

Meeting of the SYDNEY WEST~BLUE MOUNTAINS REGIONAL WEED COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Friday 14th September 2012 at the Parramatta Swimming Pool, Parramatta

Attendance:

Jonathan Sanders	NPWS - Cumberland Area North
Janet Rannard	Penrith Council
Pino Todarello	Parramatta Council
Chris Stanfield	Hawkesbury River County Council
Karen Jenkin	Hawkesbury River County Council
Huw Evans	Hawkesbury Nepean CMA
Justine Clarke	Blacktown City Council
Eric Mahony	Blue Mountains City Council
Greg Steenbeeke	Office of Environment and Heritage
Michael Michelmore	DPI Invasive Species Officer
Rosanna Luca	Project Officer (Weeds Action Project)
Liz Pearce	Project Officer (Weeds Committees)

Apologies:

Dan Long	Blue Mountains Council
Brendon Andrei	Blacktown Council
Samantha Gorny	Department of Defence
Chris Dewhurst	Hawkesbury River County Council
Lisa Willock	The Hills Shire Council
Tegan Burton	NPWS

Welcome

Jonathan Sanders (Chair) opened the meeting at 9.30am, and welcomed all in attendance. No pecuniary interests were declared.

Weeds Action Project (WAP) planning session

Rosanna Luca facilitated a planning session about the strategy for the next three years of the WAP Project. The session was based on the background paper that was distributed prior to the meeting.

Main points of discussion and priorities identified:

- Bitou Bush – West of Holsworthy land, aim for eradication
- Bitou Bush – East of Holsworthy land, aim for asset protection only
- Boneseed – eradicate from the region

Eurasian Water Milfoil – contained in two small ponds in Parramatta LGA. Has been controlled using WAP Years 2 and council funds.

ACTIONS:

Pino Todarello to confirm if the Eurasian Water Milfoil has been eradicated
Rosanna Luca to update the records for new incursions

Senegal Tea Plant – it's in Rickaby's Creek, Cattai Catchment, Redbank Creek Windsor (not detected below Windsor due to booms in place). HRCC will fund control using the new aquatic weeds funding that was recently allocated from DPI. Will not overlap with WAP funding.

ACTIONS: HRCC to map and share data for the locations and extent of Senegal Tea Plant

Boneseed

- Good benchmark data is required so we can map and show results of Boneseed control efforts over time.
- Good opportunity to record infestations is in Spring, when in flower. Everytime someone sees and records a new infestation, it's counted as a type of an "inspection" in the WAP project.
- Located on fringe of The Hills LGA (Annangrove/North west. M7 corridor, Windsor Road. Odd plant on fringes Blacktown/Doonside, M4.
- Co-operation needed from Metro Roads for the M7 - they now have an Environmental Officer.
- BMCC are receiving funds from HNCMA – not to overlap with WAP funds.
- WAP funds can be spent on private lands (via a contractor) and used as an incentive funding in special cases.

ACTIONS:

GIS officer (Anna) to circulate existing data for Boneseed locations, and request that people fill in any gaps. .

Jonathan Sanders to provide details of his contact at Metro Roads

Salvinia

Widespread in SWBM region and HN River.

HRCC funds control in strategic locations and has had success with weevil program. Reedy Creek, Mitchell Park, surrounding properties being inspected by HRCC.

BMCC, in Glenbrook Lagoon, not using weevils.

Located in pond near Werrington overpass – western side of south creek.

Parramatta – TBC, check previous locations

The strategy:

- Check in 1st and 2nd order streams. Landholder education and aim for eradication.
- Bring down the population in sub-catchments so there is less to come down to River in rain. Need to be inspecting sub-catchments to keep dams and waterways free of it. On the River, contain and control.

ACTIONS:

Pino Todarello to confirm if existence of Salvinia at previously identified locations.

Rosanna Luca to write up a case study on Salvinia weevils in Pitt Lagoon catchment.

Water Hyacinth

- Located at Pitt Town, Wilberforce and Richmond lowlands.
- Off River: eradication is achievable. Same strategy as Salvinia, keep it out of the tributaries. In the River contain and control.
- Inspections of high risks sites are important – markets, nurseries, aquarium shops etc. Karen Jenkin has seen it being sold at school fete!

Alligator Weed

- Preference for WAP funds to be spent on preventing a new population establishing in a new area. Eg. physically stopping spread from top of catchment.
- HRCC – upper headwaters of Cattai Creek, Newman Rd (one of the WAP Year 2 zones). Aiming for eradication at top of Cattai catchment, 1st order stream:
 - Sydney Water is controlling it
 - HRCC fills in the gaps/ doing what they can
- In Parramatta Council, Salvinia is the most prolific aquatic weed – ongoing

suppression program 2, 3 or 4 times a year. Dollar for dollar contribution matched with (similar to Nepean River program, ongoing suppression). WAP funding appropriate in this instance to maintain ongoing suppression.

