

Clearance of Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum salsugineum*) & associated water plants

Native Vegetation Council Guideline under Regulation 8(16) of the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2017* |
1 July 2017

BACKGROUND

Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum salsugineum*) is an important component of freshwater wetlands in South Australia. It provides important habitat for birds, frogs and other native fauna, assists in erosion control and provides a buffer for waterbodies from surrounding catchment areas. It is a plant of conservation significance and is rated as rare in the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges.

Milfoil easily spreads as small segments broken off larger plants, for example by boats or storm damage. In many areas (such as Lake Alexandrina) its distribution has increased, possibly due to sedimentation in watercourses and hydrological changes associated with weirs and barrages. Consequently, there is now an increased incidence of Water Milfoil colonising boat launching areas and designated pumping sites and encroaching into artificial drainage channels.

The Native Vegetation Council (NVC) recognises the need to manage some areas of Water Milfoil, while still maintaining the ecological values of these water plants. As a result, this guideline has been developed to allow for the regulated clearance of Water Milfoil and associated water plants under regulation 8(16) of the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2017*.



NVC GUIDELINE

1. Subject to any other Act or regulation, and in consultation with authorised agents, Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum salsugineum*) and associated water plants may be cleared where the clearance is of regrowth or colonising growth located at:
 - existing boat ramps, boat access channels, pumping sites or other existing lawfully established sites where access to open water is essential for the functioning of those sites;
 - artificial channels lawfully established for water diversion or flood mitigation purposes, where the clearance is necessary to maintain the design function of the channel;
 - the approval of the landowner has been obtained; and
 - **notification** is sent to nvc@sa.gov.au with application and property information, a description of the area, location and the proposed amount to be cleared – including a map and photographs.
2. In all cases the clearance of regrowth or colonising growth must not:
 - extend beyond that needed for the designated safe operation of the site, and if subject to previous clearance works must not extend beyond the boundaries of the area initially cleared at the site, or
 - exceed 25 square metres (eg. 5m X 5m) at irrigation / water pumping sites, or
 - exceed 8m wide for boat channels to provide access to open water from existing marinas, jetties or moorings, or
 - cause the disturbance of sediments.

Clearance of regrowth beyond these parameters must be referred to DEWNR's Native Vegetation Branch and is not to proceed under this guideline unless endorsed by the NVC.

3. Consultation with the NVC is required for any clearance in the following situations:
 - new boat ramps, pumping sites or other new lawfully established sites,
 - Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum salsgineum*) growing in land designated under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* within lagoons and coves, or
 - adjacent to other existing native vegetation, such as reed beds.

REMOVAL METHODS

The method of clearance must have minimal impact on the site and on adjoining native vegetation. Any clearance of these species outside of the sites as designated below must be discussed with the Native Vegetation Branch and is likely to require the consent of the NVC by means of a clearance application.

Boat ramps and pumping sites

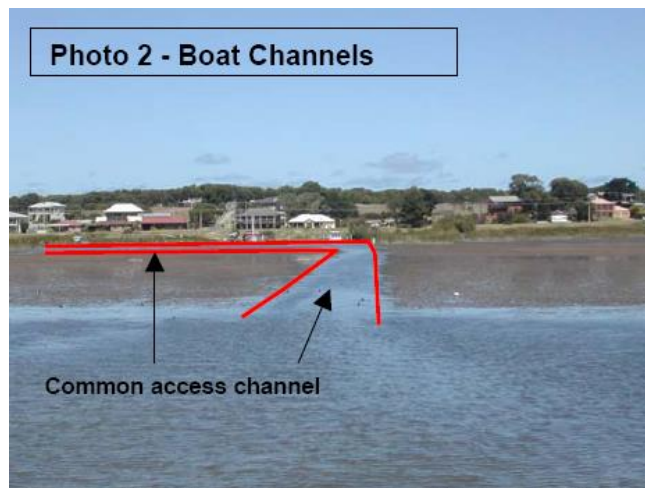
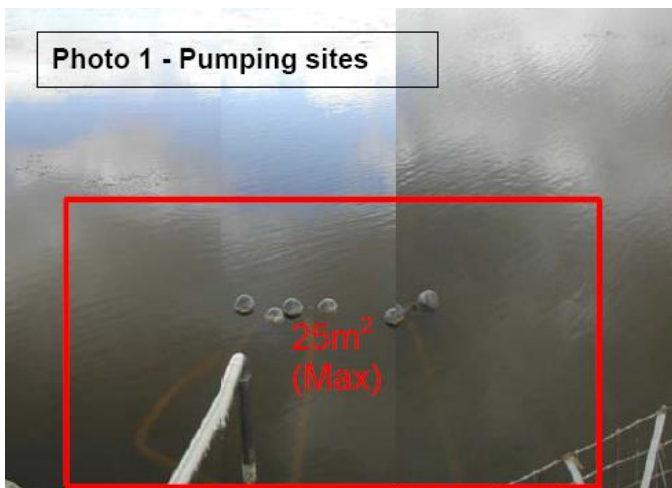
Hand cutting and raking is a suitable method for sites under 25 square metres (see photo 1, below). Substrate plates or bottom barriers have also been used with some success in the USA in boat docks and boat lanes. Bottom plates are made from sheets of fibreglass, polypropylene or a similar material and anchored to the lake bottom to prevent plant growth by blocking sunlight. Requests to use bottom plates larger than 25 square metres must be referred to the Native Vegetation Branch.



Boat channels

Mechanical removal by floating harvesters that 'mow' the Milfoil is recommended for clearing of linear boat channels and marinas. Cut material must be collected and removed from the site. Cutting without collection of all of the cut material will distribute the Water Milfoil and possibly increase distribution and abundance. Decomposing Milfoil also has the potential to reduce water quality.

Where access to a number of boat ramps is being inhibited by the growth of Water Milfoil, a single channel not greater than 8 metres wide should be created to clear water with a common access channel between sites (see photo 2, below). Consultation with the Native Vegetation Branch is required for clearance of channels exceeding 8 metres width.



For more information

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