

Strategic implementation of containment lines and outlier infestations.

Background

The Northern Tablelands area was identified as the most northern existing serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) infestations within NSW. The main areas of infestation were within the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA (BRG CMA) area with the potential for a significant increase in area.

The New England Weeds Authority (NEWA) had invested considerable resources in reducing serrated tussock levels in the Armidale district since 1999 and the weed was also present in smaller areas in the Inverell, Glen Innes and Tenterfield regions.

In 2010 Jonathan Lawson, BRG CMA, in conjunction with the Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee developed an ambitious project to deal with infestations of serrated tussock, gorse, Chilean needle grass and bridal creeper.

The program to control serrated tussock has been highly successful and demonstrates a model approach to the management and eradication of highly invasive weeds at the landscape level.

Project funding came from the Caring for Our Country program and well as contributions from BRG CMA, New England Weeds Authority and land managers.

Approach

The program for serrated tussock involved:

- strategic planning
- community capacity building
- coordination for the implementation of containment lines
- control of outlying infestations
- management of core infestations to reduce the weed's impact within the catchment.

A Project Advisory Committee was established with weeds officers, local Landcare networks and the BRG CMA. James Browning, Senior Weeds Officer, NEWA, managed the project and developed a work plan based on the existing knowledge of infestations and the outputs required under the project.

Outcomes

The project achieved:

- A significant reduction in core areas of serrated tussock infestation.
- Ongoing active control and monitoring of all outlying infestations to prevent re infestation by respective Weeds Officers.
- 9 shire councils and 4 Landcare networks working in partnership on on-going serrated tussock management.
- Development of a model project for noxious weed management.

Successful serrated tussock control in the Northern Tablelands

Prepared by Clare Hamilton with input from Jonathan Lawson and James Browning. September 2013

Keys to success

The project is recognised as highly successful across the State and has been deemed to be a model project by the Natural Resources Commission. Some of the keys to its success have been identified as:

- Established working relationships between the New England Weeds Authority, Landcare networks and the BRG CMA.
- Adequate funding to deal with the problem at a landscape scale.
- Development of an accurate map of the target area identifying all known sites.
- Establishment of a Project Advisory Committee and inclusion of all relevant networks and land managers to advise on implementation.
- An adaptable education and awareness program to assist affected land managers and identify new incursions
- Development of holistic property management plans which allow land managers to operate commercially during project implementation and involve pasture renovation, herbicides and grazing management.
- Implementation of core area management plans that are flexible within the program to adjust to specific site conditions.
- Weed Officers managing their Council areas to a high degree.
- On going financial support for the project (post CFoC funding) from the BRG CMA management and Board to ensure its longevity and completion.