

SYDNEY NORTH REGIONAL WEEDS SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Wednesday 1st June 2011

Hosted by Hornsby Shire Council

Chair: Jillian Macintyre

Attendance

Matthew Watts	Lane Cove Council
Jason Blayney	Manly Council
Susan Westcott	Sydney Water
Mel Hall	NPWS - Metro North East region
Matt Springall	NPWS - Lane Cove National Park
Stephen Pym	Hornsby Shire Council
Anthony Newling	Hornsby Shire Council
Diane Campbell	Hornsby Shire Council
Cameron Bennell	Willoughby City Council
Rob Gleeson	Ku-ring-gai Council
Dominic Edmonds	Ku-ring-gai Council
Gith Strid-Nwalaeake	City of Ryde
Steven Smith	Mosman Council
Jillian Macintyre	Warringah Shire Council
James Brisebois	Warringah Shire Council
Lavinia Schofield	Pittwater Council
Jacqui Vollmer	Hunters Hill Council
Shelly Slater	Sydney Weeds Committee GIS/Project Officer
Rosanna Luca	Sydney Weeds Committee Acting Exec Officer

Apologies

Adam Smith City of Ryde

Meeting Open

Jillian Macintyre opened the meeting.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

Introductions

Jillian acknowledged that the Sydney Weeds Committee has been through a huge administrative phase over the last year. Most of the organisational structure and administrative procedures are in place. The focus of the sub-committees is now on implementing the strategic actions and projects, and engaging more with the officers directly involved with work on the ground.

Roundtable Discussion & Mapping Activity:

SURVEYING AREAS OF CONCERN/ HIGH RISK

The aim of this activity was to start capturing knowledge and information about where the weeds officers are 'keeping an eye' on areas of concern, high risk, surveying, concentrating private property inspections and working strategically.

The terms "inspections" and "surveying" were clarified.

- An inspection is a legal activity, referring to the official role and function of a weeds officer, under delegation of the *Noxious Weeds Act*. In this context, and inspection is a formal administrative process.
- A survey can be done in different ways, on private or public land and by anyone involved in weed identification and operation work, regularly spotting weeds on

the ground. Can also include Bushcare volunteers. It is important that all weeds officers are surveying their “patch”, to ensure we are not missing areas where weed growth could be accelerating and going unnoticed.

The Department (DPI) is interested in the collective effort across Sydney, which includes both activities: inspections and surveying, as well as education, on-ground control etc.

The term “High Risk” was also clarified.

- Examples of high risk “pathways”: roads, railway corridors, easements, (utilities, drainage etc), waterways, which facilitate the movement of weeds. Eg the F3/M2/M7 corridor is a pathway for Boneseed, travelling south.
- Examples of high risk sites & “hot spots”: where a “pathway” intersects with an area of EEC, Dams, truck & machinery depots, industrial areas, nurseries & garden centres, landscape supplies, development sites, waste disposal sites, horse and boat activities etc

Some of the major pathways identified in Sydney North region:

- Coastline
- F3
- Mona Vale Road

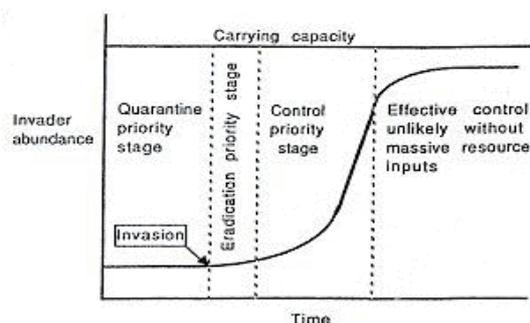
The information collected through this mapping activity is the start of an ongoing process to capture existing knowledge. Discussions will continue at the next sub-committee meeting about the information collected to date, identifying gaps and priorities areas and a strategic response where needed, at the regional level.

ACTION: Shelly to transfer the information manually collected to a GIS map.
ACTION: Everyone who received WAP funding for inspections and survey locations, please send GPS locations to Shelly.

Roundtable Discussion: NEW INCURSIONS

Invasive Species Plan definition of a “new weed incursion”:

“An isolated population of an invasive species detected in an area where it has not previously established.” i.e. the weeds that have recently been introduced into an area/landscape, the small populations of a species starting to establish, that are still in a state which we can effectively control (i.e. in the diagram, the “eradication priority stage”).



Rosanna tabled the (recently revised and simplified) “New Incursion form”. There had been some confusion about the purpose of this form, with more detailed versions previously circulated.

The form is a simple procedure to record information about:

- Known new incursions in the Sydney North region (within the last few years), which have not been formally recorded by someone on the sub-committee.
- Any new incursions that are detected from now on. As new incursions as detected, the form needs to be completed immediately and sent to Shelly.

The information about new incursions is being collected across all 4 sub-committee regions. It will be used to track where the new populations are and facilitate a rapid response for on-ground control.

