



Spring 2015

No. 63



Hatch

Landcare in the Hastings and the Camden Haven

*supporting
voluntary natural
resource management in
the Hastings and Camden
Haven catchments*



**44a Cameron St
Wauchope**

Tuesday- Thursday
9:00am-12:30pm
or by appointment

call 65864465

PLEASE HELP SAVE RESOURCES

We can email this newsletter to you in COLOUR or advise you when it is available on the website, just send us an email

hastingslandcare@midcoast.com.au

We are currently updating our mailing list, so please let us know if your details have changed.



Green Army Environmental Warriors

You may have seen a bus of young people traveling to or working in natural settings in your local area recently. This is the Greater Hastings Green Army team that is half-way through their six-month project with Hastings Landcare.

Their project targets high conservation value ecosystems and complements existing initiatives by Mid North Coast National Parks Association and Manning Coastcare volunteers. The team of nine is working along 29km of coastline including Kylie's Beach South, Crowdy Head and Harrington.

To date, they've treated over 10 hectares of weeds and revegetated 5

hectares using native plant species.

On a fortnightly basis, the team also work on building native plant stock by helping out at Greater Taree Council's nursery—they aim to propagate over 5000 plants and they're well on the way to achieving this ambitious target.

This particular team have an outstanding attendance record which is a testament to the satisfaction felt by contributing to a meaningful project and also to the skills of their team leader, Matthew Donovan. Matthew has extensive bush regeneration experience and is enjoying his role which includes passing his skills on to the next generation of conservation



If you're going to **donate** anything
donate **yourself** to Landcare

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday
September 16
3:30pm

Wauchope Country Club Board Room

Everyone is welcome

Here's your opportunity to take on an executive position in the Hastings Landcare management team.

Positions Vacant:

President
Vice-President
Treasurer
Secretary
Public Officer
Executive Members

A change to our Constitution is proposed to enable donations made to Hastings Landcare to be tax deductible.

A General Meeting will follow.

MEMBERSHIP FALLS DUE ON 1 JULY

PLEASE ENSURE YOUR FAMILY OR GROUP'S MEMBERSHIP IS CURRENT

You must be a member or represent a member organisation to vote at a meeting or be elected to an executive position.

Membership remains at \$15 per year or \$40 for three years and you can now PAY ON LINE via www.hastingslandcare.org.au

Green Army cont'd.

and regeneration warriors.

Some team members travel over 45 minutes to participate in this project which demonstrates their genuine desire to work and participate. We have team members coming from Mt George, Telegraph Point, Port Macquarie and Wauchope so they can be part of the team and because their project sites are scattered across the Hastings and Manning Valleys it's probably appropriate that the team also reflects diversity amongst team members!

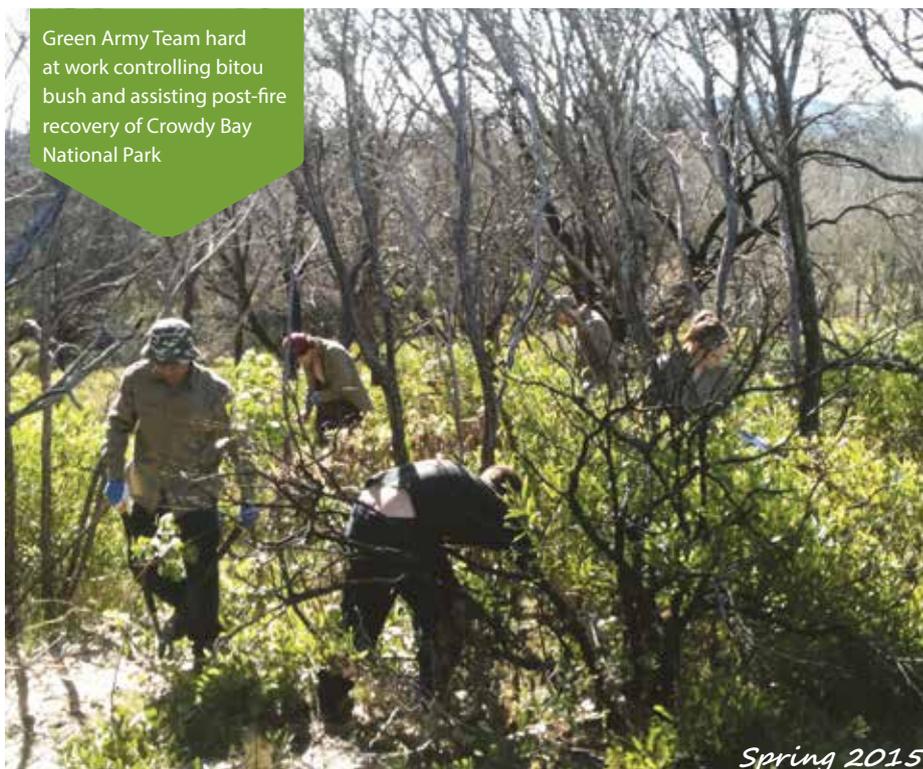
The Green Army is an Australian Government initiative and it provides opportunities for young people to develop skills, undertake training and gain experience in the delivery of conservation projects. Project Sponsor, Hastings Landcare, and Delivery Agency, Homebase Services (a service unit of Great Lakes Community Resources and on behalf of national Service Provider CoAct) are awestruck at the amount of work this team of young people are able to get through. In addition to their on-ground works,

