

## Aire Rivers Trust Biosecurity Policy

This policy promotes the adoption of biosecurity measures aimed at reducing the risk of spreading harmful pests, diseases and invasive non-native species (INNS) across the Aire catchment by members of staff, volunteers, and contractors.

This policy, in conjunction with the procedure will ensure that staff, volunteers and contractors are:

- Made aware of the detrimental impacts that pests, diseases and INNS have on the environment, economy and human health
- Considering the threat of spreading harmful pests, diseases and INNS in planning and decision-making processes and embedding better biosecurity practices in day-to-day activities.
- Trained in best practice biosecurity measures that reduce the risk of spreading pests, diseases and INNS
- Know where to find the relevant material and information to carry out fieldwork in a responsible way that does not increase the risk of spreading pests, diseases and INNS.

### Biosecurity

Biosecurity refers to practical precautions that can be taken to reduce spread or introduction of pests, diseases and INNS. Effective biosecurity means taking steps to make sure that good practices are in place to reduce and minimise the risk of spread. Pests, diseases and INNS can be spread through the accidental transfer of tiny propagules such as seeds or fragments of plants or microscopic larvae or spores. Therefore, a good biosecurity routine is always essential, even if pests, diseases and INNS are not always apparent.

### Invasive non-native species (INNS)

INNS are any animals, plants or microbes that are able to spread and cause damage to our environment, the economy, or to human, animal or plant health and the way we live. INNS threaten our native species, ecosystems and habitats in many ways. They can compete with native species, or prey upon them. They may modify habitats or spread diseases. INNS are one of the greatest threats to biodiversity worldwide. INNS also interfere with human activities such as agriculture, transport, trade and recreation. The estimated cost of INNS to the British economy is £1.7 billion per year.

### Compliance with legislation and regulations

The Trust will comply with the core requirement of the EU legislation on Invasive Alien Species (EU 2015) – or any replacement legislation – to manage introduction pathways. The term pathway is used to describe how a species is moved from place to place due to human activity. The Trust will strive to achieve the goals set out in the GB Invasive Non-Native Species strategy (GB NNSS 2015) and Defra's 25-year environment plan (2018) to adopt rigorous biosecurity measures. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) it is illegal to plant, or otherwise cause to grow in the wild, any plant listed in Schedule 9 to the Act.

## Training

All staff, volunteers and contractors will be expected to either receive either face-to-face training on biosecurity or carry out an online training course on biosecurity best practice and INNS. It is the Community Engagement Officer's role to ensure that all members of staff have received training. Whoever is supervising an activity must ensure that volunteers have appropriate training. It is the project manager's responsibility to ensure that contractors are complying with the Trust's biosecurity policy and are adequately trained. Re-fresher courses should be carried out every 2 years by taking the online course again. Continuous learning will be encouraged with biosecurity refresher questions in team meetings.

## Protocol/procedure

All staff, volunteers and contractors will be expected to carry out their tasks/operations following an agreed biosecurity procedure and protocol. Inductions will be provided for volunteers by the Community Engagement Officer. Inductions will include where relevant equipment and facilities are found.

## Updating policies and best practice

Members of staff are responsible for taking advantage of opportunities to increase their awareness of pests, diseases and INNS, the risks they pose to the natural environment and to be aware of changing best practices, as well as working towards the elimination of barriers for the uptake of good biosecurity. The biosecurity risk assessment and action planning were carried out in 2020 based on the activities and tasks that were being carried out and informed the best practice and protocol that the Trust should follow. This should be updated periodically with any new and relevant information.

## A joined up and holistic approach to tackling pests, diseases and INNS

The Trust will aim to collaborate with other organisations in the region to ensure a joined-up approach to tackling pests, diseases and INNS, where efforts can be co-ordinated, and support is given across organisations. Participation in the Yorkshire Dales Invasive Non-native Species Steering Group can facilitate this.

The Trust will promote awareness raising amongst visitors and stakeholders, by providing them with accessible information via the website and other off-line platforms (eg leaflets, posters, flyers etc).

All employees	<p>All employees must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be open to new ways of implementing good practice on biosecurity</li> <li>- Not practice activities/behaviours that risk spreading pests, diseases and INNS without taking due precautions</li> <li>- Carry out appropriate training and ensure they have all the relevant equipment to carry out better biosecurity</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow best practice protocols</li> <li>- Ensure volunteers are inducted to follow the Trust's biosecurity policy (only for staff working with volunteers)</li> </ul>
Volunteers	Volunteers must undertake appropriate training to ensure appropriate biosecurity is being followed. Volunteers must abide by this policy and take all appropriate actions to help stop the spread of invasive species.
Contractors	Contractors must be equipped with appropriate training to ensure appropriate biosecurity is being followed. Contractors must abide by this policy and take all appropriate actions to help stop the spread of invasive species. Contractors must factor in biosecurity planning and implementation in their quotes and tenders.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020