

51,000 African Boxthorns controlled

In early March, funded through the WildEyre program, Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula (NREP) staff were busy controlling African Boxthorns via an aerial technique on Waldegrave East and West Islands off the coast of Elliston as well as coastal crown land and privately owned Heritage Agreement properties between Kiana and Convention Beach.

Andrew Freeman, WildEyre Project Officer said the technique involves aerial application of granulated herbicide using a helicopter.

"The herbicide is applied from approx. 1m above each boxthorn. It may take up to 3 years for these treated boxthorns to die as the herbicide is slowly sucked from the soil by the plants roots," he said.

In just seven days a total of 51,000 boxthorns were controlled over an area of approximately 1,315 hectares. The control was done at an average cost of 1.17 per plant (not including NREP staff time). Ground application of the same area in these hard to access sites would normally have taken at least 600 days and costed at least five times as much.

A demonstration was also undertaken just south of Elliston for a number of private landholders in the Elliston district so they could see how effective this control method is in inaccessible areas.

"Granular herbicide application may not be suitable in all scenarios such as areas that have a high slope, are near water bodies and creeklines or are adjacent to native vegetation. Advice should always be sought to see if other control methods are more appropriate," he said.

"NREP plan to do further work this winter using the same technique at a number of sites including Lake Newland Conservation Park", said Mr Freeman.

For more information on the technique, costing and appropriate use of the chemical and aerial control method, particularly around native vegetation contact your local NREP office.

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