the team are also undertaking competency units from a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management, delivered by Homebase Services in partnership with Kempsey's Booroongen Djugun College. Some participants were early school leavers and others were long-term unemployed—all however are participating in a meaningful outdoor project that benefits themselves as well as their local community and environment. They have also been thrilled by the feedback received from some of the local residents who've been noticing their excellent work.

If you see a team of young people in khaki uniforms working in the bush, please stop to say hello and learn something about local youth and the local environment at the same time.

For more enquiries about the Greater Hastings Green Army, please contact Krysten Banks at Homebase Services (0478 169959) or Daintry Gerrand at Hastings Landcare (6586 4465).

Green Army Team hard at work controlling bitou bush and assisting post-fire recovery of Crowdy Bay National Park



Greater Hastings ... Building Resilience through Riparian Landscape Links

A case study in communicating biodiversity outcomes via social media

After postponing twice due to flooding a small but enthusiastic group of people ventured to Mortons Creek in late May to experience a riparian restoration project 15 years on.

The project is on private land and, recognising the high conservation value of the riparian vegetation, the landholders entered into a conservation covenant under the Native Vegetation Conservation Act around the turn of the century. About 20ha is reserved in perpetuity and other riparian areas have been progressively rehabilitated and linked to the reserved area.

The Australian Government Biodiversity Fund project has enabled the landholders to control invasive weeds in the newly reserved areas and replace some stock exclusion fencing around the area under covenant. Additionally, around 4,500 local provenance seedlings will be planted to expand the area of native vegetation.

While the group of visitors was relatively small (17), we were able to extend participation in the farm walk to 115 via Hastings Landcare on Facebook.



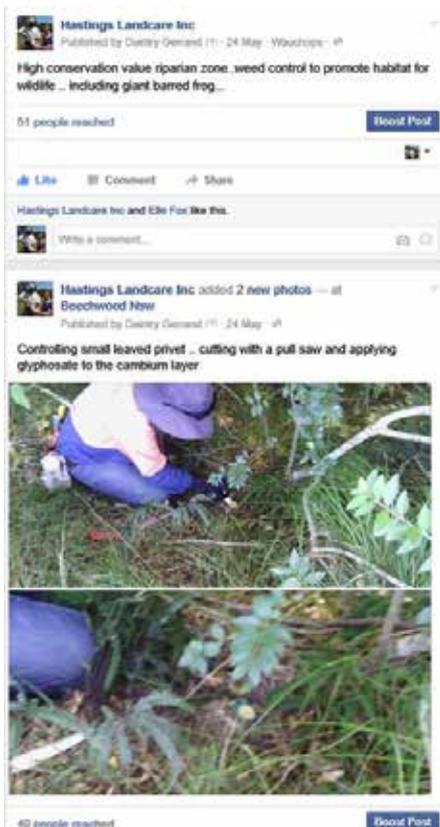
A Biodiversity Fund Project funded by the



Australian Government



Biodiversity Farm Walk on social media



The Facebook posts are still available for your viewing and interaction. So don't forget, if you are unable to attend a field day, tune in to Facebook and get involved that way.



www.facebook.com/HastingsLandcare
www.facebook.com/HastingsFarmGateTour
["/HastingsMacleayLandForWildlifeProject](http://www.facebook.com/HastingsMacleayLandForWildlifeProject)

A Biodiversity Fund Project
funded by the



Australian Government

How time flies, surveys have now been completed for all the seasons, so we now have a snapshot of what has been happening across the Greater Hastings over the past 12 months. We much appreciate the opportunity to survey on these private properties and many thanks to the landholders.

We have been surveying 16 sites, across our four rivers, two sites in the lower reaches and two in the upper reaches of each. Our objective is to get an idea of the changing avian diversity on the sites as the regeneration, fencing and or revegetation works progress over the life of this project. While it is early days and we will need considerably more data to see any trends we are already getting some good information on the bird life along our rivers.

Before looking at some of the things we have learnt, it is worthwhile giving an idea of the scale of the surveys. Each survey takes 20 minutes and we record all birds identified, either seen or heard at the site. We also record "incidental" birds identified outside the 20 minute time scale and also not within the site but within 200m of the site, these records are kept separate. This latter data set helps to identify birds that are likely to use the site over time. To date we have recorded over 3000 individuals from 97 species on the sites with an additional 2000 individuals and 22 species in the "incidental" records. The sites vary considerably in habitat and vegetation so this affects the numbers and species of birds found.

