

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 103, January - March 2015

Southern New England Landcare...

Our **VISION** is for a vibrant, socially and economically healthy community existing in a healthy, productive and biodiverse environment.

Our **MISSION** is to lead, connect and enable our communities to achieve their sustainability goals.

Contact **US** by phone 02 6772 9123 or email mail@snelcc.org.au



Southern
New England
Landcare



Regional Landcare Facilitator

Diary Dates

Black Gully (NERAM) Clean Up

Australia Day.....1 Mar

Armidale Tree Group's Lend-a-hand
day at Mike O'Keeffe Woodland.....7 Mar

AURG Working Bee (see Page 3).....8 Mar

Armidale Autumn Festival Parade.....14 Mar

Tilbuster Ponds/Pine Forest creek
planting day22 Mar

Malpas/CWC Revegetation/Birds

Project Planning Day29 Apr

Landcare Adventure, Tamworth27-28 May

Landcare Adventure 2015

Save the date!!!

Theme: Healthy soils, healthy farms, healthy people

When: 27th & 28th May

Where: Lake Keepit Sport & Recreation Centre

More information including flier and early bird discounts will be available early March.

Media Release

For immediate release, 19th February 2015

Survival of the fittest: will evolution wipe Landcare out?

"Landcare is dead" is one of the messages coming as justification for the decision by Local Land Services (LLS) to drop their support for local Landcare Coordinators by 57%.

Mr Steve Harvey, Chair of Southern New England Landcare said, "One of the positives of the new LLS investment strategy is we will now receive a 3 ½ year contract for our Landcare Coordinators instead of the very frustrating one year contracts we've had for the last several years."

"The down side is we are taking the equivalent of a 57% cut in funding for those local coordinator roles", he said.

"We have also been offered additional funding for extra responsibilities, but it remains a fact that our core support has been reduced significantly," he stated.

Southern New England Landcare's staff were recently told their employment would end on 28th February 2015 due to the cuts. However the, regionally-based New England North West Landcare Network have been successful in sourcing non-LLS funding, meaning current staffing levels at Southern New England Landcare can be maintained until June 30th.

A recruitment process will be run in June for a July 1 start based on new position descriptions that take account of the funding cuts and increased responsibilities. Based on current projections, current staffing levels will be cut by nearly 50% if no further funding is found.

"There may also be implications for our local landcare resource centre and office in Armidale," said Mr Harvey.

"This would be a real shame, because we can show that the return on capital invested in landcare coordinators is about 450%," he said.

continued on Page 6

THE PURSUIT OF FUNDING \$\$\$ FOR SNELCC MEMBERS

As most of our readers are aware, historic environmental funding sources along with many other areas have suffered massive reductions. SNELCC's capacity to operate and support projects in community in urban and rural areas has suffered as a result.

In response, SNELCC has been able to transcend our reliance on traditional funding sources which are now greatly reduced and highly competitive by developing joint projects, partnerships and alternate funding streams with other organisations. Examples of these are provided in the adjacent table.

This does not necessarily change the way we provide our services to members and the community, rather that SNELCC is looking to evolve into more complex funding arrangements which require collaborative work with government departments, local councils and not for profit organisations. More than ever we need to be responsive to our local community interests and concerns in order to be prepared and have "shovel ready" projects when opportunities are presented.

Your ability to support SNELCC in return is critical. This means that forward planning for your projects through workshops, your attendance at our events and your communication with us through our website, Expressions of Interest, Facebook or even by phone will help us prepare for large funding projects when they appear (such as 20 million trees). Also, although our capacity to visit the 30 odd SNELCC groups across southern New England has declined due to funding constraints, we will still attempt to meet with your individual group if and when you have an idea to facilitate.

Most importantly, although your EOI's might take a few years to match a funding opportunity, we will hold them as long as you are interested and are prepared to begin your project when the opportunity arises. SNELCC's future depends on it.

SNELCC's Funding application activity in the 6 months June – December 2014.

