

**INVEST IN PROPERTY 84 (PTY) LTD**

**WHOLE FARM OF VAN ASWEGENS HOEK 493 AND  
WHOLE FARM OF GREYLINGSLYN 355, MAGISTERIAL  
DISTRICT OF BOSHOF FREE STATE PROVINCE**

**ALIEN INVASIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN**



**DECEMBER 2021**

**REFERENCE NUMBER: FS 30/5/1/2/2/10067 MR**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Invest in Property 84 (Pty) Ltd applied for environmental authorisation to mine alluvial diamonds and gold from a 3 955.7022 ha area that extends over eight properties in the Lejweleputswa magisterial district of the Free State Province. Even though the project application extends over a vast area, the Applicant proposes to divide the mining right footprint (hereinafter referred to as the “major area”) into smaller mining areas of  $\pm 2$  ha each (hereinafter referred to as the “minor areas”) that will be positioned in between areas of agricultural importance. It is proposed that a maximum of three (3) minor areas will be mined at any given time. In other words, the total footprint to be disturbed by mining activities at any given time calculates to  $\pm 6$  ha of the 3 955.7022 ha mining right area, upon which a mined-out minor area has to be rehabilitated prior to the opening of a subsequent minor area. The current project proposal will entail the disturbance of  $\pm 0.15\%$  of the mining right area (major area) at any given time, as concurrent rehabilitation (strip-mining) is proposed.

Upon commencement, the proposed project will trigger listed activities (see Table below) in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2014 (as amended) and therefore requires an environmental impact assessment (EIA) that assess project specific environmental impacts and alternatives, consider public input, and propose mitigation measures, to ultimately culminate in an environmental management programme that informs the competent authority (Department of Mineral Resources and Energy) when considering the environmental authorisation.

Should the MR be issued and the mining of alluvial diamonds and gold be allowed, the proposed project will comprise of activities that can be divided into three key phases (discussed in more detail in the report) namely the:

- (1) Site establishment/construction phase which will involve the demarcation of each minor area’s boundaries and required buffer no-go zones pertaining to existing infrastructure and areas of significant importance identified during the environmental impact assessment. Site establishment will further necessitate the clearing of vegetation, stripping and stockpiling of topsoil, and establishing site infrastructure.
- (2) Operational phase that is presently expected to entail the simultaneous mining of three (3) minor mining areas within the footprint of the major mining right area. Upon the prospecting and exploration of allowable (agreed to by the landowner) farm portions, the opencast and strip-mining method will be used to recover diamond bearing gravel that will be processed, upon which the concentrated product is transported to an off-site recovery plant.



(3) Decommissioning phase which will include activities that can be divided into medium- and long term categories. In the medium term, rehabilitation will entail the continuous reinstatement of mined-out minor areas through the use of overburden and spoil material to backfill excavation pits, reinstatement of decommissioned processing areas, rehabilitation of settling ponds as well restoring eroded areas and the management of weeds and invasive plant species. In the long term, rehabilitation will comprise the reinstatement of all remaining disturbed areas (mining related) prior to the submission of a closure application to the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE)

As the vegetation will be disturbed during the establishment and operation of the mine it would be expected, the significant disturbance of vegetation results in weeds and alien invasive plant species (AIPs).

This document, the Alien Invasive Management Plan (AIMP) was compiled in order to assist the applicant to constantly monitor the mining area for problem species.



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## **ACRONYMS**

AIMP	Alien Invasive Management Plan
AIPs	Alien Invasive Plant Species
AIS Regulations	Alien and Invader Species Regulations, 2014 (amended 2016)
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
CARA	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983)
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EDRR	Early Detection and Rapid Response
EMPr	Environmental Management Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPS	Global Positioning System
IPSMP	Invasive Plant Species Management Plan
MPRDA	Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No. 28 of 2002)
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No 107 of 1998)
NEM:BA	National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No 10 of 2004)
NEM:PAA	National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act No. 57 of 2003)
NWA	National Water Act, 1998 (Act No 36 of 1998)
PCO	Pest Control Officer
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
WfW	Working for Water



## **DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

I, Sonette Smit, in my capacity as specialist consultant declare that I:

- ✦ act as independent consultant;
- ✦ will perform the contracted work in an objective manner, even if the results and findings are not favourable to the holder of the authorisation;
- ✦ will adhere to and comply with all responsibilities as indicated in the National Environmental Management Act and Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations;
- ✦ do not have and will not have any vested interest in the activity other than remuneration for work performed in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014;
- ✦ reserve the right to modify aspects pertaining to this study should additional information become available through ongoing research and further work in this field.



Sonette Smit

Date: October 2021



**CLIENT REVIEW AND COMMENT**

I reviewed and understand the contents of this report. I acknowledge that this Alien Invasive Management Plan is a work in progress.

**NB: The proposed control methods are only recommendations based on information available to the environmental consultant at the time. The environmental consultants employed at Greenmined Environmental are not registered Pest Control Operators (PCO) and in the circumstances the site should ensure that the expert advice and opinion of a registered PCO is sought prior to the commencement and implementation of control methods pertaining to invasive species.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date







## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document was prepared by Greenmined Environmental (Pty) Ltd as an independent environmental consultancy appointed by Invest in Property 84 (Pty) Ltd, to develop an Alien Invasive Management Plan (AIMP) for mining of alluvial diamonds and gold from a 3 955.7022 ha area that extends over the properties as listed in the DEIAR within the Lejweleputswa magisterial district of the Free State Province.

Even though the project application extends over a vast area, the Applicant proposes to divide the mining right footprint (hereinafter referred to as the “major area”) into smaller mining areas of  $\pm 2$  ha each (hereinafter referred to as the “minor areas”) that will be positioned in between areas of agricultural importance. It is proposed that a maximum of three (3) minor areas will be mined at any given time. In other words, the total footprint to be disturbed by mining activities at any given time calculates to  $\pm 6$  ha of the 3 955.7022 ha mining right area, upon which a mined-out minor area has to be rehabilitated prior to the opening of a subsequent minor area. The current project proposal will entail the disturbance of only 0.15% of the mining right area (major area) at any given time, as concurrent rehabilitation (strip-mining) is proposed.

Should the Applicant be issued with a mining right (MR) and the project commence, the principal mining activities is expected to include the following at each operational site (minor area):

- Site establishment;
- Stripping and stockpiling of topsoil of the mining area;
- Excavation and loading;
- Processing of gravel;
- Transport of concentrate to recovery plant;
- Backfilling of excavation;
- Rehabilitation of processing area;
- Sloping and landscaping upon closure of the site; and
- Replacing the topsoil and vegetating the disturbed areas.

Presently the preliminary layout of each operational site (minor area) is expected to include the following:

- Opencast excavation;
- Overburden stockpiles;
- Excavation and earthmoving equipment;
- Screens, conveyors and pans of the processing plant;
- Containers for administration, storage and workshop purposes;



- Mobile ablution facilities;
- Generators;
- Diesel depot (<80 m<sup>3</sup>);
- Water winning and storage equipment;
- Settling pond; and
- Internal roads..

According to Mucina & Rutherford (2006) the area consists of Kimberley Thornveld (SVk 4) and Highveld Alluvial Vegetation (Aza 5). The Kimberley Thornveld dominates the study area and covers all the terrestrial plains while the Highveld Alluvial Vegetation covers portions of the floodplain of the Vaal River. Both these vegetation types are currently listed as being of Least Concern (LC) under the National List of Threatened Ecosystems (Notice 1477 of 2009) (National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004). They are not currently subjected to any pronounced transformation pressures. Within the study area, both of these have been transformed to a significant extent by agricultural irrigation both in the terrestrial plains as well as the floodplain of the Vaal River.

Due to the proposed disturbance of the mining activities weeds and invader plant species are expected to germinate on the site area. Control of invasive plant species is an important aspect and highly regulated in terms of South African legislation. Therefore, an alien invasive management plan was developed for the proposed quarry to be implemented throughout the operational-, decommissioning/rehabilitation phase and 12 months' aftercare period.

The information used in this AIMP was mostly gathered from the Department of Water and Sanitation- (DWS), the Agricultural Research Council- (ARC), and the Working for Water web-sites. There are around 379 problem plants listed as Category 1, 2, or 3 alien invasive species in the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983) (CARA) and Category 1a and b, 2 and 3 under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act (NEM:BA).

This document focuses mainly on alien invasive species which are listed under legislation and that are typically associated with the Succulent Karoo Biome. The document was compiled in such a way that other species can be added, should they be discovered on the property of concern, or should they become problematic plants within the area.



The AIMP format includes a summary on the legislation, a brief overview of the problems associated with alien invasive species establishment, various control and eradication methods available, a list of chemicals that are registered and can be utilised against alien invasive species and information sheets for the alien invasive species of concern. The information sheets indicate the category the alien invasive species belongs to, the growth form of the species, the control measures that can be used against the species, the monitoring methodology that should be applied and, finally, indigenous species that can be utilised for rehabilitation of areas where large infestations occurred. The use of the information sheets allows for easy update of the various information as research uncovers newer, improved control measures against species and as biological control agents become available on the market.

Global trade and transportation have increased the opportunities for plants and other invasive species to cross geographic boundaries like never before. The invasive species problem is expanding rapidly because of the introduction of an increased variety of non-native species and many new types of infestation pathways. Natural controlling processes and limiting factors that kept species in check in their native ecosystems are not present in their new habitats, thereby enabling the populations to thrive. Alien invasive plants species (AIPs) can out-compete native species, especially when ecosystem health is stressed by factors such as drought, fire, pollution, resource over-utilization and landscape disturbances.

Lack of knowledge about how invasive species function in their new environment, significantly inhibits the ability to detect and eradicate new or small infestations. Efforts to find and eliminate new infestations are hampered by the lack of an effective early warning and rapid response systems. In addition, there is a shortage of safe and effective techniques to limit the impact on non-target areas or sensitive natural species. Furthermore, control efforts can be hampered when they extend across multiple political jurisdictions and ownerships especially in urban areas. Rehabilitation and restoration efforts require new and expanded sources of endemic plant materials and improved techniques to repair damaged ecosystems.



## 1.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Invest in Property 84 (Pty) Ltd applied for environmental authorisation to mine alluvial diamonds and gold from a 3 955.7022 ha area that extends over eight properties in the Lejweleputswa magisterial district of the Free State Province. In order to meet the mitigations measures, set out in the Basic Assessment Report and Environmental Management Plan, an invasive species management plan should be compiled and implemented at the mine. This document, the Alien Invasive Management Plan (AIMP) was compiled in order to assist the applicant to constantly monitor the mining area for problem species.

The AIMP includes alien plant species removal, control and management procedures. The following aspects are listed and discussed below:

1. Alien plant identification and listing;
2. Control of alien species;
3. Methods of removing alien species;
4. Alien plant material disposal;
5. Eradication tool for invasive plant species;
6. Site specific guidelines; and
7. Rehabilitation guidelines for reclaimed areas.

**NB: The proposed control methods are only recommendations based on information available to the environmental consultant at the time. The environmental consultants employed at Greenmined Environmental are not registered Pest Control Operators (PCO) and in the circumstances the site should ensure that the expert advice and opinion of a registered PCO is sought prior to the commencement and implementation of control methods pertaining to invasive species**



## 1.2 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The following list of documentation was used to formulate the objectives for the AIMP:

- ✦ Alien and Invader Species Regulations, 2014 (as amended 2016) (AIS)
- ✦ Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983) (as amended) (CARA);
- ✦ Fertiliser, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947) (as amended);
- ✦ National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No 107 of 1998) (as amended) (NEMA);
- ✦ National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (as amended) (NEM:BA);
- ✦ National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) (as amended) (NWA);
- ✦ Policies on alien invasive eradication methods.
- ✦ The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry Environmental Best Practice Specifications of 2005; and

## 2. OBJECTIVE

This document describes the potential sources of AIP infestation and provides a method for its control and management. Furthermore, it aims to provide methods to minimise and monitor the AIPs infestation as a result of vegetation clearance due to the activity.

