone in the community who wants to take on this rewarding work next season. If you are interested, or if you know the perfect person, please get in touch. Requirements: love working outdoors and engaging with the community, own a vehicle that can transport equipment and supplies; ability to safely operate a hand-held bladed brush-cutter and lift wood pallets occasionally; interested in invasive plants and their control; possessed of good observation skills and attentive to detail. We think this job could be parlayed into a bigger one for the right person – private invasive work for land-owners, perhaps, or working with other towns in Lamoille County. We're open to helping construct that portfolio.

Early Detection is Everything! It's obvious: if you get a small patch of KW as soon as you see it, you can stop a small burst of KW from exploding and from becoming many patches when it inevitably spreads. Of the 15 new sites we took on this year, 6 of them are what we call "EDRR" (Early Detection/Rapid Response) sites. Of the 49 "legacy" (pre-2024) sites, 13 of those are EDRR. Most of those 13 are now producing little/no re-growth of KW. **Please be the eyes of KW EDRR sites in HP!** Know what it looks like and get in touch to alert us. Thanks to Liam Paus we have an ArcGIS map we can use to track sites. We dig up the KW and then monitor for any regrowth. It takes almost no time to do.

Update on 3 Big Sites:

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail on Black Farm Road is our biggest mechanical control site – some 250-feet of KW on the road side and another 30-feet on the river side. We have seen a massive reduction in the re-growth of KW. We now need to develop a strategy for how to take that site through its next phase, which is less about pulling lots of KW and more about maintaining a site that has some KW – and loads of Sumac – growing there.

Our Cricket Hill Site, which KiHP manages with Chris Whitlock and his Lamoille North High School science students, has just finished its second full season. The experiment here is to test the effectiveness of only three cuts per season. Our view so far is that the less frequent cutting does mean slower progress, and possibly affords the plant more time to react by sending rhizomes out laterally. But there is nonetheless definitely progress. And we love the educational impact that Mr. Whitlock is having. Huge thanks to him for his commitment to this work. Still the largest drying stack in HP!



Friends of Green River Reservoir have continued their work on The Dam Road.

Now all four sites (including an EDRR site at the top of the road) are under management. Again, it's a '3-cuts/season' protocol. Happily, there is lots of non-KW plant growth already taking hold at the main site. Thanks especially to Terri Gregory for leading this effort and bringing out the Friends.

Expanding the Toolkit. We have direct experience that mechanical control of KW works and we remain committed to that method. However, it relies entirely on a reliable supply of labor to do it consistently; hence our decision to hire a part-time employee to supplement our committee/volunteers. But supply of labor is not endless and there are sites that are not conducive to mechanical control -- either because of their sheer size or their location/circumstance. In those situations, the choice is either to do nothing or to do something else; hence our interest in a working with glyphosate which is the herbicide known to be effective against KW.

Last season we commenced a Pilot Program to treat 7 small sites. This year we re-treated the residual KW re-growth at 6 of the 7 sites (there was no return of KW at one of the sites). We added three new sites to the program this year: they are important road-side locations, not conducive to mechanical control, and thriving in the greenhouse conditions this season produced. This herbicide work is undertaken under permit from VT Agency of Ag, Food & Markets, using a licensed applicator and best-practice KW treatment (a single late-season application), and with the express permission of the land-owner.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Watershed Grant/Green River Knotweed Project.

A perfect example of where mechanical control is not an option is the massive KW stand where the Green River crosses under Garfield Road. In April 2024 Hyde Park was awarded a Watershed Grant aimed at bringing the KW under control to protect the watershed, improve road safety, and to prepare the site for major infrastructure replacement over the coming decade. We commenced work this season with a pre-cut of the KW in early July; and an application of glyphosate in early September. The grant will fund a follow-up treatment and some revegetation of the site. Thanks to the F&WL Citizen Review Committee for seeing merit in the project.

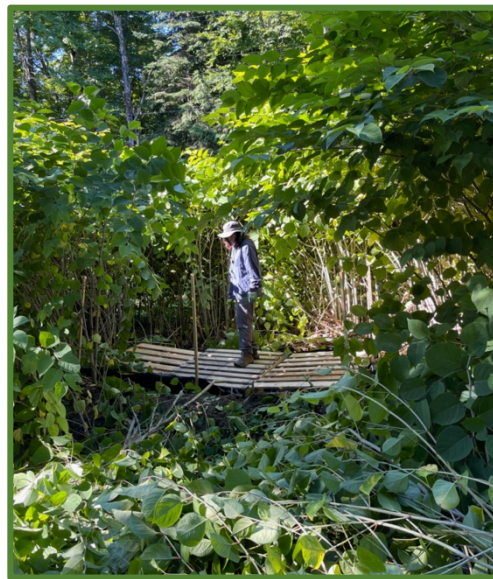
Volunteers. Every season we get a steady stream of inquiries from people wanting help with their own KW issues. That's great! We have learned a lot and we really want to share what we've learned. It's fair to say, though, that we get fewer inquiries from people who want to volunteer to work at our community sites. We do get a handful and we are super grateful to them. We continue to believe that "adopting a spot" should be an easy way for people to engage. And we will continue to try to develop that model. We think technology might have something to offer. Meanwhile, if you can't volunteer, you can always consider donating toward the cost of an employee.

Thank you Thank you Thank you.

- HP Taxpayers for \$2,000 contribution to our annual budget.
- The donors who contributed to the cost of our part-time employee, without whom we would not have been able to make the case that this is the way forward. Big thanks!
- Our Road Commissioner/Foreman Mark French and his Road Crew – for being aware and engaged; and developing a method for safe road-side mowing of KW.
- Jennifer Tricou, HP's Finance Director, for making our first employment experience successful. And HP's Select Board for its continued interest and support.
- To all the landowners who took the time to patiently engage with us, educate themselves and give us express permission to do the road-side herbicide work.
- And, of course, all the volunteers who came out and pulled KW or put it on their list of to-dos for Season 2025.

Ways to get involved in Season 5 (2025)

- Adopt a Spot. Sign up to work on a site near you.
- Join our Committee or come to our meetings. We're on sabbatical until February.
- Check out our website at the Town's Homepage hydeparkvt.com, under "Committees".
- Please do follow us on Instagram: #knotinhydepark
- Make a donation toward our employee payroll for 2025: knotinhydepark@gmail.com



Ella, our part-time field-worker, in a sea of knotweed at 2024 new site on Garfield Cross

Why are we intent on stopping the spread of KW?

1. If left alone KW will create a solid mono-culture in an area and crowd out all other plants.
2. A single patch of KW is the birthplace of more patches – any part of the plant can be moved along through road works, mowing, flooding events, or any kind of excavation activity; those pieces will take root and create a new mono-culture.
3. KW does not hold the soil like plants with more complex root systems and therefore allows soil to erode more easily (and spreading the plant with the erosion).
4. It is an extremely aggressive grower, able to penetrate through paved roads and house foundations.
5. It is extremely difficult to eradicate once it takes hold.

EDRR (early detection, rapid response) matters! It doesn't just stop a small patch of KW from becoming a LARGE one; it stops it from becoming MANY patches.

Act Early and Persist.