Successful Funding Grants June 2014 – Current			
Name of Grant	Partners	Details	\$
Environmental Trust Moths Magpies and Marsupials \$99k	SNELCC	11 landholders for farm revegetation	\$99, 898
Pilot project – Riparian and Reveg NTLLS-SNELCC - \$108k	SNELCC, NT Local Land Services	12 landholders for farm revegetation	\$108, 000
Pilot project – Malpas catchment NTLLS-SNELCC - \$68k	SNELCC, NT Local Land Services	6 landholders for riparian water quality improvement	\$68, 000
Master Tree Growers	SNELCC, Australian Agroforestry Association	21 Landholders in training program for farm agroforestry industries	\$65, 000
Ascent Partnership	SNELCC, Ascent Group	Event hosting and Mental health support awareness raising in southern New England	\$30, 000
Crowd funding for Frog Dreaming	SNELCC and community donations	Funding to support the 2015 Frog Dreaming event for schools	\$10, 000
USC Roadside Veg Survey	SNELCC & Uralla Shire Council	Surveying plant species populations in significant roadside environments	\$14, 000
Pending Funding Grant applications			
20 Million Trees consortium SNELCC + NENW Landcare networks plus 1 Landcare group from WA, SA and Vic	SNELCC + NENW Landcare networks plus 1 Landcare group from WA, SA and Vic	Many Landholders required to plant up to 1 million trees in the New England/North West	
Greater Eastern Ranges corridors and connectivity	SNELCC, New England Landcare networks, OEH, UNE, local councils, Armidale Tree Group, Citizens for Wildlife and more	Many Landholders required throughout New England	
Environmental Trust Quality Koala corridors	SNELCC & Citizens for Wildlife	11 landholders for farm revegetation	
USC roadside habitat Turtle population survey	SNELCC USC and Rail Corp	Surveying roadside turtle populations in targeted roadside areas	
Unsuccessful Funding Grant applications			
20 million trees	SNELCC	12 landholders for farm revegetation	
20 million trees	SNELCC, ADC & Armidale Urban Rivercare Group	2 km restoration of Dumaresq creek in Armidale	
20 million trees	SNELCC & UNE	400m restoration of Dumaresq creek and other remnant veg sites at UNE	
Tablelands Flora Walcha Shire	SNELCC, OEH and WSC	Conservation of roadside and linked privately held remnant vegetation	
Tablelands Flora Armidale – Dumaresq	SNELCC, ADC OEH & ATG	Conservation of roadside and linked privately held remnant vegetation	

ANYTHING IS *Pozible*

The recently launched Landcare & Environment Collection on the crowdfunding site Pozible has successfully raised \$194,181 for independent, local and international Landcare and environmental projects.

Landcare NSW chair, Rob Dulhunty said, 'We were blown away by the level of support for the Landcare & Environment Collection. We received great feedback from both project proponents and the community. Landcare NSW acknowledges the NSW Government's strong support which enabled us to develop this initiative for grassroots Landcare.'

Locally our favourite schools Landcare project, Frog Dreaming, was successful in reaching their goal of \$10,000. This collaborative effort between NSW Landcare, SNEL & the UNE Agriculture Extension students, speaks of the value we place on providing a relevant learning platform for our future decision makers and land managers.

Over the past 7 years with the help of so many we have gathered together more than 700 young rural and urban students from across New England in an agricultural setting that embraces challenges and appreciates difference while learning all about natural resource management.

These opportunities are golden, as one teacher Mrs Joanne Low put it, "The expression 'It takes a village to raise a child' comes to life at Frog Dreaming - it takes a community to embrace children and guide them to the rich, full life that is possible for them. This was evident in the passion the adult leaders brought to the event, both in the supportive role of developing leadership in the mentors, which the event provides; and in inspiring the younger students to work together in thinking smartly about caring for the environment, facing challenges, being respectful and using common sense to manage behaviour."

Thanks to all those that supported the Frog Dreaming campaign – and please consider this an invite to join us in a massive-never-seen-before planting at this year's event on 15-16 October.

Landcare groups interested in having their project included in the Landcare & Environment Collection can obtain further information by contacting Landcare NSW.



*Frog Forest
2012*



*Gathering at
the campfire*



Landcare
New South Wales

The AURG is holding a Working Bee on Sunday, 8th March 2015

This will be a continuation of the three focus plantings on the southern side of Dumaresq Creek between Niagara and Donnelly Streets. We will also be planting out a new section with *Callistemons*, *Juncus* and *Lomandra* as well as replacement planting of *Tea Trees* and *Sedges*.

Details of the working bee are as follows:-

Time: 8.30 am **Date:** Sunday 8th March 2015

Location: Focus planting sites on southern side of Dumaresq Creek between Niagara and Donnelly Streets, access via Claude Street

What to bring: BYO long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy boots. Please also bring gloves, broad brim hat and sunscreen.