The primary objective of this document is to provide a AIPs control and management plan that focuses on AIPs control measures to be implemented by the client on the site.

This objective will be met through the implementation of the management measures specified in this plan, including:

- ✦ Effective management of invasive species present on site;
- ✦ Control and rehabilitation of open or unused areas at the site where possible; and
- ✦ Minimise re-invasion through preventative measures such as regular monitoring and the planting of species to cover open areas.



### 3. WHAT ARE ALIEN INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES?

According to the book, *Problem Plants of South Africa* (Bromilow 2001) a weed is a plant in the wrong place at the wrong time. Problem plants are described as vigorous growers that are easily adaptable and mostly exotic or foreign in origin. Weeds usually are pioneer plants that invade disturbed spaces such as stockpile areas, overburden and topsoil stockpiles and firebreaks. Invasive plants are plants that have been imported and has the ability to invade the natural vegetation.

Alien invasive plants and alien invasive infestations have several repercussions, which includes environmental, social and economic. Some of the more obvious issues are:

- ✳ These plants absorb and transpire a large amount of water, which is wasted/removed for use by indigenous plants. This leads to the reduction of water flow in the vicinity of water bodies and alters aquatic ecosystems.
- ✳ When invasive species are in close proximity to watercourses, the plants may alter riverbanks and highly increase the potential for erosion that could in turn impact the integrity of the watercourse and alter flood lines. This has negative consequences on associated ecosystems and all downstream water users.
- ✳ Large stands of alien invasive species result in loss of productive land resulting in associated negative economic and social impacts.
- ✳ Large infestations reduce the availability of land to indigenous species. This has ecological implications when biodiversity is directly impacted, and social implications when natural resources become scares.
- ✳ Alien invasive species increase the dry material ratio of the veldt, thereby directly increasing the veldt fire hazards.

Therefore, the benefits of eradicating and controlling alien invasive species extends to the social-, economic- and environmental aspects of South Africa.



Invasive species have been characterized as a “catastrophic wildfire in slow motion”. Thousands of invasive plants have infested hundreds of millions of hectares of land and water across the country causing massive disruptions in ecosystem function, reducing biodiversity and degrading ecosystem health. The health and function of forests, mountains, wetlands, and rivers have been affected by alien plant invasion which outcompete indigenous or endemic plant species and drain the water resources.

A species is considered invasive if it meets these two criteria:

- ✳ It is non-native to the ecosystem under consideration; and
- ✳ Its introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Appendix 1, of this document highlights, listed alien invasive species common in the Nama-Karoo Biome that might occur, that need to be controlled. The list also indicates the control methods to be applied.

## 4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 NATIONAL ACTS

#### **The Constitution of the Republic of Southern Africa (Act No 108 of 1996) – Section 24**

The Constitution is South Africa’s overarching law. It prescribes minimum standards with which existing and new laws must comply. Chapter 2 of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights in which basic human rights are enshrined. Section 24 of this chapter states that *“Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.”*

Government's commitment to give effect to the environmental rights enshrined in the Constitution is evident from the enactment of various pieces of environmental legislation since 1996, including the National Water Act, the National Environmental Management Act, etc.



### **National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No 107 of 1998)**

NEMA replaces a number of the provisions of the Environment Conservation Act, 1989 (Act No. 73 of 1989). The Act provides for cooperative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment, institutions that will promote cooperative governance and procedures for coordinating environmental functions. The principles enshrined in NEMA guide the interpretation, administration and implementation of the Act with regards to the protection and / or management of the environment. These principles serve as a framework within which environmental management must be formulated. Section 2(4) specifies that *“sustainable development requires the consideration of all relevant factors including the following aspects specifically relevant to biodiversity”*:

- ✳ The disturbance of ecosystems and loss of biological diversity are avoided, or, where they cannot be altogether avoided, are minimized and remedied;
- ✳ The development, use and exploitation of renewable resources and the ecosystems of which they are part do not exceed the level beyond which their integrity is jeopardized;
- ✳ A risk-averse and cautious approach is applied, which takes into account the limits of current knowledge about the consequences of decisions and actions; and
- ✳ Negative impacts on the environment and on people's environmental rights be anticipated and prevented, and where they cannot be altogether prevented, are minimized and remedied.

The costs of remedying pollution, environmental degradation and consequent adverse health effects and of preventing, controlling or minimizing further pollution, environmental damage or adverse health effects must be paid for by those responsible for harming the environment.

Sensitive, vulnerable, highly dynamic or stressed ecosystems, such as coastal shores, estuaries, wetlands, and similar systems require specific attention in management and planning procedures, especially where they are subject to significant human resource usage and development pressure.

Of particular importance are the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations of the Act, which identify activities that may have a substantial detrimental effect on the environment. The identification of these activities results in the activity being prohibited unless the competent authority has granted a written authorization after the consideration of an environmental impact assessment or basic assessment.





### **Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No 43 of 1983)**

South Africa has numerous problematic alien invader species. The Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 was promulgated to amongst other things combat the invasion and spread of such species. The Act categorizes weeds into three categories, with varying degrees of action required for each category of weeds.

The Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, No. 43 of 1983, (CARA) as amended in March 2001, sets out the regulations regarding the control of invasive plants and weeds under Regulations 15 and 16 and provides lists of species declared as invasive plants and indicators of bush encroachment. The Regulations classify the listed alien invasive plants into three categories. The categories can be described as follows:

**Category 1:** Plants that are alien invasive species and must be eradicated and controlled. These species have little economic or social value and their invasive habits outcompete indigenous species, severely alter ecosystems and threaten local biodiversity.

Section 15A of CARA states that:

1. Category 1 plants may not occur on any land or inland water surface other than in biological control reserves.
2. A land user shall control any Category 1 plants that occur on any land or inland water surface in contravention of the provisions of sub-regulation (1) by means of the methods prescribed in regulation 15E.
3. No person shall, except in or for purposes of a biological control reserve –
  - a. establish, plant, maintain, multiply or propagate Category 1 plants;
  - b. import or sell propagating material of Category 1 plants or any Category 1 plants;
  - c. Acquire propagating material of Category 1 plants or any Category 1 plants.
4. The executive officer may, on good cause shown in writing by the land user, grant written exemption from compliance with the requirements of sub-regulation (1) on such conditions as the executive officer may determine in each case.

**Category 2:** Species that have commercial or utility value and may only be grown in demarcated areas, in a controlled manner and under a permit.

Section 15B of CARA states that:

1. Category 2 plants may not occur on any land or inland water surface other than a demarcated area or a biological control reserve.



- a. The executive officer may on application in writing demarcate an area as an area where Category 2 plants may occur, be established and be maintained.
- b. An area in respect of which a water use license for stream flow reduction activities has been issued in terms of section 36 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998) shall be deemed to be a demarcated area.
2. The executive officer shall demarcate an area for the occurrence, establishment and maintenance of Category 2 plants only if –
  - a. The Category 2 plants in the area are cultivated under controlled circumstances;
  - b. The land user concerned has been authorised to use water in terms of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998);
  - c. The Category 2 plants or products of Category 2 plants in the area are demonstrated to primarily serve a commercial purpose, use as a woodlot, shelter belt, building material, animal fodder, soil stabilisation, medicinal or other beneficial function that the executive officer may approve; and
  - d. All reasonable steps are taken to curtail the spreading of propagating material of the Category 2 plants outside the demarcated areas.
3. When an area is demarcated for the occurrence, establishment and maintenance of Category 2 plants the executive officer may impose such additional conditions as may reasonably be deemed necessary to keep the Category 2 plants in the area in check.
4. No person shall sell propagating material of Category 2 plants or any Category 2 plants to another person unless such other person is a land user of a demarcated area or of a biological control reserve.
5. No person shall acquire propagating material of Category 2 plants or any Category 2 plants unless such material or such plants are intended for use in a demarcated area or in a biological control reserve.
6. Propagating material of Category 2 plants or Category 2 plants shall only be imported or sold in accordance with the provisions of the Plant Improvement Act, 1976 (Act No. 53 of 1976), the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983) and the environment conservation regulations.
7. A land user shall control any Category 2 plants that occur on any land or inland water surface in contravention of the provisions of sub-regulation (1) by means of the methods prescribed in regulation 15E.
8. Unless authorised thereto in terms of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), no land user shall allow Category 2 plants to occur within 30 meters of the 1:50 year flood line of a river, stream, spring, natural channel in which water flows regularly or intermittently, lake, dam or wetland.



9. The executive officer may, on good cause shown in writing by the land user, grant written exemption from compliance with one or more of the requirements of sub-regulations (1), (3), (5), (6), (8) and (9) on such conditions as the executive officer may determine in each case.

Category 3: Species that often have ornamental value and may be grown where they currently exist but cannot be planted, propagated or traded.

Section 15C of CARA states that:

1. Category 3 plants shall not occur on any land or inland water surface other than in a biological control reserve.
2. Subject to the provisions of sub-regulation (3), the provisions of sub-regulation (1) shall not apply in respect of Category 3 plants already in existence at the time of the commencement of these regulations.
  - a. No land user shall allow Category 3 plants to occur within 30 meters of the 1:50 year flood line of a river, stream, spring, natural channel in which water flows regularly or intermittently, lake, dam or wetland.
  - b. The executive officer may impose such additional conditions as may reasonably be deemed necessary with regard to Category 3 plants already in existence at the time of the commencement of these regulations.
  - c. A land user must take all reasonable steps to curtail the spreading of propagating material of Category 3 plants.
  - d. The executive officer may, after consultation with the land user, issue a direction in terms of section 7 of the Act that Category 3 plants in existence at the time of the commencement of these regulations must be controlled by means of the measures prescribed in regulation 15F.
3. No person shall, except in or for purposes of a biological control reserve –
  - a. plant, establish, maintain, multiply or propagate Category 3 plants;
  - b. import or sell propagating material of Category 3 plants or any Category 3 plants;
  - c. acquire propagating material of Category 3 plants or any Category 3 plants.
4. The executive officer may, on good cause shown in writing by the land user, grant written exemption from compliance with one or more of the requirements of sub-regulations (1), (3) and (4) on such conditions as the executive officer may determine in each case.



The National Department of Agriculture is responsible for administering the CARA act and landowners having alien invasive species on their property may be penalised. Penalties can be in the form of fines or imprisonment. It is therefore important to have an alien invasive management plan in place that aims at primarily eradicating and secondly controlling alien invasive species. It is also important to keep records of all procedures followed and to have photographic records, as many alien invasive species are difficult to completely eradicate

### **National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No 10 of 2004)**

The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (NEM:BA) provides for the management and conservation of biological diversity and components thereof; the use of indigenous biological resources in a sustainable manner; the fair and equitable sharing of benefits rising from bio-prospecting of biological resources; and cooperative governance in biodiversity management and conservation within the framework of NEMA. The Act also gives effect to international Strategic Review of the Status of Biodiversity Management in the South African Mining Industry agreements relating to biodiversity. The Act states that the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism may identify any process or activity in a listed ecosystem as a threatening process and will, thereafter, be regarded as an activity contemplated in Section 24(2)(b) of NEMA which states that:

- a. Specified activities may not be commenced without prior authorization from the Minister or MEC and specify such activities. This Act allows for any person, organization or organ of state to contribute to biodiversity management. Such a party may submit to the Minister a draft management plan for an ecosystem or species. Should the Minister approve the management plan, an agreement can be entered into regarding the implementation of the plan.
- b. The NEM:BA established the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and gave it a mandate regarding monitoring, advising and co-coordinating biodiversity issues in South Africa.

The Alien and Invader Species (AIS) regulations was subsequently published in terms of section 97(1) of NEM:BA in August 2014 and amended in July 2016. The AIS regulations, 2014 grouped plants into four categories and prescribes the subsequent management of each category.