- Inspections in surrounding properties and streams very important to stop the source.

BMCC has it 3 locations – confident it is under control within resources.

- Glenbrook Lagoon - same aim as Salvinia. Confident they have got all scattered individuals. Aiming for 4 treatments per year.
- Private lands – spot spraying.
- Small population at Woodford.

Cats Claw Creeper

In order to deal with as a priority – we need to know where it is and spreading to.

- Grose Vale, Kurrajong – West Sydney Dry Rainforest – control for asset protection needed in short term.
- Parramatta Park Trust – on the target list of weeds
- BMCC – in Lapstone (asset protection) advancing west.
- Penrith Council – Werrington Ck, Mulgoa

ACTIONS:

Huw Evans to talk to HRCC/Hawkesbury Council about locations of Cats Claw Creeper core infestations at Grose Vale, Kurrajong
Action for Year 4 (Project Officers): collate mapping for Cats Claw Creeper

Kudzu

- Boundary Creek infestation on private land (HRCC/Penrith area). Part of the creek bank slumped and Kudzu washed downstream in early 2012 flooding. HRCC has inspected surrounding areas and not found any fragments to date.
- Sydney Water seed funding will be used for primary control. Some WAP funds will be set aside in case needed at a later stage.
- Kudzu is providing bank stabilisation and erosion control along this creek. There is no imperative for property owners here to control. Kudzu Declaration of Kudzu as noxious will help enforce ongoing control.

African Olive

- Spreading in Lower Blue Mountains. Containment lines possible. Legitimate asset protection and use of WAP funds. .
- HNCMA is looking into a Biodiversity Fund application for the next round and use of into multi spectral imagery to track extent (not effective when African olive is only in understorey).

Realistic goals for African Olive (to contain and gradually push back):

- Northern containment line with WAP and/or HNCMA funds (working with HRCC, NPWS etc).
- Southern containment line with WAP funding (Wollondilly LGA).
- Western containment line to stop spread into Blue Mountains.

ACTIONS:

Liz Pearce to discuss with HNCMA opportunities for a joint Biodiversity Fund application for African Olive.
Eric Mahony to provide ideas about the western containment line.

Chinese Celtis

Greg Steenbeeke would like this expanded to all Ulmaceae family. Leaf fall has devastating effect on aquatic biodiversity. Mainly a problem in Sydney Central region.

Coolatai Grass

- Thrives in dry desiccated conditions of less than 12% soil moisture – very drought tolerant. When you have 5% in ground cover at a site you lose ground biodiversity.
- If spotted in Cumberland Plain woodland location, control it immediately!
- Hard to prevent it from arriving, travels through transport corridors. Spread on vehicles such as mowers – hygiene protocols required.
- The manager of the asset should be funding control. WAP funds may be available if there is any left over for asset protection.

Serrated Tussock

- Spreading in Camden, on its way to Penrith.
- WAP can fund education for staff and landholders about how to identify it and distinguish from natives.
- ID and hygiene training also for council staff.
- Involve HRCC who can deliver training to other councils internal staff.

Tree of Heaven

Huw Evans would like to see this added to the list for asset protection. Its on its way to Sydney from Capertee Valley and Singleton. Seeds and suckers have toxic aspects. The strategy:

- eradicate small new infestations
- suppress where established

ACTION: Huw Evans to look into joint HNCMA/BMCC joint project.

Broom

- A lot around Wollondilly and Hornsby rail corridors.
- BMCC – linear strip of Broom across Mountains. Council is currently bearing the cost of control post fire (both planned and unplanned). BMCC to talk more with transport corridors bodies, contain/prevent spread.
- Mapping required across the region– to see where it is and where it is going.

Chilean Needle Grass

Similar situation to Coolatai and Serrated Tussock

Need to build people's ID skills of the 3 grasses – Coolatai, Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needle Grass.

Madeira Vine

- Mapping required across the region– to see where it is and where it is going.

Gorse

- Look out for it coming out of Grose Valley into HRCC area
- Mapping required across the region– to see where it is and where it is going.

Inspections - High risk sites (nurseries, development sites etc)

- There is a problem with major chains such as Bunnings and Flower Power selling noxious or environmental weeds – we need to be checking regularly and finding out what they are selling.
- Compile a list of commonly sold environmental weeds and distribute to them and their suppliers. Letter to Head Office may be required. Send copies of Grow Me Instead and posters to stores.
- Inspections should also be tied in with control objectives on public and private property. Where on-ground weed control is happening, surrounding areas should be inspected.
- BMCC – inspection of sub-catchment/ identify weeds/control of weeds/aims for voluntary compliance of landowners.
- HRCC wants to increase inspection programs – more high risk sites such as

aquariums and shops. Also consider development sites with contaminated soil with weed seed.

