



**Hastings Landcare Inc.**

Supporting Voluntary Natural Resource Management in the Hastings, Camden Haven and Wilson River Catchments

Number 41

Autumn 2009



# Mending Fences

**Flood Recovery Info:**

**FENCING**

- [www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com](http://www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com)
- [www.rivers.gov.au](http://www.rivers.gov.au)
- [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

**FINANCIAL**

- [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au)

**PERMITS**

- [www.dwe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au)

**WEEDS**

- [www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au)

Need to gather up the twisted remains of your flooded fences and start again? Consider wildlife friendly fencing. Is barbed wire necessary when plain wire with an electric stand-off would do?

Experience has shown that the top strand of barbed wire is most often involved in entanglements of bats and gliders, but they can also be caught on lower strands. Fences that are new, on ridge lines, near feeding trees, or over water are most likely to entangle bats.

Of course, fences should be built above flood level where that is possible, but in the flood risk zone there are a number of options that might help to reduce the chance of future losses. Techniques worth considering before

you rebuild are isolating high risk sections, installing lay-down or drop-down fencing or using electric fencing. Fewer wires provide less opportunity for debris to collect. Build your flood-prone fence only as tall as is necessary, increase the depth of your posts and drive your posts into the ground to reduce the risk of losing your fence.

Design ideas for flood resistant fencing are available from the Landcare Office.

The “natural disaster” declaration over the mid north coast means that assistance may be available for primary producers and small

businesses to help with flood recovery. Check out



Riparian Fencing Following the February Flood

the Rural Assistance Authority for more information.

Don't forget that you will need a “Controlled Activity” permit for in-stream or near-stream earthworks or vegetation removal.

See inside (p.7) for more information on relevant legislation.

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## How Big was Your Flood?



The Flood Peak in Mortons Creek

Did you take photos or video of the recent flood? Did you keep rainfall records? Can you mark where the high water level was? Do you know what time the flood peaked? This kind of information is important in modelling and

predicting future flood events.

Port Macquarie Hastings Council's Environmental Engineer Gordon Cameron wants to hear from you. You can contact Gordon Cameron on 6581 8649.

# Reflections on Royal Pullen

Val and Roy Pullen retired to Port Macquarie in 1990. Both became active members of the Friends of Kooloonbung.

They were regular visitors, involved in working bees, meetings and tour guiding. After Val's passing, Royal was still a regular at working bees, often visiting Val's commemorative seat on the park's eastern path.

Since retiring from the CSIRO,

Royal exercised his scientific skills well on the mid north coast.

He sat on the estuary management committee and the weeds advisory committee and was a valued member of many groups including the National Parks Association, the Australian Plants Society and Friends of Kooloonbung Creek Nature Park.

School students from all over the state have been enriched by Roy's

guided tours of the park over the years. Roy generously shared his wealth of knowledge and experience with everyone.

Roy will be sadly missed by his family, his large circle of friends and all of those who knew him. Our environment and community will remember him fondly.

Adapted from Janet Watson's  
Kooloonbung Reflections.

## The Future of Landcare in Doubt

Of the \$42 billion splashed around in the Commonwealth's economic stimulus package, not a cent went to Landcare—an ominous message for the 20-year-old movement as it struggles to find its way through new realities.

"It beggars belief," said David Walker, chairman of Landcare NSW. "We've got all this money to spend, we could be thinking globally and acting locally by working on the environment and renewable energy, and yet we're doing what we've always done.

"What better way is there of investing in our future than ensuring the productivity, sustainability and resilience of our land, particularly as we confront climate change?"

It's a sign of troubled times for Landcare, which turns 20 this year.

The movement still boasts some 4000 groups, with 53,000 registered Landcarers in NSW alone, and there is huge recognition of Landcare's "caring hands symbol".

Yet those who have invested their lives into Landcare are fearful for the movement's future.

Throughout Australia, particularly across the farming communities where Landcare got its start, small

Landcare groups are becoming dormant—alive only because a few members pay their fees—or have died a natural death.

The bigger, better organised Landcare networks, better able to fight for funding in an era when applying for a "Caring For Our Country" grant means filling in a 130 page application, are surviving. But their future is by no means guaranteed.

According to Chris Scott, chairman of the NSW Landcare Committee, Landcare staff on contract currently have no idea whether their contracts will be renewed at the

end of the financial year—a state of affairs that has resurfaced year after year, and has cost Landcare the services of those who need more certainty in their job.

"These are the people with the skills we need to address climate change in this country," Mr Scott said.

"If we're serious about the environment, we need to treat these people as the professionals they are, and give them a career path."

He too is perplexed at funding priorities.

