

## **Deal Island Working Bee March 12 - 21st 2024 Report.**

### **Participants**

Stuart and Georgie Dudgeon, Tamara Terwal, Cassie Strain, Alanna Cowley, Christine Bowman.

### **Summary**

The Summer and early Autumn continued to see a good focus on our main weed control efforts on the island. This was the second FoDI visit for 2024. Jo Widdowson and I had a four day visit in January for the release of the Ragwort beetle, and were able to see the good work the summer caretakers were doing as well as providing direction for the rest of their stint. Our March working bee was able to further consolidate the search and removal of Sea Spurge and seeding Ragwort in our managed areas. The autumn caretakers had just started during the working bee and readily took up the baton on our departure. Thanks so much Ali, Apanie, Stu and Mads.

Key outcomes from our 9 days were:

- Thorough searches of Garden Cove, Winter Cove, Pegleg, Little Squally and East cove for sea spurge.
- Follow up on removal flowering/seeding ragwort on the Garden Cove slopes and Barn hill little squally track area, and slowing its encroachment toward East Cove from the airstrip.
- Gutter cleaning for the Museum, visitor and caretaker houses as well as some emergency waterproof repairs to the museum dormer windows.
- Commencement of repainting of the generator and radio room exteriors.
- Repainting of the kitchen in the guest house, wall and ceiling washing, and partial painting of the front verandah (south) bedroom.
- Caretakers have undertaken Big Squally sea spurge removal as well as continuing to hit the other more established bays, and follow up on Ragwort to the end of the seeding season.
- It was heartening to also see good signs of the Ragwort Beetle adults spreading from the original release site. Fingers crossed their egg laying and larvae development are as obviously successful.

Transport logistics were made easier with two of our crew departing from Flinders. This meant that flight weights were only an issue from Flinders.

Having most of our supplies purchased from flinders again worked well, thanks to Georgie Dudgeon's diligent collating of dietary requirements and ordering of a good array of food options. All in all a harmonious, fun, and productive time.

## **Weeding Results**

### **Sea spurge**

The group spent roughly 150 hours on searching and removing sea spurge.

We continued with the thorough search pattern used above East Cove with the higher numbers being found on the drainage line/ Whim tramway end. 730 plants were removed with around 10% flowering.

Three 1/2 day sessions were spent at Garden Cove resulting in the removal of 651 plants. A large portion of these were again higher up on the elevated dune on the west of the cove. No new sites were located

Winter Cove again delivered significant numbers, the initial dune search producing 177 plants. Given the effort the Summer Caretakers put into Sea Spurge control this was a surprisingly high number

1 plant was found in Little Squally. Caretakers reported finding a number of plants on the eastern end of Big Squally in late March.

### **Horehound**

The usual areas were thoroughly searched by Christine and Cassie with 71 plants found. 11 plants were carrying seed, with one particularly large mature plant that had been missed in past searches.

### **Ragwort**

The Summer Caretakers had completed a large section heading up from East Cove along the airstrip on our arrival in January. Before our March working bee they had continued with removal of plants between the compound and Little Squally. It makes such a difference when caretakers have the time to assist with our weeding efforts. Thank you! On our working bee we focused primarily on the compound to Little Squally noting that the area of infestation seems to be moving toward Barn Hill. Over 2500 plants were removed with several seeding plants removed.

It was interesting to compare areas that had been sprayed in November with areas that had been chipped. Generally both had good populations of juveniles, however there appeared to be a higher density around those chipped or pulled possibly resulting from the greater ground disturbance.

The positive outcome was that the site that had had time put into it at the flagstaff hill saddle had greatly reduced numbers from spring. Unfortunately, some that were missed had flowered.

A repeat of the search from Garden Cove up to Flagstaff hill saddle. The tree line still continues to have the majority of the ragwort, although under casuarinas they are tending to flower and seed later. The results from January and March searches show that it is only a matter of time before this area gets beyond us making an impact without a concentrated effort biannually.

The group was particularly interested in knowing the whereabouts and looking for evidence of the beetle. We were rewarded with a quite extensive area of shot holing in the ragwort leaves spreading out 20 metres or more from the original release site. This confirms that the adults have survived and had spread out since the release. The next important stage is seeing if this is still occurring in Summer /early Autumn next year, which will mean they have completed a full lifecycle.

