

Attachment A: Homer SWCD Final Report Narrative

Homer SWCD *Prunus padus* and *Prunus virginiana* Control Grant (Phase I)
Final Report November 2021

This final report is a follow-up to all grant activities and deliverables previously described in the semi-annual progress reports for this funding, submitted by Homer Soil & Water Conservation District (HSWCD) in December 2020 and June 2021. The following work was performed since June 2021, in collaboration with the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (KP-CISMA) partners and contractors. The Kenai Watershed Forum and Chugach National Forest have played a significant role in invasive *Prunus spp.* control and eradication across the peninsula.

A. LIST OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS PERFORMED

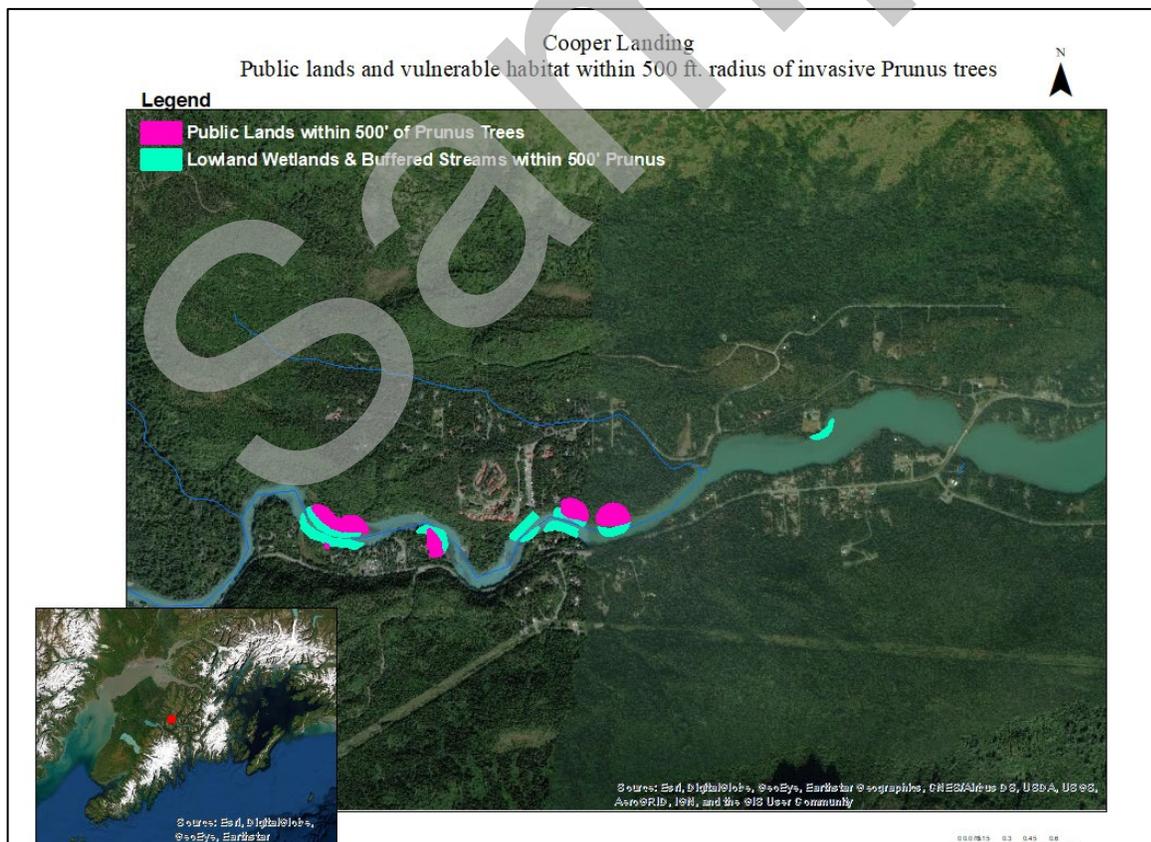
1) Synthesized the spring 2020 survey data.

Completed in December 2020 – see semi-annual progress report

Lower Kenai River survey: On June 16th, 2021 Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF) completed a survey of the Kenai River between the Moose River confluence and Morgan’s Landing. Both banks were surveyed for *Prunus* species for 7.3 miles of river. Three infestations were located during this survey that covered a total of .068 acres.

Cooper Landing surveys: KWF completed a survey of Cooper Landing and began reaching out to property owners for permission to remove the trees found.

Figure 1: Survey data example from Cooper Landing Area, 2020 data.



Attachment A: Homer SWCD Final Report Narrative

Conducted landowner outreach and education regarding invasive *Prunus* trees.

