

North Coast WEED READ

No.18 SUMMER 2008

Newsletter for the NSW North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee

We circulate each March, June, September and December. Please send information to the Secretary in the month before publication.

Now, what's going on in weeds....

COURSES, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES

Plant Identification Training Workshop

12 February 2009. EnviTE nursery, Byron Bay.
26 February 2009. EnviTE nursery, Goonellabah
9am - 3pm. An opportunity to learn how to identify native and weed plant species from the experts. No cost. Training materials and equipment provided. Please bring food & drink for the day. Numbers are limited. Bookings essential. Please ring Emma Wagner at EnviTE 6621 9588 or email emmaw@envite.org.au

Chemcert training

13 & 20 February 2009. Grafton
13 & 27 February 2009. Lismore
13 & 20 March 2009. Coffs Harbour
9am-4.30pm. From 1 Sep 2003, training became compulsory under the Pesticides Act 1999 for commercial users of herbicides. Herbicides can be dangerous if incorrectly applied or managed. Training aims to minimize mistakes being made so that workers, their families, the community and the environment are protected. Refresher courses are required every five years. Contact 6621 9588 or email lismore@envite.org.au

Clean up Australia event. 1 March 2009

Shaws Bay Escarpment Forest, Lighthouse hill, East Ballina. 8am. Assist local landcare group with cleaning up this High Conservation Value Forest by helping with rubbish removal and weeding. A chance to view the successes of the local Landcare group. All welcome. For further info please ring Lee Andresen 6681 3557

Bush Regeneration Training Workshop

20 March 2009. Boatharbour Nature Reserve. 9am-3pm. An opportunity to learn how to undertake bush regeneration from the experts. No cost for attending. You will gain first hand experience in identification of weeds and weed control techniques. Work alongside professional bush regenerators and gain skills for restoring native plant communities. Please bring food & drink for the day. Training materials, tools and

equipment will be provided. Numbers are limited. Bookings essential. To register for the workshop contact Emma Wagner at EnviTE 6621 9588

Mullumbimby Huge Community Tree Planting

Day. 22 March 2009. The planting day aims to revegetate 300m of Mullumbimby Creek using 1500 to 2000 trees. The day is being organised by Madhima Gulgan, Rainforest Rescue, Brunswick Valley Landcare and the Murray family. Please email Dave Rawlins daverawlins75@gmail.com

Paddock Plants Field Day. 24 March 2009.

Field Day with DPI Agronomists Carol and Harry Rose. Contact Coffs Regional Landcare 6651 1308

The Australian Network for Plant Conservation Second National Forum.

April/May 2009. "Minding our own biodiversity: conservation on private land". Halls Gap, The Grampians, Victoria. Are you interested in conserving native flora and fauna on your land? Do you participate in conservation activities on public land? Are you part of a network linking conservation efforts across the landscape? This Forum will focus on conservation outside the formal reserve system, whether on small blocks, large landscape level efforts or cross-tenure projects. People and places involved will be highlighted and incentives and support discussed. The Forum will include presentations, case studies, discussion sessions and field visits to project sites. A program will be posted on the ANPC website in late January
www.anbg.gov.au/anpc/conferences.html

Asia Pacific Biochar Conference. 17-20 May

2009. Watermark Hotel, Gold Coast. Guest speakers include Prof Tim Flannery and Prof Johannes Lehmann (Cornell Uni). Biochar is a stable carbon-rich product that results from heating biomass materials (such as weed waste) in limited oxygen. Biochar can be added to soils to increase soil fertility and agricultural productivity, sequester carbon and mitigate climate change. The process also yields renewable energy. Abstracts are currently being accepted. Topics include biochar production technologies and environmental benefits. Conference includes dinner and field trip. Contact Lee Munro, NSW DPI (02) 6626 1279 or email leanne.munro@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Visit www.biochar-international.org

All communications to the Secretary

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www.northcoastweeds.org.au

W E E D N E W S

2008 North Coast Weeds Forum Caring for our Country

The 6th North Coast Weeds Forum was held on August 14th at Nambucca Heads RSL. This venue was very successful with picture postcard views of the river from the conference room and a delicious lunch provided! The Forum attracted about 120 delegates mostly from NSW and some from Qld, with the furthest afield coming from Sydney and Wyong. The Forum provided an opportunity for networking and communication on similar issues along the coast including raising awareness of potential weeds. The audience was a mix of Local and State government representatives, private consultants and bush regenerators, as well as members of Landcare, Bushcare and Dunecare community groups.



The Forum was opened by Judy Henderson, Chair of the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the keynote address was by Rachael Gallagher of Macquarie University on the topical issue of climate change and weeds. Other topics included Miconia, effects of camphor laurels on aquatic communities, catsclaw creeper, bitou bush, ponded pasture grasses and urban weeds. Displays were provided by Coffs Harbour Bush Regeneration Group, DPI, Nufarm, MacSpred, Bayer and Australian Environmental Services.



The NCWAC thanks all of the speakers and others who assisted with the organisation for making it such a successful day. Thanks also to Far North Coast Weeds for managing the registrations.

