



INVASIVE VEGETATION &
WEED CONTROL SPECIALIST

Documnet Number - LFR-RP-CWC-EN-0304

Invasive Weed Site Inspection Report



Client: Galway County Council

**Project Title: Loughrea Fire Station at Athenry Road,
Loughrea, Co. Galway**

Document reference: CWC 22527-SVS-F01					
Revision	Status	Issue Date	Prepared by:	Checked by:	Approved by:
D01	Draft Issue 1	23/02/2022	JD	LL	CL
F01	Final Issue 1	19/08/2022	CL	LL	CL
F01	Final Issue 1	29/07/2024	JD	LL	CL

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1 PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Connacht Weed Control Ltd. (CWC), were requested by Galway County Council to carry out an invasive weed site survey at Athenry Road in Loughrea. Galway County Council is currently at planning stage to construct a Fire Station on this site in Athenry Road. The subject site is located to the northwest of Loughrea Town. The site is currently a green field site and is maintained as a green open space. The location of the proposed development is shown in Figure 1.

This study comprised of a desk study combined with a site visit to identify any existing invasive species risk to the proposed development site. The subject site was visited on 21st February, 2022. This report recorded the conditions on site at the time of the survey. The objective of this report is to identify invasive weeds that are currently growing on the Athenry Road site. An additional survey was undertaken on the 19th of July, 2024 to update this report for the pending planning application.

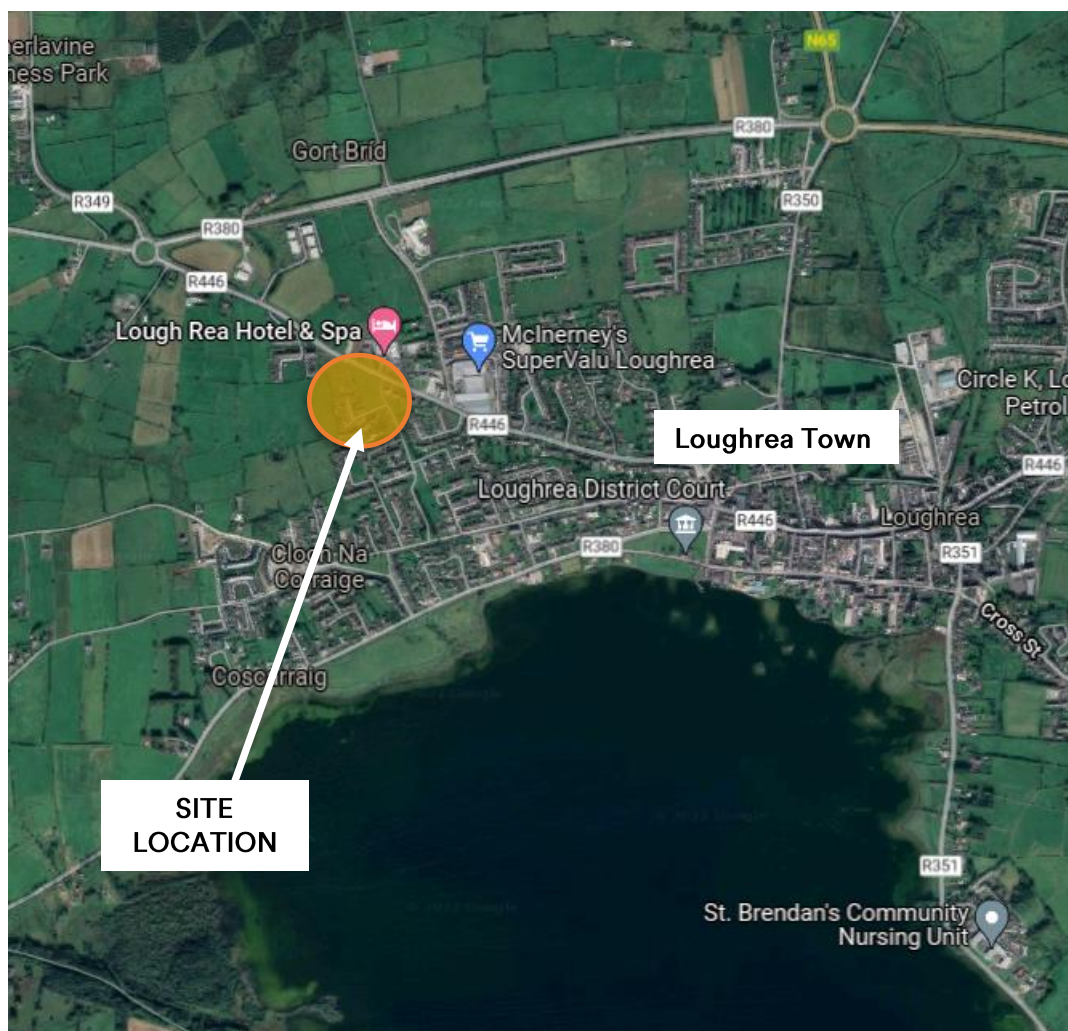


Figure 1: Location of the proposed development site (Google Maps)

1.2 SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The site is approx. 1.1 acres and is currently maintained as open grassland. The boundary has evidence of scrub vegetation and brambles. The proposed site is bounded to the east and north by the Athenry Road. Residential developments and access roads from the boundaries to the east and south. There is a brown field site located adjacent to the site to the west. Loughrea Hotel and Spa is located 20m north of the site.