HSWCD staff continued to field phone calls and in-person inquiries from private landowners throughout summer 2021 regarding removal of invasive *Prunus* trees. The following tasks & metrics were completed in summer 2021:

- A 30-minute radio program aired on local Homer radio station (KBBI 890am), educating the public on the invasive prunus trees and how best to remove them. This was a rebroadcast from 2020, but regardless initiated some feedback from the community.
- On June 8th, 2021 a public zoom event was held focused on the Anchor River State Rec Area, in which HSWCD gave a 15 minute presentation on invasive plants including prunus trees. The audience included 22 people for two hours: members of the public (fishermen & state park users), State Parks staff, DOT&PF, ADF&G, USFWS, construction contractors, Cook Inletkeeper, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, and Kachemak Bay Research Reserve.
- On June 12th, KWF reached 120 people at the Russian River during an outreach event where they hosted an invasive species booth. This was a fantastic opportunity to educate the fishing community regarding invasive prunus species.
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were aired on both KDLL (Soldotna/Kenai) and KBBI (Homer) public radio stations between July – August, once per day during prime listening hours (alternating between a.m. and p.m. slots). The script was adopted from the Division of Forestry PSA launched in the Anchorage area in mid-summer.
- Flyers were posted digitally (facebook & website; community newsletters) and hard copies around the Kenai Peninsula. One landowner specifically called HSWCD after she saw a flyer in Homer, removed the *Prunus padus* tree from her yard, and began reaching out to neighbors regarding prunus removal within her neighborhood. This resulted in gaining landowner permission to do frill treatments on an abandoned property with seven mature *Prunus padus* trees.
- Prunus Outreach Event: A volunteer sapling pull was arranged at a property off of East End Drive, and two volunteers participated. It was difficult to round up volunteers for any of our events this summer.
- June 29th: Advertisement was posted in the Cooper Landing Crier and Moose Pass Messenger (local online newsletters) regarding prunus awareness and removal incentive programs.

MOST RECENT MESSAGE:



POSTED: JUNE 29, 2021 @ 2:06PM
POSTED BY: KATHERINE@HOMERSWCD.ORG

views: 1

Invasive European Bird Cherry/Chokecherry Tree landowner incentive program

[Bird Cherry Flyer 2021.pdf](#) Originally planted as a popular ornamental tree, the Mayday/European Bird Cherry tree (*Prunus padus*) and Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) have taken over the banks of salmon streams, altered insect populations that juvenile salmon depend upon, and outcompeted native plants like alder, willows, blueberries and wildflowers of the boreal forest. On top of being an aggressive invasive tree, this tree is toxic to moose, and its cherries are spread by birds over 4 miles where they will establish new populations. Help us protect our moose and salmon habitat and remove your invasive Mayday/Chokecherry trees! See the below flyer for more details and contact Katherine Schake (katherine@homerswcd.org) if you would like to participate in the \$100 reimbursement program, or need resources on how to properly remove the trees.

Attachment A: Homer SWCD Final Report Narrative

3) Removed *Prunus* trees on private properties

The following metrics were collected in 2021. Please refer to 2020's report for the majority of landowner removal projects.

- 24 landowners throughout Homer and Cooper Landing were directly communicated with (in some cases contacted us) regarding their prunus infestations by either HSWCD or KWF staff, the majority of who removed the Prunus trees on their properties. Four out of the ten infestations on private properties in Cooper Landing were removed this year.
- HSWCD and KWF assisted with removal of invasive Prunus trees from 14 different parcels throughout the summer.
- Infestations spanned a total of 4 acres, and 50% glyphosate solution was applied by DEC Certified Pesticide Applicators as cut-stump treatment, frill, and/or hack & squirt application on approximately 0.4 acres of land. Landowner agreements for these properties are in Appendix I.
- Approximately 71 invasive *Prunus* trees were removed from the Homer & Cooper Landing areas, greatly reducing the amount of cherries adjacent to vulnerable habitat (wetlands/riparian areas). Thickets of over 100 sprouting saplings & suckers up to 90 square feet in size were also removed at some well-established sites.
- Upper Kenai River treatment: KWF completed treatments to all known infestations along the Upper Kenai River (between the Cooper Landing bridge and Sportman's Landing). Ten infestations in total were treated with either cut stump or hack and squirt methods.
- The Chugach National Forest staff continued their efforts to remove invasive Prunus trees in the community of Hope on CNF lands and campgrounds, and assisted with removal of a Prunus padus tree on AK Railroad property near Seward. KWF assisted CNF with DOT&PF hwy work.
- In 2021, landowners contributed an estimated 32 hours of volunteer time, equivalent to \$970 of in-kind match for removal of trees, disposal of limbs, outreach to neighbors, and surveying neighborhood vulnerable habitat.

4) Articles and photos submitted about project and outcomes

- An article was written for the HSWCD fall newsletter, and the USFS Forest Health Report in 2020, and included in the 2020 report.
- A bird cherry/chokecherry blog was written and published to the KP-CISMA website on July 1st, 2021. It is available here: <https://kenaiinvasives.org/plants/help-us-remove-invasive-mayday-chokecherry-trees/>
- A presentation on summer prunus removal efforts on the Kenai River was given by Maura Schumacher (KWF) during the Trout Unlimited Fishing Film Festival (their annual fundraiser) on October 23rd.