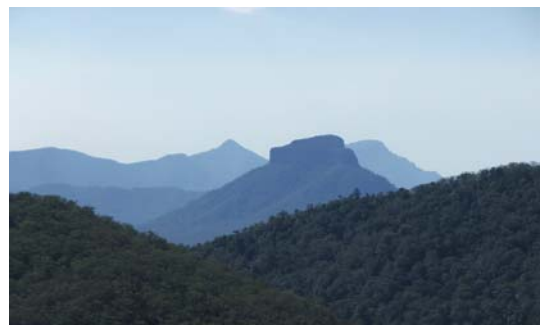
The presentations and photos of the day can be viewed on the NCWAC website:
www.northcoastweeds.org.au



SOME UP COMING FUNDING

Northern Rivers CMA Biodiversity Grants

Funding to protect and enhance our native vegetation. This program delivers financial incentives to rural landholders and some public land managers in the upper north coast area (between Evans Head and the Qld border and west nearly to Tenterfield) for the improvement of native vegetation, riparian management and biodiversity values. Applications are currently invited for up to \$45,000. Priority will be given to applications that can produce significant conservation outcomes and offer value for money. Applications covering areas of high biodiversity value, rare and endangered vegetation types and connecting vegetation corridors will be highly regarded, as will projects offering substantial in-kind contributions. Funding is also available for significant revegetation projects or new plantings under the Greenfleet Vegetation Carbon Offset Program. Sites of 10ha or more are preferred. For further info visit www.northern.cma.nsw.gov.au or ring NRCMA Alstonville 6627 0170. No specific closing date: applications will continue to be taken until all funds are allocated.



(Photo credit: Des Boorman)

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Montane Wetland Restoration

WetlandCare Australia is looking for landholders on the New England Tablelands who are interested in protecting and rehabilitating wetlands on their properties. There are two types of Endangered Ecological Community wetlands in the region: Montane Peatlands and Swamps, and Upland Wetlands.

Montane Peatlands and Swamps occur at the headwaters of creeks, at elevations above 400m. The soil is rich organic sediment (peat) and plants include sphagnum mosses, sedges, grasses and shrubs. Upland Wetlands occur above 900m and form in areas where there is a depression in the underlying rock substrate. They are not connected to creeks. Their water regime may be permanent or temporary. The vegetation is usually grasses, sedges, rushes and aquatic plant species. Most of these wetlands are situated on granite of the New England Plateau but some are on basalt near Guyra. They are located between Walcha in the south and Bald Rock in the north.

The funding for this Montane Wetland EEC Project has been provided by the Northern Rivers CMA and will be allocated to landholders through a tender process early in 2009. Funding will allow preparation of plans of management, biodiversity assessments, and will support the management of threats such as weeds, modified water flows and stock access.

For further information contact Adam Gosling on 6681 6169 or email adamgosling@wetlandcare.com.au or visit www.wetlandcare.com.au

Getting your share of the Funding Pie. 10 February 2009. Macquarie Graduate School of Management, Pitt Street, Sydney. Two seminars on fund-raising: Seminar 1: How to raise funds from Philanthropic Trusts and Foundations. Seminar 2. How to develop partnerships with companies. These seminars are aimed at volunteer co-ordinators, board and committee members, proposal writers and anyone else who requires advice on fund-raising. For further info ring Pathways Australia (03) 8530 6444.

Caring for our Country funding

In its initial five years, Caring for our Country will provide \$2.25 billion in funding for natural resource management. The Australian Government is now calling for investment proposals for projects that will meet the targets outlined in the Caring for our Country business plan 2009-10.

www.nrm.gov.au/business-plan/index.html

The closing date for submission of proposals is 6 March 2009. The website will be regularly updated.

- WEED ALERT -

WHITE TRUMPET VINE

Pithecoctenium cynanchoides



(Photo credit: © Zoya Akulova)

White Trumpet Vine, also known as Yellow-throated Canary Vine or Monkey's Comb, is a woody climber with hexagonal ribbed branchlets, and many-branched twining tendrils. The leaves are heart-shaped, thin, two to three foliate, up to 8cm long and the terminal leaflet is often replaced by a tendril.

This species flowers November to February. The white tubular flowers, up to 5cm long, have a yellow interior. The fruit is a thick woody, compressed capsule with dense bristles. Seeds are surrounded by a transparent wing.

This species is originally from South America but has become naturalised in some areas of the east coast of NSW. There is a small infestation in the Brunswick Valley and some patches have been found in the Kedron Brook catchment in Brisbane. There is also a large infestation at Gore Creek Sydney.

This weed can be highly aggressive, described on the Lane Cove Council website as choking the native vegetation and spreading at an alarming pace

Trials are required to determine the best control method for this weed. Treat as other Bignoniaceae weeds such as Cats Claw Creeper, using a combination of hand based control methods, spraying and regular follow-up. For small infestations cut/scape and paint stems with herbicide. For large infestations cut vines and foliar spray regrowth. (Source: Byron Bay Council Weed Profile/Landmark Ecological Services & Bower Bush Works).

Please contact your local Weeds Officer or DPI office for details of the most suitable control methods in particular situations.

Money or Menace ?

The tourist dollar is becoming harder and harder to come by – so many small towns are thinking about beautification programmes. When the summer heat has gone, the autumnal colours, the local winery, coffee or craft shop can provide an incentive for an afternoon out. The question is... are we sowing the seeds of a future problem? In the mid nineteenth century a group of European settlers formed Acclimatisation Societies that aimed to introduce the English customs to their new land. Today Australia is still paying for this whim with plants, which have now become “weeds”, which flourish in the sub tropical climate that occurs on the North Coast of New South Wales.

In 2007 it was suggested that a small town on the Orara River should be involved in a beautification program and plant *Quercus palustris* – pin oak – in the main streets. The vision of the autumnal colours certainly seemed very attractive but the question was whether this would be a “camphor laurel” for future generations.



