

http://juneauempire.com/stories/092910/loc_713424111.shtml

Wednesday, September 29, 2010 - Story last updated at 9/29/2010 - 10:41 am

Oxeye daisies didn't stand a chance

By Sarah Day | JUNEAU EMPIRE

Oxeye daisies at Eaglecrest fought a losing battle against 60-70 Juneau-Douglas High School freshmen Tuesday morning.

Students in Henry Hopkins' biology class, Andrea Stasyszen's math class and Kristy Germain's English class (the trio teaches as part of learning community) learned about invasive plant species and took a field trip to combat one area of the problem.

Student Kathryn Noreen said the oxeye daisies "kind of are everywhere" past the lodge at Eaglecrest. Classmate Logan Jones said the plant is not only invasive, but also aggressive.

Student Hannah Cassell said they learned that the oxeye daisy ranks a 61 or 62 on a scale of 100 - 100 being the most aggressive on the Alaska Natural Heritage Program list. "We're going to be filling up the bags as much as possible," she said.

Dana White, invasive plant coordinator for the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts, spoke to the classes at JDHS on Monday about different invasive species and was helping pull daisies Tuesday. Noreen said the biology class also did a big plant project for two to three weeks.

The students enjoyed getting out of the classroom and into fresh air. Hopkins said as far as invasive species go, he's more concerned with green crab and Atlantic salmon "but they're hard to address with a school class." Plants are easier, he added.

Juneau also struggles with Japanese and Bohemian knotweed, Hopkins said, but said it's hard to make a dent with a school class.

"This is a more realistic project," he said, adding that it brings hands-on science and community involvement to students. "Kids enjoy getting out of the classroom for any and all reasons ... If you can connect learning, everybody wins."

Hopkins said the field trip was made possible by First Student Bus, Inc., and White.

White said her job includes community outreach education and organizing weed pulls and eradication efforts.

"They're going to know what oxeye daisy looks like the rest of their lives," she said.

Normally, weeds and invasive species aren't talked about and people tend to have the opinion "weeds, who cares?" White said. This project brings issues involving invasive plant species into the forefront. If invasive species aren't dealt with, they can over crowd and kick out native plants and change the environment.

White said if people are having problems with invasive plants on their property they can contact her at invasive.plants.jnu@gmail.com or (907) 586-6878. She said her position is paid for by 2009 stimulus funds.

• Contact reporter Sarah Day at 523-2279 or at sarah.day@juneauempire.com.

