

The Gorse Report

Newsletter of the National Gorse Task Force

Issue 5, February 2011

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Congratulations to Marg Hatton of Kilmore, Victoria and Anton Kurray of Mt Gambier, South Australia. After being nominated by members of the National Gorse Taskforce, the efforts of these two were recognised with the first two National Outstanding Gorse Management Achiever Awards

More details inside ...

Hi there and welcome to the fifth issue of The Gorse Report.

My name is Michael Noble, I have been in the National Gorse Coordinator position since November 2009. As Coordinator arriving five years into the national gorse project, I have been tasked primarily with completion and handover of many aspects, but there has been an exciting new recognition initiative in 2010 also.

I thank my predecessors in the role for their work. Michael Rowland completed a revision of the National Gorse Best Practice Manual. Prior to him, Dean Vincent got the 25 year Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) idea going.



In the last year, the National Gorse Taskforce created an addendum to the national gorse strategy with updated objectives and timelines. Fulltime national coordination of gorse (and other existing WoNS) is to end in mid to late 2011. After this, there will be minimal national involvement with these species, though they will remain WoNS listed. National coordination focus will move to additional/new WoNS weeds to be announced this year. For now, I hope you enjoy this update on what has been happening on the national gorse scene in recent times.

Michael Noble
National Gorse Coordinator

For further information or a copy of this newsletter visit - www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse or contact - National Gorse Coordinator

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Australian Government
Defeating the Weed Menace



National Gorse TASKFORCE



Coordinators Report

In 2010 the National Gorse Taskforce (NGT) saw some important highlights. These have included:

- Awarding of the first two Nationally Outstanding Gorse Management Achiever Awards
- Launch & distribution of the revised WoNS Gorse Best Practice Manual
- Revision of the WoNS Gorse National Strategy actions for project phase down

During 2009 the Australian Weeds Committee reviewed progress of the gorse WoNS in achieving actions outlined in the gorse national strategy. The review found that WoNS gorse strategy had been about 80% achieved.

These findings were used by the Taskforce to revise the direction of the project as it moves toward a final phase. As the project phases down, there will be focus on gorse awareness and spread prevention, ongoing support to 25 year memoranda of understanding signatories, and further encouragement and reward for quality gorse management.



L—R Broken Goulburn CMA Chief Chris Norman, award recipient Marg Hatton, and National Gorse Taskforce Chair Ian Sauer presenting the inaugural Outstanding Management Achiever Award in April 2010

NATIONAL GORSE COORDINATION TO END SOON

Dear Gorse Stakeholder,

The Australian Government recently announced that funding for coordination of existing Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) species will largely end by mid to late 2011, and this includes gorse.

The National Gorse Taskforce has been planning for a completion of national coordination, but considers a full 12 months is required for completion of the revised National Gorse Strategy.

Revision of the National Gorse Strategy is in the form of an addendum updating objectives, actions and tasks. This is available at www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse/, or you can contact the national coordinator for a copy. Gorse stakeholders should make themselves familiar with this document.

As the national coordination winds down, a key focus will be on handing over of ongoing responsibilities to state governments and stakeholders, and shoring up the seventeen 25yr gorse eradication Memoranda of Understanding signed around southern Australia. The clear focus for the next 12 months is to hand over national coordination of gorse to state governments and major stakeholders. I understand this is going to be challenging for some people, however, we must all remember the big picture, and part of that is the protection and value adding of investments made by the Australian Government, state governments and community for gorse management between 2004 – 2011.

Ian Sauer,
Chair (National Gorse Taskforce)

Nationally Outstanding Gorse Management Achievers Recognition

The first two nationally outstanding gorse management achievers have been recognised by the National Gorse Taskforce.

In 2010, Margaret Hatton and Anton Kurray were recognised for their outstanding gorse management efforts. Here is some background on what they have achieved with their communities.

Margaret Hatton

Margaret is a resident of Kilmore, Victoria. Through involvement with Mitchell Shire Council and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Margaret has – in a voluntary capacity - been instrumental in securing funding over an eight year period for inspection and treatment of gorse on 383 properties. She has also been instrumental in attracting a Vic DPI Regional Extension Program for gorse control in her region.