Category 1a: Invasive plant species requiring compulsory control. These plants must be removed and destroyed and any species falling within this category is by law required to be eradicated from the environment. No permits should be sought or given to keep or propagate plant species falling within this category. Any form of trade or planting is strictly prohibited.

Category 1b: Invasive plants requiring compulsory control as part of alien invasive plant species control programme. These plants are considered to have high invasive potential, thus require removal and eradication. Plants falling within this category qualify for governmental sponsored alien invasive plants control and management programmes. Furthermore, no permits will be issued to keep or sell plant falling within this category.

Category 2: The plants falling within this category are alien invasive plants regulated by area or locality. These alien invasive plant species requires a demarcation permit in order to import, grow, breed, sell, buy or accept as gifts. However, no permit will be issued for invasive plant species within this category existing in riparian areas or zones.

Category 3: These alien invasive plant species are regulated by activity, thus an individual plant permit is required to import, grow, breed, possess, sell, buy, or move these plants. No permit is issued for Category 3 alien invasive plant species existing in riparian areas.

In order to identify invasive plants in need of controlled/eradication from site, the plants specified in these groups must be used as a guideline.

### **National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act No 57 of 2003)**

The National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act No 57 of 2003) (NEM:PAA) provides for the protection and conservation of ecologically viable areas representative of South Africa's biological diversity and its natural landscapes and seascapes; for the establishment of a national register of all national, provincial and local protected areas; for the management of those areas in accordance with national norms and standards; for intergovernmental co-operation and public consultation in matters concerning protected areas; for the continued existence, governance and functions of South African National Parks; and for matters in connection therewith.



### **Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002 (Act No 28 of 2002) (Section 37(1))**

According to the MPRDA, any prospecting or mining operations must not result in unacceptable pollution, ecological degradation or damage to the environment and must be conducted in accordance with generally accepted principles of sustainable development by integrating social, economic and environmental factors into the planning and implementation of projects. Section 37 (1) of the MPRDA acknowledges that the principles set out in Section 2 of the NEMA, apply to all prospecting and mining operations and serve as guidelines for the interpretation, administration and implementation of the environmental requirements of this Act. In addition, mining right holders must give effect to the objectives of integrated environmental management as laid out in Chapter 5 of the NEMA. The MPRDA also obliges the owner of the mining right to rehabilitate disturbed areas and holds the owner responsible for any environmental degradation on his/her site.

### **National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998)**

The mining industry is itself dependent on key resource inputs such as water, the provision of which depends on the health and integrity of ecosystems.

The National Water Act, 1998 (NWA) is a legal framework for the effective and sustainable management of water resources in South Africa. Central to the NWA is recognition that water is a scarce resource in the country which belongs to all the people of South Africa and needs to be managed in a sustainable manner to benefit all members of society. The NWA places a strong emphasis on the protection of water resources in South Africa, especially against its exploitation, and the insurance that there is water for social and economic development in the country for present and future generations.

### **National Forests Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998)**

The Act protects State Forests, Forest Nature Reserves and Wilderness Areas, and the plant and animal life contained therein. In addition, the Act allows for management programmes to be established in order to prevent soil erosion and fire, maintain the natural genetic and species diversity and control plants and animals which are harmful to a particular area. The Act provides for the control and reasonable access to State Forests for the purposes of recreation, education, culture or spiritual fulfilment as well as prohibiting any person from damaging State Forests or contributing to the threat of fire. Forest officers are empowered to arrest any person who has contravened this Act and may seize such person's property. This act also refers to the protected trees that are listed and the licencing permits that is needed to remove, or relocated if needed.



**Fertilisers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947)**

This Act provides for the following:

- ✦ appointment of a Registrar of Fertilizers, Farm Feeds and Agricultural Remedies;
- ✦ the registration of fertilizers, farm feeds, agricultural remedies, stock remedies, sterilizing plants and pest control operators;
- ✦ regulate or prohibit the importation, sale, acquisition, disposal or use of fertilizers, farm feeds, agricultural remedies and stock remedies;
- ✦ designation of technical advisers and analysts; and to provide for matters incidental thereto.

In other words, this Act governs the use and application of herbicide:

- ✦ All herbicide applications are to be made under the direct supervision of a registered Pest Control Operator.
- ✦ All persons applying herbicides are to be trained in their use.
- ✦ Correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn.
- ✦ Only registered herbicides may be used.
- ✦ Correct storage facilities must be used.

## **4.2 PROVINCIAL ACTS, PLANS, POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES**

### **Bioregional Plans**

The bioregional plans aim to provide maps of biodiversity priorities with accompanying land-use planning and decision making guidelines in order to inform decisions associated with land-use planning, environmental assessment, natural resource management and authorization.

### **Biodiversity Management Plans**

Biodiversity management plans ensure the long term survival in nature of species; to provide the responsible person or organ of state effective monitoring and reporting on species progress and to be consistent with acts, frameworks and applicable bioregional plans or any plans issued in terms of Chapter 3 of the NEMA or any municipal integrated development plans etc.





### **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans**

The goal of national biodiversity strategies and action plans is to conserve and managed terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity to ensure a sustainable and equitable benefits.

### **National Biodiversity Assessment**

Formerly known as National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment which is a systematic biodiversity planning approach that aims to give a comprehensive biodiversity assessment (previously it focused on spatial only) throughout the country. Its focus is to mainstream biodiversity priorities throughout the economy and making links between biodiversity and socio-economic development.

### **Mining and Biodiversity Guideline**

The mining industry plays a vital role in the growth and development of South Africa and its economy. Since the earliest discoveries of minerals in the region, this rich endowment of mineral resources has been a key driver of South Africa's social and economic development. Mining continues to be one of the most significant sectors of the country's' economy, providing jobs, growing our GDP and building relations with international trading partners.

On par with this mineral wealth are exceptional endowments of biodiversity and ecosystems. South Africa is globally renowned as a mega-diverse country that harbours an exceptional number of species in relation to most other countries. This rich biodiversity and ecological infrastructure underpin and support the social and economic development in numerous direct and indirect ways. It is currently impacted upon by mining and other land uses in ways that are not sustainable.

Sustaining the goods and services that flow from ecosystems, and the benefits that these provide over the long term, will require limits in mining and other activities in certain areas. South Africa's Constitution and the laws stemming from it recognise the vital role of both ecological and mineral resources in a development path built upon the socially just, environmentally sustainable and economically efficient use of these resources.

The Guideline offers six principles that should be applied towards good decision making when addressing biodiversity issues and impacts in a mining context:

- ✦ Apply the law;
- ✦ Use the best available biodiversity information;
- ✦ Engage stakeholders thoroughly;
- ✦ Use best practice environmental impact assessment to identify, assess and evaluate impacts on biodiversity;





- ✦ Apply the mitigation hierarchy in planning any mining-related activities and to develop robust environmental management programmes (EMPr);
- ✦ Ensure effective implementation of the EMPr, including adaptive management.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Invest in Property 84 (Pty) Ltd is the responsible mining right applicant and will be accountable for the effectively implementation of this plan. The alien invasive management plan is legally binding and must be implemented to fulfil the requirements of relevant legislations and recommendation.

## 6. CONTROL OF ALIEN INVASIVE AND PROBLEM PLANT SPECIES

Alien plant invasions cause a decline in species diversity, local extinction of indigenous species and ecological imbalance. Thus, preventing the onset of an alien invasion, management of further spreading is required as problem plants outcompete indigenous plant species and quickly establish themselves in an area. In light of this, a national strategy was compiled identifying four primary programs to address the management of alien invasive plant species as listed below:

1. Prevention: Keep the invasive species out;
2. Early detection and rapid response: Detect and eradicate invasive species to stop them from spreading;
3. Control and management: Eliminate or control the problem of invasive species; and
4. Rehabilitation and restoration: Heal, minimize, or reverse the harmful effects from invasive species.

The occurrence of alien invasive plants not only affect the growth and distribution of natural endemic plants, they also use more water than indigenous plants, some have toxic fruits or leaves which when consumed could lead to fatalities. Therefore, alien invasive plant species need to be controlled or removed and the following section contains different methods that can be used.



The ultimate aim of an alien invasive management plan is to completely eradicate problem species from site. This is often very difficult as many of the species have seeds that remain viable for a very long time and even after physical removal of plants, the seeds germinate to form new infestations. An alien invasive management plan must therefore be an ongoing practice over many years and should follow the following phases:

1. The initial bulk eradication of alien invasive species by chemical or mechanical means, and in some instances biological control agents. This may also require rehabilitation if large stands of alien invasive species are removed. Local, indigenous species should be planted in the disturbed areas;
2. There should also be immediate follow up and all seedlings should be pulled out and removed. This should be done regularly, although the timeframes will vary from species to species depending on their growth forms and rates; and
3. Finally, monitoring of areas that appear to be under controlled must continue on at least an annual basis. Rehabilitated areas should also be monitored and action taken immediately if regeneration of problem plants occur.

Various options are available for the control of alien invasive species, including mechanical, chemical and biological control. In most instances, mechanical means are utilised and include physical removal of plants. Research on use of herbicides has been conducted on many species and can be applied in conjunction with mechanical methods. For some species, herbicides have not yet been fully researched and/or herbicides have not been registered and these need to be mechanically controlled. The Department of Water and Sanitation's Working for Water section provides guidelines to the preferred clearing methods for most problem plants. This information can be obtained from their website: <http://www.dwaf.gov.za/wfw/Control/>. The selection of appropriate methods of control shall be based on the species to be controlled, the size of the plants, the density of the stand, the accessibility of terrain and environmental safety.

Biological control of alien invasive species is an ongoing process with some biological control agents having been released on various alien invasive species showing varying degrees of success. Biological control options need to be carried out with specialist advice from academic or research institutes involved in research of alien invasive species.



Control options must take into account the species being controlled, as well as the ecosystem in which the control options are being applied. For instance, some of the herbicides registered for control of alien invasive species may not be used in riparian areas, while some should preferably be used in areas where natural grass cover occurs. Some herbicides should only be utilised after consultation with a Working for Water technical advisor.

The control options are discussed below as individual actions, but in many cases integrated measures (more than one (1) control measure) are taken for more effective control of alien invasive species.

The Department of Water and Sanitation proposes that the following methods of control for age or size target plants:

✦ Seedlings

Hand pulling or hoeing:

- ✦ Hand pulling/hoeing should be carried out in sparse stands.
- ✦ Seedlings should be severed below the soil surface or removed from the soil. Soil disturbance should be minimized to reduce re-germination.

Herbicides:

- ✦ Herbicides can be used on dense stands.

✦ Saplings

Hand pulling or hoeing:

- ✦ Where appropriate saplings can be removed manually as described above.

Herbicides:

- ✦ Foliar sprays can be carried out depending on the density of the stand. Fan nozzles should be fitted for overall spraying and solid cone nozzles for individual plant treatment. Spraying should be restricted to plants waist high or lower. Ensure there is sufficient foliage to carry the herbicide to the root system.
- ✦ Basal stem treatments of suitable herbicides in diesel can be carried out to the bottom 250 mm of the stem. Applications should be by means of a low pressure, coarse droplet spray from a narrow angle solid cone nozzle.
- ✦ Cut stump treatments can be used where stems are cut as low as practical. Herbicides are applied in diesel or water as recommended for the herbicide. Applications in diesel should be to the whole stump and exposed roots and in water to the cut area as recommended on the label.
- ✦ The application of herbicides should only be sprayed/used on site by a registered pest control officer.



✦ Mature Trees (trees above shoulder height or robust bushes 12 – 1 months or older)

Ring Barking:

- ✦ Bark must be removed from the bottom of the stem to a height of 0.75 – 1.0 m. All bark must be removed to below ground level for good results.
- ✦ Where clean de-barking is not possible due to crevices in the stem or where exposed roots are present, a combination of bark removal and basal stem treatment should be carried out.