Loughrea SPA, pNHA & SAC (Site Codes: 004134 & 000304) is located 610m south of the site. There are no direct vectors linking the site to the NATURA 2000 site.



Figure 2: NATURA 2000 Sites (Source NPWS)

1.3 PROPOSED WORKS

Galway County Council will be applying for planning for a fire station on this site at Athenry Road. As part of this process, VHA appointed CWC to carry out an invasive weed vegetation survey.

This vegetation survey will be used to ensure that any invasive species are identified on site and that there will be no biosecurity breach by machinery or workers on site during the site work stage.



Figure 3: Site Aerial Photograph (Source Google Mapping)

2 SITE VEGETATION SURVEY

2.1 INVASIVE WEED SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Athenry Road site was surveyed on the 21st February, 2022. The information compiled during the consecutive approach was undertaken in the dormant season (October- March). An additional survey was undertaken on the 19th of July, 2024 to update this report for the pending planning application, see site photographs in the Appendix 4.3.

There was no visual evidence (canes/ crowns/ brash) to suggest that there was Japanese knotweed or its hybrids were growing on the site.

There was visual evidence to suggest the presence of non-native invasive weeds namely; *Crocosmia X crocosmiiflora* (Montbretia) inside the red line boundary on the site. (See Figure 4.1 Proposed Site). *Crocosmia X crocosmiiflora* (Montbretia) was identified growing on the site at the south western boundary. The total area of the stand of *Crocosmia X crocosmiiflora* (Montbretia) on the site is approx. 5msq. This infestation has resulted from garden waste being tipped in this area.

Buddleia var. & *Hogweed var.* were identified growing in the lands adjacent to the east of the site.

2.2 SITE WATERCOURSE SURVEY

There are no open watercourses on the Athenry Road site.

2.3 SITE SERVICE SURVEY

There are no services surveyed as part of this report.

2.4 SITE STRUCTURAL SURVEY

There are no existing structures on the Athenry Road site.



Southern site aspect



Northern internal aspect

3 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Montbretia was identified growing inside the boundary on the Athenry Road site. This is a small infestation of approx. 3sqm. There were two invasive species identified in the lands to the west of the site; Hogweed and Buddleia. The information compiled during the consecutive approach indicates that the Montbretia infestation will spread if not treated. At the time of the site survey there was no visual evidence (canes/ crowns/ brash) to suggest that there was Japanese knotweed or its hybrids were growing on the site.