As a local community member put it “Margaret and her team [of three], quietly deliver the gorse control subsidy project year in, year out without much fanfare – delivering amazing environmental, agricultural, visual, and fire prevention results for our community”.



Margaret Hatton of Kilmore, Victoria was the inaugural recipient of the Nationally Outstanding Gorse Management Achievers Award



Anton Kurray of Mt Gambier, South Australia was awarded the 2nd Nationally Outstanding Gorse Management Achievers Award

Anton Kurray

Anton Kurray is based in Mt Gambier, South Australia. He is a long term natural resource management practitioner.

In his capacity as Senior Authorised Officer with the South East Natural Resource Management Board (SENRM), Anton was instrumental in the success of the “SE Gorse Eradication Project” that ran between 2007 and 2009 (see pg 7 for further information on the project).

Anton’s skills were critical in the success of this project. His colleagues point to Anton’s mix of outstanding communication, strategic thinking and project management skills as being behind the success of the project that has put gorse on the path to eradication in the SE region of South Australia.

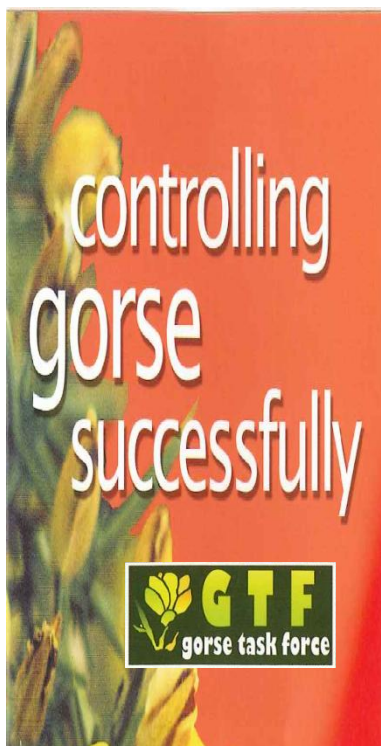
This project saw 40 gorse sites treated resulting in completion of the first phase of eradication of gorse from the SENRM area. On ground work was undertaken in accordance with the WoNS Gorse National Best Practice Manual. Regular monitoring and follow-up continues.

Victoria

The Victorian Gorse Task Force have with Victorian Government resources, been able to continue their support for on-ground gorse management works. 13 projects are underway or complete in the 2010/11 financial year. Many of these are highly strategic – outlying infestations – from a national perspective.

The Victorian Gorse Task Force (GTF) have produced a brochure “Controlling Gorse Successfully” that may be of interest to those in other states.

Limited numbers of these are available. If you would like a sample brochure contact Victorian GTF Coordinator Shane Herbertson on 03 5336 6844 or Shane.Herbertson@dpi.vic.gov.au



South Australia

Critical state gorse management funding has continued to be provided to the Northern and Yorke, Eyre Peninsula, SA Murray Darling Basin and Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Boards.

The commitment to gorse management and long term eradication in South Australia continues to be impressive. See the update from SE South Australia on page 7.

Tasmania

Tasmania's West Coast Weed and Fire Management Group (WCWFMG) successfully sought funding to identify and treat all gorse within a buffer ten kilometres out from the South West Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area boundary.

The project is expected to be completed by autumn 2011. Follow-up gorse control within this buffer area will remain an ongoing priority for WCWFMG.

Western Australia

Gorse in Western Australia is found almost exclusively within the South Coast NRM area. At least 95% of the WA gorse has undergone primary treatment, but the ongoing challenge as always remains the long-lived seedbank.

Weed scientist John Moore and South Coast NRM officer Matthew Kennewell presented a paper to the 17th Australasian Weed Conference on WA's gorse management experience. This conference was held in September 2010 in Christchurch, New Zealand. The following is taken from their paper summary:

The South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc has committed to a 25 year program [MOU]. The Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia provides legislative support through the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act and the local council has recently introduced measures to reduce the movement of soil contaminated with gorse seed. The combination of dedicated officers, community surveillance, landholder support and the potential to enforce control is the strategy adopted to maintain the program long enough to run down seed banks. Research is still required to find methods of breaking seed dormancy and small scale trials are conducted whenever potential techniques are discovered.

