

Weed Management Plan Review - Summary Document

Athel pine 2021 review



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Acknowledgment

The Weed Management Branch acknowledges the time invested by land managers, landholders and key stakeholders to inform and guide this review.

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a review undertaken of the Weed Management Plan for Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*) 2016. The review of the Weed Management Plan for Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*) 2016 (gazetted on 22 March 2017) has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *Weeds Management Act 2001* (the Act). Under the Act, the Minister must review a weed management plan not later than 3 years after it is approved and thereafter at intervals not longer than 3 years.

To inform the review process, a public notification period was held between March and April 2021. The public and key stakeholders were able to provide comment on the review during this time. A summary of feedback received during the review process is included in **Appendix A**.

Based on the review undertaken, it is recommended that the Weed Management Plan for Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*) 2016 is amended. This document outlines a summary of changes made to the revised weed management plan for athel pine.

2. Introduction

The review of the Weed Management Plan for Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*) 2016 (the plan) (gazetted on 22 March 2017) has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *Weeds Management Act 2001* (the Act) administered by the Weed Management Branch of the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security. Under the Act, the Minister must review a weed management plan not later than 3 years after it is approved and thereafter at intervals not longer than 3 years. A weed management plan remains in force for a period of 10 years, as specified by the minister. This is the first review of the plan.

3. The review process

The review has included assessment of existing objectives and management requirements in the plan. An assessment against target dates was also conducted. The plan including existing objectives and management requirements can be viewed online at Territory Stories: <https://territorystories.nt.gov.au/10070/400510/0/0>.

Consideration was given to amendments required to the plan based on progress being made with athel pine. Consideration was also given to how the plan can be simplified. A series of workshops was held with WMB staff to consider amendments required to the plan.

Stakeholder engagement was then conducted to inform the review process. This process is explained further in section 3.2 below. Comments and concerns raised through this process were considered and the amended plan was finalised.

3.1. Progress against targets

Extensive athel pine control work has been ongoing since 1992 along the 420km stretch of the Finke River that extends through the Class A zone and through Horseshoe Bend Station.

Athel pine in the Class A Finke River main channel and catchment area, continues to be controlled and remains as an ongoing management area.

Throughout the Class A zone outside of the Finke River catchment area, athel pine extends as far north as Katherine, however it is not common in this region. Naturalised athel pine is predominantly south of Tennant Creek, however numerous amenity athel pine plantings also exist in the Barkly Region.

Athel pine in the Class B zone, extending through Horseshoe Bend Station has continued to be controlled extensively. Athel pine in this area has been reduced from what were very large dense infestations of athel pine to what are now highly manageable and feasible levels of control. Consideration will be given to including this area in the Class A zone over the next 3 years prior to the next review of this weed management plan, if eradication in this area is considered feasible.

Athel pine in the Class B zone, Lower Finke Area consisting mainly of Lilla Creek Station, New Crown Station and Andado Station continues to consist of large dense infestations along the main Finke River channel. Athel pine outside of the main channel consists of smaller infestations. It is considered that the eradication of these smaller infestations outside of the main channel is feasible.

3.2. Stakeholder engagement input

Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken to inform the review of the Plan. A notice of the review was published in the NT News on Friday 12 March 2021. Comments on the review were open for four weeks, closing Friday 9 April 2021. The notification stated that comments could be directed via either mail or email to the Weed Management Branch.

During this comments review time period, key stakeholders were emailed directly to inform the plan was under review and open for comment. Stakeholders contacted directly included, stakeholders in the zone A (eradication zone) surrounding the Finke River and properties in the zone B (growth and spread to be controlled zone).

Other key stakeholders were also contacted including the Central Desert Shire Council, Alice Springs Council, Tangentyere Council – Alice Springs, Ngaanyatjarra Council, Central Land Council, Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, Pastoral Land Board, Territory Natural Resource Management, Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association and the Alice Springs Regional Weed Reference Group.

During this 4 week consultation period land owners in the Class A - Intensive Management Area and Class B zone extending along the Finke River were also emailed the draft amended management requirements for their consideration and comment.

Comments received during this stakeholder consultation period are included in **Appendix A**.

4. Summary of changes to weed management plan

4.1. Summary of changes to management requirements

Table 1 to 4 summarise the changes made to the landholder management requirements in the plan.

Table 1 Class A – Outside of Intensive Management Area

Revised requirement	Current 2016 requirement	Reason for change
1.1 All athel pine amenity plantings must have a permit to be retained. A permit can be obtained from the Weed Management Branch. The permit holder must comply with all conditions of the permit.	You must submit an application for a permit to maintain culturally or historically significant, low risk amenity plantings of athel pine. If successful, the permit holder must stringently comply with the conditions of the permit.	To simplify the existing requirement and make reference to the WMB. Athel pine amenity plantings have also been defined in this review.
1.2 All athel pine is destroyed immediately, unless under permit.	Eradicate plants (if not deemed significant or granted a permit) using the control methods detailed in section 6. Athel pine trees originally planted for landscaping or shade must be documented prior to being eradicated.	To simplify the existing requirement. Control methods that can be used can be found in the Northern Territory Weed Management Handbook and a link to this document is provided in Section 8 of the revised plan.

