

## Invasives Eradicated From Downtown Hillside

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Those frequenting the downtown area in recent weeks may have noticed an odd patch of hillside behind the stoplight at Rezanof Drive and Marine Way. Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District Project Coordinator Blythe Brown described the strange parcel of land.

"It was our largest known patch of bohemian knotweed. And we've known about it for quite a few years, the original land owner agreed to let us get rid of it, but I was real, real nervous about that site because it was on the hillside. That hillside, it slid a few years ago, and then the house was condemned. So they tore down the house and that made me even more nervous."

But last year Brown caught a break when Kodiak hosted the state invasive plants conference, and she gave a tour of some of the downtown weed locations.

"And on that tour was Casey Dinkel with the Alaska Plant Materials Center out of Palmer. And I told the group that, on the tour, how nervous I was about that site and what should we do, ask for recommendations and asked Casey for a recommendation of grass seed to put down there."

Dinkel went above and beyond just answering Brown's question.

"He came back and said not only can he give us some grass seed for it, but he would help us with the whole project. We applied herbicide last fall, BJ with American Pest Management helped us on that one. And then this year we removed all the dead, standing stocks that were left. Cleared it down to soil level and then smoothed out the soil so that his hydroseeding, Casey's hydroseeding would contact the soil, itself because it won't do any good if it's on a piece of leave."

Brown said they then placed an erosion control cloth on top of that.

"So the erosion control cloth will temper the rain impact, and help soften the impact of the raindrops on the soil so that it doesn't erode as the impact of the raindrops on the soil can move the soil particles."

She said three species of grass should grow and build a nice mat of roots to hold the soil in place along the hillside. The process was very collaborative, and Brown said it would not have been possible if a number of different entities didn't come together to make it a reality.