Frilling or partial frilling:

- ✦ Cuts should be made through the bark into the sapwood by means of a light axe and a suitable herbicide must be applied into the cuts.

Basal stem treatments:

- ✦ Suitable herbicides should be applied in diesel to the base of the stem and to any exposed roots. Stems with a diameter up to 50 mm should be treated to a height of 250 mm and stems above 50 mm diameter to a height of 500 mm. This method is only suitable for stems up to 100 mm in diameter.

Cut stump treatment:

- ✦ Stumps should be cut as low as practical and the herbicide applied. Applications in diesel should be to the whole stump and exposed roots and in water to the cut area as recommended on the label.

When herbicides are chosen as the preferred control method the guidelines of Working for Water (DWS) as stipulated in the Policy on the Use of Herbicides for the Control of Alien Vegetation must be followed:

- ✦ Herbicides selected for control shall be registered for use on that species under the conditions specified.
- ✦ Protection of the environment is of prime importance. Riparian areas must be protected and only herbicides that are approved may be used. Washing of equipment or disposal of waste spray mixture is prohibited in or near water courses where contamination of water can occur.
- ✦ Empty herbicide containers must be disposed of as hazardous waste and may not be used for any other purpose.
- ✦ Equipment must be washed where there is no danger of contamination of a water source or natural vegetated area. It is proposed that washing be restricted to the wash bay.
- ✦ Product and spray mixtures should be stored so that it is inaccessible to the public. Site management must ensure that the Safety Data Sheet of the product is available on site.
- ✦ The application of herbicides should only be sprayed/used on site by a registered pest control officer.



### 4.3 CHEMICAL CONTROL

Chemical control requires the application of herbicides which can either be highly selective, or non-selective (inhibit certain plants or toxic to all plants respectively), or can be localised or systemic (act on the area where it is applied or attack areas of growth respectively). In most cases, herbicides utilised against alien invasive species are systemic.

Selective herbicides have been registered against specific alien invasive species and the plant names are shown on the labels. Many alien invasive species, however, do not have registered herbicides, and in such cases general herbicides such as Garlon 4 (used with wetter Actipron when applied as spray), Roundup, Mamba, Clearout, or Tumbleweed (the latter 4 on less woody species) can be tested but success is not guaranteed. When the test show positive results, it is suggested that the results be communicated to various research institutes (reference <http://www.wessa.org.za>).

Chemical control is at times the only viable option for the control of invasive species, and more often than not is more cost effective and less time-consuming than mechanical control options. If used incorrectly, chemical control can be damaging to the receiving environment and affect indigenous species negatively. Specialised equipment and training and/or supervision and, in some cases, technical advice are required.

#### **4.3.1 Control methods, equipment and safety precautions**

When applying herbicides, always follow dosage recommendations and application procedures described on the labels. Increasing dosages may have negative impacts on the receiving environment and may reduce the efficacy of the herbicide.

When applying herbicides, it is important to consider the following:

- ✦ Chemical control of alien plants is not recommended in aquatic systems due to the risk of pollution, but may be used on the floodplain in conjunction with cutting or slashing of plants;
- ✦ Chemicals should only be applied by qualified personnel;
- ✦ Only approved chemicals should be applied;
- ✦ Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully;
- ✦ Appropriate protective clothing must be worn;
- ✦ Chemicals to be applied immediately after cutting;
- ✦ Only designated spray bottles to be used for applying chemicals; and
- ✦ Decanting of chemicals and cleaning of equipment should be undertaken at a designated location using drip trays and ground sheets to prevent spillage and contamination of the soil.

**Do:**

- ✳ Spray when plants are actively growing;
- ✳ Ensure that herbicide is mixed according to label application rates (info on herbicides to use can be requested from Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or National Department of Agriculture or relevant entities);
- ✳ Ensure correct application of safety gear at all times;
- ✳ Plan the application of herbicides before the operation commences;
- ✳ Spray when the sun is shining;
- ✳ Use a drip sheet and keep herbicide in a demarcated area in the veld, out of direct sunlight;
- ✳ Apply spray to the canopy and stems;
- ✳ Include dye to assist in the identification of areas that have been cleared; and
- ✳ For certain species mainly, for foliar application, a wetting agent should be added to the herbicide mix to allow for better absorption.

**Do not:**

- ✳ Spray during strong wind, or where there is the slightest evidence of drift;
- ✳ Spray when it is very hot;
- ✳ Spray when plants are stressed or dormant;
- ✳ Spray plants that are over 1 m;
- ✳ Apply herbicide in the rain or on wet, damp leaves; and
- ✳ Spray near children, animals or water bodies.

In addition, it is always best to control invasive alien plants when the plants are young, rather than when it is woody and difficult to remove by hand. Furthermore, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between young invasive species and natural species, so care should be taken at all times. Consider engaging an experienced alien clearing team (Department of Water Affairs - Working for Water unit could offer assistance and expertise on how best to remove and manage alien plants on the property).



#### 4.3.1.1 Foliar Application

This method requires the herbicide to be sprayed onto leaves and young stems. The herbicide is sprayed in quantities on these plant parts to the extent just prior to running off the leaves and stems. In some instances, other agents are applied to increase the adhesiveness of the herbicide or to increase the liquidity of the herbicide. Sufficient foliage must be present for the herbicides to be effective and in cases of re-growth, minimum heights of 0.5 m need to be reached prior to application. Equipment will require adequate spray packs, proper measuring equipment to mix correct doses and safety gear, which will include at least rubber gloves, safety glasses and masks. Do not spray just before rain (a rainfall-free period of 6 hours is recommended) or before dew falls. Avoid spraying in windy weather as the spray may come into contact with non-target plants. Spraying dormant or drought stressed plants is not effective as they do not absorb enough of the herbicide.

#### 4.3.1.2 Basal Stem

This method is used for smaller woody species with thin stems (< 20 cm) and bark. The herbicides are mixed with diesel at dosages recommended on labels and applied to the stems from ground level to at least 0.3 m with a paint brush. Spraying can be used as an alternative. This method should also be applied to bark remnants left on the stem during strip-barking. Equipment will require adequate spray packs or paintbrushes, proper measuring equipment to mix correct doses and safety gear, which will include at least rubber gloves, safety glasses and masks.

#### 4.3.1.3 Frilling

This method is described in the mechanical control measures and repeated here as it is always accompanied by the application of herbicides. Herbicides are mixed with water at the recommended dosage and applied with a hand-held syringe or sprayer. Equipment will require adequate spray packs or syringes, proper measuring equipment to mix correct doses and safety gear, which will include at least rubber gloves, safety glasses and masks.



#### 4.3.1.4 Stem Injection

This method is limited for use on cacti. Four (4) holes (for a 2 m plant) are made near the base of the stem and around 2 ml of water-soluble herbicide solution, mixed at recommended dosage is poured in each hole. Equipment will require adequate syringes, proper measuring equipment to mix correct doses and safety gear, which will include at least rubber gloves, safety glasses and masks.

#### 4.3.1.5 Stump Application

This entails the application of herbicides to the cut stumps of felled trees. The stump should be short, level and smooth with all bark in place. Stems should be cut as low as practical and stipulated on the label. The herbicide should be mixed to the correct dosage and applied no later than twelve (12) hours after the felling. For cut stump applications, the herbicide should be closely sprayed onto the outer rings of the stump and the entire stump for stems < 50 mm wide. In specific instances herbicide will need to be applied to the cut surface, the sides and any exposed roots. Equipment will require adequate spray packs, proper measuring equipment to mix correct doses and safety gear, which will include at least rubber gloves, safety glasses and masks. Herbicides are applied in diesel or water as recommended for the herbicide. Applications in diesel should be to the whole stump and exposed roots and in water to the cut area as recommended on the label.





#### 4.3.1.6 Stalk Immersion

There are currently no alien invasive species which have herbicides registered against them for this particular method. It may be successful on climbers and should be tried if mechanical control options are unsuccessful or difficult. The method includes the cutting of main stems at <1 m height, the digging up of roots or treatment of roots with herbicide and the placement of an inverted plastic bottle containing herbicide over the stem. The bottle should be secured in place and checked regularly to see if herbicide is still present. The generic herbicides mentioned above can be tested for this method. A hazardous sign or tape should be placed around the bottle. Equipment will require adequate plastic bottles, proper measuring equipment to mix correct doses and safety gear, which will include at least rubber gloves, safety glasses and masks.

#### 4.3.1.7 Soil application

This requires the application of herbicides to soils and should only be utilised by technical specialists.

### 4.3.2 **Registered herbicides that can be utilised**

Various herbicides are mentioned in



**Table 1** below. Many alien invasive species do not have specific registered herbicides which have been properly researched and tested. In these instances, only mechanical measures have been discussed but the general herbicides listed in can be tried against these species, although success may not be guaranteed.



**Table 1:** List of herbicides, which can be used for control of alien invasive species and problem plants

TRADE NAME	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	GENERAL COMMENTS
Mamba 360 SL	Glyphosphate isopropylammonium salt	360 g/l	Can be used as a general herbicide.
Touchdown Forte	Glyphosphate trimesium	480 g/l	
Viroaxe	Triclopyr butoxyethyl ester	480 g/l	Do not apply in riparian areas. Use preferentially in grassy areas.
Garlon 480 EC	Triclopyr butoxyethyl ester	480 g/l	Can be used as a general herbicide. Use preferentially in grassy areas. Use Actipron for wetter spray applications.
Timbrel 360 SL	Triclopyr triethylammonium salt	360 g/l	Do not apply in riparian areas. Consult working for water technical advisor.
Stumpout	Mycoherbicide		
Chopper SL	Imazapyr	100 g/l	Do not apply in riparian areas
Access 240 SL	Picloram potassium salt	240g/l	Needs to be used in selected areas only. Consult working for water technical advisor.
Roundup	Glyphosphate isopropylammonium salt	450 g/l	Can be used as a general herbicide.
Clearout	Glyphosphate isopropylammonium salt	360 g/l	Can be used as a general herbicide.
Tumbleweed	Glyphosphate isopropylammonium salt	240 g/l	Can be used as a general herbicide.
Taskforce	Flupropanate, present as sodium salt	745g/l	
Starane 200	Fluroxypyr	200 g/l	

***N.B. A PCO should always be consulted before applying herbicides to the environment. Always wear the appropriate safety clothing when working with herbicides. Mix all herbicides on a drip groundsheet when working in the veld. Keep away from watercourses. Do not rinse herbicide equipment in the veld. Always read the herbicide label and observe instructions for safe use of herbicide.***



### 4.3.3 *Mycoherbicides*

A mycoherbicide is applied as an herbicide but is not a chemical agent. It is instead a mixture of fungal spores which tend to be host-specific and on application these spores penetrate the plant where the fungus germinates. The pathogen may result in the killing of the undesirable plant. One (1) mycoherbicide, Stumpout, has been registered for application to various wattle species stumps.

## 4.4 MECHANICAL CONTROL

Mechanical control means the physical removal of plants from the problem area. It is often accompanied by chemical control although these are further discussed below. Some common mechanical control methods include uprooting, hand pulling, felling, slashing, mowing, ring barking, bark stripping and frilling. It is an effective method if applied frequently, but is labour intensive during times when infestation levels are high, and requires constant follow-up. An advantage is that mechanical control requires minimal technical knowledge, little training and/or supervision. Also, with effective rehabilitation of areas concerned, the disturbance to the environment is minimal, as no other active agents were introduced to the environment.

### 4.4.1 *Control Methods, Equipment and Safety Precautions*

When applying mechanical control methods, it is important to consider the following:

- ✦ Always start at the highest point and work downwards i.e. downhill or downstream;
- ✦ Start from the edge of the infestation and work towards the centre;
- ✦ Take care to prevent the spread of cuttings, which could take root further downstream;
- ✦ Ensure all root material is removed;
- ✦ Once plants have been removed, banks and slopes should be stabilised by erosion protection measures (such as geotextiles or other suitable material); and
- ✦ When stacking material, take note of fire protection measures and remember to always stack the material in rows.



