Impact Assessment Record

Scientific name: *Ambrosia confertiflora* Common Name: burr ragweed

QUESTION	COMMENTS	RATING	CONFIDENCE
Social			
1. Restrict human access?	Grows from 75 to 200cm. The burrs associated with burr ragweed and dermatogenic properties have the potential to impede individual access (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).	**ML**	**MH**
2. Reduce tourism?	Most species are 'so ordinary in appearance that they are rarely noticed despite their abundance'. All species are noted for their allergens and are a major contributor to hay fever in US, with some places advertising as 'ragweed free' (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Potential to have major impact on tourism in autumn months when pollen counts is high.	**H**	**MH**
3. Injurious to people?	'Most important hay-fever producing plant in North America'. Also associated with asthma and dermatogenic properties. Burr ragweed 'burrs' cause discomfort throughout the year with three species having a high pollen count from late summer through to autumn being a major component in hayfever and asthma (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).	**MH**	**MH**
4. Damage to cultural sites?	Not known to cause structural damage. Little or negligible effect on aesthetics.	**L**	**MH**
Abiotic			
5. Impact flow?	Terrestrial species (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).	**L**	**MH**
6. Impact water quality?	Terrestrial species (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).	**L**	**MH**
7. Increase soil erosion?	In dry periods over summer and in autumn, aerial growth dies back. Plants have 'creeping runner-like roots' and form large colonies (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Unlikely that the species would contribute to large-scale soil erosion.	**L**	**MH**
8. Reduce biomass?	Plant grows up to 200cm and forms large colonies. Often occurs in wasteland where little vegetation exists (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Likely that biomass would slightly increase.	**L**	**MH**
9. Change fire regime?	Herbaceous plant (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001) so assume that it would have small or negligible effect on fire risk.	**L**	**MH**
Community Habitat			
10. Impact on composition (a) high value EVC	EVC=Plains Grassy Woodland (E), CMA=Wimmera, Bioreg.=Wimmera, CLIMATE=VH. Weed doesn't occur in healthy, well-established ecosystems. Occurs mostly in open, disturbed areas where less than 3 strata are present (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Very little displacement of any indigenous species.	**L**	**MH**
(b) medium value EVC	EVC=Hills Herb-rich Woodland (D), CMA=NorthCentral, Bioreg=Goldfields, CLIMATE=VH. Weed doesn't occur in healthy, well-established ecosystems. Occurs mostly in open, disturbed areas where less than 3 strata are present (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Very little displacement of any indigenous species.	**L**	**MH**
(c) low value EVC	EVC=Coastal Tussock Grassland (LC), CMA=West Gippsland, Bioreg.=Gippsland Plain, CLIMATE=L. Weed doesn't occur in healthy, well-established ecosystems. Occurs mostly in open, disturbed areas where less than 3 strata are present (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Very little displacement of any indigenous species.	**L**	**MH**

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QUESTION	COMMENTS	RATING	CONFIDENCE
11. Impact on structure?	Weed doesn't occur in healthy, well-established ecosystems. Occurs mostly in open, disturbed areas where less than 3 strata are present (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Usually only affecting one of the strata.	**L**	**MH**
12. Effect on threatened flora?	No information available.	**MH**	**L**
Fauna			
13. Effect on threatened fauna?	No information available.	**MH**	**L**
14. Effect on non-threatened fauna?	Tends to grow in ruderal sites so assume that there is no reduction in habitat/food/shelter for non threatened fauna spp. (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).	**L**	**MH**
15. Benefits fauna?	No documented evidence that *A. confertiflora* benefits fauna.	**H**	**MH**
16. Injurious to fauna?	Hooked spines and burrs attach to sheep and furred animals but no documented impact on health or well being of animals (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).	**L**	**MH**
Pest Animal			
17. Food source to pests?	No documented evidence that *A. confertiflora* is a food source to pests (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).	**L**	**MH**
18. Provides harbour?	No documented evidence that *A. confertiflora* provides harbour for pest spp.	**L**	**MH**
Agriculture			
19. Impact yield?	'Is an extremely competitive plant, readily suppressing pasture species…also a problem in orchards, competing for nutrients' (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Minor impact on quantity of produce.	**ML**	**MH**
20. Impact quality?	Burr ragweed contaminates wool with hooked spines (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Likely that would have greater than 5% impact on quality of produce.	**MH**	**MH**
21. Affect land value?	No information on whether or not the weed affects land value. Numerous studies on effect of annual ragweed and giant ragweed on cropping systems but no references made to burr ragweed and land values. Score medium.	**M**	**L**
22. Change land use?	Weed can be controlled by herbicides in pasture (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Assume little or no change in priority of land use.	**L**	**MH**
23. Increase harvest costs?	'..a problem in orchards, competing for nutrients, interfering with the harvest, and both pollen and burrs cause discomfort to pickers' (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001).Hooked spines difficult to remove from wool so added costs in acid carbonate used for removal (Parsons & Cuthbertson 2001). Increase in time, labour and cost.	**M**	**MH**
24. Disease host/vector?	None evident	**L**	**MH**

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References cited:

Parsons, W T & Cuthbertson, E G 2001, *Noxious weeds of Australia*, 2nd ed., CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood.

Scott, R. 2001, 'Ragweed: Ambrosia artemisiifolia', *Progressive Farmer*, vol. 116, no. 4, p. 80, Birmingham, viewed: 07 Nov 2005, Proquest Database.

Revisions

Date	Revised by	Revision