New South Wales

In one of the most strategic gorse control locations in the nation, Border Rivers – Gwydir Catchment Management Authority (CMA) have allocated significant funds and undertaken control works.

Booralong Creek in Northern NSW is one of the most northern gorse infestations in Australia. The CMA have recently allocated more than \$200 000 to tackling WoNS in their region. Fortunately the region only has to deal with (high priority) outlier populations of gorse, while serrated tussock is posing even more significant and expensive issues for the region.

National Gorse Distribution, Control and Potential Range - March 09.

National mapping Highlights the outliers to be targeted.

It all starts with a map - all sites mapped to the National Mapping Standard to get national action prioritised.

Legend

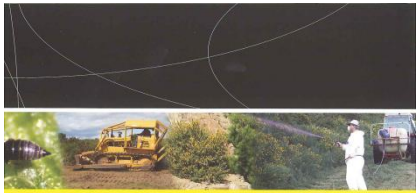
- Gorse
- 25 Year eradication agreement
- NRM Regions
- Potential distribution of gorse

National mapping portal trial

Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) Coordinators have been involved in the ongoing development of a national weed mapping portal. This is an exciting development as national mapping for weeds like gorse that has been collected during the WoNS program will continue to be readily accessible to weed managers nationwide after national coordination of existing WoNS weeds phases down.

The national weed mapping portal is still under development with data for various WoNS weeds being uploaded as it is made available. National mapping data for gorse has to date been stored by the Tasmanian Government, as national gorse WoNS coordination has been run from Tasmania during the last six or so years. However, it is intended that this will be made available to weed managers via the national weed mapping portal.

Development of the national weed mapping portal is being funded by the Australian Government and run by Chris Auricht in cooperation with the Western Australia Government. For more information, contact Chris (08 8377 3460/0417 817 579 or chris@auricht.com), or Michael Noble, National WoNS Gorse Coordinator (contact details on front cover).



Weeds of National Significance

Gorse

National Best Practice Manual

Download your copy of the

Gorse Best Practice Manual

at

www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse

National gorse bio-control overview

Biological controls of gorse have been actively investigated and implemented for much of the previous century and the work continues. Dr John Ireson* of the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR) wrote the following

Three foliage feeding biological control agents and a seed feeder have now been released for biological control in Australia.

The gorse seed weevil, *Exapion ulicis* (Figure 1), released in 1939 and the gorse spider mite, *Tetranychus lintearius* (Figure 2), released in 1998, are now widespread across south eastern Australia. The gorse thrips, *Sericothrips staphylinus* (Figure 3), released in 2001, is now established and although initially slow to spread, populations have started to increase and disperse exponentially in Tasmania.

Surveys of release sites of the gorse soft shoot moth, *Agonopterix umbellana* (Figure 4), in Tasmania 12 months after the first releases in 2007 show that the agent can survive under field conditions and should establish.

These four agents are expected to reduce plant vigour and seed output in the long term. The host specificity of a second seed feeding agent, the gorse pod moth, *Cydia succedana*, is being tested to enable its release in Australia. In combination with the gorse seed weevil, this species has the potential to reduce gorse seed banks below critical replacement levels in some areas.

Contact details for your state/local gorse bio-control coordinator can be obtained from the National Gorse Coordinator at

**Michael.Noble@dpiwve.tas.gov.au
or 03 6421 5100.**



Figure 2. Colony of gorse spider mite, *Tetranychus lintearius* Dufour (Photo: W. Chatterton, TIAR).



Figure 3. Gorse thrips, *Sericothrips staphylinus* Haliday (Photo: W. Chatterton, TIAR).