#### 4.4.1.1 Uprooting and Hand Pulling

Hand pulling is most effective where plants are small (30 cm), immature or shallow rooted. This entails the physical removal of plants by grabbing them at their base and pulling them out of the ground with their roots. In some situations, the root systems will need to be dug out, and hoes, spades and pick-axes may be required. This process should preferably be conducted when plants are not seeding. If this is not possible, the seed heads should be carefully removed and disposed of prior to the control method being applied. Thick leather gloves and safety glasses should be worn during this process.

#### 4.4.1.2 Felling

In situations where trees are on a slope or in a precarious situation, the species must be controlled *in situ* and not felled. This control option entails the physical removal of woody plants using chainsaws, axes or machetes. Preferably de-branch cut trees. Generally, the plants are cut as low to the ground as possible, but this does vary with some species. Again, gloves and safety glasses should be used during this process and training may be required with felling of large trees as safety precautions has to be adhered to. Herbicides must immediately be applied (no later than 30 min) to the cambium layer; and all the cuts in the cambium layer must be treated. This control measure may be accompanied with chemical control measures where applicable.

#### 4.4.1.3 Slashing and mowing

This method is most effective for plants in the immature stage, or for plants that have relatively woody stems/trunks. This is an effective method for non-resprouters or in the case of resprouters (coppicing), if done in conjunction with chemical treatment of the cut stumps. This is the physical removal of herbaceous plants from the base using machetes or lawn mowers. This process should preferably be conducted when plants are not seeding. If this is not possible, the seed heads should be carefully removed and disposed of prior to control method being applied. Gloves and safety glasses should be worn during this process. Use tools such as pangas (slashers), handsaws, bow-saws, chainsaws, brush cutters and axes.



#### 4.4.1.4 Ring barking and bark stripping

This entails the removal of bark from the base of the stem (from below the soil layer) to a height of about 1 m. In some instances, the cambium (include the cork layer) is also removed in a 30 cm wide band around the stem at a height of around 50 cm. Bush knives or hatchets should be used for debarking and safety gear should include at least gloves and safety glasses. This control measure may be accompanied with chemical control measures where applicable.

Application of suitable herbicide in diesel can be carried out to the bottom 250 mm of the stem. Applications should be by means of a low pressure, coarse droplet spray from a narrow angle solid cone nozzle or by using a paintbrush. If multi stemmed, then each stem needs to be treated. Remove the bark and cambium around the trunk of the tree for a continuous band around the tree at least 25 cm wide, starting as low as possible. Where clean de-barking is not possible due to crevices in the stem or where exposed roots are present, a combination of bark removal and basal stem treatments should be carried out; and for better control of aggressively coppicing species pull off the bark below the cut to ground level (bark stripping), to avoid the use of herbicides.

**Note: Since this method means that the tree is left standing, it is only recommended for single trees, not for stands.**

Slashers or axes should be used for debarking. Where bark stripping is used, then all the bark shall be stripped from the trunk between the ground level and 1 meter above ground level; and application of suitable herbicide can also be used with this method. Applications should be by means of a low pressure, coarse droplet spray from a narrow angle solid cone nozzle or by using a paintbrush.

#### 4.4.1.5 Frilling

This method uses an axe or bush knife which cut into the bark and cambium layer at angles in a ring around the tree. The cuts are made around 0.5 m above ground.



The cuts should be right through the cambium layer and form a solid ring of cuts around the trunk of the tree. Immediately apply the registered herbicide to the cuts by spraying into the 'frill'. The 'frill' needs to be deep enough to retain the herbicide.

This method is always accompanied by chemical control measures. Safety glasses and gloves should be worn.

#### 4.4.1.6 Grubbing/ hoeing/ digging out/ tree poppers

Grubbing, hoeing, or digging involves the use of a hoe, stick, tree popper or spade. The entire plant and root must be removed. Use the following method:

- ✦ Dig around the plant making sure the sand is loosened around the root system;
- ✦ Dig down, under the roots, applying pressure, and wrench the entire plant out;
- ✦ Kicking the plant may help to dislodge it, however, care should be taken if the plant is seeding, as dry seeds may be dislodged; and
- ✦ Stockpile removed material into piles of 2 m high, 3 m wide windrows/stacks.

## 4.5 BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

Biological control is an attempt to introduce the plant's natural enemies (such as pathogens, invertebrates and vertebrates) to its new habitat, with the assumption that these natural enemies will remove the plant's competitive advantage until its vigour is reduced to a level comparable to that of the natural vegetation.

This method is considered because:

- ✦ It is environmentally responsible as it does not cause pollution and affects only the target plant;
- ✦ It is cost-effective;
- ✦ It does not disturb the soil or create large empty areas where other invaders could establish, as it does not kill all the target plants at once; and
- ✦ It allows the natural vegetation to recover gradually in the shelter of the dying weeds.



Natural enemies that are used for biological control are called bio-control agents. In the control of invasive plants, the bio-control agents used most frequently insects, mites and pathogens (disease-causing organisms such as fungi). Bio-control agents target specific plant organs, such as the vegetative parts of the plant (its leaves, stems or roots) or the reproductive parts (flowers, fruits or seeds). The choice of bio-control agents depends on the aim of the control project. If the aim is to eradicate the invasive plant species, scientists select the types of bio-control agents available which will cause the most damage. In such projects, scientists may use agents that affect the vegetative parts of the plant as well as agents that reduce seed production. However, if the target plant is useful in certain situations but becomes a pest when uncontrolled, conflict of interests arises regarding biological control. This conflict is usually resolved by avoiding bio-control agents that have the ability of causing damage to the useful part of the plant, and instead using only seed-reducing agents.

These reduce the reproductive potential of the plants, curb their dispersal and reduce the follow-up work needed after clearing, while still allowing for the continued utilisation of the plant. For instance, trees are normally grown for their wood, but the seeds are seldom utilised. If seeds are needed to replant a plantation, a seed orchard can be specially protected against the bio-control agents in the same way as other crops are protected against insect pests.

If, on the other hand, the pods are the most valuable part of the tree, as in the case of mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.), bio-control agents can be selected that will prevent pod production. The seed-feeding beetles that were introduced against mesquite prevent only the germination of seeds from animal droppings, without significantly reducing the nutritional value of the pods, and in other words do not prevent pod or seed production. Bio-control agents are mostly introduced from the country of origin of the plant. The bio-control method is considered to be the safe and environmentally friendly control method due to the methodology and care taken into implementing it.

#### **4.5.1 Implementing Biological Control**

Before the official release of a bio-control agent in South Africa, extensive studies are carried out in a quarantine facility to ensure the agent will not damage other, non-target plants.





A bio-control agent is only released once it has been proved as sufficiently host-specific for release in this country. Tested and approved bio-control agents therefore do not pose a threat to our own crops or indigenous vegetation, or to those of neighbouring countries. No cases have occurred of weed bio-control agents changing their host plant affinities after their release in a new country to include plants other than those known to be acceptable hosts.

#### **4.5.2 Effectiveness of Biological Control Method**

Probably without exception, bio-control agents do not completely exterminate populations of their host plants. At best, they can be expected to reduce the weed density to an acceptable level or to reduce the vigour and/or reproductive potential of individual plants. The fact that a few host plants always survive, in spite of the attack by a bio-control agent, actually ensures that the agent does not die out as a result of a lack of food. The small population of bio-control agents that persists will disperse onto any re-growth or newly-emerged seedlings of the weed. For this reason, bio-control can be regarded as a sustainable control method. Biological control works relatively slowly. On average, at least five years should be allowed for a bio-control agent to establish successfully before causing significant damage to its host plant. Unfortunately, not all growth of invasive plant species can be curbed purely by biological control. It could happen that effective bio-control agents do exist, but cannot be released in South Africa because they are not sufficiently host-specific.

Alternatively, the invasive plant might be a man-made hybrid between two or more species, and is no longer an acceptable host to the natural enemies of either of the parent plants. It could also happen that the natural enemies of some plants are not adapted to all the climatic regions in which the plant is a problem in South Africa, or that the habitat already contains predators or parasitoids that attack the bio-control agents. In such cases, biological control will have to be replaced or supplemented by chemical or other control measures.



#### 4.5.3 *Integrating Biological Control into Weed Management*

In some instances, bio-control agents may effectively control a weed on their own. In other cases, the bio-control agents should be incorporated into a more comprehensive weed control programme that might include other methods of control such as chemical and mechanical control as well as utilisation of products of the weed. To make optimal use of the available bio-control agents, the following points should be considered:

- ✦ The possible use of bio-control agents should be kept in mind during the planning phase of any weed control program; and
- ✦ The person in charge of planning must find out which agents are available, what they do and how to use them. One then has to consider how best to integrate the use of the bio-control agents with the other control methods.

#### 4.5.4 *Biological Control Agent Reserves or Refugia*

The mechanical or chemical clearing of large weed infestations may eliminate any bio-control agents present on the weed in that area. It is therefore essential to establish small reserves of healthy, mature plants on which the agents can survive and reproduce and from which they can spread onto plants that may have escaped the clearing process.

Some agents disperse rapidly on their own and can readily colonise extensive areas, while others; such as *cochineal* insects and mealy bugs have to be collected manually from the reserves and released in the target areas. Therefore, a person involved in cactus bio-control should always remove some insect-infested cactus plant material and distribute it to healthy cactus before the *cochineal* or mealy bugs have destroyed their host plants in a specific area. This ensures that the bio-control agents do not become extinct locally, but maintain their presence in the area to colonise re-growth.

#### 4.6 HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF PLANT DEBRIS OR MATERIAL

The unwanted plant material from mechanical or chemical clearing should not be kept on site as it attributes to the fire risk by providing fuel. Therefore, the following handling and disposal method could be utilized as some of the debris can offer services and some can be completely disposed of:



#### 4.6.1 *Stacking*

- ✦ Stacking the cut material in heaps, or in windrows along slope contours to reduce erosion, facilitates easy access for follow-up. It also assists in containing the resulting fuel load and therefore the risk of uncontrolled fire;
- ✦ Keep stacks well apart to prevent fires from crossing easily; not less than five meters apart, this is naturally dependant on the size of the stack and the resulting fire intensity when they burn. Stockpile removed material into piles of 2 m high, 3 m wide windrows/stacks;
- ✦ Stack light branches separately from heavy timber (75 mm and more). Preferably remove heavy branches to reduce long burning fuel loads that can result in soil damage from intensely hot fire; and
- ✦ Do not make stacks under trees, power and telephone lines, within 30 meters of a fire belt or near watercourses, houses and other infrastructure.

#### 4.6.2 *Disposal*

- ✦ Plant material should be used beneficially wherever possible, as opposed to disposing it at a landfill site where it takes up valuable airspace;
- ✦ Woody and dry material, provided no seeds are present, can be chipped and used as mulch or made available to the local community for firewood;
- ✦ Wet material and aquatic weeds should be combined with other organic matter and composted. Alternatively, it may be possible to use it for basket making, animal feed or other uses.
- ✦ Material which cannot be used beneficially must be disposed of at a registered and approved disposal site.
- ✦ When removing material, take care to remove all debris, including shoots and seeds.

### 4.7 CONTROL PHASES

Alien invasive plant species removal should ideally adopt a hands on approach. The combination of two or all three control methods could prove more effective than using one control method in combating the problematic plant species. Therefore, it is advisable that landowners should:

- ✦ not allow conditions to develop on their land that will contribute to the spread of a wildfire;
- ✦ remove invasive alien plants that create large fuel loads or cause fires to burn intensely;
- and



- ✦ take steps to fireproof their property and possessions. These apply especially to those living on the edge of open areas or in close proximity to fire prone areas.