Quercus palustris

Environmental stakeholders became involved and there was growing concern as to the fate of the pin oak leaves and would they choke the Orara River. On the basis of this, the Coffs Harbour Council suggested a small scientific study to clarify the situation.

Using *Eucalyptus grandis* leaf litter as a control species, packs of pin oak leaves, pin oak acorns (in 5mm mesh bags) and eucalypt leaves were placed in the Orara River to study decomposition rates and the macroinvertebrate assemblages of the native and introduced litter. A “one in a hundred year” flood swept away the last set of leaf packs so the study was cut short. However, even in with the small data set covering 28 days, some trends were found. The decomposition rate of the pin oak litter was slower than that of the eucalypt litter. This finding is supported by Molinero *et al.* (1996), and in that study it was stated that the phosphorus and nitrogen content

of the eucalypt was lower than that of the oak and this could have accounted for the faster decomposition rate of the eucalypt leaves. The acorns decomposed even more slowly (figure 1).

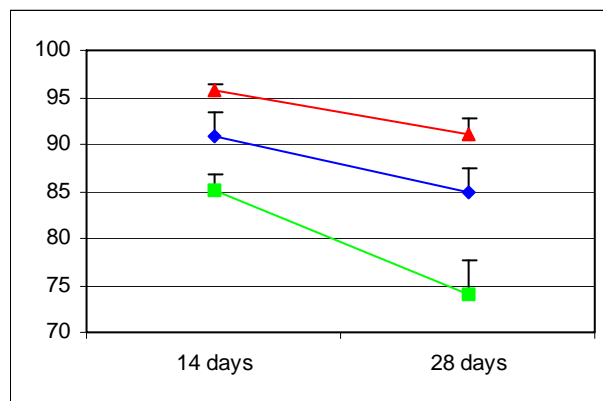


Figure 1 Decomposition rates. Percentage of litter and acorns remaining

■ *E. grandis* ■ *Q. palustris* ■ Acorns

There was no significant difference in the assemblages or density of macroinvertebrate per gram of litter between the different leaf packs. This was interesting because despite the abundance of macroinvertebrates, they obviously were not contributing to the breakdown in the pin oak leaf litter (figures 2 and 3). The low density of macroinvertebrates in the acorn packs may be a reason why the decomposition rate of acorns was slow. This could be due to the hard outer coating.

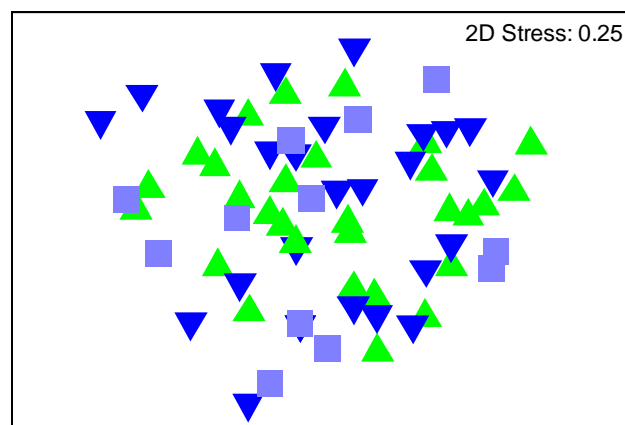


Figure 2. Macroinvertebrate assemblages

▲ *E. grandis* ▼ *Q. palustris* ■ Acorns

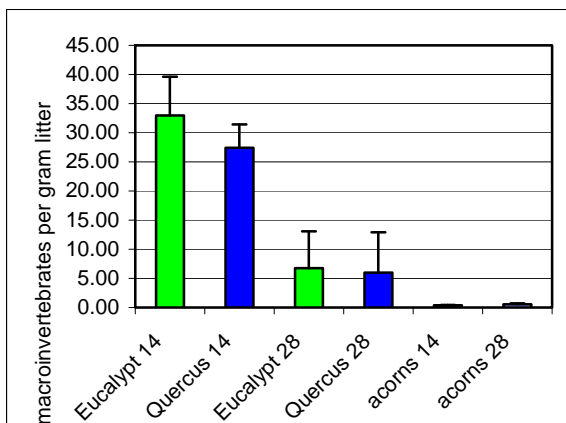


Figure 3 Density of macroinvertebrates per gram of litter

■ *E. grandis* ■ *Q. palustris* ■ Acorns

With this small study no conclusions can be drawn, but one must bear in mind that the biomass of leaves placed in the river was not even equivalent to a small branch on a sapling. The climate of the Orara Valley is one that would encourage growth, so in ten years time how many leaves and acorns would be entering the waterways, slow to decompose, "stock piling", becoming rotting vegetation and lowering the oxygen levels resulting in another stretch of unhealthy river?

Further studies need to be undertaken to come to any definite conclusions about the outcome of introducing this exotic species to an area with a near to optimum climate, but in the meantime rather than risk another menace, it may be wise to think of other avenues to entice the tourist dollar.

Judy Davies

NEW BOOKS, CD-ROMs etc HOT OFF THE PRESS!!!

