

Port Macquarie NAB Staff Tree Planting Day

Staff from Port Macquarie National Australia Bank branch teamed up with Hastings Landcare & Port Macquarie—Hastings Council to plant out 125 trees at Sancrox Park recently.

NAB Staff donate 2 days a year to support community projects and this year have chosen to team up with Landcare.

The day started with PMHC staff Mark & Jason giving background on the area and advising all regarding the correct method for planting.

The NAB guys then set up various teams, with some digging, some distributing the matting, bags and stakes and others planting out. All then got into watering.

The day finished off with a BBQ.



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

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Hastings small farm network online resource launched



Hastings Landcare has developed an online **Hastings small farm network** as part of the *Caring for our Country Small and Sustainable Farming Project*. The website is an information and networking resource for landholders and can be accessed at the following web address smallfarmnetwork.wordpress.com

The project, created and run by Hastings Landcare, has the aim of providing new landholders and those with small holdings with information about sustainable agriculture and related activities.

These days, everybody is busy; hence we feel that an important aspect of this project will be networking in a time efficient manner with other landholders. To enable this we have established this blogsite which will form the basis for questions and answers from landholders.

To join this site and network, simply fill in your email details in the box in the right hand column on the sites main page.. Alternatively, contact the project coordinator Ann Eggert (c.aeggert@bigpond.com) and you will be added to the list to receive details about field days, workshops and related information.

Collectively, there is a lot of knowledge and experience within this catchment, and the more this network is embraced by the participants, the better the service it will deliver. The site is maintained regularly and includes Contacts, details of upcoming Events, useful Links and available Resources. If you register, you can leave messages, make comments or give answers to questions posted.

Have a look. We look forward to hearing from you!

In 2012 Australians will come together to celebrate our farmers.

In 2012, we celebrate the Australian Year of the Farmer. It recognises what farmers do for all Australians. It's about what we eat; about fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy, grains, fish, meat, eggs and about wool, cotton, timber - all the fine quality products that our farmers grow and harvest in large and small businesses. Australia's farmers should be recognised and celebrated: for feeding the nation, for leading the world in farming techniques and innovation, and for sustaining the vital agribusinesses that underpin our economy. Farmers are the providers of our nation. The Australian Year of the Farmer reaches out to a broad audience – indeed to every Australian. It aims to involve and bring together rural and urban communities, schools, farming organisations, all the suppliers and the consumers of Australia's fine produce in a year-long program of events across the nation. The Australian Year of the Farmer will raise the profile of farming, highlighting the importance of food security and our dependence on the Australian farmer. Especially, it will remind city folk of the importance of our farmers, fostering greater connection and understanding, encouraging all of us to look for, to purchase and to appreciate Australian produce. And it will demonstrate how farmers respect and value the relationship they have with consumers and urban communities.... *It's an ever-growing need. Australian Farmers. Our Farmers. Our Future.*

The Hastings - Platypus country



DR. Tom Grant with an illegal crab trap found recently at Beechwood

Platypuses living in the fresh water creeks, rivers and lakes of the Hastings are now given greater protection under a partnership between Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, National Parks and Wildlife, NSW Fisheries and the Northern River Catchment Management Authority. The Hastings Platypus Awareness & Conservation Team (PACT) was formed in July 2009 in response to the discovery of a platypus drowned in a yabby trap at Comboyne. The grim find made by bush regenerators Matthew Bailey was not the first and it prompted the need for local action. According to leading platypus ecologist, Dr Tom Grant, results from his research in the Hastings catchment indicate a strong platypus population. While the platypus spends much of its time in the water swimming and looking for food, they usually only stay underwater for about 2-3 minutes as they need air to breathe.

One of the most preventable threats is the illegal use of traps and nets:

The Hastings Platypus Awareness and Conservation Team (PACT) aims to prevent the accidental drowning of platypuses (and other air-breathing wildlife such as turtles and water birds) in yabby traps.

PACT works to educate the community that it is illegal to use *Opera house yabby* traps in fresh-water creeks and estuaries and also the following fishing gear is NOT permitted in these waters (penalties apply):

- Mesh nets
- Set (unattended) lines, drop lining and jugging
- Hand-hauled yabby nets
- Spears, spear guns and bows and arrows
- Explosives, firearms or electrical devices

Use of any traps or nets other than what is outlined in the [NSW Recreational Freshwater Fishing Guide](#)

In response to the number of animals being caught and drowned in Opera house yabby traps, in 2003, they were banned in public waters (rivers, creeks and lakes) where platypuses are found. While the Hastings has a good population of platypus inhabiting our waterways, they are under threat by humans activity.

