

African boxthorn control on the West Coast

Since the start of July WildEyre has made a concerted effort to control African Boxthorns on public and private land in areas of the coastal zone between Talia Caves and Port Kenny.

Boxthorn control in this area is a priority as it contains vegetation with a high conservation value.

Andrew Freeman, WildEyre Project Manager said “the Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation (CAC) have undertaken the majority of the control works on boxthorn through their Aboriginal labour hire initiative”.

African Boxthorn is considered a major problem because it:

- invades native vegetation and alters habitat for wildlife;
- provides shelter and food for feral animals such as foxes, rabbits, starlings and sparrows;
- reduces access for stock, native animals, people and vehicles;
- has large thorns that injure livestock; and
- can support several pest insect species that breed in its fruit.

“Natural Resources EP staff undertook a control trial of African Boxthorn at the southern end of Lake Newland Conservation Park using a helicopter to distribute a granular herbicide to individual plants” he said.

“Using a helicopter has also been trailed recently on a number of offshore islands in the far west. This technique has enabled large scale African boxthorn control to be more cost effective. The use of a helicopter is most beneficial in more difficult terrain such as sand dunes and off shore islands and doesn't do away with the need for ground control activities” he said.

“A number of offshore islands out from Elliston (including Pearson Isles, Veteran isles Dorothee Island, Ward Islands and Topgallant islands) were also surveyed for the presence of Boxthorns using a helicopter survey technique. It was great to confirm that there are no boxthorns present on any of these islands” he added

“African Boxthorn control works have also been undertaken by a contractor in the coastal zone north of Sheringa Beach to value add to previous works undertaken in this area”.

Landholders who own land in the WildEyre area or passionate community members are encouraged to discuss any project ideas with local Natural Resources staff at Elliston or Streaky Bay or with the WildEyre Project Manager.

For further details about WildEyre (a collaborative conservation project on western Eyre Peninsula) see www.wildeyre.com.au or contact Andrew Freeman (WildEyre Project Manager) on 8688 3076.

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