



Ord Land and Water

Newsletter

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WINNING AGAINST WEEDS



OLW Coordinator Dick Pasfield and Sarah Strutt who was contracted to develop the plans display the finished products.

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- New Chairman.
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Weed Plans finalised for Communities

Crossing Falls and Packsaddle communities now have weed management plans developed by the residents to protect both private land and the neighbouring environment. Implementation of the plans is been taken up by residents on their properties and OLW on adjoining ground.

Both communities were able to make big inroads into populations of the high and medium priority weeds over this dry season, particularly in Crossing Falls. Packsaddle has some weeds such as mission grass and coral vine that will be best tackled early in the new year before the plants has a chance to seed.

The plans were pulled together with the initial mapping of properties and surrounding bushland. Two workshops for each community followed on from the mapping and priority areas and weeds were identified. From this information a control program was worked out.

Priority weeds at both communities included all the declared weeds such as chinee apple and sicklepod senna as well as environmental weeds such as neem and coral vine.

Crucial to the project were two contractors used by OLW. Sarah Strutt did much of mapping and worked up the plans while Charlie Buckley carried out the control work. Having the local knowledge and an understanding of the threat the weeds posed he helped significantly with the project results.

New Chairman for OLW

OLW has a new Chairman, Wilhelm Bloecker was elected unopposed to the position at a recent meeting.

Wilhelm was on the initial OLW steering committee that developed the Ord Land and Water Management Plan from 1998 to 2000 and was elected to the Board again in 2004.

He has been a farmer in the Ord for in excess of twenty years and has a strong interest in seeing farming grow within the region supported by good farming practices.

Wilhelm has replaced the out going chair John Moulden. The Board expressed their gratitude to John for his outstanding leadership over the four years he held the position. The organisation's current neem control program was an initiative that John strongly supported.

Soluble Pesticide project outcomes

Ord Land and Water's recently completed project that looked at reducing the risks of soluble pesticides moving off farm has shown some encouraging results. The work was carried out early in the 2008 and 2009 dry seasons on three farms in the irrigation area.

The work looked at testing to see if delays in watering from application effected chemical concentration levels in tail water and the result of those delays on weed control.

From the analysis there was a trend that showed concentration levels can vary significantly with different watering techniques and there is an opportunity to manage concentration levels in the first and following irrigations.

The treatment that gave on average lowest concentration levels received an initial 'wet-up' of furrows only then was fully irrigated after 72hrs later. In further monitoring it was shown that this technique also gave the lowest concentration levels in the two subsequent irrigations.

Weed control did not seem to be impacted by delaying watering across the three sites as weed populations seemed more influenced by paddock history.



Fiona Tingle setting up the automated water sampler on farm in 2008

Funding acknowledgements

Lake Kununurra weed project - Caring for our Country
Soluble Pesticide Project - National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality

Gully Control - National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality

Salvinia control - Caring for our Country / National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality

Gully Erosion measured

Gully erosion on susceptible red soil has been monitored over two wet seasons by OLW as part of a wider project.

A series of check banks were installed on an active gully system to slow down the flow of water and allow silt in transit to collect.

The wet season of 07/08 saw two banks breached in January. To secure that particular section of gully more banks were installed and as a result the entire system withstood the wet season just passed.

Measuring of captured silt showed that 340 tonnes of silt were prevented from moving downstream over the two seasons. Nearly all of this silt came from within the existing gully as it expanded up the slope and outwards.

What was noticeable was that where the water was prevented from flowing with any force the gully immediately started to rehabilitate itself by infilling and allowing vegetation to establish itself.



Revegetation of the gully system floor where water flows have been reduced through banks placement.

Salvinia declared 'Eradicated'

After nine years of work a rare win against weeds has been realised with the outbreak of salvinia in Lily Creek declared eradicated two years to the day after the last piece was found in October 2007.

Salvinia is a particularly difficult weed to control in aquatic environments with many infestations requiring large sums of money annually just to control the spread. To have completely removed the menace is a significant outcome both for the community, the environment and all the organisations involved in the ongoing work program.

Salvinia was first found in Lily Creek in May 2000 by local resident Ian Petheric. Since that time numerous Government and community groups have all had a share in carrying out control and monitoring work.

Two critical actions that were instrumental in turning the tide was the building of the groynes in December 2004 to stop the further spread that wet season and the successful OLW/Shire application for funding to install another groyne and two booms. This was supported by spraying and hand collection of the weed over the nine year period.