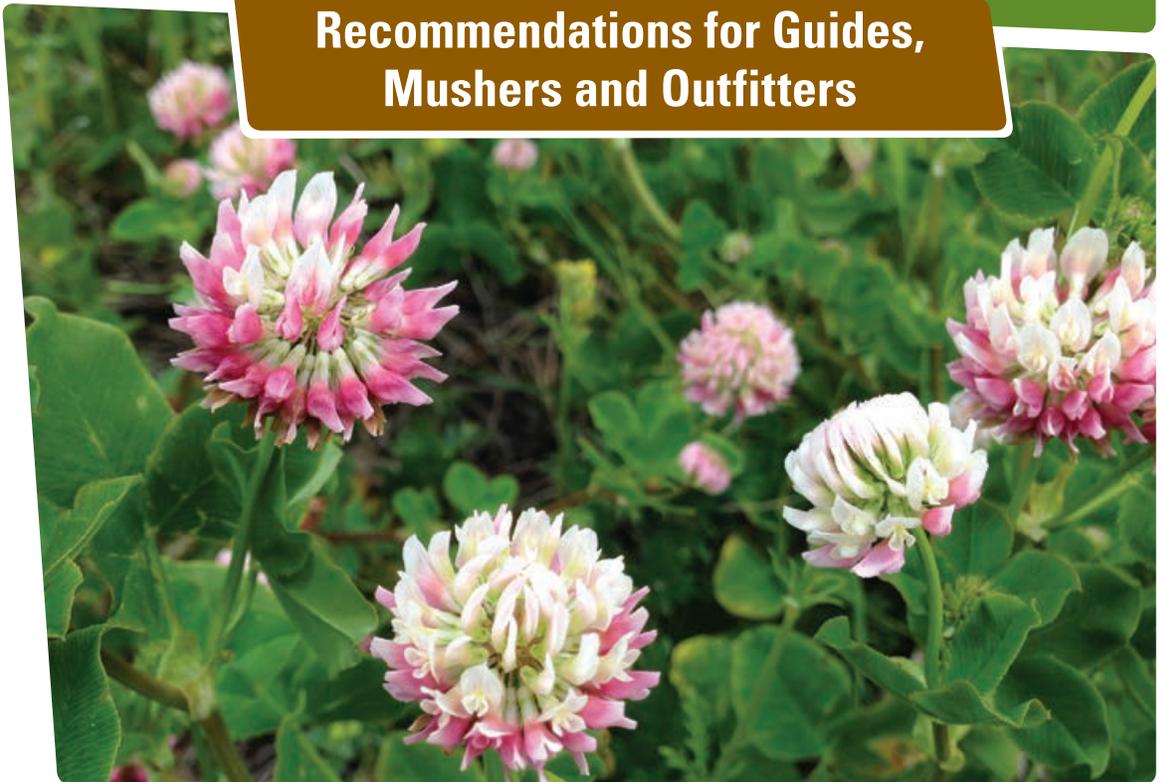


Keeping Yukon Natural

Recommendations for Guides, Mushers and Outfitters



Alsike clover, either in hay or pasture form can be poisonous to horses. It can trigger a severe skin reaction and prolonged exposure to the clover may lead to liver cirrhosis. Photo: Andrea Alther

What's the problem?

Invasive species are non-native plants that have the potential to cause undesirable or detrimental impacts on people, animals, or the ecosystem. These plants often reproduce quickly and are very persistent. Most non-native species introduced into the Yukon will not become invasive due to their inability to adapt to the cold climate and nutrient poor soils. However, invasive species that do become established often excel in these conditions due to their ability to outcompete boreal species. A high presence of invasive species can lead to loss of habitat for rare and endangered species. Changing climatic conditions in the North such as warmer winters and wetter summers may further increase the extent and rate of spread of invasive species.

Invasive species spread quickly, diminishing Yukon's backcountry areas and detract from the pristine wilderness clients expect

when they book trips to the Yukon. Horse manure, outfitting equipment, and straw can serve as primary sources for invasive species introduction. Some invasive species may introduce pests and diseases to native wildlife. Once established, invasive species can persist in areas such as horse corrals after outfitting operations cease.

Best practices for commercial guides, horse packers, outfitters, and mushers

As a professional, you can serve a key role in early detection and prevention of invasive species in the backcountry by:

- picking up a copy of the *Yukon Invaders* brochure and carry with you in the backcountry;
- learning to identify the invasive species in your area. Report changes in location or presence of invasive species;

Yukon contains many areas of natural wilderness, and by caring and doing our part, the ecological integrity of the territory can be maintained.

- carrying tools for cleaning seeds out of hooves, saddles, and packs;
- cleaning all equipment of seeds and plant parts before leaving the staging area;
- making an effort to manage weedy species around horse corrals before the plants go to seed;
- not allowing horses to graze in weed infested areas;
- if possible, using native or weed free hay for feed and weed free straw for bedding of horses and sled dogs; and
- providing clients with waders, boots and other equipment rather than bringing their own. Alternatively, making sure clients gear is clean before heading out.

Maintaining clean, weed-free equipment is critical for preserving Yukon's backcountry areas.



Alfalfa may become weedy or invasive in some regions or habitats and may displace desirable vegetation if not properly managed. Photo: Andrea Altherr

Two invasive species to look for around outfitting concessions

Alsike clover

Trifolium hybridum

Alsike clover is a fast growing, short lived perennial clover. It has leaflets in pairs of threes and a flower head that varies from pink to white. Alsike clover is quickly becoming more

abundant in the Yukon, moving north along roadsides and disturbed areas. It is commonly used for hay, forage, and green manure. Clovers are very difficult to remove once established, therefore prevention is key in keeping alsike clover out of pastures. Inspect feed and straw for presence of unwanted species. Clover seedlings are easy to distinguish and should be removed in early spring. Seeding and fertilization of native grass species around disturbed areas will deter alsike clover establishment.



Narrowleaf hawkbeard is one of the widest spread invasive plants in Yukon.

Narrowleaf hawkbeard

Crepis tectorum

Narrowleaf hawkbeard is a tall annual plant with dandelion like flower heads. It will readily colonize gravelly disturbed areas such as staging areas, roads, right of ways, and river banks. Each plant is capable of producing over 40,000 seeds which spread easily through wind dispersal. Once established Narrowleaf hawkbeard can form highly dense patches which displaces native plants. The seeds can adhere to clothing, shoes, and hoofs. Backcountry users should avoid travelling through narrowleaf hawkbeard patches and take care to clean clothing, pets, and equipment before entering and leaving the backcountry.

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Report invasive species to info@yukoninvasives.com OR
use the reporting form at www.yukoninvasive.com OR
submit your observation to www.iNaturalist.org

Email: info@yukoninvasives.com
Web Site: www.yukoninvasives.com
PO Box 30111 • Whitehorse, YT • Y1A 5M2

