

NEW FOREST NON-NATIVE PLANTS PROJECT

Newsletter Number 2 - June 2011

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project was launched in May 2009 to stop the spread of non-native, invasive plants in the New Forest area, particularly along river valleys and in wetland habitats.

During 2010 Jo Gore joined Catherine Chatters as a Project Officer. Jo has extended the Project westwards and is busy tackling non-native invasive plants along the River Avon and its tributaries.

Help the Battle against Himalayan Balsam

If you have Himalayan balsam on your land, now is the time to pull it up, before the seed pods start to develop. The pulled-up plants can be composted or allowed to rot down *in situ* but don't let them rot down on bare, moist soil, otherwise they might send out new roots and start to grow again.

Jo and Catherine have organised lots of events this summer for volunteers to help with the battle against Himalayan balsam. The work undertaken by volunteers in summer 2010 seems to have been very successful with very few balsam plants germinating in areas which were pulled last year. If you (or someone you know) would like to help on a volunteer task, please contact Jo or Catherine (contact details at end of this newsletter) and ask for details of all the events planned for the summer season.



Some of the volunteers who helped pull Himalayan balsam last summer

Date for your Diary - Wednesday 2 November 2011

Following the successful conference held at Careys Manor Hotel in Brockenhurst last November, a number of people said that they would like practical advice on how to control non-native invasive plants. To meet this demand, Catherine is organising a one-day event on Wednesday 2 November 2011 at Brockenhurst Village Hall. Places are limited and booking is essential. To book your place, please contact Catherine. There is no charge to attend the event but donations will be very welcome, to cover the hire of the hall, the cost of refreshments and speakers' costs. If you have practical experience of controlling non-native invasive plants and would like to share your experience with others, by giving a short talk at this event, please let Catherine know as soon as possible. Thank you.

New Forest and Hampshire County Show - 26th, 27th & 28th July 2011

If you are visiting the Show this summer, why not call in at The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project's display in 'The New Forest Corner'? The display will focus on the 'Be Plant Wise' campaign which aims to stop the spread of non-native invasive garden pond plants. The Project Officers are very grateful to all the people who have volunteered to help 'man' the display and talk to visitors.

Research and surveys by volunteers

During 2010 excellent survey work was undertaken by volunteers on behalf of the Project. Alexander Bridges and Claire Shepherd monitored the results of herbicide treatment to control parrot's feather at 4 sites in the New Forest. Ruth Kernohan mapped the extent of American skunk cabbage along the Lymington River. Tom Fox and Athene Gadsby, recent graduates of Southampton University, surveyed streams flowing across the New Forest and mapped populations of Himalayan balsam.

Tom and Athene also monitored the relative effectiveness of two different herbicides used in a trial to control American skunk cabbage; the results of their research will inform the herbicide treatment to be undertaken by professional contractors in 2011.

This year Tom White and Alexander Bridges will continue the American skunk cabbage monitoring along the Lymington River and Catherine Pascoe will help Alexander continue to assess the impact of the herbicide treatment at the parrot's feather sites. We are also delighted that Hannah Bye and Jessica Allan (students at Southampton University) will be mapping Himalayan balsam along some of the tributaries of the River Avon.

Charlotte Phillips and Any Denness are both studying for their Masters Degrees and have chosen non-native invasive plants as the subject of their dissertations. Charlotte (Bristol University) is investigating the factors that make particular sections of the Lymington River vulnerable to invasion by Himalayan balsam. Amy (Reading University) is researching giant hogweed and will be collecting samples of plant material from the banks of the Avon Water.

Thank you to all the landowners who have allowed the students and other volunteers access to their land to enable them to undertake this really useful and important research.



Volunteers undertaking research & survey work
(Left to right: Ruth Kernohan, Tom Fox, Athene Gadsby, Tom White, Alexander Bridges)

Giant Hogweed along the Avon Water

We are delighted to report that all landowners along the Avon Water who have giant hogweed on their land are now co-operating with the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project and are committed to controlling it at the catchment level, either by digging up their plants or by accepting the Project's offer of help from professional contractors to treat the plants with approved herbicide.

Following the herbicide treatment undertaken in 2010, the Project is organising two herbicide treatments in 2011. Any donations towards the cost of this treatment work would be most welcome.

Control work organised by the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project

The Project Officers have been liaising with professional contractors to stop the spread of a wide range of other non-native invasive plant species. Contractors are tackling Japanese knotweed, creeping water primrose, parrot's feather, American skunk cabbage and bog arum which has been found growing along a tributary of the Beaulieu River.



Professional contractors controlling parrot's feather (left) at East End and American skunk cabbage (right) along the Lyminster River during summer 2010

Trials to control New Zealand pygmyweed in the New Forest

Dr Naomi Ewald, with help from Sussex University students and other volunteers, has mapped the spread of New Zealand pygmyweed *Crassula helmsii* on the Crown Land in the New Forest. Now that we have a good idea of the extent of New Zealand pygmyweed, we can start to plan some trials to control this problem plant which, to date, has proved extremely difficult to eradicate. Naomi has helped select a number of ponds which are suitable candidates for trialling three techniques - aquatic dye, organic hot foam and herbicide. The Project is liaising closely with the Forestry Commission and Natural England in the design of the trials. During the summer Naomi will undertake baseline surveys of the flora and fauna found in these ponds, prior to any control work being undertaken, so that she can assess the impact (if any) on non-target species, as well as assessing the impact on the pygmyweed.

Please send us your records of non-native invasive plants

If you discover non-native invasive plants growing in the New Forest area, Jo and Catherine would be very pleased to receive your records. If you would like a supply of recording cards, please contact the Project Officers who will be pleased to put some in the post to you. Alternatively you can submit your sightings on-line using the electronic recording card which can be accessed via the link from the Project web page at:-

<http://www.hwt.org.uk/pages/new-forest-non-native-plants-project.html>

The records we receive enable us to build up a picture of the distribution of non-native invasive plants in the New Forest area, so we can prioritise action and resources.

If you would like help in identifying non-native invasive plants, please have a look at the useful identification sheets and photo gallery on the excellent website of the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat at www.nonnativespecies.org

'Check, Clean, Dry' Campaign

An important campaign aimed at stopping the spread of non-native invasive species was launched earlier this year by the Government. The campaign focuses on the importance of checking and cleaning boots, waders, boats, fishing equipment etc very thoroughly to prevent invasive species and diseases being spread from site to site and from catchment to catchment. Further details about the campaign can be found on the following website:-

<http://www.direct.gov.uk>



If you are a water user, you may unknowingly be helping to spread invasive species from one water body to another on equipment, fishing tackle, shoes, boots, waders, boats and clothing. Help stop this from happening by following three simple steps: check, clean and dry equipment.

Contact us

Catherine Chatters and Jo Gore the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project Officers can be contacted on 023 8042 4205 or via e-mail at catherinec@hwt.org.uk and joanneq@hwt.org.uk

Postal address is:-

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Catherine Chatters



Jo Gore

The New Forest Non-Native Plants Project is a joint partnership supported by:-



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