How to help protect platypuses in your area:

Plant native plants along bare or eroded banks:

- it will consolidate the banks, reduce flood damage and other erosion
- create shelter and reduce the chance of predators such as foxes, dogs & some birds of prey from accessing the burrow
- the constant fall of leaves into the water provides food for the small invertebrates that make up most of the platypuses diet (macro invertebrates).

Clean up streams by removing rubbish and broken bottles. If possible, fence off creek banks so that livestock don't damage them. Keep your dogs on a leash when walking near platypus habitat. Don't disturb them if you see them and leave their burrows alone as they might be incubating eggs.

Platypus are a protected animal throughout Australia under the *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974*. Anyone caught using illegal traps can face heavy fines.

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING IMMEDIATELY - 24 hour Fishers Watch Phone line
1800 043 536

FAWNA 24 hour injured wildlife hotline 6581 4141

For further information about the Hastings PACT contact

Kim Freeman

Project Officer Water Supply Services Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

P: 02) 6581 8241 M: 0431 567 127 E: kim.freeman@pmhc.nsw.gov.au

Julie Ho — On Top of The World



LORD HOWE ISLAND

Would you like to see a slice of heaven right on our doorstep? If you're fit and have a good knowledge of bush regeneration, why not volunteer to work on Lord Howe Island ?

Lucky me, I was invited for a second time in February 2011. While the beauty of LHI is the main attraction, I'd like to suggest some other reasons to volunteer on this World Heritage

site.

1. Volunteers are vital: Your work is part of in-kind contributions, which the organisers must make to secure their funding for environmental work. You will work a 40hour week alongside the Island's team of bush regenerators, for 3 weeks or more.

In the process you will climb up and down mountains hunting weeds, and it's hard work, but you will be SO fit (this will prepare you should you decide to do the Mt Gower climb!) You will learn heaps about ecology, plant ID, weed control strategies. Your expenses will be covered – travel to and from LHI, food and accommodation.

2. See the wildlife and landscape up close: While at work I was up on the cliffs with the seabirds, I weeded around the muttonbird burrows, woodhens hung around us as we worked amid the dense rainforest. On the weekend I snorkelled in the lagoon with gorgeous fish and the occasional shark, swam with turtles, enjoyed the corals. I treated myself to a boat trip all around the island and out to Balls Pyramid, seeing masses of birds and flying fish.

3. Living laboratory: You are likely to be in accommodation with scientists who share their enthusiasm and knowledge. I met researchers who were there when the corals spawned in February, although rough weather stopped people going out at night to snorkel or dive to observe the spawning event. At LHI (the world's southernmost coral reef) they fixed ceramic plates to areas of coral to monitor its growth.

Other scientists were researching native skinks and geckoes and I helped them at night to collect lizards, which were measured, weighed and tagged, and had tissue samples taken to study their genetics. Another researcher interviewed me about sustainable living, because I had seen some changes since my first weeding visit four years ago.

4. Meet the local people: They are so special, and here's an example! On Feb 17 LHI celebrates its Discovery Day with a fish fry, games and competitions under the stars. Local people and visitors of all ages joined up in teams for races or a tug-of-war, and unusual events such as slow bike riding or climbing the palm tree. It was like a magical time warp, back to the warm and friendly village atmosphere of my childhood -- I treasure the memory, and the medal I won that night. Thanks, Lord Howe – it was a privilege!

Julie receiving her award. From left to right

Ian Morrison

Volunteer of the Year - Julie Ho

Steve Cartwright

John Sherwood

Rex Moir

Port Macquarie Landcare Grp



Port Macquarie-Hastings 2011 Volunteer of the Year Award And the winner is ... Julie Ho from Port Macquarie Landcare!

There were 10 nominees for the Volunteer of the Year Award at the presentation on May 19, held in conjunction with the local Volunteer Expo. A full auditorium at Panthers watched the announcement unfold, for an award that is only in its second year.

Julie Ho was nominated by the PML committee, not only for her work with Landcare, but for the many other organisations that Julie volunteers with.