Rural Landholder's Guide to Environmental Law in New South Wales, 2nd Edition (Sept 2008). The purpose of this booklet is to help readers to understand their legal rights and obligations as landholders and to manage land in accordance with environmental and natural resource management law. Topics include: vegetation management, protected plants and animals, agricultural chemicals, water management, bushfire management, crops and stock, pollution, heritage protection and voluntary conservation. This booklet is free from The Northern Rivers Environmental Defenders Office 1300 369 791 or email edonr@edo.org.au or download from the website: www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/publications.php

Aquatic Weed Management in Waterways and Dams. November 2008. Aquatic plants serve a variety of uses in a water system, some of which are vital to the overall health of the aquatic environment. There are numerous aquatic plants that grow in farm dams, streams and waterways and fortunately most are rarely a problem. However, when water becomes rich in nutrients, aquatic plants can grow vigorously to a point where they become a nuisance or are considered a weed. This information is intended for both property owners and officers of public authorities. Some of the topics covered in this Primefact include:

- * Impact
- * Managing aquatic weeds
- * Identification of the plant
- * Aquatic plant reproduction
- * Aquatic weed Management techniques
- * Legislation

Primefact 30. Can be downloaded from NSW DPI website:

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/publications/factsheets/aquatic-weed-management

USEFUL RESOURCES

The Northern Herbicide Resistance Reporter

This newsletter provides information about research and development in herbicide resistance in the northern region. Eleven issues are available on the website. Next edition expected to be released about mid 2009. www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/publications/newsletters/nhrr

Control of Weeds With goats DVD

This DVD runs for 12 minutes and includes information on how to:

- * integrate goats onto a property with cattle or sheep
- * use other control methods in conjunction with goats
- * choose the breed of goat
- * select suitable fencing
- * stop trees from being ring-barked
- * describes the palatability of various weeds to goats e.g. blackberry is palatable.

Available from NSW DPI bookshop 1800 028 374.

Junior Landcarer e-Newsletter

The first edition of the Junior Landcarer e-newsletter is out now for those who wish to inspire the next generation of landcarers to care for our country. This will be a bi-monthly publication with information about funding opportunities, competitions, giveaways, teacher's resources and ideas from Junior Landcare schools across the country. For more info visit www.juniorlandcare.com.au or ring 1300 151 105.

Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle & Richmond Valley LGA (Far North Coast Weeds area) update

1. Camphor laurel

FNCW has achieved excellent results with the Camphor Laurel control program on roadsides with seedlings under three metres controlled on most roads. Focus is now shifting to outlying infestations of large trees in an effort to reduce potential for ongoing re-infestation and reduce the overall extent of the infestation.

2. Miconia in the Tweed

Mullumbimby spray staff are to be commended for detecting *Miconia calvescens* on private property in the Tomewin area while conducting a private works activity. This is a particularly significant find as this is the first time this species has been detected as a self-recruited seedling (not planted) in the wild in NSW. The national team for eradication of four serious weeds is supplying support for on-ground inspection activities. The aim is to conduct a strategic surveillance program to determine the extent of the infestation, destroy all new plants that are found and to ensure that no more seedlings or plants have spread or established in adjacent forested areas. Due to the proximity to the QLD border, Queensland government agencies will also be involved in the initiative. A separate report will detail proposed actions regarding this extremely serious weed.

3. New occurrence of *Hymenachne*

Lismore spray staff are to be commended for detecting and identifying a new occurrence of *Hymenachne* on Cusack Rd near the Lismore Racecourse in mid August. This is significant find, in that all previously known infestations were restricted to the Yorklea and east Leeville areas, south of Casino. The spray gang noticed unusual looking plants in a culvert on the roadside as they were driving along Cusack Road and quickly identified it as *Hymenachne*. This is despite the fact that it was quite short and had been frosted off.

Spray staff have shown great diligence on both occasions in identifying these Class 1 weeds and should be acknowledged for their vigilance leading to these significant and serious discoveries.

4. Alligator Weed

The information provided to the community at the Lismore Show led to the discovery of a substantial new location of alligator weed near Woodburn. The Lismore team carried out an initial surveillance exercise in adjacent waterways and identified 46 new individual sites in Rocky Mouth Creek. Fragments have been found in the river, ranging from small individual

pieces to large rafts of 30m² with several moving in tidal oscillations. These sites appear to be well established at standing water level with the two biggest sites being adjacent to the Pacific Highway indicating a possible connection with known weed dispersal vectors.



Alligator Weed flower (Photo credit: Des Boorman)

Further upstream in the Wilson River catchment above Boatharbour, alligator weed has been targeted at known sites with a series of control activities being undertaken from Bangalow to Booyong. Control activities will increase over the next quarter when growing conditions are ideal. Sites at Lismore Lake have shown some recurrence at the major site and some at the Jabiru Wetlands site at Casino. This wetland will require a specific approach that involves the mechanical removal of the perched organic horizon floating in the system where the infestation occurs.

5. Water lettuce

Water lettuce has been detected in a number of off-stream drains as a result of flood events in the Long Lagoon / Barling Creek system and these sites have now been treated. The extent of movement of aquatic weeds due to flood activity is yet to be fully determined. Staff have conducted thorough searches at some locations immediately downstream but are yet to comprehensively conduct searches further downstream of all potential sites.

Notably, potential spread of water lettuce from infestations adjacent to Peacock Creek has been fully scoped and no new sites were located that could be linked to the flood event. However several dams and features containing water lettuce were identified as a result of the targeted inspection activities in that area. This reinforces the need for coordinated and strategic inspection and control activities in the vicinity of known infestations. One property has had water lettuce completely eradicated and the owner and staff will maintain vigilance to ensure that any recurrence at the site is treated promptly to prevent reinfestation.

Water lettuce in Bora Creek was not flushed out as a result of the flood events. Control activities

have reduced the infestation down to a relatively small number of plants with a high likelihood of eradication of water lettuce from the Bungawalbyn this season. Advertising requirements from the EPA Licence to Pollute continue to impede timely control activities and place substantial burden on weed control funds. A review of our licence agreement is planned.