As always a morning tea and lunch will be provided for a gold coin donation. Hope to see you all there!

Funding cuts reduce Landcare services

Southern New England Landcare has been around for 21 years - and has survived the changes of delivery and support to community through CMCs, CMBs, CMA's and now the latest iteration, Local Land Services (LLS). This shows the resilience of our organisation, and that resilience shows we have been meeting the needs of land managers.

Over time, through this series of changing Regional NRM Bodies, funding for landcare coordinators in the SNELCC area (which covers 4 local government areas) has dropped from 2 full-time positions working directly with and for groups, to more recently, 2.5 frontline staff delivering predetermined programs and on-ground projects, to currently, 1.2 frontline positions covering the roles of Landcare Coordinator, Regional Landcare Facilitator, and Project Officer.

In January, the NT LLS dropped the level of support to Landcare networks for their Landcare coordinators by 57%. This 57% drop makes running a Landcare Resource Centre an unviable proposition, and meant SNELCC would shut its doors.

However, to ensure that we could maintain a local presence, the Landcare Networks in the Northern Tablelands have jointly agreed, given the magnitude of the funding cuts, to forgo the services of the Regional Landcare Facilitator (RLF) position, funded by Federal Government through the LLS.

With the RLF funds now divided equally across SNELCC (Armidale, Guyra, Uralla, Walcha), GWYMAC (Inverell), GLENRAC (Glen Innes) and Granite Borders (Tenterfield), Landcare offices in those areas will now remain open, but services provided directly to local groups will be reduced, as staff now need to deliver on both regional and local needs.

Long-time landcarer and staff member at SNELCC, Mrs Sonia Williams said, "SNELCC thanks Jennie Coldham for her 4 ½ years of dedication to the RLF role.

"While many on the ground Landcarers had limited dealings with Jennie, she worked solidly and tirelessly behind the scenes building opportunities and connections for the four landcare networks on the Northern Tablelands, giving them information and access to additional services for their members, and helping networks with the tricky issues that go with running staff, grants, and so on.

"We will miss her support greatly," she said.

Group Action Planning paves the way to Small Grants

The Northern Tablelands Local Land Services has also made available part of the National Landcare Program (NLP) small projects funding to each of the networks, to further support the services the Landcare Networks provide.

This will fund a number of group action planning workshops with local groups to help develop up projects that could be funded from either the remainder of the NLP small projects fund, from within other LLS programs, or be suitable for other external grant submissions.

Karen Zirkler, Executive Officer with Southern New England Landcare said, "This move is welcomed by landcarers who have had assistance from a Landcare Coordinator to undertake local action planning and project development in the past.

"We heard this at last night's quarterly SNELCC meeting in Uralla," she said.

Concerns over access to larger scale grants

A concern to the Board of Southern New England Landcare is the change to the major grants programs delivered by the Federal Government.

Previously, SNELCC has been able to offset the gradual reduction in Landcare Support for coordinator positions by running projects funded directly from the Federal Government (and from other sources) to support our groups and deliver on-ground outcomes.

However, under the new National Landcare Program, funding is only available to regional NRM bodies (i.e. LLS), limiting the other sources from which SNELCC can gain funds.

So, while we are still here, we will be required to do more with less. We therefore ask your understanding for the decreased level of services that will result.

Despite this, we are determined to continue to work for our members and the broader community. We will work hard to ensure your needs are considered in the projects designed and delivered by NT LLS.

We also look forward to working with NT LLS and contributing to the processes used to ensure the intention of the new National Landcare Program – simple, local, long-term – are enacted with the SNELCC community though the small, medium and large-scale projects they will deliver with NLP funding.