*"What better way is there of investing in our future than ensuring the productivity, sustainability and resilience of our land, particularly as we confront climate change?"*

## Matt Cawood

"There are a lot of 'shovel-ready' projects waiting to go that would deliver dollars straight into regional communities, via contractors and other workers, and help the environment at the same time."

John Laing, president of the Goulburn Murray Landcare Network in northern Victoria, said his committee is becoming increasingly frustrated at being used as a low-

cost employer by other regional bodies, while facing further funding cuts to an organisation already "run on the smell of an oil rag".

"We see the rhetoric in the media about doing something for the environment, but each year for a number of years, our funding has been reduced," Mr Laing said. "We're not walking the talk."

Ross Colliver, who with support from the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) trains Landcare groups and networks to be more effective, believes Landcare's once-considerable on-ground capabilities are being eroded.

Cont'd p.5

# Stewarts River

## Landholders funded for riparian restoration projects

Eleven landholders along the Stewarts River will receive funding assistance this year as part of the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (NRCMA) 'Targeted Rivers Program'.

Daintry Gerrand – Co-ordinator of the program for the CMA said that "The program is aimed at providing incentives to landholders over a three year period to assist with control of weeds such as Camphor Laurel and Small-leaved Privet, as well as off-stream watering systems and creek crossings to improve water quality. This river system has a very stable structure and supports a good habitat corridor of native vegetation along the riparian zone. The current funding program is aimed at conserving these significant environmental values."

The Stewarts River has its headwaters on the northern end of the Lansdowne escarpment in the Coorabakh National Park and Comboyne State Forest near Flat

Rock Lookout. As the crow flies it is some 23 kilometres to the mouth of the river into the Watson Taylors Lake. The valley is a rich agricultural area supporting dairy farming enterprises and beef grazing properties as well as a range of small farm initiatives.

"It is the river corridor which provides a significant wildlife and habitat corridor linking across the landscape from the Coorabakh National Park on the escarpment to the lake system and Crowdy Bay National Park along the coast."

"Since 2001 some 60 on-ground projects have been implemented under a variety of funding programs from Federal Government program such as the Natural Heritage Trust and National Landcare Program. The latest funding comes from the Federal government through the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority. Partners in the projects over the years have included the Department of Primary

Industries – Dairy Section, Port Macquarie Hastings Council – Natural Resources Division and the Greater Taree City Council – Weeds Division"

Funds for 2008-09 are all allocated. Unfortunately, there is some uncertainty about the program for 2009-2010 and beyond due to changes to federal government funding priorities under the 'Caring for our Country Program'. However, any landholders wishing to register their interest should contact their local Landcare community support office in Wauchope on 6586 4465."

**2 field mornings are planned – Weed Control is planned for April, and Erosion Control and Creek Crossings is planned for May.**

For further information please contact Daintry Gerrand 6556 5099, Mob 0427 565099 or

[daintry.gerrand@bigpond.com](mailto:daintry.gerrand@bigpond.com)

## Message to a Landcare Volunteer From a Tree Seedling



I am just a baby tree,  
I am a native, I am a toughie,  
but I need your care to get started.  
The land was cleared and weeds grew  
I am here to create a canopy ... just give me time  
Please visit me while I grow, especially to remove those  
smothering weeds,  
My leaves will grow, and will give thanks for your visits  
I will grow taller and stronger with your care  
Eventually, insects and birds will appear  
They will sing a song for you  
I am living because you planted me  
During future summers I will give you shade  
And you will no long need to 'baby' me  
I will continue giving, for I am a tree.

Contributed by Janet Slater



## Caring for our Country Funding

Caring for our Country is an Australian Government initiative that seeks to achieve an environment that is healthy, better protected, well-managed and resilient, and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

Caring for our Country aims to conserve, protect and restore our unique and valuable environment by focusing on six national priority areas: National Reserve System; biodiversity and natural icons; coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats; sustainable farm practices; natural resource management in northern and remote Australia; and community skills, knowledge and engagement.

Hastings Landcare will be involved with the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority in projects that they are applying for under this funding. In brief these are:

### **“Improving the storage of carbon in NSW farmers soils to offset carbon emissions from agriculture”**

Training farmers in preparing a “Carbon plan”, reaching approx. 20-50 farmers in the targeted locations of the floodplain and Comboyne. Incentives will then be offered to implement these plans and results of changes will be measured over the four year period.

### **“Improved knowledge and skills of land managers”**

The project aims to provide knowledge, skills and engagement opportunities to Northern Rivers land managers to better manage the natural resources on their land. Assistance will be provided to local community groups in the form of information and advice on natural resource management and training opportunities will be provided to develop natural resource management plans. Delivery will be by devolved grants and competitive bids for specific targeted natural resource management issues.

