



INVASIVE VEGETATION &
WEED CONTROL SPECIALIST

Invasive Weed Site Inspection Report



Client: Galway Fire & Rescue Service

Project Title: Site Vegetation Survey at Prospect, Athenry,
Co. Galway

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Invasive Weed Site Assessment

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1 PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Connacht Weed Control Ltd. (CWC), were requested by Mr Brian Fahy (VHA) to carry out an invasive weed site survey on the lands at Prospect, Athenry, Co. Galway. There are approx. 0.76ha of land on this property. The subject site is located in an agricultural setting to the south west of Athenry Town. It is proposed to construct the Galway Fire & Rescue Athenry Base on this site.

This study comprised of a desk study combined with 1no. site visit to identify any existing non-native invasive species on the lands. The subject site was visited on 18th February, 2021. The location of the proposed development is shown in Figure 1.

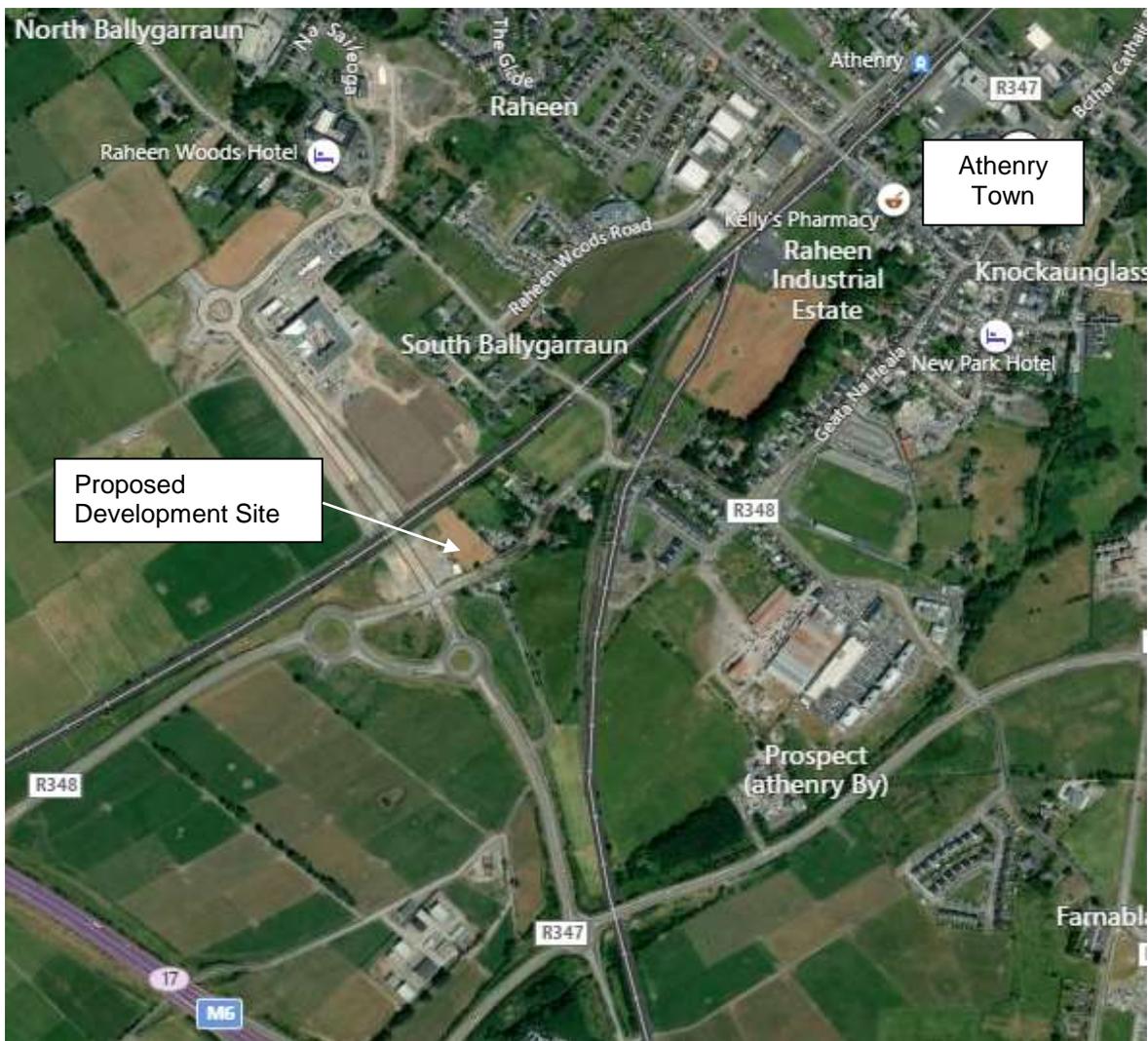


Figure 1: Site Location (Bing Maps)

1.2 SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The site is located in an agricultural setting to the south west of Athenry Town. The site comprises of an agricultural field that has been used for agricultural activities and as a compound area for the adjacent road building works. The western boundary comprises of the Dublin-Galway Rail Line. The eastern and southern boundaries are bounded by the Prospect road and Athenry relief road respectively. The northern boundary is formed by a stone wall that has some native trees and scrub growing near it. Two Ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) are located on the eastern boundary. A thicket of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) forming along the north western corner of the site. There are some weeds present on site such as: Nettles, Thistles, Cocksfoot, Brambles, Gorse, Dandelions and Rambling Buttercups.