6. Giant Rats Tail Grass

Giant Rats Tail Grass control has been conducted to complement the work being undertaken by landowners on properties in the Afterlee area. All affected properties have now received a treatment and this is the first time since the infestation was identified that all properties have received simultaneous treatment.



Giant Rats Tail Grass (Photo credit: Des Boorman)

7. Groundsel bush

Groundsel bush has been controlled on numerous roadsides in the Bungawalbyn area. Due to ideal growing conditions groundsel bush has undergone resurgence throughout the County this season and FNCW has mounted a renewed awareness campaign.

Local control plans are yet to be reviewed and this needs to happen soon to ensure the strategies are consistent with best practice and the strategic management approach.

8. New truck and spray rig for Lismore

The old spray unit was 'due for retirement' and increasing maintenance was resulting in significant downtime. Consequently, the Lismore control crew has now purchased a new truck and dual reel spray unit which will greatly improve operational efficiency. The new truck has been fitted with the spare boom spray and a boomless jet for roadside treatments. The boomless jet will enable staff to spray roadsides and embankments in a safe, timely and cost effective way that should result in substantial efficiency gains in some roadside treatment applications. A five year replacement program is to be developed in conjunction with the

2008/2009 Management Plan to provide a structured approach to ensuring that obsolete equipment is disposed of and that new equipment is purchased in a timely manner to maximise productivity.

9. New Toughbooks

Two new Toughbook® have been acquired to replace older units. With the onboard GPS units, they are substantially easier to use in the field. Budget provisions in 08/09 will replace the four remaining old units. As these computers are considerably more expensive than ordinary office laptop computers, future budgets will need to provide funding to ensure timely upgrades.

10. Field Days

FNCW has received funding to conduct two *Hymenachne* (or Pondered Pasture Grass) Field Days, prior to Christmas. FNCW will also be conducting an Alligator Weed Field Day for landowners in the Woodburn – Rocky Mouth Creek area before the end of the year. FNCW will advise the other local control authorities when these field days are occurring.

11. New Declarations

Following on from his presentation to weeds officers in Coffs Harbour on 5 November 2008, Steve Johnson toured the FNCW district to view a number of potential new weeds. A list of proposed weeds for consideration has been prepared and will be presented to Council for approval, prior to any formal request to NWAC.

One issue arising from any proposal for new declarations is the requirement for 'three adjoining local control authorities' to support any such proposal. FNCW will write to NCWAC and make a request to NWAC to seek to have the wording changed to read 'three adjoining local government authorities.' In this way we can avoid the need to seek support for matters that would not otherwise be a concern to local control authorities outside the FNCW district (which incidentally covers six local government areas).

DECC - FNCW region

- Bush Regeneration Coaching program. Ongoing programs across the Region, one day per month to increase bush regeneration skills and experience in Richmond river Area, Kyogle, Tweed and Byron Coast
- Regeneration Training - Some staff recently completed Cert III in CLM at TAFE. Additional training scheduled for 2009
- Bitou Bush control - Monitoring of Byron Bitou Bush control currently underway to look at response of native plant communities post aerial spray program. Follow-up control underway in accessible areas.

- Other programs underway as part of ongoing bitou TAP site works such as Bundjalung NP, Broken Head NR, Brunswick Heads NR, Billinudgel NR and Wooyung NR
- Kudzu programs - Recently a new infestation of Kudzu was detected adjoining Tooloom NP by neighbours. A control program is currently being devised and will be implemented accordingly.
 - Programs for follow-up will recommence in Couchy Creek NR and Mt Jerusalem NP.

Lantana TAP sites - Some reserves have received funding under the lantana TAP program including Mallanganee NP, Duroby NR, Brunswick Heads and Inner Pocket Nature Reserves.

Clarence Shire Update

Co-ordination

- During the July-September quarter much time was spent coordinating the weekly spray control activities. In addition to this departments' core duties in noxious weed control within Vacant Crown Lands, waterways and roadsides, resources were diverted to undertaking vegetation controls for the other departments within Council that require herbicide application within their assets, including Open Spaces, Roads and Traffic.
- Open Space's vegetation control operator has been re-assigned within Council's Organization Structure to be directed from the Noxious Weeds Office. This has benefited Council in the coordinated Notification of Pesticide Use and Vegetation control resources.
- Follow-up control works within the Bitou bush Threat Abatement areas of Woolli and Brooms Head were carried out. Other Bitou bush ground based control programs were carried out as per annual programs.
- Reports and grant submissions to Department of Lands were completed in August to gain funding for Noxious Weeds control in the numerous VCL land and waterways under Council's management. Funding allocations are still being processed.
- Biodiversity Strategy- Issues Paper developed with weeds noted as high priority- promote relativity to Northern Rivers Invasive Plants Action Strategy.

- Bush Regeneration Team working to Coastal Vegetation Rehabilitation Plan.
- Two CVC Weeds Officers attended the Lawrence Agricultural Fair to inform attendees of Noxious Weeds issues in the region.
- Several kilometres of Mysore thorn and Red flowering Lantana have been controlled as part of the Wombat Creek Rehabilitation Program. Funds were received and administered by Council on behalf of the adjoining property owners who applied for NHT Envirofunds. Ongoing works were carried out prior to Christmas.
- NSW DPI Coordination, Inspectorial, and Operational reports were completed in late September. It proves to be a frustrating time when Contributing Organisation reports again were not received within the pre-agreed time. It is acknowledged that this is a busy time for all Weed Officers, however, the whole process needs re-thinking to reduce duplication and to ensure reports are received in time to meet deadlines.
- This year's Weedbuster Week snuck up on everyone. Inspection commitments did not allow for the traditional displays at Grafton Shopping World and regional Sale-yards. In lieu, handouts and a presentation was given at the Grafton High School and Glenreagh Public School.
- Aquatic Weeds- a meeting with representatives from Council, NRCMA and Water & Energy was held at the Grafton Agricultural Research Station to investigate a coordinated approach to control Hyacinth and other aquatic weeds within the Clarence Valley's waterways.

