

Work Practice 6.4

Works in Hawkweed Sites

1. Introduction

Hawkweeds are perennial herbs from the Asteraceae (daisy) family. The scientific name for hawkweeds changed in 2016 from the genus *Hieracium* to *Pilosella*, however *Hieracium* is still referred to in the legislation. The entire genus is prohibited of entry into Australia by the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS), and the genus is listed as a State Prohibited Weed in Victoria.

Three species of hawkweed are known to exist in the Australian Alps, orange hawkweed (*P. aurantiacum*), king devil hawkweed (*P. piloselloides*) and mouse-ear hawkweed (*P. officinarum*). To date, only orange and king devil hawkweed have been found within Falls Creek Resort. Hawkweeds pose threat to entire ecological communities of the alps, with the ability to spread rapidly by both above ground runners known as stolons and producing large amounts of seed. One square meter of hawkweed can produce upwards of 40,000 seeds per year with dispersal via wind, rain, animals, contaminated soil, clothing, bikes, vehicles and machinery. Hawkweeds are allelopathic of nature, meaning they possess powerful allelochemicals which are released into the soil, inhibiting neighbouring plants growth, germination and survival. This results in the loss of native species, replaced by dense mats or monocultures of hawkweed. As known populations are relatively small, with the appropriate allocation of resources hawkweeds could be eradicated from the Victorian alps not too far into the future. Early detection and correct control methods are crucial to achieving this goal of eradication.

All three species are managed under the Falls Creek Hawkweed Eradication Project, in partnership between Parks Victoria, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, and the Falls Creek Alpine Resort Management Board.

2. Scope

This work practice applies to any individual/s, volunteer/s, contractor/s, sub-contractor/s, organisation or businesses carrying out works within the Falls Creek Alpine Resort. This work practice outlines the appropriate management of known hawkweed sites during development or disturbance within the Falls Creek Alpine Resort. The purpose of this work practice is to ensure that the spread of hawkweeds via translocation of contaminated soil, machinery, or the disturbance of living plants or dormant seeds is nullified during developments or works.

3. Responsibilities

All known active hawkweed sites within the Falls Creek Alpine Resort are recorded via databases, undergoing regular updates and maintenance with the collaboration of Falls Creek Resort Management and Parks Victoria. These databases include that of historical archived data.

The identification or possible identification of hawkweed within the resort is the responsibility of identifier and must be reported to Falls Creek Alpine Resorts Environmental Officer as soon as possible. The Environmental Officer will then conduct a site inspection, if hawkweed is present, then inform the Hawkweed Control Manager at Parks Victoria Mt. Beauty office

Any changes, alterations or new information to active sites should be communicated directly to the Falls Creek Alpine Resorts Environmental Officer.

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4. Procedures/Practice Guidelines

All works that are to occur within the Resort require the submission of a Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) when applying for a planning permit. Site Environmental Management Plans (SEMPs) must pertain to this Works Practice to the satisfaction of ARV-FC. Works that are to occur in areas of active Hawkweed must further illustrate on the environmental risk associated, measures to address these risks and the implementation of a monitoring program of the identified risks. Further information on active Hawkweed sites in relation to proposed works and/or permit applications can be obtained through ARV-FC. Prior to the commencement of works, site supervisors are to be inducted on Works Practice 6.4 Works in Hawkweed Sites by an ARV-FC representative. All staff working on site are required to be inducted on Works Practice 6.4 Works in Hawkweed Sites by either the site supervisor or an ARV-FC representative.

Should Hawkweed be either identified or suspected on site, works are to cease immediately, and ARV-FC notified.

When undertaking works in the Resort the following procedures must be followed:

4.1 For works where a Hawkweed site is present but not directly disturbing the known hawkweed site (i.e., no soil disturbance within 2m of a hawkweed site):

- Retain any Hawkweed site markings and avoid disturbance to these areas
- Enable and maintain access to the Hawkweed site for regular monitoring. Ensure the hawkweed site is not covered by materials/ equipment etc.

4.2 For soil disturbance and removal from anywhere within the Resort: Where soil is to be moved to an alternate location

- Soil that is to be removed from site and transported to an alternative location within the Resort must be included as part of the Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) during the application process.
- Incidental spreading of soil during the removal and/or transportation must not occur. Where possible, lay out plastic sheeting or a similar impervious material on the bed of the transport vehicle. Cover soil with plastic sheeting or a similar impervious material.
- Return the transport vehicle to the worksite and follow the equipment hygiene procedure, including the wash down of the plastic sheet or covering material.
- For large projects that excavate deep into the subsoil, the risk of contaminated Hawkweed soil will be considered as part of the SEM with individual case-by-case details to be specified regarding the washing down, the staging of soil material and the movement of soil to locations outside of the Resort. Topsoil is to be treated as the highest priority for minimising weed spread.
- Should soil require transportation off mountain, the receiver is to be notified that the soil has come from a Hawkweed contaminated area. Once emptied, the transport vehicle should be washed down following the hygiene procedure.

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4.3 For soil disturbance and removal from anywhere within the Resort: Where soil will remain on site

- Ensure any Hawkweed sites clearly marked, avoiding disturbance to these areas
- Enable and maintain access to Hawkweed sites for regular monitoring. Ensuring no stockpiles of materials, waste receptacles or equipment are placed on or within a two (2) metre radius of a hawkweed site.
- Maintain all excavated/ disturbed topsoil on site, clearly marked and can be accessed by Hawkweed eradication staff, or maintain excavated/ disturbed topsoil on site and bury to a depth of at least 30cm.

5. Equipment Hygiene

- All vehicles, machinery, equipment and footwear must be washed down with water after working with contaminated soil or working in a known hawkweed site.
- Machinery and tools must be washed down onsite or as soon as reasonably practicable (in some instances FCAR crews may select to transport covered equipment to the triple interceptor washdown bay at the FCAR workshop) immediately after working with contaminated soil or prior to moving locations if they have been accessing a Hawkweed site. Areas to be washed down include all parts of machinery or tools that have come into contact with contaminated soil including machinery and vehicle tyres. The area of washdown should be bunded to prevent seed spread due to water runoff, suitable bunding may include silt bags or silt fencing. All soil and vegetation must be washed from the vehicle.
- Footwear must be washed down prior to leaving a known hawkweed site. Hawkweed sites are marked with orange flags and/or flagging tape.
- Trucks that have transported soil off the mountain should wash down their vehicle at an appropriate washdown bay after emptying loads of soil.

6. References

Legislation:

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

Related FCAR Policies:

BP 1.22 Environmental Policy

1.47 *Vegetation and Weed Management Policy*

Related FCRM Work Practices:

7.0 Operations on & near Peatlands

Other:

FCAR Environmental Management Plan

FCAR Biodiversity Management Plan

FCAR Trail Management Plan

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