



For Immediate Release: May 28, 2020

## Grants available to remove invasive chokecherry trees from Alaska

**(Anchorage, AK)** – The USDA Forest Service and the Alaska Division of Forestry are offering financial grants to local governments and non-profit organizations to remove two types of invasive chokecherry trees from Alaska.

Both *Prunus padus*, commonly known as European bird cherry (EBC), chokecherry, or mayday trees, and *Prunus virginiana*, commonly known as Canadian red, or chokecherry, were originally introduced in Alaska as attractive ornamental trees. However, each has since been deemed an invasive species with the potential to significantly affect native ecosystems in Alaska.

Now rapidly invading riparian and natural forest areas in Southcentral Alaska and Fairbanks, *Prunus padus* is especially aggressive and poses several different hazards:

- *Prunus padus* can take over the understory of forests, and form thickets where native plants once grew.
- There are documented cases of moose dying of cyanide poisoning from consuming *Prunus padus*.
- Future salmon populations may be smaller due to increasing streamside growth of EBCs, which produce less of the insect biomass that falls into water to provide food for juvenile salmon.

The grants are offered to help recipients identify and remove prominent stands of these two *Prunus* species from Alaska, and to train additional certified pesticide management consultants and applicators.

Approximately \$200,000 is available in grants of up to \$25,000 each. Grants will be awarded to applicants with knowledge and commitment to removing *Prunus* species from their communities. The application deadline is June 15, 2020.

Additional information is available in the request for proposals, application, and grant report form at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/grants>

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