Meetings attended

- North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee
- Weed Officers Meeting- Trenayr
- Weeds Forum – Nambucca
- QLD Weeds Society Forum- Tweed Heads
- Regional Weeds Advisory Committee – Orange
- Alligator Weeds Meeting - Lismore

Inspectorial

Weed Officers have maintained a heavy work load with property inspections in the Kangaroo Creek, Nymboida, Ashby & Ramornie districts. Inspection tally numbers have radically increased during this quarter since the recent appointment of two operational spray staff, enabling the Weed Officers to return to their core duties. Improved procedures

All communications to the Secretary

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and administration support has also minimized the time individual Inspectors spend in the office.

Tally

Quarter 1 – Jul to Sep 2008 - **668** inspections encompassing an area of **36, 676** Ha. A further **115** reinspections were carried out during this period.

(**203** clean, **359** weeds found, **114** clearance, **0** Sec18 notice, **0** Sec20 notice)

Training

Both the Senior Environmental and Senior Weeds Officers undertook training in Leadership and Supervision of Staff. All Staff were involved in Native Plant Identification training helping to identify plants within Endangered Ecological Communities. Most operational staff also gained skills in OH&S (Yellow Card) -this brought them up to speed in the requirements of safe work practices when working around traffic and construction sites.

Operational

Staff have kept extremely busy with both Core Duties and *Works Requests* from other departments within Council. Having a full complement of operational crews has meant that tasks normally low on the priority list are finally now being dealt with. A diverse skills base has also helped with assigning staff to carry out tasks. The following list indicates days spent on priority weeds.

Control programs on regionally significant weeds (represented in days/crew):

Bitou Bush – 20 days – various areas

Broadleaf pepper tree – 1 day

Camphor laurel – 10 days

Green Cestrum – 2 days

Groundsel bush – 5 days

Lantana – 27 days

Mother of Millions – 14 days

Privet – 3 days

Prickly pear – 2 days

Salvinia and Water Hyacinth – 3 days

Other Projects:

- Council (various) – 20 days

- Council (bindiis) – 44 days

- Brooms Head project - 3 days

Bitou TAP – 14 days

DECC - Clarence

Main on-ground works, previous three months

- Chaelundi NP & Nymboi-Binderay NP- blackberry & lantana (35ha), privet (4.8ha), giant parramatta grass (5.9ha), mistflower & crofton weed (0.4ha) & some fenceline vegetation control
- Yuraygir NP- bitou bush control in many areas, Red Rock, Station Creek, Diggers Camp North and South Sandon, Redcliff, Angourie. Follow up control on isolated infestations of Painted Spurge, Coolatai Grass and Singapore Daisy. Bush regeneration works south Sandon and Redcliff. Lantana control at Pigeon Gully. Slash pine control
- Bundjalung NP- Bitou Bush control southern Bundjalung NP and Iluka NR, Bush regeneration works in southern Bundjalung NP and Iluka NR. Groundsel bush control commenced in remote areas of lower Esk River. Isolated glory lily control.
- Nymboida NP- Lantana control around Nymboida River Camping Area.
- Susan Island NR- moonflower control
- Planning – Site plans prepared and approved for Lantana TAP sites southern Bundjalung NP and Clarence Estuary NR. Site nominations completed for widespread weeds impacting on biodiversity project. Reports completed for bitou bush TAP sites.

NSW DPI – Grafton Weeds Unit

Alligator Weed has raised its ugly head again this time in the lower reaches of Richmond River, near Woodburn, adjacent to the Pacific Highway. Far North Coast Weeds staff have located 45 patches of Alligator Weed in Rocky Mouth Creek, a small tributary in the Richmond. Staff have placed a boom across the creek to contain fragment movement downstream and have enclosed many of the larger patches with shade-cloth. All sites have been treated with herbicide. To assist with raising public awareness in the area, an Alligator weed field day will be held in Woodburn during early December.

DPI, DECC and Clarence Valley Council will be assisting FNCW with a delimiting survey of the river and adjacent high risk sites to help determine the extent of the infestation. Alligator Weed was first found in the upper reaches of the Richmond Catchment, in Byron creek at Bangalow in 1998 and up until recently was contained above Lismore.

Alligator weed is a Class 2 noxious weed in the North and Mid North coast regions and these areas are still considered as non-core infestation areas. Alligator Weed is a Weed of National Significance and considered a high priority for containment and eradication in NSW.

This incursion is a timely reminder for Councils to be on the look out for Alligator Weed at high risk sites in their areas. All weed and land managers are encouraged to maintain their vigilance in looking for and reporting sightings of Alligator weed. Any suspicious plants should be reported to your local Council Weeds Officer or NSW DPI.

For further Information on Alligator weed, including the Control Manual and information and ID brochures, see the DPI web address at ; <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/profiles/alligator>

The **Aquatic Weed Early Detection** project is currently being completed by Jessica Grantley. Jessica commenced duties with NSW DPI during October and her first task is to finalise this project. Many Council staff and community members have participated in the Aquatic weed identification training workshops and the early detection field surveys. If you have any feedback on the survey procedures please contact Jessica as they will be finalised in early 2009. The training package when finalised will be available for weed managers to run their own aquatic weed training days. You can contact Jessica Grantley at Grafton DPI on 02 66401644.