Furthermore, any control programme for alien vegetation must include the following three phases;

1. **Initial control:** drastic reduction of existing population;
2. **Follow-up control:** control of seedlings, root suckers and coppice growth; and
3. **Maintenance control:** sustain low alien plant numbers with annual control.

The initial control in most cases, involves mechanical methods and in the case of heavy infestation, machinery could be used. The initial control is a drastic measure to reduce the number of adult and large invasive plants.

The follow-up control serves are measures to reduce the ability of the mechanically removed plant species for coppice or having the infestation proliferate such as to negate the efforts of initial control. Therefore, follow up control of alien seedlings and coppice re-growth is essential to achieve and sustain the progress made with initial control work.

Maintenance control entails regular monitoring to prevent the occurrence of re-colonisation or re-infestation. The monitoring should take place timeously so to prevent infestation of the cleared area by another alien invasive plant species.

## **7. ALIEN INVASIVE PLANT ERADICATION TOOL**

Working for Water provides the site manager with an implementation tool to control problem species and keep the site free of invasive plants:

Step 1: Conduct Site Assessment;

- ✦ Identify areas where alien invasive species need to be eradicated and controlled. Take pictures of these sites so as to have a pre-control photographic reference of the site. In this way comparisons can be made at later stages to see if control measures are adequate.

Step 2: Set objectives based on resources available and priorities:

- ✦ Prioritize management of plants according to the categories stipulated in the AIS regulations.



- ✳ Consider control options that will be applied in these areas. Consider integrated approaches and ensure approaches are not conflicting with each other. Also consider safety aspects such as trees on a slope which should not be felled but treated *in situ*.

Step 3: Develop and implement an action plan to achieve objectives:

- ✳ The plan must be long term and should include a clearing plan that includes follow up actions for rehabilitation of the cleared area.
- ✳ The site plan should include a map showing the areas invested with problem plants.
- ✳ Lighter invested areas should be cleared first to prevent the build-up of seed banks, while the control plan works progressively towards the areas with denser stands.
- ✳ Educate workers on the species that needs to be eradicated, as well as the specific method to be used.
- ✳ Conduct control of invasive plant species.
- ✳ Remove plant remains to a suitable disposal area.
- ✳ Prevent dispersal of seeds.
- ✳ Strive for collective management and planning with neighbours to prevent seed dispersal of problem plants across boundaries.
- ✳ When removing alien invasive species from infested areas, always work from lower infested areas towards more infested areas and from higher-lying areas to lower areas;
- ✳ Try to remove alien invasive species when they are not seeding. If seeding, then seed heads should first be carefully removed and disposed of in a sealed bag so as not to spread the seeds;
- ✳ If soils are disturbed during the process, then these should be carefully levelled, slightly pressed down and covered with leaf litter or cut vegetation that is seed-free. Some alien invasive species release chemicals that suppress growth of other plants and these should not be utilised as leaf litter under any circumstances. The soil can also be re-seeded with indigenous vegetation;
- ✳ To reduce the risk of spread via seeds, flowers should be removed from the plants prior to seeding. To prevent further infestations, remove seeds, fruits, bulbs, corms, tubers and any other vegetative parts that may root from the site in sealed bags and dispose of safely. In some instances, these parts should be burnt on site immediately;



- ✦ Consider herbicide practices to integrate with physical removal where possible, with use of generic herbicides on alien invasive species without registered herbicides;
- ✦ Consider the uses of plants that will be removed. Options such as its potential for compost heaps (as long as it is seed free), potential as leaf litter (as long as it is seed free) and possible options for timber and cork markets. As stated earlier, some alien invasive species release chemicals that suppress growth of other plants and these should not be utilised as leaf litter under any circumstances.

Step 4: Monitor performance and change actions if necessary

- ✦ Conduct monthly inspections to enable early detection of grow back.
- ✦ Regularly follow up on areas where infestations were treated and re-apply control measures if necessary. Once again, take photographs of sites regularly and keep records of actions that were taken so that evidence is in place with regard to control measures that were successful and those that were not.
- ✦ Consider rehabilitation of area cleared of invasive species at every stage of the control programme and consider the need to re-introduce local indigenous species to help the natural ecology stabilise within the areas.
- ✦ Consider training of employees. Courses range from introductory and awareness courses to those that qualify individuals as alien invasive control officers.



**Table 2: Alien invader plants control plan to be implemented by site management**

ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS CONTROL PLAN		
Method / Procedures	Equipment	Responsibility
<b>1. PLANT IDENTIFICATION AND LISTING</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ The site must be visually inspected for alien plant species and the observed AIP's must be listed.</li> <li>✦ All observed and identified plant species should be categorised according to the list contained Appendix 1 and be removed according to the methods stipulated under heading 2 and 3 of this table.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Camera</li> <li>✦ Global Positioning System (GPS)</li> <li>✦ AIPs and problem plants identification guides such as Bromilow's <i>Problem Plants of South Africa: A guide to the identification and control of invasive plants</i> as well as Henderson's <i>Alien Weeds and invasive plants – Complete guide to declared weeds and invaders in South Africa</i>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stage 1:</b> Identification and listing should be done by site management utilizing the suggested field guides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Time frame – for the duration of the operational and decommissioning phases.</li> <li>✦ AIPs are opportunistic species that will use the gap created by project disturbance to spread and establish themselves. Therefore, a monthly monitoring regime, to assess alien invasion, should be maintained</li> </ul>
<b>2. CONTROL OF AIPS</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Site management shall appoint a suitably qualified specialist and/or contractor who will be able to distinguish between the invasive and indigenous plant and clear the alien invasion.</li> <li>✦ Four methods can be applied for alien infestation clearing as stipulated by DWS:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Mechanical control;</li> <li>✦ Chemical control;</li> <li>✦ Biological control;</li> <li>✦ Integrated control.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ It is advised that an experienced alien invasive removal contractor be appointed as there is a need to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Train personnel on how to handle machinery used in mechanical control;</li> <li>✦ Train personnel to handle, mix and apply the herbicides used for chemical control; and</li> <li>✦ Provide guidance on which insects or pathogens to use if management opts for biological control.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Stage 2:</b> Site management is advised to liaise with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) Alien Invasive Plants Early Detection and Rapid Response (AIP EDRR) Unit (contact: 021 799 8837 or <a href="mailto:alienplants@sanbi.org.za">alienplants@sanbi.org.za</a>) on the management of AIPs found on the property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Time frame: Operational-, and decommissioning phases as well as the 12 month after care period of the mine.</li> <li>✦ Furthermore, liaison could be established with the Agricultural Research Council - Plant Protection Research Institute (ARC-PPRI) based in Rietondale with regards to guidance on the use of biological control organisms (contacts: Dr Stefan Nesor at <a href="mailto:nesers@arc.agric.za">nesers@arc.agric.za</a>, Dr David Simelane at <a href="mailto:simelaned@arc.agric.za">simelaned@arc.agric.za</a>, Dr Alan Urban at <a href="mailto:urbana@arc.agric.za">urbana@arc.agric.za</a>)</li> </ul>



**Table 2:** Alien invader plants control plan to be implemented by site management

ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS CONTROL PLAN		
Method / Procedures	Equipment	Responsibility
		or call 012 356 9800). * Management can access the DWA-WfW website to download treatment guides for terrestrial AIPs or those identified at the site. Or, to request a clearing form/application for the WfW personnel to clear the site.
<b>3. REMOVAL METHODS FOR AIPS</b>		
* All Category 1a & b species shall be removed from the site on a continuous basis.  Method for removal of seedlings: * Seedlings and new sprouts should be removed by hand and not be allowed to reach seed bearing age. * Seedling should be removed when the soil is wet, preferably after rainfall;  Method for removal of mature plants: * Mature plants must be cut off using a chainsaw or brush cutter as close as possible to the ground. * Herbicides can be used for application to the stump.	* Chainsaw or brush cutter is recommended (N.B. Training is crucial for operating these machines).	<b>Stage 3:</b> Site management is responsible for removal of all AIPs as indicated in the methods. * Time frame: Operational-, and decommissioning phases as well as the 12 month after care period of the mine.  * For mechanical removal of mature plants, a trained and experienced individual should be used to operate the equipment.
<b>4. DISPOSAL OF AIP CUTS OR MATERIAL</b>		
* All alien plants removed	* Preferably a contractor	<b>Stage 4:</b> The proponent should seek a





**Table 2:** Alien invader plants control plan to be implemented by site management

ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS CONTROL PLAN		
Method / Procedures	Equipment	Responsibility
<p>from the site are to be disposed of at an approved or licensed waste disposal site if no alternative use for the plant material can be identified;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Alternatively, the removed plants can be buried in a trench of at least 1 m deep. Grow-back will need to be controlled in this area, preferably with herbicides.</li> <li>✦ Logs or wood can be donated to the landowner or community;</li> <li>✦ Non-seeding woody aliens can be retained and used for dust control purposes (i.e. act as windbreakers) or soil stabilisers;</li> <li>✦ Cut plant material should be removed from site within three days, to lower fire potential; and</li> <li>✦ Burning of dried alien vegetation should not be allowed on site.</li> </ul>	<p>should be appointed for this aspect.</p>	<p>contractor to oversee this phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Time frame: Throughout control phase when deemed necessary, or at least monthly.</li> <li>✦ Record keeping:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ There should be a record of the dates the disposal truck collects the plant waste material;</li> <li>✦ License for the disposal site; and</li> <li>✦ License for the company tasked with collecting and disposing of the plant waste material.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>5. EARLY DETECTION AND RAPID RESPONSE (EDRR)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ This aims to allow site management to detect and respond to new alien infestation before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ GPS;</li> <li>✦ Camera; and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stage 5:</b> Site management is responsible to ensure that the mining area is protected from alien invasion.</p>



**Table 2:** Alien invader plants control plan to be implemented by site management

ALIEN INVASIVE PLANTS CONTROL PLAN		
Method / Procedures	Equipment	Responsibility
<p>it escalates;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A monthly inspection should be established to monitor AIP infestation in areas that were re-vegetated.</li> <li>* Seedlings should be removed as explained under heading 2 before they establish and start to produce seeds;</li> <li>* EDRR should be applied in all the project areas and mostly in areas that are newly disturbed; and</li> <li>* AIPs should not be allowed to establish and mature as the bigger they become they more expensive it becomes to control.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Garden fork and gloves for loosening the soil and removing the seedlings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Time frame: Operational-, and decommissioning phases as well as the 12 month after care period of the mine.</li> </ul>



