

ROCKLANDS ROAD WEEDBUSTERS
“PROJECT DEVINE PHASE 1 – EASTSIDE”
to 14 JUNE 2010

As you all know the grants (this includes \$2000, of \$4000, for this year from TDC, which was very helpful to get us off to a quick start) for removing pest vines from the East side of Rocklands Road has come through. We were lucky that this coincided with the down time for members of the DoC weed teams. We have got off to a quick start to and now have 6 people working on the project. Not all are available on the days when the weather is good for the work, but that means that there is always 2-4 available to keep the enthusiasm up. The grant requires that a report is sent in every 6 months. To make this easier, I will be sending out a report to you all approx every 3 months to keep you up to date and save me phoning you all. I have just finished analysing the first three weeks of work:-

The team managed 10 working days with an average of 3 people days at each one.

The properties worked on were:-

1/ Rudolf Samper

We estimated 120 hours of work for the property in the first year. We have done a clean sweep, with a follow up a week later to get a few missed ones and have also got well up the escarpment face to the zig-zag track. 1 x Wanga Wanga and 1 x Old Man's Beard found. Approx 550 Banana Passion Vine cut, does not include those that can be pulled!

This took 96 hours.

2/ Marco and Karen Pessione

We have done a clean sweep of 3 of the 10 zones on their property. This included the bluff alongside Rudolf Sampers property, where some whoppers were found.

Approx 260 BPV's and 25 W W's.

This took 56 hours (includes rope / abseiling work which is much slower). Total estimated allowance is 300 hrs + rope work extra.

3/ Dave Wilkie

The rocky bluff has been cleared and a few stragglers found. The path accesses were very helpful! The climbers will do one more recheck when the cut ones have wilted.

This took 6 hours of the 10 allowed.

13 x B P V's.

4/ John Parkes and Leon Moleta

This is the south end of the project and goes up to a ridge at the south of John's property and the lower slopes of the east side of Kite Creek gorge.

Survey work up the gorge found only 2 x BPV's. 1 needs to be accessed by the climbing team.

The terrain is slower than the other zones visited so far and the vines harder to trace back to their common root. Approx 2 days more to do. So far 60 hours done of the 100 allowed for.

Approx 150 x BPV's cut.

An outer perimeter search has been done from the south end to above Rudolf Samper's property. Some BPV's were found and another one in the spring or later will be done above (ie to the east) the other properties.

It is an encouraging start and we will be focusing on areas which are drying out quite quickly after rain during the next 3 months. Mainly north or west facing slopes.

The team are carrying GPS devices so that a down load of the routes and OMB's or W W's can be mapped. DOC are helping with the logistics and mapping of all this. They also carry sheep counters so they don't forget how many they have cut!

I am away in 10 days and will leave the team with a brief to follow for those 7 weeks. They will endeavour to phone you before they come, but the days will depend on weather and whether they get held up on a previous property. Any help you can give them would be much appreciated and tea, biscuits or fruit is always welcome!

If you have any queries, Nigel Mounfort at DOC can try and help or liaise with the team.

My thanks to all the behind the scenes support people:- Jo-Anne and John at Forest and Bird, TDC staff for maps and many of the DOC office staff,

In the spring Ken Wright from TDC, Nigel Mounfort from DOC and I will be starting to contact all the west side of Rocklands Road people to get a concerted "devining" push going there.

Any seedlings or mature pest vines that you can remove yourself will help the project immensely as then more time can be spent on harder to access areas.

Best wishes

Chris Rowse (coordinator)