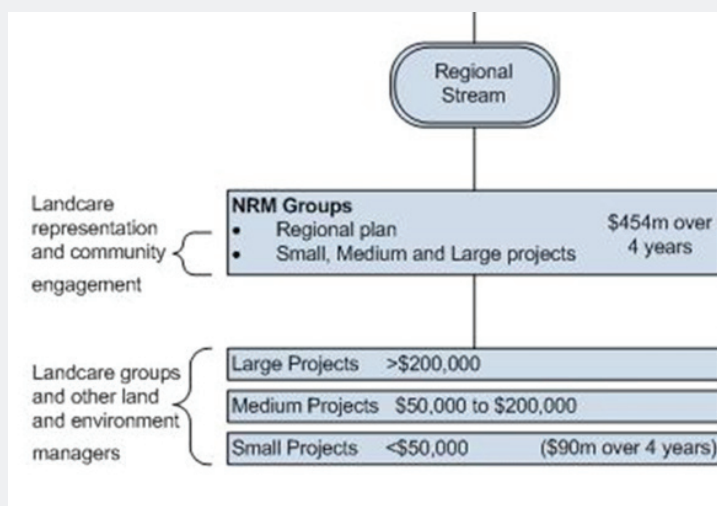
The New National Landcare Program (NLP)

The majority of NLP funding is delivered by the Regional Stream, i.e. via Local Land Services.

The NLP replaces the previous federally funded program Caring for our Country.

To implement the new NLP the government undertook a broad consultation and incorporated this feedback into the program design and delivery.

Key findings relating to community engagement are provided below.



NLP Consultation: Key themes and Australian Government Response

The common messages were analysed and five key themes were identified. The table below presents findings of the key stream of **Local agenda and community engagement**, with some examples of the feedback provided, and how the design of the Regional Stream has been improved to address that feedback.

Feedback	Design Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community needs to have a 'seat at the table' and a voice in regional NRM. Participatory approaches to NRM planning and prioritisation are important so that "everyone is on the same page" and working towards agreed priorities. Not only does this promote collaborations and community engagement, but can also maximise environmental outcomes. There needs to be sufficient flexibility to deliver against local and regional priorities determined with the community. Long-term funding and projects are needed to get the community 'on board' and to achieve meaningful sustainable agriculture and environmental outcomes given the nature of NRM issues. It is important to share local stories of NRM and sustainable agricultural achievements so that the efforts of landcare and other groups are acknowledged, valued and supported by the community. Decision-making for regional investment should be transparent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be an increased focus on local community engagement in the delivery and prioritisation of activities, including a requirement that regional NRM organisations report on their performance in community engagement. Regional NRM organisations will have greater autonomy in setting and delivering on their regional and local priorities with the community and agricultural industries. With this they will be accountable for NRM outcomes and ensuring appropriate local industry and landcare community participation. NRM investment decisions will be aligned with regional NRM plans that have community and agricultural industry support and a strong scientific basis and provide a strategic basis for investment under the National Landcare Programme. Through the MERIT online reporting tool, regional NRM organisations will report progress against project outcomes, including the NRM community's participation in the planning and delivery of projects. The community will be able to view information about the progress of projects funded through the Regional Stream. Regional NRM organisations will be able to share information on their Regional Stream delivery, such as attaching their regional NRM plans, promoting events and good news stories using the 'news and events' function. To ensure there is a local voice in the National Landcare Programme, the newly established National Landcare Advisory Committee has been formed to directly advise Ministers on matters such as landcare investment priorities, implementation and whether the National Landcare Programme is meeting its objectives. The committee is made up of members with skills and expertise in areas such as land management, community leadership, project development, agriculture, Indigenous affairs, accounting and finance.

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications/outcomes-community-consultation>

SUSTAINING LANDCARE - FEBRUARY 2015 UPDATE

EXTRACT FROM LANDCARE NSW

5th February 2015

Campaign Progress

The good news is our message is being heard; Ministers and staffers are interested and willing to listen. However we now need to translate the goodwill into action because as yet there is still no commitment to a NSW Landcare Support Program.

At every opportunity we are conveying the message that without core funding and a statewide policy and program, Landcare organisations will struggle to be an effective partner in sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and conservation.

The Issue

Government can't deliver programs without the help of the community – whether it's baiting wild dogs, fencing river banks, creating tree corridors, education, training and field days or voluntary conservation agreements. But how can the community participate if we are not adequately resourced and supported?

Landcare operates with dedicated volunteers and landholders who will do a lot of things but cannot carry the management, administration, coordination, evaluation, training, systems and development any volunteer network relies on. It is this core infrastructure and support Landcare needs to operate to its full potential.

As many are aware, Landcare's funding through DPI will cease in June this year. There is no indication of what comes next. And, we are seeing a very uneven approach by Local Land Services. There is a sense of urgency, with the NSW election seven weeks away, to mobilise local and regional landcarers to champion our Sustaining Landcare message.