In addition Hastings Landcare is applying for the following on a stand alone basis:

### **Project officer to assist land managers with farm planning in the Hastings catchment**

This will be an integrated project with various project partners including all the rural Landcare groups. The project will work one on one with land managers to assist them to prepare holistic property management plans. The project arose out of recognition of the numerous new landholders in the area who require assistance to manage their properties.

Applications for this funding close 03 April 2009 and we will keep you informed of the progress.

## Another Fish Kill in Lake Cathie

The recent (February) fish kill in the Lake Cathie estuary, caused by a lack of oxygen due to the shallowness of the water and normal seasonal heat could have been much worse if we had suffered a few days of extreme heat in the 35 to 40 degree range. The fish kill was basically caused by a build up of sand and other matter, water flow restricted by a causeway that should never have been built, and grassed islands which have claimed permanent status. Professional fishermen believe about one metre of depth has been lost.

Many of the current problems resulted from Council's approval about forty years ago to approve development of a residential estate on low lying ground. The impact of this was to take away nature's

method of flushing out the system as the entrance has to be opened at a depth of 1.6 metres to avoid properties being flooded. When opened naturally the height of water was 2.5 metres or more which had the velocity to take all before it. Unfortunately no alternate system of cleaning out the excess sand build up has yet been implemented.

The estuary is severely degraded and without a comprehensive management plan in place even though there have been about nine studies undertaken. The Umwelt study done in 2003, with full consultation involving Council and the community, put forward management options. It also dealt with the possible reversion of Lake Innes to fresh water which many believe would allow better

management of the entire estuary system.

Council require Hydrodynamic Modelling to be undertaken before the recommendations of Umwelt or numerous other studies can be implemented. The Umwelt study was commissioned by the National Parks and Wildlife Service which manages the Lake Innes Nature Reserve.

Council has committed to undertake the Hydrodynamic Modelling in the current financial year.

Contributed by Lake Cathie  
Progress Association

## Funding available for NSW recreational fishing programs

Anglers in NSW are being encouraged to apply for funds from the Recreational Fishing Trusts for projects that will improve recreational fishing.

Any organisation can apply for funding and projects must have direct benefits to recreational fishing. Examples of previously funded projects can be found at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au).

Projects enhancing recreational access and facilities usually receive high priority for funding from the

Trusts. These include funds for fish cleaning tables, fishing platforms, fish measuring stations, upgrading fishing access points, fence stiles and other on-ground work. Other types of programs that improve recreational fishing are also eligible for funding.

There are two types of grants available, small grants (up to \$10,000) and large grants.

Matching funding is encouraged by the Expenditure Committees and can be provided as in-kind support, such as voluntary labour, salaries etc.

The closing date for applications for consideration at the next meeting is **20 March 2009**. Small grant applications can also be submitted at any time during the year for consideration at other meetings held in 2009/10.

A funding application package is available at

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) or call the DPI Angling Facilities Manager on 6648 3917 or email

[recreational.fishingtrust@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:recreational.fishingtrust@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

## Landcare's Future

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In Victoria, changes in funding priorities means that compared to a few years ago, there are now only about half the Landcare facilitators available to the community.

"Facilitators are the interface between communities and the complex world of government," Mr Colliver said.

"Losing them means that the ability of communities to organise activities is reduced, and their ability to tap into government programs is reduced.

"Landcare groups that can organise themselves into networks and collectively put up large scale

projects have a chance to compete with the CMAs and government agencies for funding. That means that the well-off are doing alright—just—but those that are not well-off are really suffering."

How to resolve these challenges has been exercising Landcare committees at all levels for years, with no clear sign of a solution.

Ross Colliver suggests that Landcare may need to start funding itself, by being a broker between those on the ground ready to make environmental change, and corporations, philanthropists and the potential carbon credits market,

some of whom might be willing to pay for environmental services.

In some communities, Landcare is reinventing itself as a facilitator of ecologically-based productivity solutions for farmers, with a focus on soil and environmental health.

New committees have been established with the aim of providing a better conduit for communication between Landcarers and government.

But to date, there are no clear answers to Landcare's core problem: who pays?

## Aquatic Weeds Alert

After the flood is a good time to be on the lookout for new infestations of aquatic weeds. If you live near a creek or waterhole and are unfamiliar with *Cabomba caroliniana*, get to know it and keep your eyes peeled for outbreaks.

Cabomba establishes readily from very small fragments that are easily transported by floodwater, boats and fishing equipment. So, please clean



your gear on dry land when moving between waterbodies.

