

Knotweed and Herbicide Use in the Cedar River Municipal Watershed

Seattle City Council Governance and Utilities Committee

February 12th, 2026

Purpose of Legislation

- Renew authority to control knotweed in the Cedar River Municipal Watershed with imazapyr

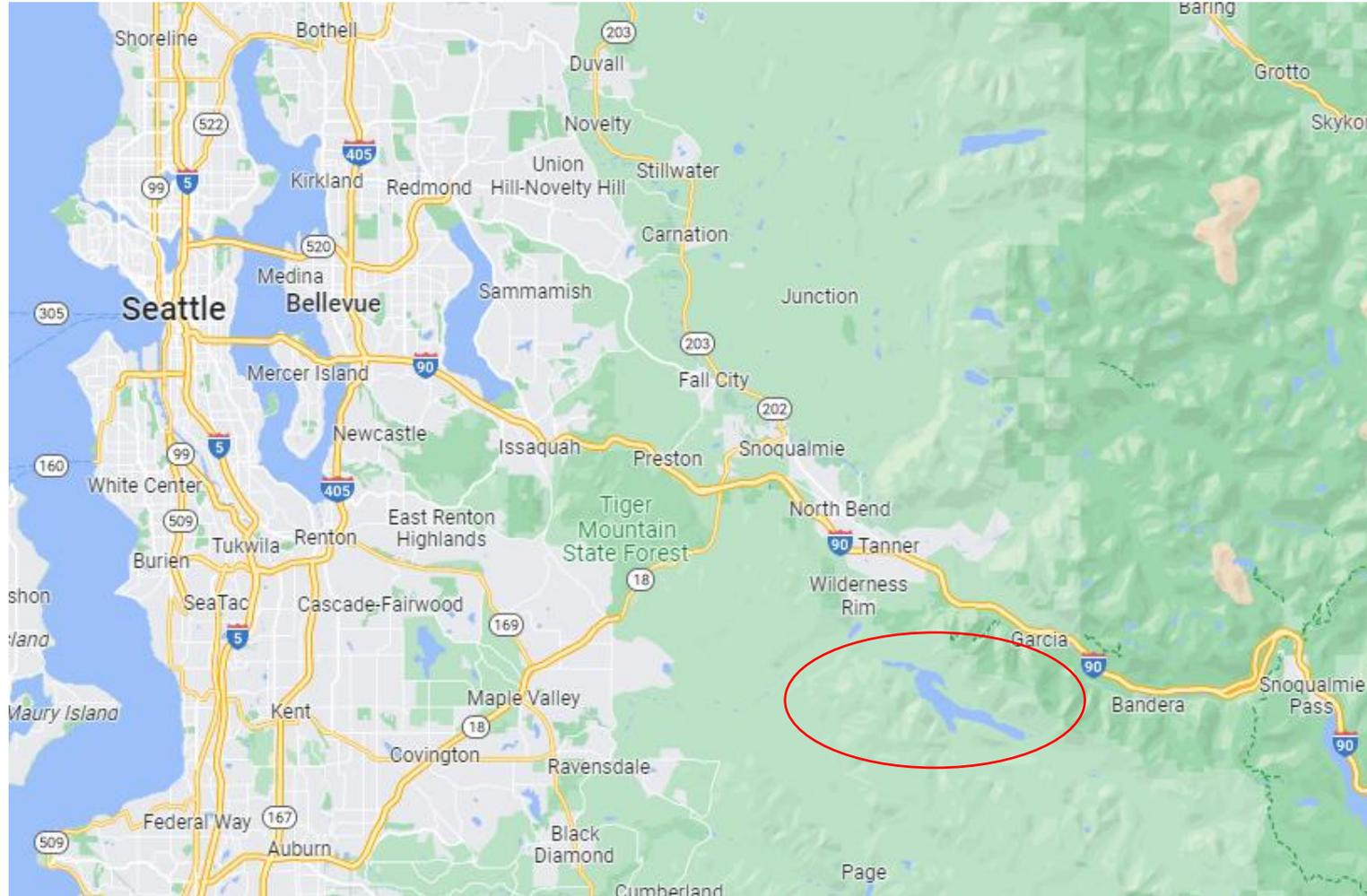
Knotweed: What's the Problem?

- Dense stands crowd out native vegetation
- Poor erosion control
- SPU is legally required to control on Cedar River
- Expensive and ineffective to control without herbicide



Knotweed along Cedar River downstream of watershed, 2010.

Cedar River Municipal Watershed



History of Knotweed Control in Watershed



- 2002-2010: SPU controlled knotweed by covering with fabric and digging with little success
- 2010-2023: City Council passes five consecutive ordinances to allow use of imazapyr in watershed
- 2023: most recent ordinance passed

Knotweed Program Success



Knotweed coverage and herbicide use have decreased 95% since 2011

Imazapyr and Human Health



Imazapyr inhibits an enzyme found only in plants



Environmental Protection



SPU samples water quality before and after spraying



SPU does not spray plants with pollinators present

Current Treatment Efforts

- Long-term sites are treated every other year
- Annual surveys along Cedar River and its tributaries



Legislation Summary

- Renew authority to control knotweed in the Cedar River Watershed with imazapyr
- SPU anticipates similar levels of herbicide will be applied over six years that was previously applied over three
- SPU is requesting 6-year ordinance cycle to reflect this change in management

Questions?