Call To Action

We now ask Landcarers everywhere to contact their local members and candidates and ask them, "What's your Landcare policy?" If you've already contacted them, it's time to follow up.

Invite your local members and candidates to community Landcare events. Let them see what good work Landcare does for the environment, community engagement and farming. And tell them, for us to continue to operate, and operate to our full potential, we need a properly funded support program for Landcare.

You can read the full message and add your support at <http://landcarensw.blogspot.com.au/> Your help will go a long way to raising awareness of the situation in government.

continued from Page 1 Media Release "Survival of the fittest: will evolution wipe Landcare out?"

"Landcare plays an important role linking landholders and community members and leveraging their voluntary input to achieve LLS regional priorities. However, Landcare's survival depends on the support of LLS because National Landcare Program funding is delivered through LLS," said Mr Harvey.

Landcare recently celebrated 25 years of communities solving local issues in their local areas. In doing so it has survived at least four iterations of regional natural resource management institution in NSW – from Catchment Management Committees to Catchment Management Boards, then Catchment Management Authorities and now, Local Land Services (LLS). Or has it? Is evolution finally catching up?

The funding cuts have forced Southern New England Landcare to address the question, "Are we still relevant to our local community?" When put to the full committee of Southern New England Landcare at their quarterly meeting last night, the answer was an overwhelming 'yes'.

Landcare is calling for community support. Community members are being asked to speak to their local MP and get involved in the Sustaining Landcare Campaign.

Details can be found at www.landcarensw.org.au/current-issues-details.php?aid=5

JOHN WINTER-IRVING SCHOLARSHIP

Firstly congratulations Michael Taylor for receiving the 3rd Annual John Winter-Irving Scholarship. The Scholarship was set up by the family of the late & great Landcarer, John Winter-Irving, to further develop the NRM skills & knowledge for people within our SNE Landcare network.



Now you have had time to think about the scholarship and its possibilities Michael, would you share some of your ideas with us?

It's an honour to receive this scholarship because John Winter-Irving showed us great leadership and was a role model worth following. For me the reward is a chance to further develop my leadership skills in the Landcare and NRM community. We have good access to technical knowledge and training these days through extension programs and improved communication and access through the internet. The logical next step is ensuring that the perpetuation of this experience will be passed to the next generation of farmers and wider community through leadership and inspiring innovative NRM. There are a couple of relevant selective leadership programs I am applying for at this stage so fingers crossed.

You have played many parts within the Landcare network with your current leadership role as a Director on the SNEL board, how do you find Landcare within the greater community?

The current situation sees many of my generation overcome by 'busy' schedules or plain financial strain due to any number of reasons from having kids in school, drought management, economy downturn, skilled farm labour shortage or just the costs of start-up and high land values in farming businesses. Because NRM is far more main stream now than 20 years ago I feel there is a sense of 'resting on our laurels' from all that has been achieved. The implications of this are that local NRM knowledge and management may not be passed on to the next generation without leaders to continue facilitating it. And the way I see it Landcare is an effective and relevant vehicle for this transfer of knowledge and skills.

And finally some words of wisdom?

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass... it's about learning to dance in the rain (when it finally arrives!).



*Our Chair of New England
North West Landcare
Network Chairs, Sally Wright,
awarding Michael Taylor with
the annual John Winter-Irving
Scholarship award*

PLANTING 1 MILLION TREES ACROSS THE NEW ENGLAND

The Commonwealth Government Department of the Environment recently announced a tender for large scale projects as part of their “20 Million Trees” funding program. This program is the core component of the new National Landcare Program.

The tender was open until February 6th which left little time to develop an application for a project of this size. Fortunately SNELCC was able to call on all resources to lodge an application as part of a consortium bid consisting of 4 interstate Groups. The lead group is Katanning Land Conservation District Committee (WA). The other groups in the consortium are Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning Association (SA), Woody Yaloak Catchment Group (Victoria) and Southern New England

Landcare representing the interests of other New England and North West Landcare Network groups.

If this funding application is successful, SNELCC and the NENW network will be required to establish close to 1 million trees across our region. To achieve this, we will be able to offer many landholders from our region with the opportunity to commence their farm revegetation projects. The project will involve planting seedlings and direct seeding to establish trees and shrubs with a minimum height of 2 metres.