Amazingly a survey at one site yielded 187 birds. Why? Well, there were 114 Topknot Pigeons in several feeding flocks. Usually, however, there are about 40 individuals from 20 species but we have found as many as 27 species on a single site. It all means we have to be on our toes.

A case study in monitoring biodiversity outcomes

Bird Surveys One Year On

Most of the birds we are finding are common species and to date there hasn't been anything unexpected. Unsurprisingly the five most commonly recorded species are Brown Gerygone, Superb Fairywren, Lewin's Honeyeater, Grey Fantail and Brown Thornbill, all small common birds. They are all confiding birds that are easily found calling and feeding through the undergrowth. All these birds were found at every site, though not in every season.

The sixth most recorded species is the Topknot Pigeon, that single record of 114 skewing the results somewhat at this time. This bird is a nomad dependant on the fruiting trees, figs, Acronychia and unfortunately the Camphor Laurel. Like all the fruit pigeons, White-Headed, Brown Cuckoo Dove, Wompoo and Rose-crowned, if the trees are not in fruit then we don't see the birds as their home range may be substantial.

Then it's back to small common birds including Red-Browed Finch, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler and Silvereye completing the top ten. These plus the top five are "sedentary", that is

they stay at one location for their life, so our sites are their homes or at least home range.

Interestingly the Scarlet Honeyeater which held the third spot after just one set of surveys made it in at number 11, though we only saw a further 17 individuals across all sites over nine months. This bird is also a nomad searching out the flowering trees and shrubs, moving from the forest to the heath to a calendar of flowering plants. There are some birds that we have only recorded in small numbers and we are happy for it to remain that way. These include:

The Noisy Miner was only found at six sites and then only in small numbers with 27 birds recorded. This is fantastic as this bird has been listed as "a key threatening process" for many woodland bird. Any increase in the sites where they occur or the numbers will be something to avoid.

There were also only small numbers of the introduced birds recorded, including the Spotted Dove, Common Blackbird and Common (Indian) Myna. A total of six birds were found at six sites, another good result we would

White-Headed Cuckoo-Dove: A bird with a large home-range, reliant on fruiting trees.



like to stay that way. Of these the Myna takes nesting hollows but overall these are not as great a threat to native birds, all the same it's good there are small numbers.

Of course there are other birds we only see occasionally or for short periods of time and these are often more interesting and reliant on the corridors, including along the rivers, to travel the countryside in search of food or a place to breed.

A juvenile Owlet Nightjar was found during summer near Beechwood on Morton's Creek. Being a night bird, a hollow nester and a cryptic bird this was an exciting find. We also found two pairs of Azure Kingfishers on this property, not a rare bird but good records.

Only a single Wompoo Fruit Dove has been recorded, feeding in a fig. However when we were selecting sites we found a flock of a dozen or more of these beautiful birds along the Hastings River. So it's a matter of being there when the right trees are fruiting, not always easy.

One site on the upper Camden Haven river has had three robins recorded, the common Eastern Yellow Robin but more interestingly a Pale-yellow Robin, a rainforest resident and finally a Rose Robin, an altitudinal migrant escaping the cold of the mountains.

Two Bassian Thrushes that spend the summer at over 550 metres in places like the Comboyne were found feeding along the lower reaches of the Camden Haven in early spring last year. This reinforces the need for corridors for this and other altitudinal migrants.

Then finally there are bush regeneration, planting, fencing and erosion control works to be done on the sites and with these works we will undoubtedly see changes in the bird life on the sites. Already we have noted some changes.

At one site on the Camden Haven River the site has been progressively fenced off and is now fully fenced. This site holds a high bird diversity, with 44 species found on site, not bad for just two hectares. We have already seen vegetation changes with plenty of



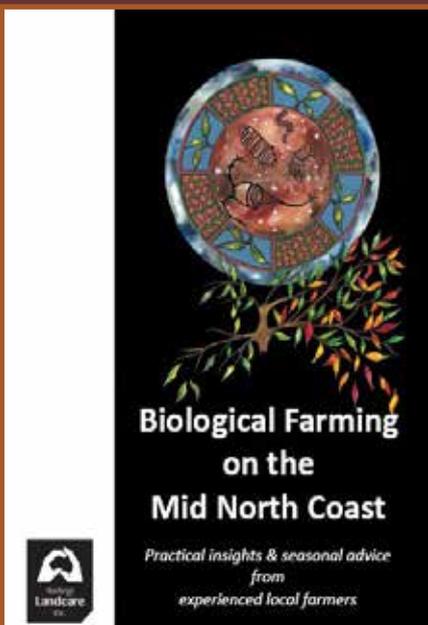
Topknot Pigeon: A nomadic frugivore often seen in large flocks, also reliant on fruiting trees.

native rainforest regrowth which should be good for the birds, we shall see.