Table 2 Class A – Intensive Management Area

This table has been amended to only apply to the intensive management area (defined in the 2021 plan revision), rather than naturalising infestations in the A zone and upstream managed area of the Finke River (in the 2016 plan). Naturalising infestations in the A zone in areas outside of the Intensive Management Area are subject to the requirements in Table 1.

Revised requirement	Current 2016 requirement	Reason for change
2.1 All athel pine amenity plantings must have a permit to be retained. A permit can be obtained from the Weed Management Branch. The permit holder must comply with all conditions of the permit.	Not in table 2 of current plan.	This requirement has been added to all four tables in the 2021 revision. This requirement allows athel pine in the NT to be retained as an amenity planting as long as a permit is obtained.
2.2 Athel pine control must work towards the eradication of athel pine on the property.	Maintain eradication targets in the upper managed 420km section of the Finke catchment (upstream of Horseshoe Bend Station boundary) and prioritise control works as per requirement 4 (of 2016 plan).	To simplify the existing requirement.
2.3 A two year property weed management plan must be documented and implemented to achieve requirement 2.2.	Requirement 4 (of 2016 plan) - Plan and implement an eradication program using the control methods detailed in Section 6 (section outlining control methods). Prioritise the control works for your infestation in the following order:	To reflect standard terminology around property weed management planning in line with property weed management plans guidelines . The property weed management plan would still be used to map out the property's eradication plan.
2.4 The property weed management plan must be prepared in accordance with Section 7 below by December 2021 and provided to the Weed Management Branch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single trees in otherwise clean areas • Small, outlying or easy to control infestations • Upstream infestations • Upwind infestations (prevailing summer / autumn weather) • Core infestations <p>Seek advice from the Weed Management Branch regarding control as required.</p>	Section 5 (2021 revision) refers to the guide online Weed management planning - NT.GOV.AU This is a guideline for Central Australia about developing

Revised requirement	Current 2016 requirement	Reason for change
	Weed management plans are developed for all properties, and include planning schedules for athel pine mapping and control programs. Completion timeframe of 2 years (i.e. 2019). (p.29 2016 plan).	property weed management plans. WMB can provide assistance in developing this plan. We have allowed additional time to complete these property weed management plans now required by December 2021.
2.5 An annual report that outlines progress made against the property weed management plan must be provided to the Weed Management Branch by December 2022 and each December thereafter.	A monitoring and management record may be requested by the Weed Management Branch at any time (page 21, 2016 plan). Data including location, size and density of infestations has been provided to Weed Management Branch (page 29, 2016 plan). Reporting to Weed Management Branch on management activities and outcomes has occurred (page 29, 2016 plan).	The requirements for reporting in the 2016 plan, are included in Appendix B (page 29). We have linked these reporting requirements specifically to the property weed management plan.

Table 3 Class B – Horseshoe Bend Station

Revised requirement	Current 2016 requirement	Reason for change
3.1 All athel pine amenity plantings must have a permit to be retained. A permit can be obtained from the Weed Management Branch. The permit holder must comply with all conditions of the permit.	Isolated plants, including mature athel pine plants deliberately planted for landscaping or shard must be recorded prior to control, except where a permit has been successfully applied for.	To simplify requirement and make consistent with other tables.
3.2 Athel pine control work is progressed to destroy all athel pine prior to seeding.	Continue control of historically managed and newly emerged infestations located within the Finke River main channel in the downstream managed (420km) area of the Finke catchment on Horseshoe Bend Station.	Requirement updated based on progress of athel pine being made on this property and current status of athel pine at the site.
3.3 A two year property weed management plan must be documented and implemented to achieve requirement 3.2.	Plan and implement a management program using the control methods detailed in Section 6 (of 2016 plan). Prioritise the control works for your infestation in the following order:	To reflect standard terminology around property weed management planning in line with property weed management plans guidelines . The property weed management plan would still be used to map out the property's management program.
3.4 The property weed management plan must be prepared in accordance with Section 7 below by December 2021 and provided to the Weed Management Branch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single trees in otherwise clean areas or areas previously under eradication or control works • Small, outlying or easy to control infestations • Upstream infestations • Upwind infestations (prevailing summer / autumn weather) • Core infestations <p>Seek advice from the Weed Management Branch regarding control as required.</p> <p>Weed management plans are developed for all properties, and include planning schedules for athel pine mapping and prioritising control programs. Completion timeframe of 2 years (i.e. 2019). (p.30, 2016 plan).</p>	Section 5 refers to the guide online Weed management planning - NT.GOV.AU This is a guideline for Central Australia about developing property weed management plans. WMB can provide assistance in developing this plan. We have allowed additional time to complete these property weed management