Shelly needs to consult with a small team of people across the sub-committees to process the information received about new incursions and ensure that this information is communicated and acted on appropriately. This group will function mainly as a “sounding board” for the GIS/Project officer position, with communication via phone and email. For example, if a weed has shown up in the Sydney North region/Sydney region for the first time, a “New Weed Alert” is put out to the sub-committees, Department, RBG, Sydney Weeds website, other relevant people.

Sydney North Weed Alert Team: Mel Hall, Matt Springall, Rob Gleeson

Roundtable Discussion: Recent new weed incursions in the region

Hederanthera

Found in Ku-ring-gai LGA and Lane Cove National Park.

Growth drops off over Winter. Not as concerned as initially thought.

Murdania

An isolated population, has been stable for 20-30 years, along the Lane Cove River. Being monitored.

ACTION: Rosanna to place the finalised new incursion form on website members page.

ACTION: Everyone – please send completed new incursion forms (for species found within last few years) to Shelly Slater.

High Risk Weeds List

Rosanna provided a brief update on where the list is up to, and requested assistance for the next step. Weed Risk Assessments (WRA) have been done by DPI for the highest priority weeds (eg Salvinia). Sydney Weeds Committees representatives did WRAs for several Sydney region weeds last year. The high risk weeds list needs to be finalised by (i) identifying if there are any gaps, weeds that have not been through WRA and (ii) identifying which of the weeds on the list are still in the “eradication priority stage” (ie have not yet become widespread).

Mel Hall asked whether the Sydney Weeds list correlates with the work done in previous years, such as “Biodiversity Priorities for Widespread Weeds” (work done by DECCW, focusing on assets, and what are the risk to them - primary weeds, secondary weeds, other impacts etc) Many sub-committee members provided input for this project. Mel also has indicative information about what weeds are in national parks, can also be used as a tool.

ACTION:

Mel Hall to send information and link about “Biodiversity Priorities for Widespread Weeds”.

Rosanna to seek further information from Mel Hall and Dom Edmonds about their input into CMA and DECCW weeds information, collected in the past.

All new Class 4 weeds will require a WRA. To be confirmed at a later date who will do the WRA, once the review of the Noxious Weeds Act is complete and publicised.

Weed Action Program (WAP) Funding

Year 1 (2010-2011)

- Year 1 reporting form and procedure has just been emailed to all organisations that received funding. The report form to use and procedures are on the website members page.
- Progress Reports for the financial year 2010-2011 are due 15th July 2011. Reminders will be sent leading up to this deadline. This is a strict deadline, to ensure all progress reports can be collated in time for the DPI reporting deadline.
- Organisations that did not receive WAP funds will also be asked to report on weed management activity, to assist with providing statistics on the total effort across Sydney. DPI wants to know what else is happening in the region, parallel to the WAP project.

The need for “baseline data” was raised, so the progress of on ground can be tracked over time. Discussion points:

- The level of reporting should match in proportion the amount of funds received.
- Don't make it too cumbersome for the project partners. Many are already doing their own monitoring and internal reporting.
- The previous form developed by Acting Executive Officer took too long to complete. Rosanna clarified not to use this form. The format needs to be simplified to collect the essential information. Could also include descriptive information, broad statements about what the site was like before work started.
- Telling stories of changes noticed over time is also a valuable way of reporting (could be incorporated into future reports).

ACTION: Rosanna to confirm with the Board about the level of baseline information required for sites that are receiving WAP funds.

ACTION: Mel Hall to circulate information and weblinks about site monitoring guide, for assessing plant response to weed control (Bitou Bush manual and proforma).

Year 2 (2011-2012)

- The Year 1 funds were received and distributed late, so all funding recipients need to catch up on expenditure and work programs, which will run over into Year 2.
- Calls for Year 2 WAP applications scheduled around July 2011.
- The Board agreed to invite existing project partners to nominate for slightly increased amounts in Year 2 and justification for why the extra is needed.

Lavinia asked about our small project funded by RTA (working with Roadside Environment Committee, minimising the spread of grasses along linear reserves). The project has recently commenced, and the mapping activity today implements one the first actions of the RTA project – identifying high risk pathways (transport routes).

It was clarified that the RTA funded project is primarily about collection of information and recommended management protocols for the high risk roads, rail lines etc. The Cowan Transport Corridors project is a good model of a localised approach, which resulted in on-ground work.

ACTION: Rosanna to discuss with the Board whether the WAP Year 3 application (2012-2013) can incorporate some on ground work, based on the recommendations and information that comes out of the RTA/REC project

Training needs & skills gaps for officers

Training needs identified:

Legal 2 & 3. The Department is subsidising the course fee for the last time, course coming up soon. Contact DPI directly.

Sydney Weeds website Members page

The website now has a Members Page, requiring a login password. The information on this login page is for internal use, to be shared among sub-committee members.

It was asked if the Regional Plans be publically available again, as many other council officers, bushland managers etc who are not on the weeds sub-committees also refer to these Plans. There was general agreement about doing this.