Another site on the upper Pappinbarra has had significant bush regeneration works completed with the privet substantially removed. Consequently the site is far more open and we were very pleased to record as many birds as we had recorded in spring though the species numbers were down. However the drop in species is to be expected as the summer migrants are still to return. What will we find this spring? Also for the first time we found Logrunners

had moved in with the more accessible forest floor, it even appeared as if the birds were breeding, all good news. So some good outcomes at the two sites that have had the most work completed during the survey period. It is going to be interesting to see how these two progress and how others will fare as work is commenced.

Peter West



Biological Farming Guide Released

Based on what local farmers told us about barriers to adopting biological farming practices and where more information was needed, we interviewed three local biological farmers to bring you *Biological Farming on the Mid North Coast*.

The guide shares practical insights and seasonal advice from experienced local farmers Lauchie Hollis, Chris Eggert and Jeremy Bradley. A range of topics are discussed, including, of course, a very strong focus on the soil.

A valuable reference for established and new farmers, particularly if you are just getting started in biological farming, the guide is available for purchase from Hastings Landcare in hard copy or on-line for \$10.

Thanks go to our farmers who volunteered their time and freely shared their experiences and to North Coast Local Land Services who funded the project *Building Resilience in our Soils and Landscapes through Improved Soil Management*.

Soil field days in October

Soil expert, Ludwig Mueller, will present the results of several years of remineralisation and soil health work with farmers in the Macleay and Nambucca valleys in October. These are good opportunities to learn about interpreting soil test results and working out a schedule for remineralisation. We will also get to see results in improved agricultural production and soil health and overall resilience of the agricultural system.

On **14 October**, a presentation at Utungan Hall in the Nambucca will be followed by lunch and a visit to Max Saul's dairy farm.

On **18 October**, Millbank Hall in the Macleay Valley will be the venue for a talk, followed by lunch and a farm walk at Vicki Humphries' beef cattle property.

Ludwig's presentations will also draw on information from other farms in the area as well as research conducted by TNN and others from around Australia.

We will look at soil test results from the properties prior to any fertiliser

program, the sequence of soil remineralisation, and the resultant improvements in soil health and production over the years. Current soil tests will complete the picture and inform a soil mineral maintenance program for these properties.

These field days are made possible through the small incentives program as part of the project funded by North Coast Local Land Services: *Building Resilience in our Soils and Landscapes through Improved Soil Management*.

Book with Hastings Landcare 65864465.



STOP PRESS!

Jeremy Bradley wins NSW Landcare Award for Innovations in Sustainable Agricultural Practices

In recognition of Jeremy's tireless contribution to and infectious enthusiasm for soil health and innovations in sustainable agricultural practices, we are proud to announce that Jeremy is a Winner of the Australian Government sponsored award in 2015.

Jeremy will be presented with the award at the Landcare *Breakfast of Champions* in Orange in September. Congratulations Jeremy!

A team from UNE is researching the effect of climate change on dung beetle performance. Four Hastings Valley farms are assisting PhD Candidate Zac Hemmings with his study of dung beetle assemblages across a range of altitudes and climate change impacts.

Dr Jean Drayton is also seeking landholders, particularly dairy farmers to assist with her study into climate change impacts....

We are trying to identify species that will do well under climate change and test if more diverse dung beetle assemblages are better able to cope with climate change than monocultures.

During the study, we will rear dung beetles in custom built climate chambers that will be warmed to a few degrees above ambient (as predicted under climate change). We can then assess their performance under simulated global warming.

The study is supported with funding from Dairy Australia.

We need field sites to collect the beetles for the study. We are particularly looking for properties that either don't drench or use minimal drench. At the field site, we will dig in around 10 pitfall traps. Each traps consist of a small collecting jar, a 23cm funnel and a grid of wire mesh across the top. The traps are baited with cow manure that has been wrapped up in tulle. The traps are then covered with wire cages to keep the cattle off them.

We will first do 2-4 days trapping to sample the abundances and species in the area. Once we know on average how many beetles will come to a dung pat, we can then collect beetles for the experiment.

The first trapping session to establish abundances takes about a week. Once we have abundance data, we will then need to trap intermittently for a few months (say 2-3 days per month) to

Warren Avery, Stewart Armstrong and UNE's Zac Hemmings installing a dung beetle trap at Rollands Plains



Dung Beetles in a changing climate

collect beetles for the experiment. This is because beetles that we sample in the first week would probably become too old by the end of the experiment, and so fresh ones would be needed.

Once the trapping is done, I will remove all traces of the traps and fill in all pitfall trap holes. I feel it is also helpful to mention, I grew up on a cattle farm and appreciate the importance of taking the utmost care when you are on someone else property (for example, always shutting gates, never leaving anything around that cattle can get into and eat). So I can assure you I would be very diligent to take care and respect your property at all times. I also intend to do all of the work myself, there would be no need for you to do any of the trapping (that said, if you would like to have a go you are very welcome, I just don't want to make any extra work for you guys.

