

Inside this issue:

The Allyn River p1

HRLN Projects p2

Conserving Land
for Woodland Birds p2

Landcare on the
Coast-Merewether p2

New Members p3

Dainty's & Dragons p3

Regional Landcare
Facilitator Update p3

Horsing Around p4

Dates for Diary p4

Contacts p4

THE ALLYN RIVER

The town of East Gresford is lucky enough to be situated by the Allyn River, a river of beauty and also inspiration. The Allyn is a wild river. Its source lies in the high altitude rainforest of the Barringtons where it runs fast and clear with deep green pools overhung with stunning rainforest.

From its beginnings just below Carey's Peak (elevation 655 m) it snakes its way down, past Antarctic Beech trees to sub-tropical rainforest containing Red Cedar. Then down the valley through forest and farmland to the lower reaches where after over 80kms. it flows through the Paterson to the Hunter River, becoming somewhat degraded by the time it reaches the coast.

It floods in a spectacular fashion, drops equally fast and comes almost to a halt in drought. For landholders living along the Allyn these fluctuations require an understanding of the rivers vagaries and an ability to adapt to them.

Flood management plans are an important aspect for our local landholders and communities.

As landholders with river land we face familiar challenges at times. Local bridges and roads can be impassable from flooding and debris, riverbanks and fencing may need repairs or washed away native vegetation areas may need to be replanted.



Photo - S. Stoutas

When the district experiences drought conditions creeks and rivers like the Allyn can stop flowing. Changes to subsoil moisture levels and to vegetation can affect general land and farm production.

The river around Gresford is healthy, clean and alive with fish, platypus, eels, perch, some crayfish and mullet and numerous other freshwater river life.

Some landholders monitor and record the varieties of native birds on their properties, passing information on to relevant government and community

based databases. Birds such as the Whinbrel and Diamond Finch are rare to this area but have been sighted on some Allyn River properties.

In the middle of town, at the end of Showground Road, right beside the campground is a most beautiful swimming hole. Countless visitors spend time here each year, some having come for generations to camp at the river with their families.

The Gresford Park Trust manages the park, maintaining its buildings and monitoring the environment and its biodiversity. Over time, as a result of flood events and heavy usage, the banks of the swimming hole have become degraded and overcome with weeds such as Privet, Green Cestrum, Ricinus (Castor Oil Plant) and Giant Weed. Each time a flood sweeps through, fences may have to be repaired and native plantings replaced.

Gresford District Landcare Group has received a grant from the CMA to repair and revegetate the banks. Regular 'working bees' at the site are planned and starting in April we will be working to clear weeds and rubbish.

It will be a pleasure for the Group to help repair and maintain this precious asset for the town of East Gresford and all who visit.

Penny Kater



Photo S. Stoutas

HRLN PROJECTS

- HRLN Website upgrade incl. Urban Landcare & Sustainable Farming resources
- Long term research into climate change in the Hunter for Sustainable Farming initiatives
- River Redgum project—local provenance plantings along the Hunter River
- Regional Landcare Facilitator Initiative—sustainable agriculture, landscape management & Landcare
- Educational resources - incl. mobile Puppet Theatre
- Workshops - Junior Landcare & Adult education weed control, native vegetation, soil health

CONSERVING LAND FOR WOODLAND BIRDS



Regent Honeyeater Photo Chris Tzaros

Wearing 'more than one hat' whilst working for the environment is fairly standard for me. As the Birdlife Australia NSW Project Officer for the Woodland Birds for Biodiversity project I 'stretch my own wings' across differing issues and areas, working to enhance conservation of threatened, declining birds and improve outcomes for them.

Threatened species we work to protect include Diamond Firetail, Turquoise Parrot, Little Lorikeet and the Hooded Robin and the endangered Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater (NSW is this bird's stronghold). A partnership between Birdlife Australia and the Nature Conservation Trust of NSW means I liaise with landholders, conserving native woodland bird habitat through covenanting (similar to a National Parks Conservation Agreement).

Local landholders can preserve some of their high value conservation land in perpetuity, to help protect and care for natural values on their property, for long term outcomes.

Plans of Management are developed for individual properties under this scheme. The Trust also provides ongoing support to landholders for the monitoring of native plants and endangered animals on their properties. They also receive a monetary payment when they take out a covenanting agreement which is registered on their land title.