ACTION: Rosanna to email login instructions and password, and move the Regional Plans to a public section of the site

Sydney Weeds stall at ABC Gardening Expo

Proposed Sydney Weeds stall at the Expo, which is on from 19th - 21st August 2011 at Rosehill Racecourse. Representatives from all of the sub-committees are being asked to do 3-4 hour shifts at the stall over the weekend. The stall meets a major target of the Weed Action Program, for regional community education events.

It was suggested to use a combination of:

- Live weeds displays (using Jillian's license)
- Rob's resin displays
- Examples of good native plants as alternatives in the garden
- Eco Van TBC?
- DPI Marquee

ABC Gardening Expo stall/ interested Sydney North representatives: Matt Springall, Jacqui Vollmer, James Brisebois. Steven Smith (Friday only). Rob Gleeson, Jillian Macintyre and Rosanna to set up the stall.
ACTION: Rosanna to confirm availability and the weekend roster with all.

Follow up from Previous Meeting

The previous minutes were confirmed by Rob Gleeson. Seconded by Lavinia Schofield.

Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action List (not already discussed)

Class 4 Plans and new declarations

Last year Sydney North region put up a list a new Class 4 declarations. A series of generic Class 4 plans were developed, for use and adaptation by each council, to suit their needs. These new declarations across various LGAs won't be known until October 2011, after notification is received about the changes to the Noxious Weeds Act.

Cameron Bennell noted that in his correspondence with Sue Stevens last year (working for SWC at the time), it was stated that Willoughby Council did not want to list any new Class 4 weeds. As part of the Sydney North submission, some additional weeds were added for Willoughby LGA. Rosanna will check this with Frances Pike.

ACTION: Jillian to resend to Rosanna Mich Michelmore's Draft workshop notes and final versions of the Class 4 plans, for the website members page.

ACTION: Rosanna to check listing of Athol Pine

General Business

ANPC workshop coming up about Myrtle Rust.

- 3 tiers of hygiene protocols.
- None known to be on NPWS land. Very hard to control, can be spread by park users, walkers etc
- NPWS and Hornsby Council are looking at where are the assets they don't want to come affected, and implementing specific hygiene measures.
- Infection linked to Rhodamnia sp
- Long term effects no known
- Seems to kill younger trees, regenerating areas. More so than mature trees.

- Increased Phytophthora at West Head, during to increased rainfall lately.
- Pest Management Strategy for NPWS Metro North East region is currently being rewritten. Draft will be circulated to sub-committee for comment. Control Class 4 weeds tends to be lower priority, based on asset ranking system.

ACTION: Mel Hall to circulate inform about the asset prioritization system – for the website members page.

- Weeds Society seminar – 27th July 2011 “Environmental Weeds. Current Practices & Procedures”.
- Cameron will be presenting about flameweeding, at the Weeds Conference in Coffs Harbour.

ACTION TO FOLLOW UP: Suggestion made about an end of year field day/canoeing trip, inviting representatives from all 4 weeds sub-committees.

Next Meeting date & host

Date: Wednesday 21st September 2011

Host: Lane Cove National Park. Venue TBC: Jenkin Hall

Sydney North weeds sub-committee

Action list June 2011 meeting	Responsibility
Transfer the mapping activity information a GIS map. Distribute when ready.	Shelly
Supply GIS data about recent/current inspection and survey locations.	All organisations that received WAP funds for inspections/ surveys
Finalise the New Incursion Form and place on website page	Rosanna
Send completed new incursion forms (for species found within last few years) to Shelly.	Everyone
Circulate website login password to all sub-committee representatives. Move Regional Plans back to public domain.	Rosanna
Send information and link about “Biodiversity Priorities for Widespread Weeds”.	Mel Hall
Seek further information from Mel Hall and Dom Edmonds about their input into CMA and DECCW weeds information, collected in the past.	Rosanna
Confirm with the Board about the baseline information requirements for WAP funded on-ground control that are receiving WAP funds.	Rosanna
Circulate information and weblinks about site monitoring guide, for assessing plant response to weeds control (Bitou Bush monitoring manual and proforma).	Mel Hall
Circulate inform about the asset prioritisation system (NPWS Pest Strategy) – for the website members page	Mel Hall
Discuss with the Board about WAP Year 3 application and funding some on-ground work, based on RTA/REC project	Rosanna
Put onto website members page: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mich Michelmore’s Draft workshop notes • Final versions of the generic Class 4 plans 	Rosanna
Confirm availability and roster timeslots for ABC Gardening Expo stall, 19-21 August 2011	Rosanna Matt Springall, Jacqui Vollmer, James Brisebois, Steven Smith. Jillian & Rob (set up)
Check listing of Athol Pine	Rosanna
End of year field day/canoeing trip, inviting representatives from all 4 weeds sub-committees.	Rosanna/ pass onto Frances Pike