## 8. SITE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

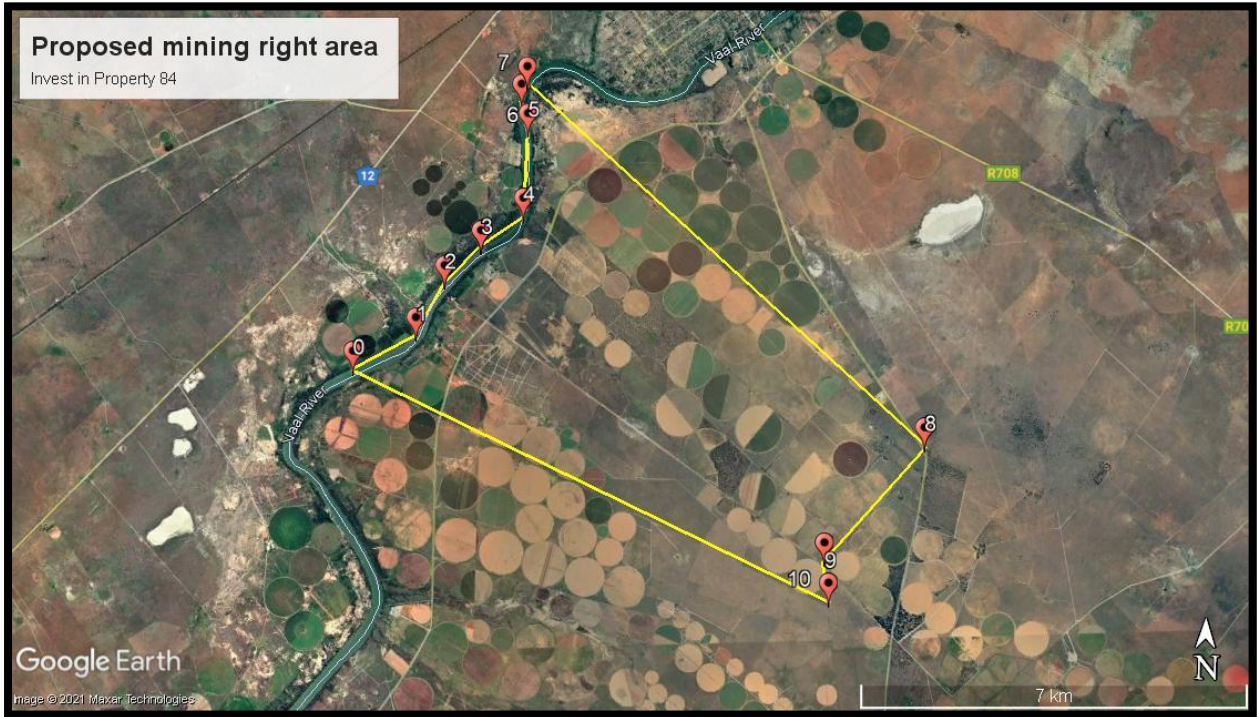
According to the Ecological and Wetland Assessment conducted by DPR Ecologist and Environmental Services dated November 2021 (attached as appendix H) it is evident that the majority of the site has been transformed by agricultural and mining operations. This would therefore increase the conservation value of those portions of remaining natural vegetation, i.e. the less habitat remains, the rarer it will be, the higher the conservation value will become. However, when looking at available resources it is evident that the vegetation types on the site, Kimberley Thornveld and Highveld Alluvial Vegetation is not currently regarded as rare or endangered and still covers large areas of the region.

The Free State Province Biodiversity Management Plan (2015) regards the site as being of Ecological Support Area (ESA) 1 and 2 as well as Degraded and Other categories and do not contain Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) which would be of high conservation value (Appendix A: Map 2 of Appendix H). Despite this, natural areas do still contain some elements of conservation value such as a range of protected succulent and geophytic species and large and old specimens of the protected *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn).

Given the fairly low conservation value of remaining natural areas on the site, this will decrease the impact that mining operations will have on the loss of habitat and species diversity. However, from previous mining operations it is also clear that mining operations cause significant impacts and result in the transformation of natural areas. By the nature of alluvial diamond mining, i.e. removal of the vegetation and modification of the soils profile, it results in the irreversible transformation of the ecosystem. However, given the fairly uniform soil conditions and habitats on the site and provided that comprehensive rehabilitation is undertaken, it may be possible to re-instate a somewhat similar vegetation composition after mining has ceased. This will also entail the re-instatement of the natural topography as far as possible as well as the correct management of topsoil. Mining also results in high levels of disturbance and consequently, the establishment of exotic weeds and invasive species and the eradication and monitoring of these should also form an important part of the management of mining and rehabilitation operations.



The Free State Province Biodiversity Management Plan (2015) regards the site as being of Ecological Support Area (ESA) 1 and 2 as well as Degraded and Other categories and do not contain Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) which would be of high conservation value (Appendix A: Map 2 of Appendix H). Despite this, natural areas do still contain some elements of conservation value such as a range of protected succulent and geophytic species and large and old specimens of the protected *Vachellia erioloba* (Camel Thorn).



**Figure 1:** Satellite view of the proposed mining area, where the yellow polygon indicates the mining boundary. (Figure obtained from Google Earth)

The following species of concern has been known to likely occur within the mining boundary:

Listed invader Plants:

- *Opuntia ficus-indica* (NEMBA – Category 1b)
- *Argemone ochroleuca*, (NEMBA – Category 1b)
- *Opuntia humifusa*, (NEMBA – Category 1b)
- *Verbena bonariensis*, (NEMBA – Category 1b)
- *Gleditsia triacanthos*, (NEMBA – Category 1b)
- *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, (Cat 1b or cat 2 dependent on environment)
- *Cirsium vulgare*, (NEMBA – Category 1b)
- *Datura ferox*, (NEMBA – Category 1b)
- *Cylindropuntia imbricata*, (NEMBA – Category 1b)



- *Tamarix ramosissima* (Category 1 in Northern Cape, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Category 3 in rest of SA NEMBA – Category 1b)

Exotic species (not listed)

- *Bidens bipinnata*,
- *Tagetes minuta*.

As everyone isn't familiar with the identification of plant species, photographs of the most important species to be controlled at the quarry was included below for ease of reference. Site management can refer to the species listed in Appendix 1 of this document for the proposed management/control methods to be applied.

***Opuntia ficus-indica***



***Argemone ochroleuca*,**





*Opuntia humifusa,*



*Bidens bipinnata*







***Verbena bonariensis***

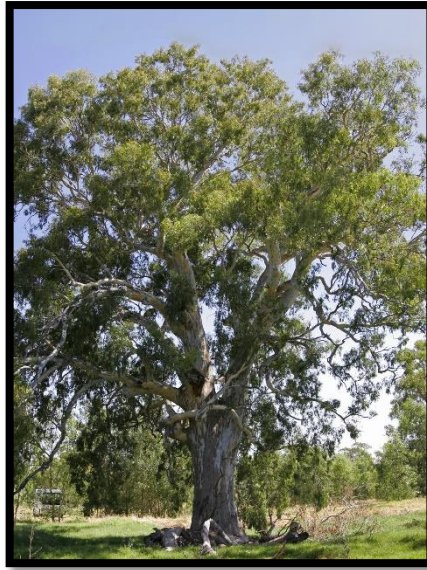


***Gleditsia triacanthos***



***Eucalyptus camaldulensis***



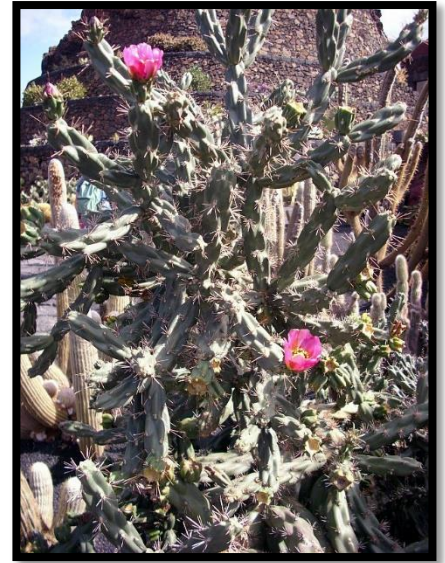


*Cirsium vulgare,*



*Cylindropuntia imbricate*





*Tamarix ramosissima*



*Tagetes minuta*





*Datura ferox*







## **9. REHABILITATION OF RECLAIMED AREA**

Monitoring and maintenance of reclaimed areas are important to establish the necessity of follow-up operations. It is preferable to follow up on a reclaimed area and remove all seedlings or treat re-sprouting plants prior to the treatment of a new area.

Denuded areas where eradication of weeds/invader species was done needs to be rehabilitated to ensure soil conservation and prevent erosion. Denuded areas also have a much higher potential of re-infestation than areas that has been vegetated with indigenous plant species.

It is proposed by the ecologist that the topsoil and seedbank must be managed in an appropriate manner for it to be able to be restored to its previous state.

As invasive plant species can lay dormant until favourable conditions arise, monitoring of re-vegetated areas is of extreme importance and should be implemented at least quarterly. Accurate records of monitoring and maintenance actions and associated costs should be compiled to assist with future planning.

## **10. REFERENCES**

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## APPENDIX 1

# PROPOSED MANAGEMENT/CONTROL METHODS FOR THE MOST COMMON ALIEN INVADER PLANT SPECIES





**Argemone ochroleuca (White flowered Mexican poppy)**



<b>Category:</b>	Category 1 NEMBA – Category 1b
<b>Form:</b>	Herb
<b>Distribution:</b>	Throughout South Africa
<b>General Description:</b>	A very spiny annual herb growing up to 90cm high with stems that exude a yellow sap when cut. Grey or bluish-green spiny leaves with prominent white veins. Pale yellow or creamy white flowers appear from September to January. Spiny, oblong green fruit capsules turn.
<b>Origin &amp; Problem:</b>	Mexico. Prolific in disturbed sites and competes with agricultural crops and indigenous species. This plant contaminates crop seed and the spiny fruits and leaf tips can adhere to the wool of sheep. The seeds and parts of the plant are poisonous to humans and livestock.
<b>Control Measures:</b>	<u>Biological control:</u> Various insect agents are being tested. <u>Chemical:</u> Herbicides containing picloram are affective against seedlings. <u>Mechanical:</u> Physical removal of plants prior to seeding. Removal of seed heads prior to seeding. Light tillage can destroy seedlings.
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	Photographic evidence should be kept and photographs taken on each site visit in areas of heavy infestation. Sites will need to be revisited monthly (more frequent if necessary) to cut back stems that are starting to flower and for any re-growth. With the removal of plants soils may become exposed and should be re-vegetated with grasses or indigenous.
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	Indigenous grasses or herbs



***Cirsium vulgare (Spear/Scotch thistle)***



<b>Category:</b>	Existing legislation: CARA 2002 – Category 1 NEMBA – Category 1b
<b>Distribution:</b>	Common throughout the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West Provinces
<b>Uses:</b>	No, this is a problem weed
<b>Spread By:</b>	Seed dispersal - birds eat the seeds and also collect the silky plumes for their nests. Seeds are also spread when caught up in bales of contaminated stock feed
<b>Impact:</b>	It causes heavy infestations that reduce the carrying capacity of the veld and can cause injury to man and animals
<b>Form:</b>	Herb
<b>General Description:</b>	Spiny, herbaceous biennial which forms a large, flat rosette of leaves and a deep tap root in the first year and numerous branched stems up to 1,5m high in the second year. Stems have spiny wings. Dark green leaves with stiff hairs above and white woolly beneath. Pink to mauve thistle-like flowers surrounded by spiny bracts appear from September to April. This plant invades grassland, roadsides, vlei and dam margins and river banks in cool, high rainfall areas General description: Branching, erect biennial growing up to 1,5m tall. Leaves: Leaves are deeply lobed and hairy – there are coarse hairs on the leaf tops and woolly hairs on the underside. Flowers: Flower heads are ‘gumdrop’ shaped and spines extend all around the base of the flower heads. Flowering occurs from September to April. Fruit/Seeds: Grey with longitudinal darker markings, smooth
<b>Control Measures:</b>	<u>Chemical:</u> Herbicides containing picloram are affective against seedlings. <u>Mechanical:</u> Physical removal of plants prior to seeding. Removal of seed heads prior to seeding.
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	Photographic evidence should be kept and photographs taken on each site visit in areas of heavy infestation. Sites will need to be revisited monthly (more frequent if necessary) to cut back stems that are starting to flower and for any re-growth. With the removal of plants soils may become exposed and should be re-vegetated with grasses or indigenous species of the genera below.
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	<i>Ceratotheca triloba</i> <i>Vernonia sp.</i>





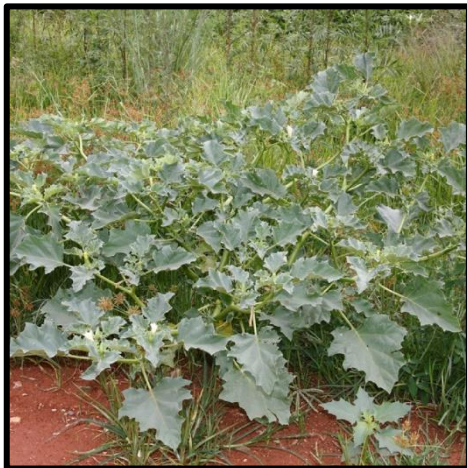
***Cylindropuntia imbricata* (Cactaceae) (Imbricate prickly pear)**