Guara Declaration Change

Order 24 of the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 recently removed *Gaura lindheimeri* from declaration as a Class 5 weed. This means that the species *Gaura lindheimeri* and any cultivars (varieties, or subspecies) can now be sold throughout NSW without restriction. There are a number of cultivars of this species that have been developed and may be now be available for sale.

The species *Gaura parviflora* is still a Class 5 noxious weed. The above declaration change did not affect this species. This means that if the species or cultivars labelled as such are found in nurseries then they should be removed and destroyed.

Refer to the following Botanic Gardens website for further information on the difference between the species.
<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/search/simple.htm> (and search by '*Gaura*')

NSW DPI is aware that *Gaura lindheimeri* can naturalise outside areas where it is planted. We

encourage people to submit herbarium samples of this and any other newly naturalising species to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney for positive identification.

Gaura parviflora is recognised as a significant weed around the world, and in Australia. Very little, if any, material of the species is currently sold in NSW.

Coffs Harbour Update Inspectorial

The principal weeds targeted over the past three months were Groundsel Bush, Crofton Weed, Chinese Celtis and Yellow Bells.

Unfortunately another infestation of *Hygrophila costata* was identified growing under a bridge on the old Pacific Highway at Pine Creek, approximately 15km south of Coffs Harbour. Mr Lush may have planted this? A downstream survey will be conducted to determine its spread.

The Coffs Harbour Chief Weed inspector Barry Powells spent two days at ProAg with the Nambucca Weed Inspector, Tim Woodward. Although Friday was quiet, Saturday was busy with lots of weed enquiries.

Residents of the Eastern Dorrigo have been concerned for some time about the spread of Lantana to the escarpment. Forestry roads are the major source of infestation. A morning was spent with Ian Swan and Tom Newly looking at this problem and they have agreed to organise some spraying in late summer. Country Energy easements through Forests are also an important means of spread of several Noxious weeds.

On October 31 an aerial inspection of the coastal area from Sawtell to Woolgoolga and west of that town re-emphasised that there are some infestations on private land requiring attention and small amounts on VCL.

A possible new roadside weed has emerged on several roads in Lowanna on the eastern Dorrigo, Shell Grass (*Briza subaristata*). Very little information is known about this grass however it spreading quite rapidly. Council slashers are not working on these roads in an attempt to restrict its spread. All infestations were sprayed with fluproponate as part of Council's roadside weedy sporobolus program.

Several infestations of Cat's Claw Creeper have been found on private land. Regional Landcare have offered to control these infestations for the landowners free of charge.

Operational

The roadside Weedy *Sporobolus* Program has been completed. Approximately 150km were treated.

The spraying of noxious and environmental weeds in reserves in Sawtell / Toormina and Coffs Harbour has been continuing. A mixture of 50% Starane and Metsulfuron Methyl (10g/100) has been producing excellent results with virtually no off-target damage.

The results of last years Madeira Vine control have shown that very good control was achieved by spraying Metsulfuron Methyl. Most tubers appear to have been killed as very little new growth has been observed.

Future Activities

- Glory Lily control to commence early November.
- Splatter gun control of Lantana in a reserve at Sawtell will recommence.
- Roadside Lantana will be targeted, particularly south of Coffs Harbour on the old Highway which now has very little traffic on it.
- *Hygrophila* control by manual removal will be undertaken in the Orara River at Nana Glen and Pine Creek, Bonville.

DECC - Coffs Harbour

- Moonee Beach Nature Reserve - mapping / control of major groundsel bush infestation. Groundsel also found on adjoining crown land. Bush regeneration and planting by Repair to Country team
- Coffs Coast Regional Park - ongoing bush regeneration at several sites by NPWS and Repair to Country team
- Kororo NP- lantana control
- Sherwood Nature Reserve, South Solitary Island NR & Bindarri NP- bush regeneration.

Bellingen Shire Update

Noxious Weed Administration & Inspection

Council's inspectorial regime has been focusing on Yellow Bells (*Tecoma stans*), both on roadsides and private property, with good results. Currently undertaking trials of 2,4-d on Morning Glory using the splatter gun technique.

Council has fully controlled all Honey locust on Council's road reserves – now approaching landholders on private property.

Aerial inspection of Broom along the Deer Park Creek and Nymboida River. Fifteen sites found (with two in Clarence Valley Council area).

Bellingen Shire and Coffs Harbour City Council are reinvigorating discussion on a proposed Strategic Alliance

Planned works

Council has been offered a Northern Rivers CMA contract (\$15,000) for coastal vegetation management work. Work will be undertaken in areas of the new Bellinger Heads State Park, still awaiting advice from NSW Lands on the grant applications previously submitted.

Aconophora compressa is now fully established in Urunga. Council has been taking infested cuttings and re-releasing them in the upper Kalang & Bellinger Valleys. Council is also continuing our work with local schools on the Weed Warriors program.

DECC - Bellingen

- New England NP / Brinerville new addition - found CATS CLAW CREEPER, cherry guava, moth vine, pyracantha etc etc in Bellinger River headwaters. Control programs in place.
- Dorrigo NP - ongoing control of madeira vine, balloon vine, moth vine & lantana on Dorrigo Mountain

Nambucca Shire Update

Inspectorial activities

During July to September of 2008, inspections were carried out throughout various areas of the Shire. Fortunately no Class 1 or 2 noxious weeds were detected within any lands in the Nambucca Shire.