Cabomba grows entirely below the surface of the water and this feature makes it very difficult to control with herbicides. Other big name aquatic weeds to be on the alert for include Alligator Weed and Salvinia. Report any of these weeds to Council's Noxious Weeds Officer on 6581 8111.

## Now or Never: A Sustainable Future For Australia

Excerpt from an essay by Dr. Tim Flannery

For the full version, go to [www.quarterlyessay.com/qe/pastissues/index.php](http://www.quarterlyessay.com/qe/pastissues/index.php)

“Our despoliation of Earth’s life-support systems seems to mark us destroyer of our own civilisations, and as the planetary crisis we have created deepens, it is certain that no saviour will arise to rescue us from ourselves. There is no real debate about how serious our predicament is: all plausible projections indicate that over the next 40 to 90 years humanity will exceed – probably by around 100 per cent – the capacity of Earth to supply our needs, thereby greatly exacerbating the risk of widespread starvation, or of being overwhelmed by our own pollution. The most credible estimates indicate that we are already exceeding Earth’s capacity to support our species by around 25 per cent. With global food security at an all-time low, and a global climate catastrophe threatening, the signs of what may come are all around us. Everyone knows what the solution is: we must begin to live sustainably. But what does that actually mean? “Sustainability” is a word that can mean almost anything to anyone. Whether used by cosmetics advertisers or fruit sellers, it is bandied about as if it were the

essence of virtue. Wikipedia defines sustainability as “a characteristic of a process or state that can be maintained at a certain level indefinitely.” Hardly a moral definition, or a feasible one. Many environmentalists opt for a more practical meaning: “living in such a way as not to detract from the potential quality of life of future generations.” And here we find a definition in harmony with the commonly voiced aspiration to “try to leave the world a better place than we found it.” If we accept the environmentalists’ definition, living sustainably does not involve any particular morality beyond extending the Eighth Commandment (Thou shalt not steal) to future generations. A society that limited itself to such a narrow aspiration could be a barbarous place. Any meaningful inquiry into sustainability must surely be broader than this, and thus be as much a philosophical and moral discussion as a scientific one; for sustainability pertains to us – our innate needs and desires – as much as it does to the workings and capacities of our planet. A real

search for sustainability involves a broad vision – indeed, it encompasses many flashpoint issues: what of animal rights – and human rights – and religion, and democracy, and the free market, and war? Such questions will continually arise as we examine clear, practical solutions to our most urgent problems. Where does science fit into this inquiry? In human affairs there is often a great difference between aspiration and achievement. Even a society possessed of a moral and philosophical framework ideally suited to attaining a sustainable future may fail to do so if it lacks knowledge of how the world works, and of how its practices and technology are affecting Earth’s life-support systems. Accurate scientific knowledge of Earth and its processes is vital to the pursuit of sustainability. And so I propose commencing this investigation with two questions, which, even if they cannot be definitively answered, can nevertheless guide us in our search.

What is our purpose as a species? And how does Earth work?”

## Hastings Landcare’s Current Projects

### Pappinbarra Reach Project

This project is part of the Northern Rivers Catchment Action Plan—Water theme. The intent of this theme is to maintain and improve the condition of the region’s riparian and aquatic environments.

This project delivers the third phase of the staged river rehabilitation program for the Lower Pappinbarra River. It involves environmental weed management and revegetation of over 9km of the riparian zone covering 9 properties. A bush regeneration contractor has been appointed and work is about to commence.

Funded primarily by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Port Macquarie Hastings

Council is also assisting with the funding of this project.

### Port Macquarie-Hastings Environmental Levy

Port Macquarie Hasting Council generously allocated funds for the 2008/9 financial year to assist with administration and communication, as well as on-ground works for the Landcare groups within the Port Macquarie-Hastings Area.

To date, five Landcare Groups have been allocated funds to support their work within the district.

### Riparian Management Incentive Projects

This project provides incentives to landholders in the Hastings Catchment to assist them to improve

the management of their riparian zones. \$33,000 was allocated to works on eight properties. Works include riparian fencing, environmental weed control and off-stream stock watering. This is one of the last National Landcare Program projects.

### Coastal Landscape Land Rehabilitation

This project focuses on controlling and rehabilitating degraded lands in the targeted areas of the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority Region.

Funding of \$16,000 has been granted to four projects within the Hastings area. This project is supported by the Northern Rivers CMA.

# Vegetation and Water Management in NSW: A summary of the legislation

## The Native Vegetation Act

**2003** regulates the clearing of native vegetation on all lands in NSW except for land that is specifically listed in the Act. If you are planning on clearing any land that includes native vegetation then it is imperative that you

ensure that approvals are obtained (if required) prior to commencement of any works. If you are seeking funding assistance for any project that requires native vegetation clearing then you must obtain the appropriate approvals prior to submitting your

applications.

