

**UNALIENATED CROWN LAND WEED CONTROL REPORT**

**MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT**

**Financial Year 2002-2003**

**Prepared for Land Information New Zealand by:**



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## 1. Introduction

Landward Management Ltd is the contractor responsible for managing and coordinating biosecurity operations (pest and weed control) on Crown riverbeds, for Land Information New Zealand (LINZ). This role includes the following tasks:

- Preparation of annual weed/pest control programmes
- Preparation of tenders, and contracts for engagement, for weed/pest control contractors
- Monitoring and inspection of operations
- Monitoring resource consent compliance
- Annual reports on operations
- Reporting on other issues which may be of relevance to biosecurity operations.

This report outlines noxious weed control supplementary operations carried out on Crown lands in the Marlborough Region for the 2002-2003 financial year.

Operations included:

- Helicopter inspections and spot-spraying of gorse and broom
- Helicopter boom spraying of gorse and broom

Nassella tussock was also controlled in the Lower Awatere River bed. Nassella operations are outlined in a separate report on nassella control.

Identifying areas of Crown riverbed land requiring noxious weed management for the 2002-2003 financial year used the following criteria:

- ***Areas of braided riverbed bounded on both sides by marginal strip or road reserve.***

These criteria were used, as it was expected that these areas would require the greatest attention for weed management. Other areas identified from cadastral maps may be added or subtracted in the future as required.

Priority rankings were assigned to each operation. These priorities were dependent on the ability to define area as Crown land, and compliance with the Marlborough District Pest Management Strategy.

1. (Highest Priority) Eradication of Old Mans Beard and nassella infestations
2. Maintenance and inspection of existing weed - free areas
3. Contributions as part of a wider weed control programme
4. Downstream control of weed infested areas
5. (Lowest Priority) Boundary weed control.

In this programme, weed control was undertaken for eradication of riverbed gorse and broom control.

The 2002-2003 programme was prepared in consultation with the following people:

- Malcolm Brennan, Department of Conservation (DoC), Renwick, Blenheim
- Ben Minehan, Marlborough District Council (MDC)

## **2 Public Liaison**

Inspections of a number of properties adjacent Crown riverbeds has allowed continued liaison with individual landowners. Support from landowners for LINZ work has been very positive. Landward Management staff have previously met with members of the Upper Awatere Landcare Group, to discuss weed control operations, and opportunities to work in with each other's programmes. This year, Landward staff met with the owners of Middlehurst, Upcot and Molesworth stations to discuss weed control efforts in the Awatere River and tributaries. Landward staff also met with landowners in the Omaka River catchment to discuss weed control requirements.

## **3. Weed Control Operations**

### **3.1 Upper Wairau River**

There is an existing gorse and broom control programme in the Upper Wairau River Valley, supervised and undertaken by the Department of Conservation (DoC) St Arnaud, as contractor to LINZ. This was completed in October 2002. The control programme consists of spot maintenance ground control of isolated patches of gorse and broom present on Crown riverbeds, as well as adjacent DoC areas of marginal strip, National Park and other conservation areas nearby.

Ongoing maintenance weed control is necessary in this catchment. Approximately 45 kilometres of open braided riverbed is kept substantially clear of weeds at minimal cost through regular annual spot-spraying using gun and hose, as well as pulling and cutting of seedling plants in isolated areas. It is recommended that DoC continue to undertake the operations in this area, as it harmonizes with their own weed control operations.

**Future control requirements:** Ongoing maintenance is required to retain the low level of infestation.

### **3.2 Awatere River**

There is an existing weed control programme in the Awatere River for a 21 km stretch from the Jordan Bridge upstream to Molesworth Station. The programme consists of maintenance control of broom in scattered patches and isolated bushes, and some gorse in isolated patches. The bulk of the area sprayed was only young broom regrowth, indicating that previous control efforts are bringing the area under

control. Further follow-up ground spraying to get the remaining seedlings will be necessary.

Ground control spraying was carried out between Molesworth and Duntroon. The control operations were completed on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2003. Hand gun and mistblowers were used with Tordon herbicide.

**Future Control Requirements:** Further significant work is required for follow-up control in this catchment, particularly upstream of Middlehurst Gorge.

### **3.3 Omaka River**

The scheduled weed control operation in the Omaka River was put on hold during the season due to the contractor being requested to not spray the area by nearby vineyard owners. Vineyard owners were concerned that spraying may affect their harvesting operations, which finish usually at the end of May. By the end of April the nearby vineyards had completed their harvest, so the LINZ spraying operation was completed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2003. In the future this job may need to be undertaken before Christmas if the grape harvesting season is to be avoided.

**Future Control Requirements:** No further work is programmed for this catchment at this time.

### **3.4 MDC Pest Management Strategy.**

Assistance is provided to Marlborough District Council (MDC) for various compliance inspections, operations and assistance with weed control in the District. Services were calculated for compliance inspections and liaison with Landward Management.