An announcement of the successful applications is expected by the end of March this year. Watch this space for more news in the April to June Landchat.



Tree planting at “The Gap” near Uralla

*We would love you to come
along*

Pine Forest's Tilbuster Ponds Creek Community Planting Day

9am – 1pm

Sunday 22nd March 2015

More info:

phone SNELCC office 6772 9123
or email mail@snelcc.org.au



BOARD MEMBERS WANTED!

Southern New England Landcare Ltd supports and resources Landcare in our region. **Our mission is to lead, connect and enable our communities to meet their sustainability goals.**

There can be up to 10 Directors on the Board of Southern New England Landcare Ltd and currently there are four vacancies, for which we are seeking expressions of interest from community members.

Board members are responsible for being involved in and ensuring the organisation's appropriate conduct in the areas of:

1. Legal and financial accountability to its donors, stakeholders and members.
2. Periodically reviewing the organisation's demographics or constituency, mission, values, ethical guidelines, long-term goals, and risk management strategy.
3. Working closely with the CEO to further the organisation's goals and broaden its financial and membership support base, and conduct performance reviews of all staff.
4. Ensuring adequate resources for the organisation to achieve its program objectives.
5. Advocacy among the broader community through community, media and government relations.

If you think you would like to become one of our new board members, please contact Karen Zirkler on 6772 9123 and ask for the Board Member Position Description.

Estate Planning: eliminating the uncertainty



Armidale 6774 8400
Glen Innes 6739 7600
Narrabri 6792 9700

www.rm.net.au



**ROBERTS
& MORROW**
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

PLAYING THE LANDCARE TUNE IN BLACK GULLY

Some might say 'what has Landcare got to do with a music festival' - well its unique events like the 4th Black Gully Music Festival (December 2014) that helps the community, with its local musical talent & people from all walks of life, celebrate the beauty of our natural urban landscapes. Black Gully (NERAM) is one of those urban treasures that needs care and maintenance such as weed removal, revegetation, habitat restoration and now on the back of the music festival we have 47 new members of the Friends of Black Gully group.

On the day we had a Landcare stand set up to provide people with information about the good works happening around our local network – many were interested to discover our programs on tackling dieback and the regional campaigns controlling & raising awareness about pests & weeds. Of the many questions the one that stood out was 'what does Landcare do in urban environments', well Brad, I said, "we are about generating a local food culture, one that builds on a local rural supply network and (I went on) the

on-going campaign of raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity namely with the good works of Armidale Urban Rivercare, Bushcare and the HiCub project" ... to which he replied 'where do I sign up'. And that my friends is what a music festival has to do with Landcare.

Thanks go to our volunteers – Dave Carr, Mark Cooper, Simon Mellor, Tanya Howard, Harriet & Dave Schmude, Rhoie Collins, Bec Smith, Ellen Nyberg and Phoebe Maroulis – our major sponsor The Armidale Bowling Club – our generous supporters UNE Life, Armidale Tree Group, Armidale Dumaresq Council (Carol Davies), Harvest, NERAM and Sustainable Living Armidale and of course it wouldn't be a festival without the sweet tunes of our local bands.

Friends of Black Gully (NERAM) are kicking off the year with a gathering for Clean Up Australia day on Sunday March 1st – Everyone is most welcome around 10am for about an hour or 2 – contact Sara Schmude for further information.



The crowd appreciating the great flavours of the Black Gully Music Festival

STAGE 2 - PEER GROUP MENTORING PROGRAM KICKS OFF IN MARCH 2015

Following on from a highly successful Master Tree Growers program in 2014 the 2-day Peer Group Mentoring Program will be held on 5th and 6th March 2015.

The Peer Group Mentoring Program is the second stage in a pilot program funded by the Australian Agroforestry Foundation.

The mentoring program involves using the expertise of landholders who have completed the Master Tree Grower Program to support landholders wishing to integrate multipurpose tree and shrub growing into their existing farming system. For example trees and shrubs may be utilized for shade, shelter, aesthetics, bush food, honey, timber production, fire wood management, truffles or mushrooms.

The mentoring program aims to increase community networking and continuous learning, maximize farm productivity and diversity, increase knowledge and confidence in natural resource management and retain long term knowledge in farming systems.

Andrew Stewart, landholder from the Otways Agroforestry Network said "in the experience of their network peer group mentors improve the quality of the discussion that can occur naturally amongst farmers and family members."