This proposed research plan is completely negotiable. For example, if you only want the pitfall traps in for a week, then perhaps after a week's trapping we could remove the pitfall traps completely and collect beetles for the experiment by collecting dung pats

from the ground. Or we could initially trap with 10 traps in the first week to sample the populations, and then only leave 3 or 4 traps afterwards.

Are you interested in participating in the study? Please feel free to call/email if there is anything you would like to discuss or clarify.

Dr Jean Drayton

Postdoctoral Fellow
Zoology
School of Environmental and Rural
Science

University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351 Australia

Phone 61 2 6773 3511
Email jdrayto3@une.edu.au





Jeremy Bradley, the plant, in symbiosis with Brendan O'Brien, the nitrogen-fixing bacteria at the recent David Hardwick soil workshop in Beechwood.

NSW Landcare Conference September 1-3

Mid North Coast Microherders' Jeremy Bradley will be presenting at the NSW Landcare Conference in Orange this September. Jeremy will be speaking about the role of social media in soil health outreach. Those of you who have participated in the Mid North Coast Microherders Facebook forum will understand the value of this communication method. You can still access and contribute information by searching for Mid North Coast Microherders on Facebook.

Thanks to our Volunteers

Special thanks go to our 2014-15 Committee: Leonie Gale, Julie-Ann Murphy, Dale Goldfinch, Steve Gale, Stewart Armstrong, Narelle Milligan, Jim Lewin & Graham Bird. Thanks also to those who have kindly volunteered their time at the office: Rose Felipe & Dianne Myers; to Hazel Monk for her generous donation to Hastings Landcare & to Robyn Payne for her wonderful photos from the Farm Gate Tour. We are also very grateful to Silva Vaughn-Jones & Jill Smith who provided guidance on getting started in InDesign.

Got Horses? Don't miss this opportunity

Healthy Horses: Healthy Land

Learn how to use the natural and domesticated behaviour of horses, combined with good land management practices, to create a healthy and sustainable environment for your horses and your property. You will learn about horse health and welfare, the relationship between horses and pasture, pasture management systems, worm/manure management, how to save time and money on your horse property, and much more!

Stuart Myers and Jane Myers MSc (equine) are international speakers on the subject of sustainable horse property management and were awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2012. They present on this subject in various countries. Don't miss this great opportunity to learn how to manage your horses, your land and your time/budget so that you create a win-win situation all round.

Healthy Horses: Healthy Land is an introductory workshop that is a prerequisite for a more in-depth

"equicentral" horse property planning session.

Horse Property Planning

This workshop is **limited to ten properties**. It reinforces the lessons from the Healthy Horses: Healthy Land workshop and applies the principles of "equicentral" planning to individual properties. Following the property planning session, you will visit a horse property and critically review and redevelop the plan for that property, helping you to redevelop your own plan.

Please be advised that you will **need to have attended the Healthy Horses: Healthy Land** workshop held in the Macleay and Hastings last year or the workshop to be held the day before in the Nambucca. To make the most of the day it will be important to have an **aerial photograph** of your property. Please contact Hastings Landcare ASAP if you do not have an aerial photograph and we will organise for one to be printed (at your expense).

BOOK EARLY: 65864465

**BOOK EARLY
PLACES ARE
LIMITED**

HEALTHY HORSES: HEALTHY LAND

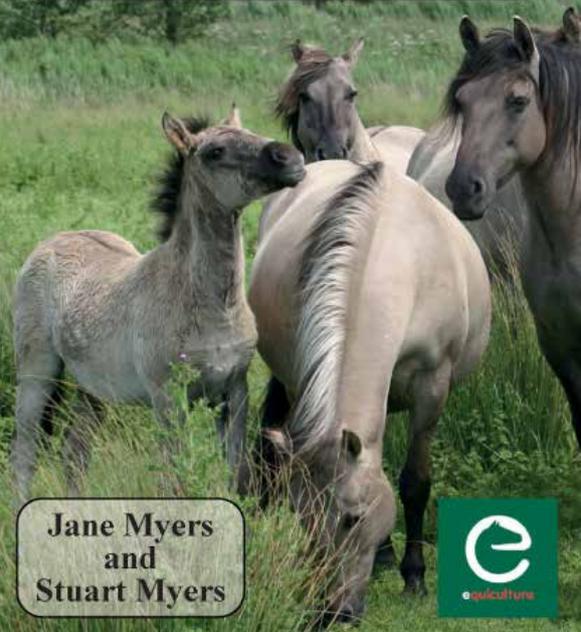
**\$10/family
Nambucca Valley
December 5
9:30 - 3:30**

HORSE PROPERTY PLANNING

**\$30/family
Sherwood Hall (Macleay)
December 6
9:30 - 3:30**

**Call Hastings Landcare to
book 65864465**

Horse properties - a management guide -



Jane Myers
and
Stuart Myers



“That spade will tell you much more about soil biology than ten thousand dollars worth of testing” is just one of the take-home messages from a series of fun and interactive workshops conducted by Agricultural Ecologist David Hardwick on the Mid North Coast in July.