- Informal weed recording and reporting of high risk weeds are also counted as “inspections” under the WAP.
- Greg Steenbeeke suggested use of Bionet for recording data from inspections – works in real time. Data reporting available. Data can be licensed for privacy in order to control access to information – need to consider if this is functional or worthwhile over GIS.
- Remember also that DPI want to know what you didn't find just as much as what you did find.
- BMCC – trying to do more voluntary compliance in Medlow Bath. 6 days of road closures for roadside control. Residents to receive letters to advise of visits within 24 months. Option given to come forward and use council as a resource before compliance.
- Parramatta City Council – not doing proactive weed inspections as hasn't been in the budget/funding. Currently opportunistic sightings, if staff notice on private property they will raise it with the regulatory team. Still recorded as an inspection.
- BMCC – systematic inspections may be more valuable in Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury areas where there are large bushland interfaces. High density residential areas likely to yield a lower return for effort.

Pathways for high risk weeds – suggested crossing pathways info with high risk weeds list to cull down priorities list.

HNCMA to be included in high risk pathways project team to look at catchment scale – include Huw Evans /Rob Mayer.

Future research ideas:

Migration pathways for bird spread weeds, also bats.

How can we break these migratory chains and what size link breaks in the chain are required. Look at territorial patterns. Talk to Cumberland Bird Observers Club.

Eg. Tree of Heaven, dispersal/how far do the seeds spread.

Education and capacity building

HRCC – decontamination procedures training can be run internally for other councils

- Need to ensure washdown facilities are there if you are going to teach how
- Demonstration very important otherwise they may not trust what you are saying
- Use blower on the mower to keep all veg on site
- Make procedures easy

RTA need to have more washdown facilities and currently talking about putting in large washdown bays on major routes – identification of major routes required.

Remember to take up the DPI opportunities for training. The training is offered based on previous needs surveys of weeds officers. If the demand is not there, the funding for this training might not continue.

Normal Weeds Committee Meeting

1. Confirmation of Minutes from previous meeting, 15th March 2012

Confirmed by Janet Rannard. Seconded by Justine Clarke.

2. Completion of actions

All actions from the previous meeting have been completed.

3. Matters arising from previous minutes

There are no matters arising from the previous minutes.

4. New weed incursions or unusual sightings

- Corky Passionfruit (*Passiflora suberosa*)
(Penrith LGA) persistent around Werrington area. HRCC talking to Penrith office.
- Athel Pine
(Penrith LGA) 3 large trees near Emu Plains railway station. Referred to HRCC and assess whether a problem. It's a weed of the desert, too wet in Sydney to be a problem.
- Ludwigia peruviana in Lapstone Creek, only location in the Blue Mountains.

ACTIONS:

Rosanna Luca to add Corky Passionfruit to list of "very limited distribution" (high risk weeds list).

HRCC to confirm if Athel Pine is spreading.

Eric Mahony to map *Ludwigia peruviana* and provide detail to Rosanna Luca.

5. Recent changes with the Sydney Weeds Committees ~ any Qs? None raised.

6. General business

It was confirmed that all of BMCC LGA is included as part of the region covered by the Sydney Weeds Committees (there was some confusion about this in the past)

7. Next meeting date and host

Date: Thursday, March 14th 2013

Host: Camden, Venue TBC. Proposed joint committee/planning meeting with Sydney West Blue Mountains/Sydney South West combined.

Presentation: Noxious Weeds Act changes

Mich Michelmore, Department of Primary Industries

Mich led a discussion of the rationale and requests from 2 years ago for new and changed noxious weeds declarations. The analysis of these new requests has not yet been finalised by the Department, and would be included in the next Order 30.

A huge number of requests for noxious weed changes and new declarations were received from the Sydney region. What are the priorities for this region? Two years later, are they still the same?

Important points from the discussion:

- Need to have a clear reason for why a weed is declared noxious
- Can't be just for administrative consistency across a group of councils.
- Some additional class 4s seem to be a "wish list", can't be enforced across an LGA/the region.

Which plants are the ones that we can slow down, and if nothing done the invasion process will take over (eg Boneseed).

If nothing will change with distribution of a plant, why have it declared noxious?

ACTIONS:

Liz Pearce to post a copy of Mich's discussion paper on Sydney Weeds member's webpage.

Mich Michelmore to collate a matrix of the new declaration requests from the region, highlighting the ones that need to be reconsidered and justified further.

All local control authorities to do an analysis of the matrix with reference to Mich's discussion notes (see SWC website member section) and consider which listings to justify on more detail or remove from the list.

Further questions?

Mich Michelmore, Department of Primary Industries

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Meeting closed at 3.00pm.