Information can be found at [www.nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au) You can call on 1800 237 012 (free call) or you can contact your local CMA. We also have copies (of some of the Act) at the office. Please call if you would like a copy.

## Water Management Act

**2000:** this is the main piece of water legislation for NSW ensuring that water is provided for the environment and more secure access to water users. Across the entire State, works within 40 metres of a river, lake or estuary require a [controlled activity approval](#) under this Act.

The Department of Water and Energy has developed guidelines to assist applicants who are considering carrying out a controlled activity on waterfront land. The guidelines provide information on the design and construction of a controlled activity, and other mechanisms for the protection of waterfront land.

Guidelines are available for:

- In-stream works

- Laying pipes and cables in watercourses
- Outlet structures
- Riparian corridors
- Vegetation Management Plans; and
- Watercourse Crossings

Controlled activity approvals are required for the following activities when carried out on waterfront land:

- the erection of a building or the carrying out of an activity (within the meaning of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*), OR
- the removal of material (whether or not extractive material) or vegetation from land, whether by way of excavation or otherwise, OR
- the deposition of material (whether or not extractive material) on land, whether by way

of landfill operations or otherwise, OR

- the carrying out of any other activity that effects the quantity or flow of water in a water source.

If you are seeking funding assistance for any project that work near a waterway then you may need to obtain a controlled activity approval prior to submitting your applications.

More information can be found at [www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au](http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au) or we can supply copies of the above. Please give us a call at the office for more information, 6586 4465.

## DO's and DON'TS for Bushland in Our Shire

From a draft report by Ecologist Bill Peel

DO treat weeds appropriately: spraying with herbicide, removal by bush regenerators, or a combination

DON'T allow mowing spoil or any other garden waste into bushland: this is how weeds spread

DON'T forget the edge: establish a strong barrier to prevent re-invasion by weeds

DON'T start weed control until you have the resources to follow it all the way through – avoid failure and frustration.

DO plant natives to assist regeneration in degraded areas, e.g. where previously sandmined

DO set an example to home gardeners by planting only local native species in public places. If foreign plants are used, they must be proven to be non-invasive.

DO encourage retail nurseries stock local native species so that buyers have a real choice

*\*Bill Peel's comprehensive final report on bushland management reform will be available soon*

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Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry  
National Landcare Programme



Northern Rivers

**CMA** CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, the National Landcare Program and the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority support the production and distribution of this newsletter.

*HatCH* presents a forum for the expression of a range of opinions. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of Hastings Landcare Inc. or its employees. While every effort is made to publish accurate information, Hastings Landcare Inc. and its employees do not accept responsibility for statements made and opinions expressed in this newsletter. We invite and appreciate your contributions.

Special thanks to contributors Julie Ho, Daintry Gerrand, Janet Watson, Janet Slater, Lake Cathie Progress Association.

## Indian Myna Traps for Sale

The enterprising guys at Hastings Men's Shed at Timbertown are now offering traps for sale at a very reasonable \$45.00. The Mens Shed is opened from 9.30am to 3.30pm Tuesdays to Thursdays If you are interested give Peter Nash a ring on 0448 504312 during these times.



## Bush Regenerator Available

Colin Coombes is now offering bush regeneration services. He has qualifications, experience and gear.

You can contact him on 6585 6504.

## Website Contributions

The Hastings Landcare website is nearing completion and we are seeking contributions of photographs, information and stories from your group, your project or your relevant field of interest. Please call the office for details on the style of information we are seeking or send an email with your ideas to [hastingslandcare@midcoast.com.au](mailto:hastingslandcare@midcoast.com.au)



## Autumn Water Bug Survey 18 March

How YOU can get involved...

Select a site near you- river, creek or dam.

Register online: <http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au>

You must register EACH site. If you have participated in the past, there is no need to enter a new site!

Download resources - your Water Bug Detective Guide, and field record sheet, from the bug survey website: <http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au>

Gather your equipment - most available in schools, homes or at the supermarket website

Conduct your survey on or near 18th March, 2009.

Upload your data and the pollution index of your site will be calculated



## Coming Up: The NSW Landcare Forum

The 2009 NSW Landcare and Catchment Management Forum at **Port Macquarie** on 9-11 September 2009. ALSO.....

The National Trust Heritage Festival - Across NSW, 4-19 April. Booklets of events available (from PMHC). Port Macquarie LCG will be holding some events at their sites, as will Council & DECC.