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MUSTERING IN PARKES

Landcarers from all over the State recently gathered in Parkes for the NSW Muster & Forum. Six HRLN members, along with our Regional Landcare Facilitators, participated in three days of workshops, Field Trips, listening to speakers and generally enjoying themselves at social events.

The theme 'Thinking Differently: New Solutions for Old Issues' reinforced the fact that that landscape, community and individual health are all linked. It highlighted the importance of people within landscapes being a major influence in NRM. Scientific knowledge coupled with the passion of local communities is far more successful than just investing in one or the other.

In making informed decisions about the future of the Hunter's environment landscape regeneration, sustainable agriculture, soil health, carbon trading etc. the health of individuals and communities go hand in hand.

During the Forum, Field Trips were organised and I headed out on a very full bus to two farms, a mine owned farm operation and a family farm for a 'Whole Farm Approaches to Sustainable Farming & Biodiversity' morning.

The mine has nearly 5,000 hectares for farming and grows canola and wheat. Buffer zones between the mine and farm also act as wildlife corridors. These native vegetation belts only marginally reduce moisture levels in the soil. Large scale farming trials are undertaken and on-farm education for locals.

Next stop was the family owned and operated farm "Derrymore" which was basically deforested when purchased by its current owners and keen Landcarers Elizabeth and Bernard Dwyer. They run sheep on the property and operate mixed cropping, on rotation.

Wide wildlife corridors have been progressively planted on the farm and paddock boundaries with over 10,500 trees and some 30kms. of land fenced. Apart from biodiversity aspects these corridors also provide shelter for sheep. A signed property agreement is now on the land title, preventing boundary corridors being touched by any future owners of the farm.

Linking remnant vegetation was a major focus for both farm operations.

Crop rotation, weed control, soil health, stock planning, effective Natural Resource Management and the realities of living in rural agricultural environments all formed part of the Field Trip. All in all a great morning which improved my knowledge of sustainable agriculture and weed control.

The dinner on Tuesday night included an announcement from Troy Grant (State Member for Dubbo and Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources) of a \$2 million funding package for Landcare in NSW over the next four years.

Landcare NSW Chair, Mandi Stephenson also said "Landcarers from across NSW had opportunity at the Muster to express their concerns and ideas for the future direction for Landcare NSW. Top of the list was again communication, support and providing opportunities to share administration and governance. A very successful Muster & Forum and a real celebration of Landcare".

On the last day the hosts for the 2013 Landcare Forum were announced—the Hunter-Central Rivers region! Organising an event of this scale is a major task, with our CMA co-ordinating the event in partnership with our local Landcare and community networks.

Ruth Hardy



Indian Hedge Mustard Weed in Barley crop

HRLN PROJECTS

- Junior & Adult Landcare workshops—Wildlife Corridors, Weed Control, Healthy Land & Water
- HRLN Website upgrade
- Long term research into climate change in the Hunter for Sustainable Farming initiatives
- River Red Gum project—Hunter River local provenance plantings
- Regional Landcare Facilitators—sustainable farming initiatives & landscape conservation
- Educational resources—incl. Mobile Puppet Theatre
- Landcare facilitation at a regional & state level—representation on Landcare NSW
- Local Council partnerships to address land and water conservation and rehabilitation needs
- Hunter Indigenous Riparian Plants Nursery

NSW LANDCARE AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to Shortland to Wallsend Landcare on taking out the Highly Commended Award for Urban Landcare Groups at the 2011 NSW Landcare Awards held in Parkes recently. Founding member of the group, Jenny Castles, was there to accept the Award. As only two awards are given in this category Jenny said “that makes us second in the whole State and that’s good enough for me!”

Group members have worked tirelessly for decades to improve the land and water resources in Shortland and Wallsend, working with residents, local schools and Newcastle City Council to identify local NRM needs, improve and conserve natural resources and plan for the future.

Whether growing native seeds at school, educating others about caring for the land, clearing parks, waterways (and even the cemetery) of weeds and rubbish, planting and monitoring native vegetation or working on regional NRM issues, Shortland to Wallsend Landcare group provide innovation and stability to local, natural environments.