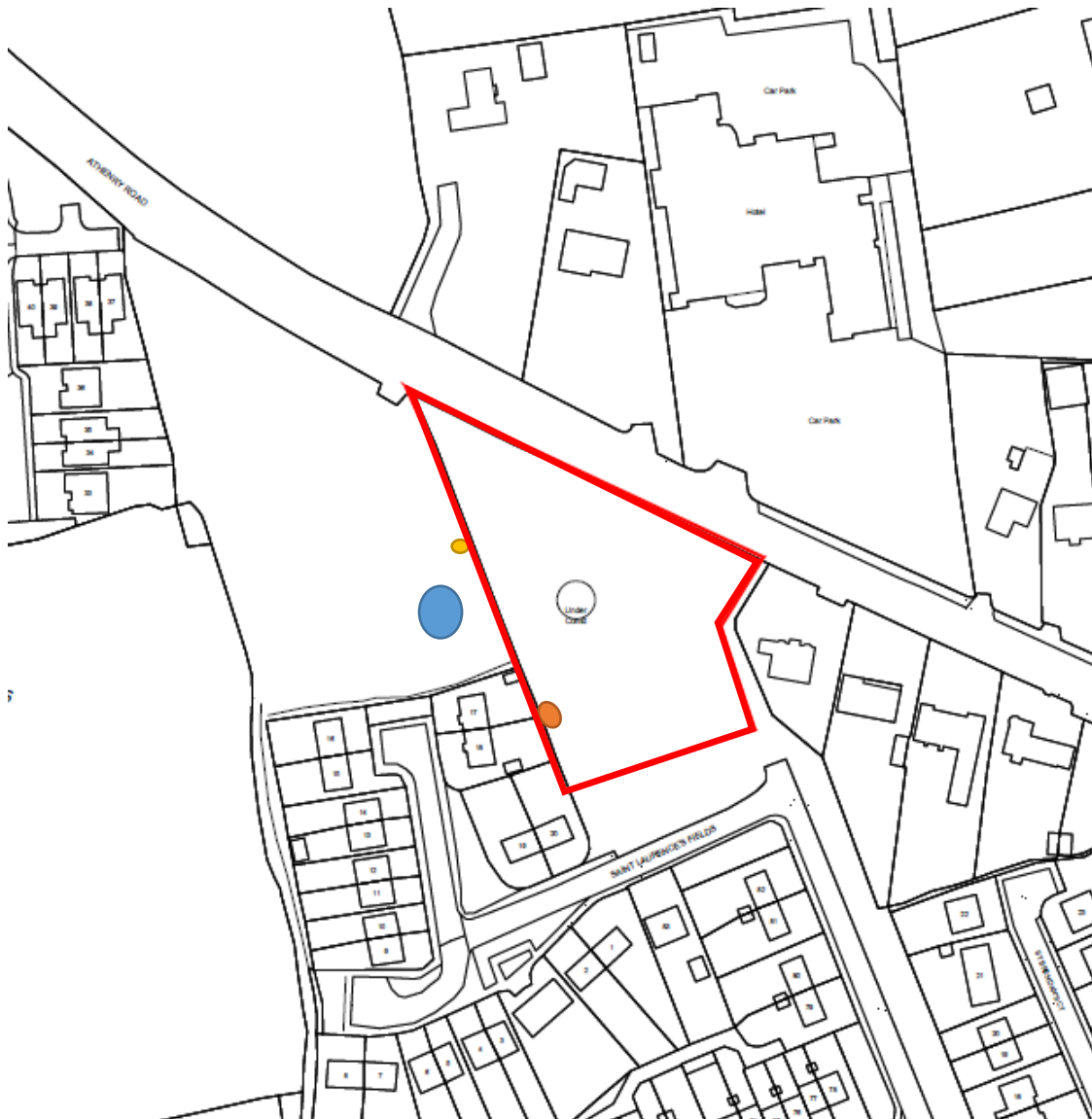
3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Connacht Weed Control have the following recommendations for this site at Athenry Road:

- It is considered that the invasive species on site should be treated with herbicide three weeks prior to site clearance works. Herbicide may be applied by foliar spray.
- Site biosecurity is essential to maintaining an invasive plant free site and also to contain and eradicate the invasive plants on site. We recommend that any imported materials will be inspected prior to arriving on site to ensure they do not contain Japanese Knotweed or other invasive weed species.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 PROPOSED SITE



LEGEND

-  *Crocasmia X crocosmiiflora*
-  *Hogweed var.*
-  *Buddelia var.*

4.2 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS _ 21ST FEBRUARY, 2022



Rubus var



Hedera Helix 'Hibernica'



Hogweed var.



Cirsium var.

Invasive Weed Site Assessment



Crocasmia X crocosmiiflora
(Montbretia) growing on site



Rumex var.



Taraxacum vulgaria



Buddelia var.

Invasive Weed Site Assessment



Southern boundary facing northeast



Eastern boundary facing west



Eastern boundary facing northwest



Northern boundary facing southeast

4.3 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS _ 19TH OF JULY, 2024



4.4 BIOSECURITY

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 weed on the Athenry Road site.

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

- Ensure that any imported materials will be inspected prior to arriving on site to ensure they do not contain Japanese Knotweed or other invasive weed species.
- All tools, materials and workwear should be inspected and cleaned using footbaths and clean down zones as necessary with particular attention paid to footwear and tools.
- All machinery that moves on or off site must be rigorously cleaned and inspected to ensure no contaminated debris is carried on or off site or within the confines of the site.
- Vehicles must be cleaned of all earth and loose sediments, with particular attention paid to tyre treads, bucket, machine arm, wheel arches and hinged joints.
- Personnel are at all times to be mindful of the threat posed by the spread of invasive species and to take all possible precautions to ensure that their actions do not result in the accidental movement of contaminated material.

4.5 LEGISLATION

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 invasive plant material)*

The invasive species listed in the 3rd schedule include: Japanese Knotweed, Giant Knotweed, Bohemian Knotweed, Himalayan Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Giant Rhubarb, Three Cornered Leek Rhododendron and Himalayan Balsam.

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.

4.6 DISCLAIMER

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS REPORT

This document and its content are confidential and may not be disclosed, copied, quoted or published unless, Connacht Weed Control has given its prior written consent.

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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 21st February, 2022 and **ON** the 19th of July, 2024 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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