"Landholders learn about new land management practices, explore how they might be adapted in particular circumstances, and make the very personal judgement as to whether they will commit their own land and resources to the task."

Mentors add significant value to the work of industry agents, government agency staff, researchers and non government organizations.

If you would like more information about the Peer Group Mentoring Program please contact Kristy Youman on 6772 9123 or email kristy@snelcc.org.au



Molly Bullen, Liz Jackson and Hannah Ford discussing bushfoods MTG 2014



MTG 2014 group calculating tree height



Rob Laurie, Gabe Staats and Andrew Stewart MTG 2014

IMPROVEMENT IN DUMARESQ CREEK CATCHMENT

A recent project in the Dumaresq Landcare area shows how members of Southern New England Landcare are working together with LLS funding to improve the local environment.

A major tributary of Dumaresq Creek is being fenced and revegetated after 100 years of clearing and grazing. Landholders Grant and Kim Harris are using Local Landcare Services funds to remediate the lowest kilometre of an unnamed tributary of Dumaresq Creek. This stream crosses Dumaresq Dam Road half way to the dam.

The four members of Dumaresq Landcare that share this catchment have in previous years done plantings using funds from Northern Rivers CMA and Citizens Wildlife Corridors and this is just the latest phase of ongoing improvement to the Dumaresq Creek valley.

Armidale Tree Group has assisted Grant with advice on the appropriate 25 species and their correct placement in the landscape to maximise survival and improve biodiversity along the waterway. Stock water, previously supplied from the waterway will now be provided by a series of troughs in the adjacent paddocks.

This is a good example of adjacent landholders cooperating to improve the natural resources in their area. Similar projects are the thing of the future. Coordinated projects involving several landholders have many advantages when seeking funding. Linking property plans across catchments can maximise benefits to be shared by neighbours.



Work begins on tree planting in the Dumaresq Creek catchment

A HELPING HAND FOR MOTHS, MAGPIES AND MARSUPIALS

Work on the “Moths Magpies and Marsupials – Promoting on farm biodiversity” project has kicked off after the successful applicants were announced by the NSW Environmental Trust late last year.

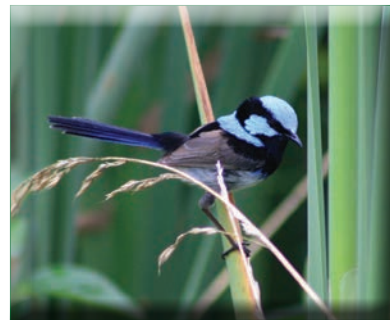
“Moths, Magpies and Marsupials” will increase biodiversity on farms through revegetation and remnant protection works. On-ground work will result in 13,860 trees being planted across 16 sites with 105 hectares of remnant vegetation being added for conservation.

The project will also involve two bird surveys and a report as indicators for biological health and activity on the sites and adjacent farmland. Bird activity is important baseline data collected by Southern New England Landcare throughout our 23 years of operation. This data enables precise monitoring of sedentary and migratory bird species in terms of numbers and diversity and is an effective measure of the biological health of a selected area.

As the project draws to a conclusion at the end of 2014 and on ground works are completed, Southern New England Landcare will be sharing the results of the project and bird surveys with our community.

Part of the project includes inviting members of the community to field events and demonstrations linked to the project, as well as the opportunity to come and develop your plans for future farm and community environmental works with our team.

We look forward to keeping you updated throughout the year.



***Moths, magpies
and marsupials will
establish tree corridors
to promote on farm
diversity***

Out and About



Armidale Dumaresq Council are one of our great supporters - here Mayor Laurie Bishop and wife Lesley celebrate with us at the Christmas party.



Armidale Urban Rivercare February working bee - tackling the phragmites head on with dense native plantings.



Dave Carr signing up for Friends of Black Gully.

Bush poet and landcarer, Gordon Edmonds, sharing his Wongwibinda ladies first aid story at our Christmas party in Black Gully.



Friends of Black Gully volunteers Phoebe Maroulis, Sara Schmude & Tanya Howard.

Our board members Black Gully planting at the Christmas Party.



CSO Ruth Trémont awarding our Chair, Steve Harvey, the much coveted SNEC coordinators award.