At the packed Awards presentation dinner there was a big cheer from the ‘Hunter Landcare table’ when this Award was announced. Well done Shortland to Wallsend Landcare!



Jenny Castles



Chris Scott from Manning Landcare is a member of HRLN’s Steering Committee for the Regional Landcare Facilitator project. He represents the Lower North Coast Landcare community on the committee. Chris has a long history of working at local, regional, state and national levels to advance Landcare. HRLN is delighted that Chris won the Individual Landcarer Award.

Ruth Hardy

Chris Scott with Phyllis Miller (Mayor of Forbes)

CLEARING UP THE CREEK

Branxton Tidy Towns members have been busy improving the quality of waterways along Anvil Creek and planting native vegetation. Since October last year weeds were progressively removed (including some cut and paint stumping on large woody weeds), the ground prepared and planting and fertilising undertaken.

The CMA and Cessnock Council have provided lots of support, knowledge, encouragement and liaison to undertake extensive clean-up work in and around the creek. The Green Jobs Corps worked hard with the clean-up process and planting out of the creek bed. Vegetation mapping of the creek provided knowledge of existing weeds and remnant native vegetation and our local supplier helped with deciding on the most appropriate native plants to purchase.

Our HRLN Landcare Assistance Fund grant meant we could purchase weed spray, fertilizer and the plants we needed for restoration of the creek bank over a 250 metre distance near the entrance to Branxton village.

These activities are part of a long term project by Branxton Tidy Towns members and have already enhanced the overall aesthetics of the area, helping to improve the quality of waterways around Anvil Creek. Volunteers will continue to monitor and maintain the area for both the benefit of the environment, the local community and visitors to Branxton.

Jo Rosenkranz

Branxton Tidy Towns

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

One Individual Member
Jerrys Plains & Districts Progress Association Inc.

WARATAH WATER & EARTH

Waratah West Public Junior Landcare Group is a whole of school environment group focused on developing student interest in caring for and sustaining their environment. A hands on learning approach is provided to help students develop a sense of ownership towards native vegetation, recycling, composting, weeding, planting, mulching, growing and using sustainable foods. Activities are planned to help students develop lifelong skills which they can transfer into their own lives and community, increasing their understanding of the need to conserve the Hunter's finite resources.

Local industry provided labour, a Bobcat, chainsaw and industrial mulcher for dead trees and branch removal and plant material recycled into mulch for garden beds. Teachers and students then replanted all the gardens with native plants and created small 'water gardens' alongside some of the school buildings. More mulch, soil, native plants (including water plants), sleepers, water garden containers and river stones were purchased from money received from a HRLN Landcare Assistance Fund grant.

Recycled water is used, food waste recycling buckets for lunch and recess are collected by years 3/4 students and placed in the compost bin and vegetable gardens provide food for weekly cooking classes.

Tanya Lawford
Environmental Teacher



REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR SPRING UPDATE

Articles of Interest

Flood Damage Assessment Allyn River System – June 2011 Flood Event by Noel Jupp,

In his article Noel Jupp discusses management of riparian zones following the June 2011 floods affecting the Paterson and Allyn Rivers. For a copy please contact the Nursery on 4938-9280 or email Riverdene.jupp@bipond.com

Funding Opportunities

Be Natural Landcare Grants

National \$125,000 grants program for voluntary 'Landcare' environmental community groups to enable them to continue tackling local environmental issues for on-going projects. Up to \$5,000 available to 25 local group projects. Closes 10 October www.landcareonline.com.au follow links to Be Natural Landcare Grants

FarmReady Reimbursement Grants

Farmers/landholders/managers can claim up to \$1,500 p.a. for FarmReady registered courses - additional funding for reasonable travel, accommodation and childcare expenses.