B. EXPENSE WORKSHEET (see Attachment C Budget Tracking; Copies of the receipts provided in Attachment E)

C. LIST OF GROUPS / ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED

Reporting, Surveys & Removal: Kenai Peninsula CISMA, including Homer Soil & Water; Kenai Watershed Forum; Chugach National Forest; Kenai National Wildlife Refuge; US Fish & Wildlife Service Kenai Field Office

Identification & Control Resources: Gino Graziano (UAF Cooperative Extension Service); Tim Stallard (Alien Species Control); Justin Fulkerson (UAA Herbarium)

Contractors for Tree Removal: Antheia Environmental; Timberline Tree Care; Homer Greenscape; Inlet Acres Landscaping

Attachment A: Homer SWCD Final Report Narrative

Funders: US Forest Service: Copper River Watershed Project Mini Grant; Chugach National Forest; US Fish & Wildlife Service

D. LESSONS LEARNED THAT WOULD BE OF VALUE TO THOSE UNDERTAKING SIMILAR PROJECTS

- See 2020 Report for many lessons learned
- The communities of Homer, Soldotna and Kenai are beyond the possibility of eradication. However, outreach to landowners still proved fruitful as many people are still willing to remove their trees once learning they are invasive.
- In rural areas and the communities of Moose Pass and Cooper Landing, early detection and rapid response may still result in eradication. Landowner assistance was provided in 2021.
- Wood chip piles of tree limbs that were chipped last fall (2020) when cherries were ripe sprouted many seedlings this year (2021) but are easy to pull. Chipping limbs in early spring seemed to work really well. We are monitoring piles to see if bark fragments will sprout.
- It is challenging to convince people to remove these trees when it is still legal to purchase them at local nurseries. While many nurseries have stopped selling *Prunus padus*, there are still a handful of people out there supplying the trees, and *Prunus virginiana* remains popular.
- We are struggling to reach big box store's gardening departments (i.e. Home Depot; Lowes; Walmart), so it would be helpful to have a statewide initiative to tackle this.

E. ECOLOGICAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS RESULTING FROM PROJECT

We have found confirmed rogue populations of *Prunus* growing in vulnerable moose habitat, and several members of the public have become local advocates in their neighborhoods and reported sightings.

However, there's still work to be done. The City of Homer has agreed to remove and replace all invasive *Prunus* trees on city parcels next summer. We will be applying for funding to remove the trees and are investigating sources of funding for replacement trees. A new *Prunus* infestation was reported by a local landowner on Moose Habitat Inc. property near Homer Airport – over 500 saplings growing in wetland that moose use for calving and to rest in spring. This project will be a big focus in 2022.

XXXXXX in Cooper Landing has multiple huge trees on their property, and while they are open to removal the dialogue and progress is slow, so we would like to continue efforts next year to assist with removal, especially given their property is adjacent to the Kenai River. KWF has put a lot of effort into coordination and education with XXXXXXXX and we don't want to lose momentum.

We are still concerned about the streams on either side of Nikolaevsk, and an aerial survey of the surrounding region would help us detect any rogue trees invading wetlands/streams.

F. DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

(Attachment B: 2021 Bird Cherry Flyer and Photos) More images, maps and videos are available upon request.

Link to Kenai Watershed Forum 2021 field work video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4TJ0HCLxUA>

Link to HSWCD 2020 field work video. *Prunus* work begins at timestamp 2:14

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkfgljxwwZA&list=PLhxDxt04MyDUzrmHW16ohKnT69hB0HS5H&index=](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkfgljxwwZA&list=PLhxDxt04MyDUzrmHW16ohKnT69hB0HS5H&index=2)



KENAI PENINSULA COOPERATIVE
**INVASIVE SPECIES
MANAGEMENT AREA**

Help us remove the invasive European bird cherry trees!

Prunus padus – European Bird Cherry / Mayday Tree

Prunus virginiana – Chokecherry

Introduced as landscaping trees, but now we know they are:

- Aggressive invaders of local forests and waterways
- Threaten moose and salmon habitat
- Spread to remote areas by birds (they love the fruit!)
- Removal can be tricky, contact us to learn best practices: kenaiinvasives.org

A **\$100 reimbursement** for purchasing alternative ornamentals is available to the first 20 people who remove all invasive *Prunus* trees on their property.

For more information email kenaipeninsula.invasives@gmail.com or call (907)235-8177 ext.5



Homer Soil & Water
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



**Homer SWCD and Kenai Watershed Forum *Prunus padus* and *Prunus virginiana* Control
Field Work Photos
Final Report 2021**

Private property prunus removal in Homer, May 2021. On the 20+ acer property the following was removed: 9 large mother trees, 4 of which had multiple trunks and two had thickets 50' x 20' wide, jungle-like stems, shoots, suckers (>100). One previously cut stump(s) that had suckered into >15 stems that ranged 2"-4" in diameter. Photos by Katherine Schake, Homer Soil & Water.