David involved participants in role-playing the variety of organisms that interact in the soil ecosystem. This understanding and a run-through of the Landcare Rapid Assessment of Soil Health (RASH) help us to follow a logical process to ensure good soil fertility management decisions: a process that David coins “the seven soil psychology steps”. The goal is not just optimal plant productivity but also maintaining the condition of the soil asset for the long term: maintaining soil health.

Following the 7 steps to managing soil and farm fertility will provide a realistic picture of your soil’s productive capacity and inform decisions about where to invest money and in what sequence....

Step 1. Determine your soil’s overall fertility. Before making any decisions about your soil it’s important to understand your soil’s nutrient storage capacity. For example, a light soil will contain and have less capacity to store and exchange nutrients than a heavy soil.

Step 2. Assess soil health and key topsoil properties. Determine the condition of your soil’s health. Identify key properties of the soil that may limit its overall function and performance. These are **major soil constraints**, including properties such as compaction, acidity and low levels of organic matter. As David points out, “you can’t buy soil structure in a bottle”.

Step 3. Determine your general enterprise and productivity goals. Based on steps 1 & 2, you now better understand your soil asset, its potential productivity and its condition. You can now match enterprises to your soil’s



Sniffing out snake oils: Rodney Anderson, Stewart Armstrong and Andrew Blackadder assessing soil fertility inputs

7 Soil Psychology Steps

David Hardwick workshops

capability and set realistic targets for production.

Step 4. Set long-term soil condition targets. Once enterprise goals are decided you can now decide at what condition you need to maintain your soil asset in to ensure reasonable performance for the long term.

Step 5. Manage any major soil constraints. Now you know what levels of soil condition you are aiming for, you can see if the soil falls outside your targets for its key properties. If so, then you have a major soil constraint. Unless you address any constraints, the soil will always be operating at less than optimal levels. You can now spend resources on addressing any major soil constraints so you can achieve a soil that will meet your soil condition targets and your enterprise goals.

Step 6. Identify and manage the nutrients that are limiting production. When you have started addressing any

major soil constraints and your soil is moving to a reasonable condition you can now look at the fertiliser nutrients you need to achieve your enterprise goals. Fertilisers are like the fuel in the tank of a truck. There is no point spending money on fuel when the truck is missing wheels and the gearbox is stuffed. We need to fix major constraints first before we can expect the truck to do the job for us.

Step 7. Monitor soil health, fertility and enterprise productivity. When you have a systematic approach to your soil and farm fertility management in place you need to keep monitoring your soil and enterprise to ensure you are on the right track. By monitoring soil health you can see if your management decisions are maintaining or improving the soil asset. By tracking fertility you can ensure you have adequate production nutrients for your enterprise and by keeping an eye on enterprise productivity it will help you see if you are making money.



Compost dancing with Ali, Sweetwater Farm., March 2014

Vale Alison Kennedy

Many of you will know Alison Kennedy as an enthusiastic Landcarer and environmental educator who was always full of life. Sadly, Ali was taken from us at the age of just 52. We will all miss Ali's smiling face, her generous nature and her valued contributions. Vale Ali.

Yeomans Picnic Plow on its way

Hastings Landcare will soon be the proud owners of a Yeomans Picnic Plow. Thanks to the Yeomans Plow Company for offering an extremely generous to discount to Hastings Landcare, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal for partially funding the project and the Capararo Trust for making up the difference.



Many of you have seen the results of keyline sub-soil ploughing with a Yeomans Plow and considered access to this kind of equipment suitable for small area farms would be important in overcoming barriers to adopting more sustainable soil management practices.

keyline system of subsoil ploughing and find out how you can apply it to your farm.

The Picnic Plow will be demonstrated at the **Plowman's Picnic Lunch at Beechwood on 22 November**. This event will also celebrate our local Landcare Champions and provide an opportunity to learn more about the

The Picnic Plow will be available to farmers throughout the Hastings for a small rental fee. Members, of course, will receive a discount.

If you are keen to volunteer your time and/or resources to the Plowman's Picnic Lunch or would like to book in for the event, please don't hesitate to contact Landcare on 65864465.

Sea Acres Open day to benefit FAWNA with thanks to Pwarrhouse CFM 11653 for Australian wildlife needing aid Rescue Line 6581 4141

Meet the FAWNA volunteers and learn about what we do with presentations and talks on Seabirds, Marine turtles, and Native bees

Meet the wildlife Come and meet the education animals

Try some Bush tucker with Aboriginal guide Nadia

Rainforest plants view the range available from Landcare

For the kids learn more about the animals with storybooks, colouring in, and face painting

Ukelele band Listen to Melodic Fortunes tear up the boardwalk on their Ukles

Not just the birds sing Come and hear "Sassy Q" the all female barbershop quartet

Guides are out there Sea Acres guides will be roaming the board walks sharing their knowledge.