As a volunteer with Port Macquarie Landcare for the past 10 years, Julie has played a valuable role as both a volunteer working on the ground at many project sites and also as a vital committee member – securing ongoing funding, raising the awareness of local conservation issues, also networking with other environmental groups and all levels of government.

Julie spends many hours a week in her role as project manager of the Mahogany Hill and Lighthouse Beach Landcare sites. On top of this there is over 500 hours each year spent on committee tasks, in her position as secretary and funding officer. (Julie also finds time to work in the field as a bush regenerator or in an office administrating for the conservation department – AND still tend to her home duties and a loving wife and mum.)

For over 25 years Julie has been committed to local conservation issues, becoming actively involved with many local volunteer organisations. Julie was involved with the inaugural NPWS guiding program at Sea Acres Rainforest Centre, the initial working bees with the Friends of Kooloonbung Creek Nature Park, and the establishment of Port Macquarie Landcare.

In this time Julie has strived for better outcomes across the district. The removal of weed and pest species is evident at many local beaches, parks and reserves. But there is also the increased community awareness of important environmental issues which Julie has contributed time for school visits, group meetings, media stories and advisory board meetings.

Just for fun, Julie has taken annual leave over the past few years and gone to Lord Howe Island. No, not as a holiday - but to spend a month each year volunteering with the LHI Board. This lady (who is old enough to retire) choses to live in basic accommodation for 4 weeks and spend each day pulling weeds with other like-minded conservationists / environmentalists.

The award also involved \$1,000 prize money. Julie has graciously donated these funds to the Port Macquarie Landcare Community Nursery, so that trees can be produced and then the whole region will benefit from the prize.

WELL DONE JULIE.

.Janet Watson — Port Macquarie Landcare

The Fundamentals of Soil Workshop - Uralla



Dr Christine Jones
and Garry McDouall

I ventured up onto the Tablelands to Uralla to hear Dr Christine Jones and Garry McDouall speak on 'The Fundamentals of Soil' - along with about 80 other interested landholders on Saturday 14th May 2011.

The emphasis of the day was 'regenerative' agriculture - that is beyond sustainable agriculture and works towards restoring landscape resilience.

It was a refreshing day and very interactive as Garry McDouall (Resource Consulting Services) encouraged the participants to consider 'imperatives for change - food, fuel and finance' and to look at the issues from an optimists or a pessimists perspective.

Dr Jones, an internationally respected ground cover and soils ecologist, has a wealth of on-ground experience working with farmers and her innovative new work focuses on biological mechanisms, particularly the role of mycorrhizal fungi in improving drought resilience and soil health.

Dr Jones had strong messages about the effects of common management systems on food security and nutritional quality and spoke about the soil's capacity to sequester carbon at depth in the soil profile.

I learnt a lot about what you do on your own land to influence nutrient availability, build topsoil, improve soil water storage and lift economic returns.

As we drove home I certainly felt optimistic about the opportunities and challenges before us and had plenty of ideas and information on how to build resilience - both on my small property as well as working within our community to help others. The day was put on by Southern New England Landcare Soil Health Forum and funding assistance from a Community Action Grant.

Daintry Gerrand, Hastings Landcare Inc. /
North Coast Regional Landcare Inc.

PURG Discoveries off the Mid-North Coast.

By David Arthur



Do you know what these are? If not read on.



PURG (Port Macquarie Underwater Research Group) has been conducting surveys off the coast of Laurieton for the past 8 months. During this time 10 different sites were surveyed between Lake Cathie to Mermaid reef and as far off shore as the Cod Grounds marine reserve 5 kilometers off Point Perpendicular. The data collected has given us an insight in the marine life of the area.

At one of these sites there was a surprise discovery. Pycnogonids a group of marine invertebrates commonly known as sea spiders. These spiders superficially resemble the land spiders but are unique in many respects. Their coloring and markings can be quite spectacular and in some cases are reliable characteristics that can be used to distinguish different species.

After several return dives photographs were taken of 4 different species which would be used to help identify them. After scouring books and the internet we contacted Marine Invertebrates Department, Museum Victoria who helped identify them. Several species have been recorded in our local waters two of which ***Pseudopallene* sp.** although reasonable common, appear to be undescribed. This has encouraged several PURG divers to be on the lookout during their dives for these particular spiders. Divers have been successful with the spiders being found and photographed on most dives.

PURG has now moved its surveys to off the Port Macquarie coast and is planning to surveys a further 10 sites over the next several months.

