Holly removal at the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District housing.

September 5-18 2012

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Holly was most likely planted as an ornamental component of the landscaping in the FS housing area in Randle. It might have been planted by the district or by the residents – at a guess not more than half a dozen trees. The first house was built in 1959.

The attractive red berries of holly attract birds as well, who spread the seed wherever they go.

Today holly has invaded all the wooded areas, borders, and flower beds in the housing area. Many holly trees have been cut down in the past, but have resprouted to form multiple trunks, and grown to 4-5 inches DBH. Some of the native Douglas fir in the housing area are suffering from root rot, and have died, or are in decline, but none of the invasive holly trees have died, or show any sign of reduced vigor.

Because holly is also invading the adjacent natural forest of the Gifford Pinchot NF, and the housing holly trees are serving as a seed source, holly tree removal from the housing area was initiated in 2012.

Fire fighters helped out with felling the trees.

Since holly sprouts prolifically from cut stumps, in order to eradicate it, herbicide treatment was planned for the stumps. The herbicide is painted on the fresh stump and translocated to the roots to kill them as well. With this targeted method herbicide does not contact any adjacent vegetation. Lewis county noxious weed personnel performed this work.

Top were hauled away to the burn pile. These berries won't sprout this year!

1,430 holly trees were removed from an area of about seven and a half acres with 10 houses. This was much higher than the original estimate of work. The trees had multiplied over a period of about 50 years. This is a testament to the invasive ability of holly under natural and semi-natural conditions in the Cowlitz Valley!

The project took about three days for a Lewis County Weed crew of 3-4, plus about two days total for a fire crew of 2-many, two days for a volunteer, and several days for a weed program manager to plan, scout, and coordinate.

Thanks to our cooperators, the Lewis County Noxious Weed Board and Cowlitz Valley fire shop, and our volunteer, Tommy Browning.