Half price subscriptions to Sea Acres for 2015/16



Sunday September 13 2015

come and join us
10am - 4pm
Gold coin donation per adult

Meet the ultimate recycled house. Shenstone started life a century ago in the western suburbs of Sydney; it had its land reclaimed for a motorway and was then moved to the mid north coast 8 years ago. Shenstone has PV solar panels, solar-heated hot water, double insulation, low-impact paint, and low emissivity windows. A wood-fired stove provides central heating in each room, and rain water is collected for use in the toilets and washing machine. Another large water tank outside the kitchen window collects water which is then used on the flourishing garden. Shenstone is a good example of an urban farm. Right in the middle of the Wauchope township, the property has an organic, edible garden with chooks, established on permaculture principles. Organic waste is composted. From the front yard, side garden, and back yard, a surprising array of fruit and vegetables is produced.

During the course of a year, enjoy mulberries, mangoes, tamarilloes, pawpaws, quinces, medlars, apples, tropical pears, tropical peaches, peachcots, babacos, dragonfruit, pomegranates, custard apples, bananas, oranges, mandarins, lemons, and limes from our many fruit trees. We also have hazelnuts, macadamias and water chestnuts growing.

Growing on the vines along the fences are Isabella grapes, passionfruit, kiwifruit, and a variety of berries. Root crops flourish in the soil at Shenstone, including potatoes, three types of sweet potatoes, arrowroot, yukon, galangal, Jerusalem artichoke, turmeric, onion, garlic, and shallots. Rhubarb is a regular favourite and strawberries are harvested each year, and over the course of the four seasons, a wide range of vegetables are grown: beetroot, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, kale, broccoli, silver beet, radishes, and much more. Two years ago we purchased Element City, on land adjacent to Shenstone. (It is named after the feature window installed high on the western wall.) Element City also has sustainable features; natural paint, ceiling fans, excellent insulation, and ceiling panels made from recycled PET bottles. We

Visit Shenstone urban farm to experience sustainable living right in the middle of Wauchope



Visit Shenstone Sustainable House Day September 13

have added water tanks, and solar panels are in the pipeline along with a compostable toilet and greywater worm farm. You can read about it on our blog at <http://elementcityblog.com/>

The blog also contains posts about a whole range of issues that we have encountered in attempting to live a more sustainable lifestyle. Click onto the blog to read about topics such as:

- How we are trying to Reduce, Recycle, Reuse in every aspect of our lives
- Cutting down on packaging in our shopping – including the challenge of avoiding that great scourge of modern packaging, plastic!
- Growing our own vegetables and fruit at home and working towards a higher degree of self-sufficiency in our diet
- Shopping locally; shopping at Farmers Markets, avoiding supermarkets (well, for almost everything...), and bartering our produce

- Monitoring food miles ... we are trying to buy food that is grown within three hours' drive from our home (although we make exceptions for sugar and flour)
- Reducing the amount of rubbish that we produce in the house (and each week, we weigh it as a discipline)
- Our adventures in hypermiling, driving in a way that reduces petrol consumption, by careful acceleration and braking, with a maximum of 90 kph on the motorway (the optimal speed for fuel consumption)
- Buying ethical, checking out the ethics of the companies we buy from, and seeking out fairtrade items such as coffee, tea and chocolate ... and lots more!

Visit Shenstone on Sustainable House Day, Sunday September 13. 6 Graham Street, Wauchope. Open from 10am-4pm, with hourly tours commencing at 10:30am.

Property Planning, Grazing Management, Weed Control & Feral Animal Control courses for 2016

Hunter Local Land Services have teamed up with Hastings Landcare to present short courses in **property management planning** and **weed control** in the **Stewarts River** catchment in Autumn 2016. Register your interest now with Hastings Landcare.

North Coast Local Land Services will be offering a grazing management course in Autumn 2016. Drs Judi Earl and Lewis Kahn from AIMS will provide the training.

The over-arching objective of this very popular 3-day introductory course is to increase the productivity of grazing enterprises through changes in pasture and grazing management, soil fertility, water-use and animal feeding strategies. The increased pasture growth allows for greater stocking rates without taking many risks. Participants learn simple, quick and effective ways to monitor pasture and how to use this information to improve their grazing business.

Topics covered during the program include:

- a description of the features of perennial grass growth and why managing the grazing is so crucial to pasture productivity.
- Understanding the water cycle and how to improve rainfall use efficiency
- Interpreting soil tests and improving soil characteristics
- The Pasture Checklist a simple and effective pasture monitoring tool
- How to estimate herbage mass and conduct a feed budget
- Developing your own grazing plan

North Coast Local Land Services is offering Wild Dog Control workshops for groups of 15 or more landholders.