Inspections throughout this quarter identified that Groundsel bush, Noogoora Burr and Class 4 weeds, Privet, Camphor Laurel and Lantana were growing at some locations. Three Honey locust trees were located growing on private property in the North Arm area - they have begun to spread. These trees were planted by a previous owner who had told the current owner that they could be utilized as fodder trees ("just look out for the spines/thorns"). The current owner agreed to remove the trees.

Both Variegated and Saffron thistles have been observed to be established within some properties. These are suspected of being introduced via imported feed or fertilizer. Given they are not declared as Noxious, property

owners can only be encouraged to control these weed species. One infestation of Coolatai grass was located within a private property in the Eungai area, the first known infestation of this invasive grass species to be established within private lands.

Two large infestations of Groundsel bush were controlled by the property owners using fire, with follow-up by mechanical cut and paint of remaining bushes.

Completed Works

A widespread control program of weedy *sporobolus* grasses was conducted throughout the roadside reserve system within the Nambucca Shire, using selective Fluproponate based herbicide.

The bitou control program was finalized during this quarter, with excellent results achieved especially on the Nambucca to Valla coastal reserve system. Metsulfuron methyl was used with no off-target damage observed to date. The bitou has been reduced to approximately 5% of the vegetation in this area of the coastal reserve.

Projects/Training

The NCWAC held the 2008 Weeds Forum in the Nambucca Heads RSL, which turned out to be a very successful day, with approximately 120 attendees. Contemporary issues such as climate change were discussed along with on-ground weed control techniques that have been successful.

The Nambucca Noxious Weeds inspector attended the Bowraville Central school to discuss the issues surrounding weeds with year nine students. Two areas were identified that students can be involved in with weed control and restoration.

A garden club invited the Nambucca Noxious Weeds inspector to attend a day that they were holding in the Talarm area to assist in the education of weed identification and to give a discussion on garden hygiene. Many plants were offered for sale on the day, but no Noxious weeds were identified.

Lantana rust release sites were monitored for success, with encouraging results. The rust was present at the release site and had appeared to have dispersed some distance downstream from the initial release site. This year's climatic conditions appeared to be favourable to the establishment and expansion of the rust. Unfortunately the rust appears to only act on the pink varieties of lantana and its impact on infected plants is limited.

Future Plans

- Follow-up on Groundsel infestations that were detected during the cooler months (when control is not feasible).
- Roadside and other reserve weed control targeting Camphor, lantana and privet.
- Follow-up on Broad Leaf Pepper tree sites. Control seedlings as required.
- Release *Salvinia* weevils in infested water bodies on private and public lands.

DECC - Nambucca

- Jagun National Park - bitou bush, lantana, paspalum control
- Valla NR & Yariabinni NP - bush regeneration

Forests NSW

Completed works:

- 43km of roadside spraying completed in the last nine months targeting Crofton's Weed, Lantana and Camphor Laurel.

Work on Bell Miner Associated Dieback trials is continuing including:

- increased ecological burning for lantana control.
- investigating the relationship between forest dieback and lantana invasion of the understorey.

Upcoming works:

- Treatment of Groundsel bush in Barcoongere State Forest, Ingalbar Plantation (Grange SF), Lawrence Downs Plantation, Houme Plantation, Crabtree Plantation, Whiporie SF.
- Roadside spraying to control Lantana, Crofton's Weed and Camphor Laurel will commence shortly in Chaelundi, Wild Cattle Creek, Nana Creek and Bagawa State Forests.
- Plantation trail slashing is to commence shortly. Some extra trails/roads (25.4km) have been done in Pine Creek, Wedding Bells and Oaks State Forests to knock down Crofton's Weed, Lantana and Camphor Laurel ahead of plantation slashing.
- Follow-up inspection of Mysore Thorn spraying in Pine Brush State Forest/Dalmorton State Forest planned for the coming quarter.

DECC across the region

Planning

- Implementing review of Coffs Coast Area weed control. 25% of staff time on biodiversity management (bush regeneration, threatened species work etc.).
- Dorrigo Plateau Area review near completion.
- Coramba Nature Reserve- monitoring & review. Now putting together summary of changes over last seven years
- Review of glory lily trials undertaken last week (6/11/08)
- Advertising all weed control contracts soon.
- Regional bitou bush control for 08/09 winter program in association with FNCW, Byron Shire, Tweed Shire, Ballina Shire Councils. Regular monthly meetings with Byron Shire and FNCW.
- Miconia surveillance and control with FNCW in north-eastern NSW. Conducted an information session with NPWS Tweed Area staff 22 October in Murwillumbah
- Participate in Alligator Weed meetings: Lismore

Highlights, next 3 months

- New England NP / Brinerville – major weed control
- Moonee Beach NR – bush regeneration at four headlands as part of Bitou Bush TAP
- Implementation of bush regeneration contracts at Coffs Coast RP, Kororo NP, Bindarri NP, Valla NR, Yariabinni NP & Bongil Bongil NP (especially glory lily)
- Glory lily control, bush regeneration and groundsel bush control major activities in Yuraygir and Bundjalung National Parks

The information contained in this Newsletter is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing / compiling (26 January 2009). However, because of advances in knowledge, readers are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer from the NCWAC or appropriate member organization or the user's independent adviser.

When using herbicides always read and follow the label and ensure that the herbicide is registered or there is an appropriate permit for the intended use.