<b>Category:</b>	Existing legislation: CARA 2002 – Category 1 NEMBA – Category 1b
<b>Distribution:</b>	All provinces of South Africa
<b>Spread by:</b>	Seed dispersal.
<b>Impact:</b>	Competes with and replaces indigenous species. Dense infestations reduce the grazing potential and hence the carrying capacity of the land. Thickets restrict access of domestic and wild animals. The very spiny cladodes adhere to passing animals and the barbed spines can penetrate their skin and feet causing severe injuries. Spines become entangled in sheep’s wool and cause downgrading of the wool. All these factors combine to cause the drastic devaluation of agricultural land.
<b>Form:</b>	Succulent Shrub
<b>General Description:</b>	General description: Spiny, much-branched succulent shrub up to 2m high with an erect main stem. Leaves: Small leaves. Flowers: Showy purple-red flowers appear from November to January. Fruit/seeds: Yellow succulent fruit.
<b>Control Measures:</b>	<u>Mechanical:</u> Seedlings & saplings: Hand pull. All plants: Cut close to ground. <u>Chemical:</u> control is possible with several herbicides, such as MSMA and glyphosphate. However, continues to be kept under control by the use of the Cactoblastis moth and a cochineal insect, <i>Dactylopius opuntiae</i> . Special control measures are rarely required. Cochineal insects are not very mobile so isolated plants must be inoculated manually by placing an infected cladode on top of the plant to be controlled.
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	Photographic evidence should be kept and photographs taken on each site visit in areas of heavy infestation. Sites will need to be revisited monthly (more frequent if necessary) to cut back stems that are starting to flower and for any re-growth. With the removal of plants soils may become exposed and should be re-vegetated with grasses or indigenous species of the genera below.
<b>Uses:</b>	Ornamental. Birds eat the fruits.
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	<i>Euphorbia</i> and <i>Aloe</i> spp.



***Datura ferox* (Large thorn apple)**



<b>Category:</b>	NEMBA – Category 1b – Declared weed. Destroy.
<b>Form:</b>	Herbaceous shrub
<b>General Description:</b>	An erect, sub-herbaceous annual growing up to 1,5m high. The stem is sparsely hairy and pale green in colour. Leaves: Relatively large leaves up to 200mm long with an irregular strongly toothed margin, dark green upper surface and paler underneath the surface of the leaves. Flowers: Funnel-shaped white flowers up to 65mm long appear during summer from October-March. Fruit/Seeds: Produces brown fruit capsules covered with hard spines and numerous tiny black seeds.
<b>Origin &amp; Problem:</b>	Tropical America. It competes with indigenous species.
<b>Distribution:</b>	Found throughout all provinces in South Africa.
<b>Control Measures:</b>	<u>Mechanical:</u> Physical removal of the plants, including the underground parts. This should be done when not seeding. If seeding then the seed heads should be carefully removed and burnt. <u>Chemical:</u> <i>Datura ferox</i> is susceptible to glyphosate herbicides.
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	Photographic evidence should be kept and photographs taken on each site visit in areas of heavy infestation. Sites will need to be revisited monthly to cut back any re-growth. With the removal of plants soils may become exposed and should be re-vegetated with grasses and/or indigenous species mentioned below.
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	Indigenous, local grasses.



## ***Eucalyptus camaldulensis (Red River Gum)***



<b>Category:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1b within                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Riparian areas</li> <li>ii. A protected area as declared by the protected areas act</li> <li>iii. Within a listed ecosystem or an ecosystem identified for conservation in terms of a bioregional plan or biodiversity management plans published under the act</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Not listed in the Nama-Karoo, Succulent Karoo and Desert biomes, excluding within any area mentioned in (a) above.</li> <li>c. Category 1b in fynbos, grassland, savanna, Albany thicket, forest and Indian ocean belt biomes but                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Category 2 for plantations, woodlots, bee-forage areas, wind rows and the lining of avenues</li> <li>ii. Not listed within cultivated land that is at least 50m away from untransformed land, but excluding within any area in (a) above</li> <li>iii. Not listed within 50m of the main house of a farm but excluding in (a) above</li> <li>iv. Not listed in urban areas for trees with a diameter of more than 400mm at 1000m height at the time of publishing this notice.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Distribution:</b>	Throughout South Africa, particularly in the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and Free State.
<b>Uses:</b>	Mostly used for shelter, timber, firewood, ornament and as a honey source.
<b>Spread By:</b>	Spreads by seed dispersal.
<b>Impact:</b>	Invades riverine habitats, drainage lines. Red River Gum forms dense stands especially when they become multi-stemmed after the main stem has been cut. The plant is still used as a wind –barrier. Cultivated worldwide. It competes with and replaces indigenous riverine species. Extensive stands along watercourses are likely to cause a significant reduction in stream flow.
<b>Form:</b>	Tree
<b>Control Measures:</b>	<p><u>Mechanical &amp; Chemical</u></p> <p><b>Seedlings:</b> Hand pull</p> <p><b>Coppice/woody growth:</b> Foliar sprays of Brush Off at 200 g/ha and Mamba 360 SL at 3 l/ha.</p> <p><b>Felled trees:</b> Cut stumps apply Chopper (1250 ml/10 l water) at 6 l/ha.</p>
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	<p>Photographic records should be kept of infested areas and should be taken at each visit.</p> <p>Re-growth should be monitored 2 and 4 months after chemical application and treated as required.</p> <p>Heavily infested areas should be revisited and treated if and as necessary at least every 6 months.</p>
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	Indigenous, local grass species in low infestation. Specialists input may be required in heavily infested areas.





### Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*)



<b>Category:</b>	NEMBA – Category 1b
<b>General Description:</b>	A deciduous, spreading tree 15-20m tall. The trunk and branches have three-branched spines. Bright green bi-pinnate leaves consist of small paired lance-shaped and minutely toothed. Small, yellowish-green flowers appear from October to November. The seed capsules are flat and twisted brown pods.
<b>Origin and problem:</b>	North America. It competes with and replaces indigenous species. Dense stands along watercourses could significantly reduce stream flow
<b>Form:</b>	Tree
<b>Distribution:</b>	Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Gauteng and Mpumalanga
<b>Control Measures:</b>	<u>Mechanical &amp; Chemical:</u> Herbicides are usually required to effectively control trees when cut. Several herbicides have been labelled for honey locust control through various application techniques, including basal bark, thin line basal bark, cut stump, frill or girdle, and foliar applications. However, picloram, one of the most effective herbicides on honey locust, is not labelled for individual basal bark or cut stump treatment in grazed pasture. Aminopyralid recently received a new label addition for individual tree treatment of honey locust in grazed pasture.
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	Photographic records should be kept of infested areas and should be taken at each visit. Re-growth should be monitored 2 and 4 months after chemical application and treated as required. Heavily infested areas should be revisited and treated if and as necessary at least every 6 months.



### *Opuntia fesus-indica* (Sweet Prickly Pear)



<b>Category:</b>	Existing legislation: CARA 2002 – Category 1 NEMBA – Category 1b
<b>Distribution:</b>	All provinces of South Africa
<b>Impact:</b>	Invades savanna and dry grassland. Propagates easily from the seeds and leaf-pads (cladodes). Even a small piece lying on the ground can produce roots and flourish.
<b>Spread By:</b>	Seed dispersal by animals
<b>Uses:</b>	Edible fruits, animal fodder and security hedging.
<b>General Description:</b>	Succulent, branched shrub or tree up to 3m high which forms a sturdy trunk with age. Leaves: Minute leaves. Flowers: Bright yellow or orange showy flowers appearing from October to December. Fruit/seeds: Yellowish turning reddish edible fruit covered with minute spines.
<b>Form:</b>	Shrub
<b>Control Measures:</b>	<p><u>Mechanical:</u> Seedlings &amp; saplings: Hand pull. All plants: Cut close to ground.</p> <p><u>Chemical:</u> control is possible with several herbicides, such as MSMA and glyphosphate. However, continues to be kept under control by the use of the Cactoblastis moth and a cochineal insect, <i>Dactylopius opuntiae</i>. Special control measures are rarely required. Cochineal insects are not very mobile so isolated plants must be inoculated manually by placing an infected cladode on top of the plant to be controlled.</p>
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	<p>Photographic records should be kept of infested areas and should be taken at each visit. Re-growth should be monitored 2 and 4 months after chemical application and treated as required.</p> <p>Heavily infested areas should be revisited and treated if and as necessary at least every 6 months.</p>
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	<i>Euphorbia</i> spp. and <i>Aloe</i> spp



**Tamarix ramosissima (Pink tamarisk)**



<b>Category:</b>	Existing legislation: CARA 2002 – Category 1 in Northern Cape, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Category 3 in rest of SA NEMBA – Category 1b
<b>Alternative common names:</b>	Saltcedar (English); perstamariske (Afrikaans)
<b>Impact:</b>	Competes with and replaces indigenous species. Dense stands could significantly reduce stream flow and groundwater reserves.
<b>Spread by:</b>	Seed dispersal.
<b>Problem Areas:</b>	Western, Eastern and Northern Cape, Free State, North-West and Limpopo Provinces.
<b>Uses:</b>	Shade, ornament, erosion control; honey source.
<b>Form:</b>	Herb
<b>Description:</b>	Evergreen shrub or tree 3-6m high with reddish-brown bark and feathery branches. Deep green, greyish or bluish-green leaves are minute and scale-like. Flowers are pale to purplish-pink in clusters 15-70mm long at the end of thin, long twigs. Fruits are papery capsules 3-4mm long. General description: Evergreen tree growing up to 6m with reddish-brown bark. Leaves: Deep green, greyish or bluish-green leaves are minute and scale-like. Flowers: Flowers are pale to purplish-pink in clusters 15-70mm long. Fruit/seeds: Fruits are papery capsules 3-4mm long.
<b>Control Measures:</b>	Being deep germinators, these weeds are not adequately controlled by many pre-emergence herbicides. In annual crops, it is best to delay treatment as long as possible in order to catch late germinating individuals. Eradicate before the plants form flowers and seed
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	Photographic records should be kept of infested areas and should be taken at each visit. Re-growth should be monitored 2 and 4 months after treatment. Heavily infested areas should be revisited and treated if and as necessary every 6 months.
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	<i>Tamarix usneoides</i>



*Verbena bonariensis* (Blue Verbena)



<b>Category:</b>	1b – Declared weed. Destroy.
<b>Impact:</b>	Invasives wetlands, depressions, riverbanks, and riverbeds. Declared as weeds because of their aggressive growth habit. Difficult to control and contaminate crop fields and disturbed areas. It is poisonous to livestock and invades roadsides, disturbed places, moist areas and grasslands.
<b>Spread by:</b>	The seeds are dispersed by animals, wind and water.
<b>Problem Areas:</b>	Limpopo, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape.
<b>Form:</b>	Herb
<b>Description:</b>	Leaves: Leaves are stalkless and clasping the stem at the base, thick textured, strongly veined beneath and the margins are sharply toothed Flowers: Flowers are purple, 40mm long, in congested terminal spikes. Flowers appear during summer. Fruit/seeds: The small fruit separate into four brown, elongated seeds (nuts or mericarps) when mature.
<b>Control Measures:</b>	Being deep germinators, these weeds are not adequately controlled by many pre-emergence herbicides. In annual crops, it is best to delay treatment as long as possible in order to catch late germinating individuals. Eradicate before the plants form flowers and seed
<b>Monitoring Measures:</b>	Photographic records should be kept of infested areas and should be taken at each visit. Re-growth should be monitored 2 and 4 months after treatment. Heavily infested areas should be revisited and treated if and as necessary every 6 months.
<b>Replacement Species:</b>	Indigenous, local grass species.