2015 Hastings Farm Gate Tour

Everyone who was involved will agree the 2015 Farm Gate Tour was a huge success. 145 booklets were sold and we reckon around 430-440 people visited ten farms in the Greater Hastings.

Special thanks go to all of the farmers who opened their gates this year: Redbank Organic Farm (Jenny, Paul, Ann & Chris Eggert); FoodPrints (Jeremy Bradley & Cathy Eggert); Shenstone (Elizabeth Raine & John Squires); Ewetopia (Jill & Ian McKittrick); Kindee Valley Farm (Brian & Kerry Wehlburg); Gromorbeef (Gail & Ken Morgan); Ticoba (Ernst & Penny Tidemann); Lorne Valley Macadamia Farm (Joanne & Ray Scott); Barbushco (Barbara & Bruce Barlin); and Port Oyster Company (Paul Wilson).

Media coverage was excellent in the lead up to the event, with features locally including Focus magazine, PrimeTV and several of our local newspapers. The Farm Gate Tour was also featured in the Telegraph and reached international tourism organisations via Tourism Australia's newsletter. Thanks to Jane Ellis and

Gabrielle Brewer from Port Macquarie Hastings Council for their assistance and special thanks to Kerry Wehlburg who contributed well beyond the call of duty in assisting with organisation and promotion of the event.

Thanks to the number of local businesses who took the opportunity to advertise in the booklet this year. We are hoping to develop this support base for next year's tour.

A big thankyou to everyone who came along on the tour and to those of you who provided feedback. Although the top end of Tom's Creek Rd is exhilarating and Ellenborough Falls is spectacular, we will improve the schedule next year with clearer instructions and less overlap in the opening times.

Here are some of the comments people made about the Farm Gate Tour and some wonderful photographs contributed by Robyn Payne:

"I'll never swallow an oyster again without thanking the oyster farmer."



"Seeing the delight on my grandchildren's faces."

"It was great to find out the history behind macadamias and have a decent cup of coffee at the same time."

"I think it is a wonderful idea that provides an opportunity for young and old to see a rural way of life and for children to see that our foods have an origin and do not come from packets in supermarkets. With so many of us choosing to source food from the grower rather than the supermarkets and lessen the food miles, it was great being able to speak directly with the farmer/producer, learn about their particular enterprise and in some cases sample the produce."

"Ewetopia was the standout because of the way the sheep interacted with all of the children and adults and the views are just amazing!"



"Redbank organic farm always impresses because of their very obvious passion for what they do and being hands-on in a true farm environment and hearing just what goes into making a cup of milk is truly enlightening."



DATE	DAY	TOPIC/PRESENTER
1-3 September	Tuesday-Thursday	NSW Landcare Conference, Orange
4 September	Friday. Contact Clive os-prey@internode.on.net	Hastings Birdwatchers, Roscommon, 140 Tower Rd, Pembroke
13 September	Sunday 10am-4pm, tours at half past the hour	Sustainable House Day, Shenstone, 6 Graham St, Wauchope
16 September	Wednesday 3:30pm	Annual General Meeting, Wauchope Country Club
14 October	Wednesday 10am – 3pm	Soil health field day with Ludwig Mueller, Saul's Dairy, Utungan (Nambucca)
18 October	Sunday 10am-3pm	Soil health field day with Ludwig Mueller, Humphries' Beef cattle farm, Millbank (Macleay)
18 October	Sunday, all day	Hannam Vale Open Gardens
7-8 November	Saturday & Sunday	National Biological Farming Conference & Expo. SoilCare Inc., Alstonville.
22 November	Sunday, 11:30am	Plowmans Lunch, celebrating local Landcare Champions and the Yeomans Picnic Plow, Beechwood
5 December	Saturday 9:30am-3:30pm	Equiculture: Healthy Horses Healthy Land, Nambucca
6 December	Sunday 9:30am-3:30pm	Equiculture: Horse Property Planning, Sherwood

Please register for all events: 65864465
hastingslandcare@midcoast.com.au



\$500 REWARD for the return of these dogs.

1 black desexed male 4 years old and 1 white & black female 8 months old. These dogs went missing from the Crescent Head area and are not only loved family pets but are highly trained feral animal hunting dogs. If you think you have seen these dogs please call 65660742/0414850029.



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On the web:

www.hastingslandcare.org
www.mnccmicroherders.org

email us:

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Landcare Community Nursery Community nursery for community revegetation

The nursery provides local provenance plants. This not-for-profit nursery operated by Port Macquarie Landcare Group enables your project's funding to go further.

NPWS Depot, end of Blackbutt Rd, Port Macquarie
Monday 9am-12 noon or by arrangement

Contact: Estelle Gough 65836508 or 0432141605