Revised requirement	Current 2016 requirement	Reason for change
		plans now required by December 2021.
3.5 An annual report that outlines progress made against the property weed management plan must be provided to the Weed Management Branch by December 2022 and each December thereafter.	<p>A monitoring and management record may be requested by the Weed Management Branch at any time (page 21, 2016 plan).</p> <p>Data including location, size and density of infestations has been provided to Weed Management Branch (page 30, 2016 plan).</p> <p>Reporting to Weed Management Branch on management activities and outcomes has occurred (page 30, 2016 plan).</p>	The requirements for reporting in the 2016 plan, are included in Appendix B (page 30). We have linked these reporting requirements specifically to the property weed management plan.

Table 4 Class B – Lower Finke Area

Revised requirement	Current 2016 requirement	Reason for change
4.1 All athel pine amenity plantings must have a permit to be retained. A permit can be obtained from the Weed Management Branch. The permit holder must comply with all conditions of the permit.	Isolated plants, including mature athel pine plants deliberately planted for landscaping or shade must be recorded prior to control, except where a permit has been successfully applied for.	To simplify requirement and make consistent with other tables.
4.2 Athel pine control must work towards containment of athel pine to the main Finke River channel.	Prioritise your control works for your infestation in the following order:	Updated to reflect the on the ground progress and knowledge of athel pine in the Lower Finke Area.
4.3 All mature athel pine plants are destroyed outside of the main Finke River channel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single trees in otherwise clean areas or areas previously under control works • Small, outlying or easy to control infestations • Upstream infestations • Upwind infestations (prevailing summer / autumn weather) • Containment of core infestation located in main Finke River channel. 	
4.4 A two year property weed management plan must be documented and implemented to achieve requirement 4.2 and 4.3.	Plan and implement a management program using the control methods detailed in section 6 (of 2016 plan). Prioritise the control works for your infestation in the following order:	To reflect standard terminology around property weed management planning in line with property weed management plans guidelines . The property weed management plan would still be used to map out the property's management program.
4.5 The property weed management plan must be prepared in accordance with Section 7 below by December 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single trees in otherwise clean areas or areas previously under control works • Small, outlying or easy to control infestations • Upstream infestations • Upwind infestations (prevailing summer / autumn weather) • Containment of core infestation located in main Finke River channel. <p>Seek advice from the Weed Management Branch regarding control as required.</p> <p>Weed management plans are developed for all properties, and include planning schedules for athel pine mapping and prioritising control programs. Completion timeframe of 2 years (i.e. 2019). (p.32, 2016 plan).</p>	
		Section 5 refers to the guide online Weed management planning - NT.GOV.AU This is a guideline for Central Australia about developing property weed management plans. WMB can provide assistance in developing this plan.
		We have allowed additional time to complete these property weed management

Revised requirement	Current 2016 requirement	Reason for change
		plans now required by December 2021.
4.6 The property weed management plan must be provided to the Weed Management Branch upon request.	<p>A monitoring and management record may be requested by the Weed Management Branch at any time (page 21, 2016 plan).</p> <p>Data including location, size and density of infestations has been provided to Weed Management Branch (page 32, 2016 plan).</p> <p>Reporting to Weed Management Branch on management activities and outcomes has occurred (page 32, 2016 plan).</p>	The requirements for reporting in the 2016 plan, are included in Appendix B (page 32). We have linked these reporting requirements specifically to the property weed management plan.

4.2. Summary of changes made

Changes made to the revised athel pine weed management plan are:

- The athel pine plan has been retitled a 2017 – 2027 plan (2021 revision). This reflects:
 - the gazettal date of the original plan of 22 March 2017 and
 - information in this gazettal notice that the plan is to remain in force for 10 years from this gazettal date.
- The plan has been simplified.
- Landowner and occupier requirements have been simplified to reflect what must be done to secure compliance under the Act and this plan.
- Performance indicators have been simplified to reflect simplified management requirements and include clear timeframes.
- Information duplicated in other Weed Management Branch resources has been removed, for example control methods that are outlined in the [Northern Territory Weed Management Handbook](#).
- The addition of a glossary that defines key terms such as mature plant, amenity plantings and eradication.

5. Summary

Based on the review process that has been undertaken it is recommended that the weed management plan for athel pine is amended. The revised plan includes updated compliance targets for athel pine which are included in the plan as management requirements.

Appendix A – Community feedback about review

Summary of comments received

Comment number	Method (letter, email, phone call)	Comments received
1	Email	<p>Just a quick email to reconfirm our previous position on Athel Pines.</p> <p>It is a weed of national significance and we have the <removed to de-identify property>. As we all know the infestation is far too great for a landholder to control.....it is too big for the government to control.</p> <p>So my main point is there is no way landholders can be held responsible for this weed which is out of control at the end of the river system and we will not be taking sole responsibility any time soon.</p>