On the first dive at a site off Lighthouse beach our spiders were found in quiet substantial numbers much to the excitement of the divers. This site also revealed the both species of ***Pseudopallene* sp.** in close proximity.

PURG divers will be continuing to search and photograph these spiders as well as other marine life found in the local area. If you would like to learn more about PURG and its projects or would like to assist in these projects, diving not necessary, contact can be made through Scuba Haven at 20 Merrigal St or on 0407457542



Hastings & Macleay Indian Myna Project



Hastings Landcare and Macleay Landcare Network have been successful in a joint application for a two year Environmental Trust grant to employ an Indian Myna Project Officer. This grant will facilitate the reintroduction of the Indian Myna Control project in the Hastings and the implementation of the project into the Macleay catchment. By extending the current Hastings project north to include the Macleay, it is effectively closing the gap and creating a continuous coverage of Indian Myna control programs from Coffs Harbour Shire in the north to Great Lakes Council in the south (7 coastal councils). Long term sustainability of the project will be a priority with the new project officer investigating alternative funding and support.

The Indian Myna Bird was first introduced to Australia in the 1860's as a control for insect pests in market gardens and sugar cane fields. Today the World Conservation Union (IUCN) has listed the Indian Myna as one of the World's 100 Worst Invasive Species. The population is currently spreading through eastern Australia and its arrival signals a disastrous change to come in local bird populations. This extremely aggressive bird chases out native birds and small tree dwelling marsupials such as feather-tailed gliders. The local community is currently witnessing the direct impacts in their own back yards with notable reduction in native fauna.

HOW TRUE IS THIS ONE FOR US OLDIES Sorry if I offend anyone but I remember all of them "The Green Thing"

In the line at the store, the cashier told the older woman that plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologised to her and explained, "We didn't have the green thing back in my day."

That's right, they didn't have the green thing in her day. Back then, they returned their milk bottles, Coke bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, using the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled. But they didn't have the green thing back her day.

In her day, they walked up stairs, because they didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. They walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time they had to go two blocks. But she's right.

They didn't have the green thing in her day.

Back then, they washed the baby's diapers because they didn't have the throw-away kind. They dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 240 volts. "Wind and solar power" really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that old lady is right, they didn't have the green thing back in her day.

Back then, they had one TV, or radio, in the house not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a pizza dish, not a screen the size of the state of NSW. In the kitchen, they blended and stirred by hand because they didn't have electric machines to do everything for you. When they packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, they used wadded up newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then, they didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. They used a push mower that ran on human power. They exercised by working so they didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. But she's right, they didn't have the green thing back then.

They drank from a tap or well when they were thirsty, instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time they had a drink of water. They refilled pens with ink, instead of buying a new pen, and they replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But they didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar and kids rode their bikes to school or rode the school bus, instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service. They had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And they didn't need a computerised gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But that old lady is right. They didn't have the green thing back in her day.

OMG...that was MY day too!

(sourced from the internet by Paul Scott)



Contact Us

Hastings Landcare
44a Cameron Street
PO Box 126
WAUCHOPE 2446

02 65 864 465

hastingslandcare@midcoast.com.au

www.hastingslandcare.org.au
open Tuesday to Friday

Important Dates

Hastings Landcare General Meeting	22 June 11
National Tree Day	31 July 11
Hastings Landcare AGM	17 August 11
NSW Landcare Conference, Parkes	5-7 September 11
Legume & Herbs Field Day	18 October 11
Legume & Herbs Field Day	21 October 2011

MISSING OUT ON THE COLOUR OR JUST WANT TO HELP SAVE RESOURCES?

You can access this newsletter in full colour on our website www.hastingslandcare.org.au. If you would prefer us to notify you by email when the newsletter is posted then let us know. We are striving to reduce the amount of paper we consume in this production and you can help! Thanks

LANDCARE COMMUNITY NURSERY

*A community nursery for
community re-vegetation projects*

The role of the nursery is to provide indigenous plants grown from local provenance. This not-for-profit nursery enables your project's funding to go further.

Address: NPWS Area Depot, end of Blackbutt Rd, Port Macquarie

Times: Monday morning 9am—12 noon
Other times by arrangement

Contact: Estelle Gough
6583 6508 / 0432 141605

The Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority support the production and distribution of this newsletter.

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