Equipping primary producers to manage/adapt to impacts of climate change

Call FarmReady program administrator on 1800 087 670 or email admin@farmready.gov.au

Low Stress Stock Handling Course

CMA course on low stress stock handling techniques, Graham Rees facilitating. Preliminary schedule:

Merriwa 28th & 29th November, Stewarts Brook 1st & 2nd December. Call Sue Rowland 6542-4444

Mirannie 5th & 6th December - Call Steve Clarkson 6578 7346

Tea Gardens 8th & 9th December - Call Mick Budden 4995 7742

RLF staff are currently planning workshops to the end of June 2012 e.g.

Native Vegetation & Weed Management – the 'good' and the 'bad', grass weeds etc.

Farm Planning – specialist advisors to assist farmers/landholders to develop their own Farm Plan

Soil Health – from simple test to advanced analysis

Managing Horses on Small Properties – incl. landscape improvements

Information on workshops/Field Days will be publicized as they come on-line.

Dates for diary:

HRLN AGM & General Meeting
8th October, 10.00 a.m. at
Maitland District Leagues Club,
Bulwer St, Maitland

Great White Sharks, Whale &
Dolphin talk 13th October 7.00 –
10.00 p.m. at Caves Beach
Email: occi_lmn@live.com.au

Conserving Native Grasses in
Rural Cemeteries—Field Day
17th October at 10.00 p.m. At
Wollar Cemetery or 2.00 p.m. at
Ulan Cemetery. Email:
info@watershedlandcare.com.au

Hunter Estuary Shorebird
Seminar 17th November 1.00
p.m. at Hunter Wetlands Centre,
Shortland. Cost \$45
Tel: 4951 6466

LORN REVIVAL

National Tree Day volunteers were out in force again this year planting native trees across the Hunter, working with other Landcarers, communities, Local Councils and other environmental organisations.

Maitland City Council focussed their activities this year on the bank of the Hunter River at Lorn. Earlier this year Council, in association with the Department of Industry & Investment, the Catchment Management Authority and Conservation Volunteers Australia had undertaken plantings to remediate the Hunter River in this area. A 1km. stretch of public open space riverfront has been targeted, from the Belmore Bridge and towards Horseshoe Bend.

The National Tree Day planting was an extension of this project. It ensured replacement of tube stock lost in high water levels back in June, provided further plantings for biodiversity with some of the tree species providing future habitat to Grey Headed Flying Foxes present in the local area.

A group of dedicated volunteers and Council staff from the local area and also Aberglassyn, Kurri Kurri, Rutherford and Newcastle came together to plant the trees and grasses provided by Council. Members of the local Lions Club were also there to get their hands dirty and support the day.

HRLN member and local resident Richard Pepper was one of the volunteers on the day. Richard said it was great to be working with other volunteers who came from differing urban and peri-urban areas in the Hunter. "We all worked well together and shared some of our Landcare stories and ideas for the future of the Hunter's natural environment. It was good to be planting in such a lovely area along the river bank. The warm weather was an added bonus" he said.

Over 800 natives were planted on the riverbank and 200 on higher ground. The volunteers efforts have added to the 9,250 tube stock planted at previous National Tree and School Days organised across the Maitland Local Council area..

Native grasses were planted along the sandy banks of the river to provide stabilisation —Tussock grass (*Poa labillardieri*), Plume Grass (*Dichelanchna micrantha*), Tall Sedge (*Carex appressa*), Blue flax-lily (*Dianella caerulea*) and Spiny-head mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*).

The Native tree species planted along the river included various varieties of Wattle, Oak, Myrtle, Ironbark and Gum. Also planted were Crimson bottlebrush (*Callistemon citrinus*), Port Jackson fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*), Lemon-scented tea tree (*Leptospermum polygalifolium*), Sieber's paperbark (*Melaleuca linarifolia*) and Turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*).

The Fig, Ironbark, Red Gum and Turpentine species were planted on higher ground away from the river bank and will provide habitat for flying foxes in future years.

Lorn was the main activity this year because of bank erosion from flooding and as part of a targeted, long term plan to encourage the flying foxes away from residential areas in the town.

Members from the East Maitland Lions Club volunteered their time to lend a hand with planting the trees and native grasses.

They also provided a much needed and much appreciated B-B-Q meal for all the hardworking and thirsty volunteers at the end of the morning's work.

Ruth Hardy



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