### **Great Mullien**

Several locations were treated by hand removal including 60 plants area around a new vehicle turning circle at the airstrip and the hill track going down into Winter Cove.

### **Slender and other thistle species**

A number of Scotch thistles were removed on searches for ragwort around Garden Cove and outside the compound fence toward Little Squally.

These were not mapped.

### **Weed mapping and documentation**

Four gps's were again borrowed from the SPRAT's group, set up with the latest weeding data from the October/November working bee (Thanks to Jon Marsden Smedley once again). The group were keen to develop their skills.

There was however very little new information to record as the weed occurrences were within existing search zones. (see appendix 1)

### **Superintendants cottage maintenance**

The painting efforts accomplished last year are still largely intact for the exterior stonework. Some discolouration is occurring where the guttering either overflows or the downpipe blocks.

This trip we were able to install a larger pop (drainage hole in gutter) in the main section of gutter which hopefully will reduce both blocking and overflow during periods of heavy rain. Clearing the gutters once again was seen as important to also reduce impacts of overflowing guttering on the exterior walls.

We experienced some decent rain on day two, which highlighted there were several expanding leaks coming into the building around the east facing dormer window. This was also evident downstairs in the main room adjacent to the fireplace. Approval was gained to install some white colourbond flashing under severely weathered pieces of weatherboard. A decaying piece of roofing iron was also waterproofed by inserting another piece under the existing holey iron

### **Visitors house**

Parks provided some more paint for us to continue painting internal walls in the visitors' house. As well as sugar soaping most bedrooms, working bees have completed the lounge, bathroom, and now kitchen in the house.

The Asbestos register specifies keeping all painted surfaces that are in a stable condition regularly painted. With this in mind our aim is to complete within the house interior, ensuring occupants are not exposed

### **Radio room /Generator shed**

The asbestos identifies the exterior walls as stable and in fair condition. Parks provided us with exterior paint to ensure these two buildings' cladding remain stable.

The west facing walls of these were in the most weathered state. The treatment was hosing and washing painted surfaces, before being given two coats each.

### **Bank Stabilisation East Cove**

The wallaby proofing of the East Cove embankment was repaired in October with the majority of the wallabies being removed.

The numbers internally were more than we left behind in October, however, we were again able to let a few out by opening gates when they were in the vicinity. To assist removal in future a small fence extension was constructed, so that wallabies can be enticed into a 20 x 10m (approx) area, then enclosed before driving them outside the main enclosure.

### **In Progress**

- The follow up to ensuring the ragwort beetle gets established is to also introduce the crown and stem boring moth. The approach to introduction is to look at areas of ragwort on the mainland prior to the next working bee, assess whether moth larvae are present and take plant material, hoping it contains them to Deal Island. This is not the way the moths were originally released, however the methodology used previously is no longer available

-Plan for an increase in bank stabilization work at East Cove now that Sea Spurge is in such low numbers

Painting Asbestos surfaces that are stable and previously painted

Renegotiating our Volunteer Partnership Plan with the PWS staff

### **Not yet acted upon**

- The repair or replacement of the roof on the museum house will need to be programmed with the next couple of years

Vegetation management around the lighthouse precinct and ruins needs to be reviewed in light of increasing vegetation height and fuel loads that are likely to increase the chances of damage should a wildfire occur

### **FoDI owned supplies/ Equipment on Island**

Equipment held on the island was reviewed and checked.

*Thanks again to all those involved for making this working bee such a memorable one*

### *Appendix 1*

#### *Weed results*

Zone	Total	Flowering
East Cove Sea Spurge (SS)Beach Zone	3	0
East Cove (SS) Enbankment	681	77
JMS site (SS)	36	10
Garden Cove SS East	3	0
Garden Cove SS West	361	81
Garden Cove elevated dune SS	290	59
Garden Cove Creek SS	Didnt search	
Winter Cove Beach SS	177	3

Ragwort

Compound to Little Squally      Searched west of little squally track 2500+  
(multiple flowering)

Airstrip to East Cove      20 + none flowering

Flafstaff hill saddle      75 (approx.)