

Call for volunteers to assist with major invasive species response in Sargeant Bay wetland

The wetland in Sargeant Bay Provincial Park has recently been infested with the very aggressive Yellow Flag Iris. How the plant arrived there is unknown, but it is not a native so must have originated in a private collection somewhere nearby. The significance of this species is simple— if left to proliferate unchecked it will take over the wetland and many of the important native species will be overgrown. This will have major negative impacts on the microbiota that live in, or depend upon, native wetland plant species and all they support.

Nesting birds such as Virginia Rail, Common Yellowthroat and Red-winged Blackbirds will be reduced or forced out completely. Frogs, newts, garter snakes and salamanders will be adversely impacted. Action is needed immediately to prevent an ecological disaster in one of our Provincial park gems on the Sunshine Coast.

The Sargeant Bay Society is planning a volunteer-led control program that initially involves removal of all the seed pods produced this year, thereby reducing the surface spread of the plants. To do this we need help. Access to the upper wetlands must be, by necessity, “on foot”, as the vegetation is too dense to allow loaded boat access. The plan is to muster a crew of wet-suited, or otherwise protected, volunteers, to venture into the wetlands in an organized manner and remove all seed pods for transfer to a burn site for destruction. Small empty watercraft will be utilized as receptacles for the seed pods as the team progresses through the wetland. Any areas that may be too deep for walking access will have to be dealt with from skiffs or canoes.

The date for this important endeavour is Saturday, July 16th, starting at 0900. Please contact Rand Rudland if you can assist in any way. This is also the date for the Sargeant Bay Society’s Intertidal Exploration event, back after a COVID-hiatus, starting at 1230. Plan a family day at the Park.

Contact - srgntbay.soc@gmail.com