North corner facing south

Designated Areas

There are no designated areas within a 5km zone of this site.

The objective of this report is to identify non-native invasive weeds that are currently growing on site.

2 SITE VEGETATION SURVEY

2.1 INVASIVE WEED ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The lands were surveyed on the 18/02/2021.

On completion of the survey it was found that there was no visual evidence to suggest the presence of non-native invasive weeds on site.



East corner facing west

2.2 SITE WATERCOURSE SURVEY

There are no watercourses on site.

2.3 SITE SERVICE SURVEY

There are no existing services visible on site.

2.4 SITE STRUCTURAL SURVEY

There are no existing structures surveyed as part of this survey.

3 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Stage 1 - Invasive Weed Identification Summary

There were no non-native invasive weeds identified on site. The information compiled during the consecutive approach was undertaken in the dormant season (October- March), there was no visual evidence (canes/ crowns/ brash) to suggest that there were non-native invasive species growing on the site historically.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As with all sites that have been surveyed, site security is essential to maintaining a weed free site or also to contain and eradicate an invasive weeds on site.

Proposed Treatments

It is considered that the site should be treated with herbicide to all vegetation growth on site. Herbicide may be applied by foliar spray.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 SITE BIOSECURITY

Connacht Weed Control would recommend the following as essential site Biosecurity measures for the future safety of the site from invasive weeds:

- Set up site fencing to secure the site.
- We recommend that any imported materials will be inspected prior to arriving on site to ensure no evidence of Japanese Knotweed or other invasive weed species.

4.2 LEGISLATION

Regulations 49 and 50 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 make it an offence to:

- plant, disperse, allow dispersal or cause the spread of Japanese knotweed.
- keep the plant in possession for purpose of sale, breeding, reproduction, propagation, distribution, introduction or release.
- keep anything from which the plant can be reproduced or propagated from without a granted licence.
- keep any vector material, in this case soil or spoil taken from Japanese knotweed, for the purposes of breeding, distribution, introduction or release

In 2011, the Republic of Ireland's Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016, Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Plan was launched with 7 objectives, 21 targets and multiple actions.

Target 8 states that:

Harmful invasive alien species are controlled and there is reduced risk of spread of new species.

There are 5 supporting actions listed for this under this target:

- Prepare, by 2011, detailed species and pathway risk assessments and develop exclusion and contingency plans for priority pathways and high impact species that are likely to invade Ireland.
- Continue and enhance measures for eradication, where feasible, control and containment of invasive alien species.
- Examine options for rapid response when new invasive alien species are discovered.
- Increase awareness within the horticultural and constructed wetlands industries of native alternatives that can be used in place of invasive alien species.
- All public bodies will endeavour to use native species, landraces and breeds and the public will be encouraged to do so.

In September 2011, comprehensive regulations which address deficiencies in Irish law implementing the EU Birds and Habitats Directives were signed into law. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 contain important new provisions to address the problem of invasive species. A black list of unwanted species is set out in the Regulations. It will be an offence without a licence, to release or allow to disperse or escape, to breed, propagate, import, transport, sell or advertise such species.

Fallopia Japonica, Japanese Knotweed and its hybrids are listed as invasive Alien Plant Species in Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (S1 477 of 2011, as amended). Additionally, soils and other material containing Japanese Knotweed and its hybrids, are classified in Part 3 of the Third Schedule as vector materials and are subject to the same strict legal controls. Failure to comply with the legal requirements set down can result in either civil or criminal prosecution, with very severe penalties accruing. The relevant sections of the regulations are reproduced below.

49(2) *Save in accordance with a licence granted [by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht], any person who plants, disperses, allows or causes to disperse, spreads or otherwise causes to grow in any place [a restricted non-native plant], shall be guilty of an offence.*

49(3) *... it shall be a defence to a charge of committing an offence under paragraph (1) or (2) to prove that the accused took all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence to avoid committing the offence.*

50(1) *Save in accordance with a licence, a person shall be guilty of an offence if he or she [...] offers or exposes for sale, transportation, distribution, introduction or release --*

- (a) [any restricted non-native animal or plant species],
- (b) *anything from which an animal or plant referred to in subparagraph (a) can be reproduced or propagated, or*
- (c) *a vector material listed in the Third Schedule, [which includes] soil or spoil taken from places infested with Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia japonica)*

It is an offence under regulations 49(2) and 50(1) to spread, or cause to spread, Japanese Knotweed and its hybrids. An offence may be avoided only if the relevant party can prove that they took reasonable steps to avoid causing an offence under the legislation. This management plan will rely solely on methodologies necessary to ensure strict compliance with the legislation.

In a situation where non-native invasive plant material is to be moved off site the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended and associated regulations must be adhered to. A licence from the NPWS will be required prior to any soil removal works take place on site. The waste facility that receives this contaminated soils/ plant material must also have a current permit/licence.

4.3 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Prospect, Athenry, Co. Galway _ Site Photographs_18/02/2021



South corner facing North



Thisles



Gorse



Briars



Nettles



Dandelion



Blackthorn sucker growth



West corner facing East

4.4 DISCLAIMER

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Connacht Weed Control accepts no liability for any matters arising if any recommendations contained in this document are not carried out, or are partially carried out, without further advice being obtained from Connacht Weed Control. Japanese Knotweed is an invasive species. This report is based on site conditions witnessed by CWC staff on the 18/02/2021, with a view to immediate action. Any delays to this timeline outlined in Indicative Invasive Weed Treatment Procedure Section will affect the integrity of this report.

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