WEEDS AND WEED CLASSES UNDER THE NOXIOUS WEED ACT

After a couple of very dry years the recent good rains have caused an explosion of weed growth in the area. In addition to the usual group of widespread weeds we are also getting a number of enquiries relating to new weeds brought into the area, largely through movements of stock feed.

Remember, New England Weeds Authority (NEWA) can help landholders with weed identification, weed control options and assist with the preparation of weed management plans. NEWA inspect all rural properties on a three year cycle and the Noxious Weed Act, 1993, gives authority for us to access properties, issue control notices when required and issue fines for non-compliance. We undertake our work in a cooperative way and do all we can to help landholders and use penalties as a last resort. We ask that all landholders be good neighbours and control weeds on their properties for the benefit of all. The Act groups noxious weeds into 5 weed classes, Class 1 posing the greatest risk down to Class 4 which are widespread weeds and require ongoing management. Class 5 is weeds we want to prevent from entering our area.



Nodding Thistle is a Class 4 weed in the New England, this means you must be continually reducing numbers. This noxious weed causes a lot of complaints between neighbours. The seed does not travel as far as many thistles so you'll be rewarded for returning to the same.



Blackberry is also a Class 4 weed in the area. Blackberry was once so prolific in this area that livestock and native animals were almost completely excluded from natural waterways. If we were to turn a blind eye to Blackberry we would very soon be back in a similar position. Blackberry is the other weed that we get a lot of complaints about. The Noxious Weeds Act does not state that your property needs to be free of this plant but we need to be satisfied that you have an active plan in place that will reduce Blackberries on your property over time. There are some good, cost effective herbicides available but it's most important that you use a good wetting agent for best outcomes.



St John's Wort is a Class 3 weed in our area. Class 3 weeds require a more consistent approach in that the plant must be 'fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed'. This recognises the potential economic impact this weed can have in agriculture. St John's Wort contains a toxin which causes photosensitisation, or simply an allergy to the sun, and animals afflicted are a very sorry sight indeed. Given its hard seed coat St John's Wort takes many years of suppressing seed production before this plant can be cleaned up.



Serrated Tussock is also a Class 3 in our area. The Southern Tablelands of NSW has Serrated Tussock in much larger infestation than we have here on the Northern Tablelands and it has reduced carrying capacity to the extent that many properties are no longer financially viable. Given our climate is equally suited for this weed it will only be by consistent diligence by all land managers and landholders that we prevent similar impacts here. We spend a lot of time educating the community on tussock identification and encourage anyone who suspects they may have it to get a positive identification.



Chilean Needle Grass is Class 4 and given its drought tolerance it appears to have thrived in recent years. This grass has a sharp seed which causes wool and meat contamination in sheep but can also lead to unnecessary vet bills for dog and horse owners. It is readily distinguished from native grasses due to a distinct corona or ring above the seed. Again, this is a difficult plant to control once established and is best controlled before it gets too widespread.



Tropical Soda Apple, which we are busily trying to control in the Upper Macleay, is an example of Class 1 weed in our area. Class 1 dictates that the plant must be fully eradicated from the land and the land must be kept free of the plant. In summary, our aim is to eradicate this plant – no small task. Both America and Canada rate Tropical Soda Apple as the worst weed they have ever had and that's why such a concerted effort is being taken. It takes a lot less money and effort to control a plant in its early days of establishment rather than waiting until it is widespread and the battle has been lost.

Other noxious species which are present in greater numbers this year include Vipers bugloss and Blue heliotrope. For further information NEWA produce a weed control guide that provides recommended herbicides and spray rates for the most common weeds we deal with. Remember other weed control methods can include biological controls, grazing management, fire, slashing and maintaining good competition in the form of desirable plants. The Northern Inland Weeds Advisory Committee (NIWAC), of which NEWA is a proud member, also produces an excellent handbook '**Weed Management Guide for the North West NSW**'.

You can contact NEWA on 67703602 or visit NEWA.com.au.



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**Local Land
Services**
Northern Tablelands

2015 SNELCC Inc General Meetings

General Meetings for 2015 are currently under review. The new dates will be discussed at the next scheduled meeting as listed below.

**Wednesday 22nd April in Guyra
4pm – 7pm (venue to be confirmed).**

**Please RSVP by the Tuesday PRIOR to the meeting for catering purposes.
Tel 6772 9123, mail@snelcc.org.au,
www.snelandcare.org.au**



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