



RISK ASSESSMENT

Activity:	Removal of Himalayan Balsam
Date:	20, 22, 27, 29 June; 11, 13, 18, 20, 25, 27 July 2024
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Assessed:	

1 Introduction

Himalayan Balsam is an invasive plant species that is threatening our rivers and countryside. It grows along the Ouse river banks, outcompeting native species and causing erosion.

Himalayan balsam can grow to more than three metres in height in a year and each plant can produce 800 seeds. These seeds are dispersed up to seven metres away from the parent plant, most frequently by humans and animals brushing past the ripe seedpods.

A 'Balsam Bash', involves pulling up the Himalayan balsam, to prevent it from setting seed and spreading further along the riverbank. Clearing a site like this reduces the amount that will grow in the same place in future years. Our Countryside team pull plants throughout June and always clean and disinfect their boots before going to different river sites to prevent the seeds dispersing far and wide.

2 Location

20th & 22nd June

Volunteers will meet on the public footpath opposite the entrance of Chestnut Farm Holiday Park.

The activity will be along the river bank from this point towards Bishopthorpe.

3 Safety Information

First Aid Kit to be available on site.

Throw line to be available on site.

No lone working permitted.

Supervisor must have a mobile phone available.

Safety briefing to be given prior to work starting.

Activity:	Work in and around watercourses			
Hazards Identified	Affects	Risk O	Precautions	Risk N
Risk of rising water levels.	All	M	Continuous observation of weather reports & prevailing river conditions.	L
Risk of drowning	All	M	Nobody to enter the watercourse. Keep at least 1m from the bank. NO LONE WORKING.	L
Sudden changes in weather, exposure, sunburn. Thunderstorms(lightning) etc.	All	M	Check local weather forecasts in advance of visit if considered necessary. Keep check on weather during occupancy. Wear appropriate clothing. If conditions severely deteriorate – abandon activities and seek appropriate shelter. Lightning: move from high ground if at all possible, avoid sheltering under trees, seek shelter indoors (or otherwise in a car) if possible. In exposed areas and if lightning is very close, crouch down into a “ball” as low as possible to the ground to minimise risk of lightning strike.	L
Slippery and uneven surfaces	All	M	Visual assessment of area. Wear appropriate protective clothing and footwear.	L
Head/eye injuries from contact with low obstacles (bridges, branches, etc.)	All	M	Ensure adequate visibility/awareness. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing (e.g. gloves, headgear, and safety footwear). Be vigilant for low obstacles and apply dynamic risk assessment.	L
Polluted water (e.g. leptospirosis & other water borne diseases).	All	M	Provision of hygiene equipment (medi-wipes, paper towels). Wear protective clothing (e.g. gloves and barrier products) where necessary. Any cuts/abrasions cleansed and covered.	L
Members of the public & dogs entering survey area	All	M	Use courtesy when accessing public footpaths and public areas to ensure they are still able to access these areas easily. Be aware of dogs entering the work area.	L
Falling In water/immersion	All	M	Ensure access to charged up mobile phones in case of an emergency and relevant telephone numbers in memory. Ensure colleagues/family members know of your whereabouts NO LONE WORKING PERMITTED.	L
Anti-social behaviour	All	M	Avoid confrontation and move to another location if necessary. If necessary, abandon activity and call police on 101 (or 999 in an emergency).	L

Injury from sharp / pointed objects and potential illness	All	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of broken glass and metal and possible hypodermic needles. • Do not touch with hands. • Gloves to be worn at all times. 	L
Injury from pulling out balsam plants	All	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care when bending down to pull out balsam plants to avoid back strain bend knees and keep back straight. • Do not over- reach or strain to reach plants. • Gloves to be worn to avoid damage to hands. • Rotate tasks so that individuals are not repeatedly bending to remove low vegetation or over reaching/straining. 	L
Nettle stings / insect bites and stings, including risk of anaphylaxis	All	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warn staff/volunteers of dangers, especially nettles. • Ensure AMPC site supervisor made aware of any allergies that staff/ volunteers may have. • Those with allergies must have appropriate medication with them where applicable, and wear bracelet or pendant to identify their health problem where relevant. • Where person identified as having allergies, staff/volunteer 'buddy' must be shown how to deal with this and know where medication is kept. • Ensure access to charged up mobile phones in case of an emergency. • First Aid kits to be available as close as possible to the location of the activity. • Long sleeves and trousers are recommended to reduce risk of bites and stings. 	L
Injury from Giant Hogweed	All	M	Before undertaking work, all participants to be warned of dangers of Giant Hogweed and how to identify it. Ensure arms and legs covered in areas where GHW can be found and avoid working near broken plants where sap is exposed.	L