Figure 1. Gorse seed weevil, *Exapion ulicis* (Forster) and seed damaged by larvae (inset) (Photo: W. Chatterton, TIAR)



Figure 4. Larva of gorse soft shoot moth, *Agonopterix umbellana* (Fabricius) (Photo: R. Holloway, TIAR)

*Dr John Ireson (Senior Research Fellow, Biological Control of Weeds) of the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research can be contacted at (03) 6233 6821 or John.Ireson@utas.tas.edu.au.

Getting rid of Gorse in the SE of SA.

One of the standout partnerships for on-ground results has been that between the National Gorse Taskforce and a regional authority, has been with South Australia's South East Natural Resource Management Board (SENRM). Deb Lang*, an Authorised Officer with SENRM wrote the following.

In October, 2007 the South East of South Australia took on a project called "Gorse Eradication". This was a huge undertaking driven by a cooperative effort between the South East Natural Resources Management Board (SE NRM Board) and The National Gorse Taskforce (NGT). It utilised funds from the Defeating the Weed Menace Program and the National Gorse Outliers Project to target 17 major sites and 23 smaller outlier sites. These infestations were in a variety of settings including native vegetation, agricultural land and forestry.

All of these sites were treated at least once and some up to 6 times. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the before and after scenarios at a site on Boggy Lane, Allendale East. With seeds able to remain dormant in the soil for so long, follow-up control is still being carried out with most landholders keen to continue the gorse control on their properties. The major sites will need to be treated well into the future as there are many years of seed bank to exhaust and the density of some of these infestations was very high.

The SE NRM Board and the NGT developed a memorandum of understanding to work towards gorse eradication in the region over 25 years. The custodian and overseer of this project is community member Tom Megaw. He regularly seeks updates and field inspections of gorse sites from local field officers to determine the extent of follow up treatments.

Since then there have been other sites identified in more vegetated areas of the south east. Most of these sites have been treated. Authorised officers and landholders jump on (not literally) infestations as soon as possible when they are discovered. The fight for total knockout continues.



Figure 1. Before treatment in 2007. One small calf paddock at Boggy Lane, Allendale East. This gorse is at least 2 metres high.



Figure 2. Authorised officer, Deb Lang, inspecting Boggy Lane, Allendale East site in November 2010. Selective broadleaf herbicide has been used in this competitive grass pasture.

*Deb Lang, Authorised Officer with South Australia's SENRM can be contacted on (08) 8721 0421 or deb.lang@senrm.sa.gov.au

National Gorse Task Force Members

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National Gorse Coordinator
Housed and hosted by TAS Dept Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment

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Australian Capital Territory

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Dr. Peter Everist
Community Representative and
Victorian Gorse Task Force President

Karen Stewart
Tas Dept Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment

Warwick Ragg
Forest Industry Representative
Australian Forest Growers



National Gorse TASKFORCE

The role of the National Gorse Taskforce is to facilitate, improve and encourage strategic National Action by coordinating the implementation of the National Gorse Strategic Plan.

The Task Force welcome contributions to the newsletter which will be circulated biannually

National Gorse Program Achievements

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 2003 | National Gorse Strategic Plan published |
| 2004 | National Gorse Coordinator appointed
National Gorse Task Force formed |
| 2005 | National Gorse Eradication Areas identified
Gorse National Priority Action Framework produced (a document that helps guide investment in gorse management and maximise public benefit) |
| 2006 | National Best Practice Manual Produced
NSW gorse infestations mapped
National Containment Lines developed for SA, WA, Tasmania and NSW
National Gorse Map Produced |
| 2007 | Task Force Focus on Regional Eradication of Gorse Outliers Commences
First 25 Year Agreement signed by Kangaroo Island NRM Board to Eradicate Gorse
Gorse under eradication in 8 NRM Regions, through 25 year MOU commitments by various land managers with long term capacity to achieve eradication. |
| 2008 | Western Australia commence plan to eradicate all the known gorse from Western Australia |
| 2009 | Launch of the Western Australian Defeating the Weed Menace Programme and hand over of the first Gorse Baton |
| 2009 | 2 nd edition of the Gorse Best practice Manual printed for release. |
| 2010 | Nationally Outstanding Gorse Management Achiever Awards begin |

We're on the web!
www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/gorse

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