If you are a Hunter landholder 'just starting out' or are already working on rehabilitation and protection of your woodland bird habitat and want to find out more about this project, you can call me on 0421 761 237 or 4023 535 to find out more. You can email me at mick@nct.org.au or go to our website at www.nct.org.au

Mick Roderick



Swift Parrot Photo Chris Tzaros

LANDCARE ON THE COAST—MEREWETHER

Since 2004 Merewether Landcare members have worked to restore coastal dunes in our area, meeting on Tuesday mornings March to December, then in the cooler evening hours during hot summer months. We undertake regeneration work on the lower slopes of Merewether headland and around Merewether Baths car park and picnic area. This is a historically significant precinct, the site of the old Burwood Colliery railway. The area is a significant repository of social history.

We are working with Newcastle City Council to develop a heritage park on this site.

Over the years our Landcare members have—

- Regenerated the Merewether dunes and worked to restore the Merewether Baths surrounding area
- Planted some 35,800 local native tube stock, with a 80% survival rate
- Restored 3 native vegetation communities on severely degraded land
- Increased biodiversity from 3 local native species to 30
- Raise awareness of the role of native plants in coastal stabilisation and urban beautification through interpretative signage, pamphlet/newspaper articles and via our website.

We also work Newcastle City Council to source and gain funding and plan for future restoration along our coastal strip e.g. establishing a boardwalk and viewing platform on the heritage park site, due for completion by mid 2012.

Our Newcastle Community Group of the year, 2012 Australia Day Award is the most recent of several awards we have achieved, recognizing the hard work of our Landcarers.

For more information about us contact Griff Foley or Lori Hungerford on 4969 8683 or email griff.foley@bigpond.com. Website www.merewetherlandcare.com.au

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

One Individual Member
Branxton Tidy Towns

DAINTY'S & DRAGONS

The Society of Frogs & Reptiles (SOFAR) recent Expo in Newcastle attracted over 4,200 visitors eager to see and learn about this side of nature. Eastern Dwarfies, White Lip, Dainty and Green Tree Frogs were on display, along with Black Headed, Woma, Jungle, Diamond and Carpet Pythons and Central, Eastern and Henry Lawsonii Bearded Dragons and the all too familiar Blue Tongue Lizard.

SOFAR works to promote the understanding and care of these smaller but so important members of our natural environment. Volunteers get so much enjoyment from sharing their knowledge of frogs and reptiles with their local community and particularly from seeing the smiles on children's faces as they see a familiar backyard Blue Tongue Lizard or a Dainty for the first time.

Tammy Bazley

REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR UPDATE

The Weed's News, a regular publication, can be read on-line at <http://invasivespecies.org.au>

Frogs Australia Network - database, Field Guides etc. at www.frogsaustralia.net.au

NSW Livestock Health & Pest Authority Review - recommendations include major changes to Travelling Stock Reserves. Go to the www.dpi.nsw.gov.au to read the Review. Submissions are due by May 23 to lpha.review@dpi.nsw.gov.au

NSW BioNet - the Atlas of NSW Wildlife includes information on flora & fauna sightings www.bionet.nsw.gov.au

Total Field Days (TFD) - HRLN and the RLF project will have stalls in the Land Management marquee. Junior & adult Landcare activities/groups, sustainable farming, Carbon Farming Initiative information, guest Landcare and production representatives and more.

Local landholders can join HRLN's River Red Gum project and tube stock will be available FOC on the day.

Daily HRLN workshop on the Land Management stage - Junior Landcare, Wildlife Corridors, Industrial Hemp farm production in the Hunter (as a crop, its versatility, manufacturing uses, soil health and composting benefits).

National Tree Day - be a Co-ordinator for this event in your neighbourhood. First time Co-ordinators can share their school or public site 'story' on the website www.treeday.planetark.org/

Pacific Conservation Biology - recent issue no. 17 discusses Climate Change in Oceania, incl. articles on Australia www.surreybeatty.com.au

FarmDay 2012 - farming families hosting city families for a day - May 26 & 27 to register go to www.farmday.com.au

Introduction to Holistic Management, Wollombi June 18 - 20 www.holisticresults.com.au

Target 100 - sustainable cattle & sheep farming initiative, connecting producers with urban consumers—research, case studies, farmers joining case study project etc. Visit www.target100.com.au

Funding Opportunities—closing dates:

- Go Green Grants & Go Green Shopping Spree competition for schools & groups Tel: 9412 1040 Email Email@landcareaustralia.com.au - May 1
- Coles Junior Landcare School Garden Grants www.juniorlandcare.com - May 1 & July 27
- NSW Environmental Trust grants covering Environmental Education - April 20, Eco Schools & Food Gardens in Schools - May 18, Protecting our Place - June 1 www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au
- Australian Bird Environment Fund - research, conservation works, education, management plans/techniques May 31 boca.org.au
- Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife - community groups, landholders, scientific research, caretakers of Australia's reserve system. Applications anytime www.fnpw.org.au

Dates for diary:

HRLN General Meeting April 14 at Hunter Region Botanic Gardens, Pacific Highway, Heatherbrae. Incl. workshop
Tel: 0458 348 110

Environmental Defender's Office, Coal Seam Gas workshop April 17. RSVP to education@edo.org.au

"Nature is Fun" April 18 & 11 July at Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. Tel: 4987 1655

Make Your Own Backyard Habitat workshop April 28 at Lake Macquarie LRO
Tel: 4921 0392

'Back to the River' Family Festival April 29 Kooragang Wetlands (Ash Island).
Tel: 4964 9308

Total Field Days May 4, 5, 6 at C B Alexander Agricultural College, Tocal Road, Tocal 9.00 - 5.00 p.m.

International Composting Awareness Week May 7-12 www.compostweek.com.au

World Migratory Bird Day May 14, 15

National Volunteer Week May 14-20

World Environment Day June 5

HORSING AROUND

In late February and early March HRLN's Regional Landcare Facilitator project held four Horse and Land Management workshops in the Hunter, Central and Lower North Coasts. Heavy rain fell over the weekend of the Scone and Singleton workshops and a handful of disappointed people were unable to attend due to flooding on their property or to local bridges.

Each workshop at Morisset, Scone, Singleton and Wingham had a mix of landholders with small or large properties, farmers, agricultural industry workers and some owning horses for mainly recreational purposes.

New ideas and techniques on property design and planning, water, waste, pasture, grazing, revegetation and general land management were discussed by workshop presenter Jane Myers, an international horse and land management educator and author.



Jane Myers with horse, of course

People talked about their own land, water and horse management experiences e.g. farmers discussed mixed crop, cattle and horse grazing techniques they use.

"Should I graze cattle and horses in separate paddocks with different grass feed" and "How can I improve the design of my horse yards, stables and paddocks" were common questions. "Why can't I manage to get my two fat horses slim" was a question we could all relate to.

Cattle and horses have some different grazing needs. Growing native pasture for horses and cattle, protein and fructan level limits for horses, weeds harmful to cattle but not to horses and visa versa were covered.

Whilst horses are often stabled their natural instinct is to be out in the open. Providing 'natural' shelters in paddocks (no roof but protection from wind etc.) is both economical for landholders and responds to those instincts.

Pasture improvement - native grasses, mulching, weed management, wet paddock drainage, use of swales and paddock rotation were the highest priority areas people identified as planning to address on their properties. Fencing of creeks and vegetation stands, increasing internal paddocks, salinity, stock drinking water issues, riparian and general vegetation plantings were also on the list for landholders and industry managers.

Valuable feedback was gained from landholders on ideas and learning needs for future RLF Field Day and workshop planning. For example, aspects of pasture management, nutrition, soil improvement, Carbon Farming, weed identification and control, riparian management, 'which grass species goes where', natural alternatives to using chemicals/poisons, more understanding of equine feeding, nutrition and behaviour. cattle operations and fodder management and pests and parasites.

For more RLF project information or for assistance please email rfl.hunter/lnc@bigpond.com

Ruth Hardy

The RLF project is supported by HRLN, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

HRLN Chair: Ruth Hardy Tel: 0458 348 110 (HRLN Mobile)

HRLN email: hrln@bigpond.com

Shirtsleeves Editor: Ruth Hardy

Landcare NSW Inc: www.landcarensw.org.au

Publicity: Helen McClelland Tel: 4930 1030

Website: www.hunterlandcare.org.au

Shirtsleeves articles to email: hrln@bigpond.com

Landcare Australia: www.landcareonline.com.au

Shirtsleeves is supported by  Hunter-Central Rivers
CMA CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY