

# Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 86, November - December 2011

## 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 foster community participation in sustainable natural resource management.

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## Diary Dates

Dung Beetle Field Days.....	2 Dec
Joint CMA Landcare CAP Workshop .....	5 Dec
Weeds Safari .....	7 Dec
Upland Wetland Field Day.....	TBC mid Dec
Women's Business Conference .....	20-22 Jan
SNELCC Meeting.....	9 Feb
2012 Landcare Adventure.....	26-27 Mar
Sustainable Farming Tour USA .....	May 2012

## Local Groups Win Community Action Grants!

**Community Action Grants were announced recently with \$96,220 coming to our groups for projects! We have the following successes:**

### Balala Brushgrove Landcare Group

Revegetation of degraded land and riparian zones in the Balala-Brushgrove region

This project will enhance the resilience of the area through the implementation of biodiversity corridors in the Balala-Brushgrove area. The project will include the planting of native and endemic where possible; trees, shrubs and sedges/rushes in degraded areas of land, including gully and creek erosion areas, previously cleared wetland and riparian zones and previously cleared hilltops and ridges. These plantings will have great environmental impact on repairing the degraded land as well as increasing native habitat and improving the biodiversity of the area. These plantings will link with isolated paddock trees and remnant vegetation communities, hence decreasing fragmentation across the landscape.

### Bergen Op-Zoom Ohio Landcare Group

Blair's Gully to Apsley River Biodiversity Corridor

The project involves planting of local endemic species to improve connectivity of threatened woodland ecosystems to the Apsley River corridor and bush regeneration in these remnant areas. Plantings undertaken will also improve water quality and enhance local biodiversity within the Walcha township. This project will connect to a larger urban biodiversity plan for the Walcha township. Bergen Op-Zoom Ohio Landcare Group will work with the Walcha Shire Council and Southern New England Landcare as well as other local community groups, including adjoining Landcare groups, to deliver this project.

### Malpas Catchment Group

All the Dirt - Understanding and Sustaining our Soils in the Malpas Catchment

This project aims to give landholders an increased understanding of their soil and how it can be managed sustainably. Malpas Catchment Group landholders will participate in 12 workshops to address the following: why land degradation has happened and how to avoid it; what has happened to soil carbon and

*Continued on page 4*



# High Country

## Urban Biodiversity Project



### SLEX Success!

The 'Village Green' at SLEX had a wonderfully warm buzz, with a variety of workshops drawing crowds through the days.

Chris Whackett, chef and bush-regenerator with the HiCUB project pulled in some friends and a team of chefs used local, seasonal produce, including smoked trout and superb fresh organic vegetables provided by Mary Wall, to hold Master Chef style demonstrations. Thank you to Dave and Chris from Bistro on Cinders and Rohan from Neram Harvest.



The site looked beautiful with the vegetable garden display, flowers and the display in the marquee, promoting the concept of growing and eating fresh and local – grow and eat your own.

Year 8 from Armidale High School, guided by the versatile Bec Smith, had grown veges in boxes for the last term and did a great display of their project for the marquee. John Davidson grew boxes too with samples of sugarbeet and kale. John also brought along his canning equipment, which created quite a bit of interest.



Dave Carr got covered in clay – as were many students, when they made clay seed balls. A great time was had by all, including work experience student Caleb who put in a lot of time manning the HiCUB marquee.

Many thanks to Emily Ingram for pulling the whole display together (and helping kids make potato stamps) – above and beyond the call of duty!



*Top three photos: The SLEX Village Green.*

*Bottom: Nic Cobcroft, Brenda Shepherd, Phil Wheaton and Mick Jarochowicz at the Bowling Club's Showcase site near the dog walking area. Nic has designed seating and the tree stumps are the uprights.*

Thank you everyone who contributed time and effort.

### Tidy Towns Awards

HiCUB's Ellen Nyberg nominated HiCUB in the 2012 Tidy Towns Awards, and then showed the judges around when the project became a finalist – and we won!!

'The Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities Awards 2012, Wildlife Corridors and Habitats Conservation Award to Northern Tablelands for High Country Urban Biodiversity Award in the Category of population 25,000+' is the legend on the beautiful plaque which was accepted for us at the Awards ceremony at Lithgow by Phil Wheaton from Armidale Bowling Club.

Phil had just accepted the Water Conservation award for his club and came home so excited and inspired, vowing that Armidale should be an overall winner in the future.

Congratulations to Armidale Bowling Club for that award, but better still is the commitment being made by the members to continue working in the Creeklands. Having held one highly successful planting in their own showcase site, they will complete the job in early December and Phil believes they will make a long-term commitment to continue the work.

### Walcha

Progress in Walcha has been slow, with all sorts of hiccups – including enough rain to hold up works in the river itself, but finally some planting has been done on the top of the levee. At a well-advertised community planting, there were some enthusiastic Landcarers – Cherie and George Pethard and Caroline Street as well as a few local walkers and a visitor from Perth who is a Lion. A team from TAFE's Rural Skills were a fantastic help.





*Above: Richard Torbay MP at the launch of Walcha project.*



*Above: planting at the Walcha site.*



*Above: The local TAFE team.*



*Above: Guyra students worked hard.*

A thousand grasses and shrubs were planted into the prepared jute-matted areas and should look fantastic when grown. It was a glorious sunny day and whilst other parts of the tablelands had storms, Walcha had missed out so Nic and Bevis Hoy watered everything.

We hope to have another planting before Christmas, probably a sociable twilight event to allow working people to take part. Keep a look out for the date.

## Guyra

School students from Guyra Central and St Mary of Angels planted over 400 trees and shrubs beside the creek along Baldersleigh Road in Guyra this month and had a great day.

The ground was hard, but Mick Jarochowicz augered some holes, Guyra Council provided a water tanker and it poured rain the next day – sounds like a successful planting. Ellen and Bec Smith put in a huge day helping the kids.

The community planting at the Scout hall which followed was a lot easier and a small group planted 100 in no time at all.

School children will again put in their energy to plant shrubs and grasses at Ben Lomond's Bushy Park and a big day is planned for Urandangie planting on December 5th with students from Guyra Central and some small primary schools

The next event for Guyra is 26th November when 2000 trees will be planted by Bowling and Golf Club members on the prepared site at the Golf Course. Starting time is 9am with a barbecue lunch to follow.

## Uralla

Nic Cobcroft had a wonderful day with SRC students from Uralla Central School when he introduced them to bushcare on Mt Mutton. The kids learnt about helping native plants survive and thrive through removing weeds and the importance of picking up after dogs. The kids pulled weeds then planted some trees and shrubs and had a great time then morning tea before walking back to school. We now have some aware bushcarers in the making.



*Above: Watering in the Guyra plants.*

## Showcase Plantings in Armidale

Take a walk along the Creeklands and see the fantastic plantings. This month is a busy one with the Bowling Club and New England Solar having done plantings and EcoLogical and Community Mutual yet to plant their sites. In December the Bowling Club will finish their site and Sport UNE will do a big planting near Niagara St. A Community planting is planned for mid- December at Cook's Rd.

## Black Gully

We have had a few events at Black Gully, behind NERAM, where there have been some old broken-down willows removed and replaced with native riverine species. The last event for the project is on Sunday 27th at 9am with a celebration lunch to follow. Amazingly, NERAM has a sculpture workshop the same day and will probably use some of the willow logs.



*Above: Uralla Central School students at the Mt Mutton site.*



how to get it back; the importance of water, mineral and nutrient cycling; and why and how economic and ecological ideals can be achieved simultaneously. Improved soil health must be achieved in the Malpas Catchment, for sustainable production and improved water quality in the Gara River and Malpas Dam. This project will give control back to the land manager, enabling them to make more informed decisions for managing their land sustainably.

### **Uralla High Country Urban Biodiversity Project Working Group**

Whacking willows for water wildlife

A variety of willow species dominate the riparian zone of Uralla Creek. They cause narrowing of the channel, divert floods into the bank, dump large loads of leaves in the water in autumn (resulting in low dissolved oxygen levels) and displace native plants. The creek is home to platypus and native water rats which are affected by low DO. This project will remove willows from 500m of the creek and replace them with native riparian species. This project continues the work of a previous project which cleared the upper 2km of this catchment.

### **Uralla Rivercare Group**

Native Habitat for our Water Rat!  
Uralla Creek, Uralla.

The project will aim to enhance the natural habitat of the water rat *Hydromys chrysogaster*, which has been found in Uralla Creek. Weed control will focus on the class 4 noxious weed, running bamboo. Following technical advice from the New England Weeds Authority and Office of Environment and Heritage, trial methods of weed control in situ will be conducted and monitored to ensure that the most appropriate outcome is achieved. Revegetation works, involving the local community will replace the exotic vegetation with local wetland species, grasses and understorey plants, improving native plant cover and water quality conditions for this iconic freshwater species. Follow up weed control and maintenance will take place.

# **Frog Dreaming 2011**



Picture 80 inspired school children dancing around a fire chanting to the hum of drums and didgeridoo – story telling through dance, drama and song – this was at the heart of the 2011 Uralla Frog Dreaming children's conference. Held in Uralla at the showground and 'The Glen' over 2 days, children from our regional primary and secondary schools took part in a gathering that connected them with one another and with the land.

### **Performance**

Prior to the conference students from each school were asked to identify a local natural resource management issue of importance to them. They then designed and developed a performance based on this issue and presented it in front of the other schools at the conference. The main issues covered were native habitat protection in urban and rural areas, effects of climate change on a local scale and rabbit control. They creatively explored these issues through drama, art works, music and mixed media presentations.

### **Action Plans**

Following on from the performances the students with their teachers discussed the possibilities of turning their ideas into action. Once they developed the action plan on paper they presented them to the whole group. To help make these plans a reality we had representatives from Southern New England Landcare, Uralla Shire Council, Border Rivers Gwydir Catchment Management Authority and Northern Inland Regional Waste on hand to provide support and resources to develop, implement and manage their projects.

### **Tribes**

Students were divided up into 6 tribes each with a totem that defined their individual group. Each of these tribes was lead by Gurus and student mentors from Armidale High School. Together they spent a very eventful afternoon designing a name, a flag and a story as well as partaking in some very interesting ice breaker activities – a great way to get to know one another.

### **Under the full moon**

That night we sang and played our way by the light of lanterns from the Uralla showground down to 'The Glen' where we were met by friends and family of our school communities. It was here that we told our stories by the light of the full moon and a very generous bonfire.

The night continued with drumming circles – where each tribal group received a drum and was asked to create a beat unique to their totem – other groups then would repeat the beat and so on. Bec Smith (Landcare Project Coordinator) concluded the drumming circle with a very memorable beating on a single drum – reminding us that we are all one tribe from the planet earth working together to heal this land – all the tribes then joined in the drumming creating a great harmony - the atmosphere invoked many emotions. AND then to top it all we were further inspired by the very skilled fire twirlers from The Armidale Waldorf School.

### **Day 2 Workshops**

- HiCUB – Brenda Shepherd and Nic Cobcroft – Frog habitat in 'The Glen' – native planting along the banks of Uralla Creek at the Glen.
- HiCUB – Chris Whackett – Bush regeneration – weed ID and removal along the banks of the Uralla Creek.
- Uralla Shire Council and BRG CMA – Steph MacCaffrey and Kelly Coleman - presented a WaterWatch activity – very hands-on, wet and muddy experience learning about water quality and the importance of aquatic biology.
- Aboriginal Heritage – Michael Brogan (Aboriginal Keeping Place) – Aboriginal arts activity that involved understanding different



tribal symbols and patterns - and painting boomerangs.

- Ruth Tremont and Phil Spark – Biodiversity around Uralla is a fascinating look at the wealth of native flora and fauna in our local environment – with a close up look at the variety of native species from Mt Mutton.

## HiCUB Planting

In celebration of our Frog Dreaming experience we gathered for one last workshop where, with the support of HiCUB's Brenda Shephard and Nic Cobcroft, each student planted a variety of native plants along the banks of the Uralla creek to be one day an abundant and diverse frog habitat. A spot where we can all meet again to listen to frog calls and reminisce about our special experience at Frog Dreaming 2011.

## From the Dreamers

"I made friends with kids that I never thought I would"

"Bec, did you know that that was the most amazing thing I have ever done."

"It was great fun to dress up and paint our faces"

"We learnt so much about the environment in a fun atmosphere full of creativity"

"Sara you are awesome!"

"It is so important that we all work together to create solutions for our problems."

"It was great how everyone in our tribe was given a chance to contribute"

"All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today"

"Meeting heaps of new friends was really cool!"

"I think the kids had a really good time, and learnt a lot in the process. I thought the storytelling was very special, the fire twirlers were fantastic and the drumming circle to end Tuesday festivities was truly beautiful!" Kelly Coleman (BRG CMA)

## For More Information

Enquires can be directed to either Sara Schmude (SNEL School Landcare Coordinator) on [sara@snelcc.org.au](mailto:sara@snelcc.org.au) or 0419 697 651, or Bec Smith (Landcare Project Coordinator) on [rebecca@snelcc.org.au](mailto:rebecca@snelcc.org.au) or by leaving a message at the office on 67729123.

We greatly appreciate the support of our sponsors, participants and volunteers, including:

Students from Black Mountain, Uralla Central, Waldorf, Minimbah and Armidale High School (Josie, Ned, Isabelle, Atlanta, Ezra and Goth) - Georgia Smith, Belinda Baker, Wayne, Angela Muir, Glen Pardy, Jenny Brown, Leona, Karen Jenkins, Marty Branagan, Nils, Chris Riley, - Michael Taylor, Mari Grantun - Uralla PandF - Leanne Savage BRG Board member, Bob Crouch Chair BRG CMA, Kelly Coleman BRG CMA, Sue Hudson BRG CMA board member, Kath Little and Uralla Shire Council grounds staff, Mahri Koch, Caroline Bridge, Steph MacCaffrey, Emily Ingram, Ellen Nyberg, Helen Schwartz, Simon Mellor, Jen Shephard, Bri Wilson and Susen Smith. - Ruth Tremont, Phil Spark, Brenda Shepherd, Nic Cobcroft, Michael Brogan, Chris Whackett, Andrew Parker, Uralla Arts Council, Max Schultz - Uralla Showground Trust, Ian Harvey (and Angus).



new england mutual



High Country

Urban Biodiversity Project

northern inland regional waste  
NIRW



Border Rivers-Gwydir

CMA CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Images:

Top: Actions plans with Uralla Central Primary students. Middle: Planting along the creek at The Glen in Uralla. Bottom: The Frog Dreamers Uralla 2011.





# Lower Apsley River Landcare Group Annual Report

**Well actually, this is last year's report! Nearly a full 12 months have lapsed since Ross wrote this – its so inspiring though we thought this should be shared with everyone. Lower Apsley have their annual group Christmas planting in mid December – so members should contact Ross to find out more details [Ed].**

We have had a terrific year in the Lower Apsley River Landcare Group, maybe our tree plantings are attracting precipitation.

This year we launched our Carbon audit. We held a day titled Carbon in Agriculture Revealed - the Full Landscape Picture, on the 21st



*Above & below: Lower Apsley River Group members at last year's Christmas planting day.*



June 2010 attended by 80 people. This begins our quest to have all the carbon in our grazing system recognized rather than just the emissions. The day was opened by David Walker chairman of Landcare NSW. Samantha Jamieson MLA was a very popular speaker relating read meat demand in a carbon sensitive world. Mick Keogh Australian Farm Institute topped the bill talking about the big picture of Agriculture in an ETS. Martin Oppenheimer told us about AWI's wool carbon alliance committee. Matthew Cawood of the Land Newspaper spoke about global issues and Charles Armstrong NSW Farmers spoke about NSW Farmers issues. Annette Cowie the Director of the National Centre for Rural Greenhouse Gas Research spoke and Sandra Eadie, principal research scientist CSIRO, also gave comment.

Most important was Shane Andrews who did a wonderful job gathering data and putting it together in a very concise document. His presentation was terrific. Thankyou very much Shane. Unfortunately while everyone seems to accept our work it has not been adopted by policy makers. That's the challenge. Thank you to the Walcha branch of the NSW Farmers who sponsored our lunch and Tim Norton and Sonia O'Keefe in particular.

Publicity since the audit is steadily building. SNELCC has printed a further 300 copies. Shane and I presented it to the Landcare Adventure in Guyra on the 17th March 2011 to a large group. Again Shane was sensational.

Tim Wright hosted Ross Garnaut (Chief Advisor to the Federal Government on climate change) and Tony Windsor (Member for New England and Member of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change) on his property Lana 14th April 2011. Again Shane and I were asked to present our carbon audit to a very small gathering, so it can't go any higher in terms of policy influence.

I presented it to Tony Abbott (leader of the Federal opposition) and Senator

John Williams who have both agreed to read our pamphlet.

Lower Apsley has been asked by MLA to be an environmental advocate. This will mean publicity in their Feedback Magazine and a chance to present our work to their environmental committee. Tom Davison the Manager of climate change RandD asked me to present the audit to a group in Brisbane, 12th and 13th May 2011. I hope this will be another way of pushing the idea that the carbon ingested by livestock before it is released as methane should be counted in any consideration of carbon accounting.

As part of the Environmental Advocate program, photographer Robert Bruce came to us on the day of our Christmas plant to take photos of our group and its activities. The plant was terrific with 30 plus members and family and a great get together brilliantly organized by Mark Whitehead, thankyou Mark. On this occasion we welcomed our newest and cutest member Harriet Lisle and gave her head a good wetting.

Other new members to welcome include David and Margaret Carter, Bevis Hoy, Will Fletcher, Angus and Katrina Warden and Greg Stier who stopped to help while driving by and stayed all afternoon.

Special thanks to Mark Whitehead secretary treasurer, Eric Noakes for doing the very important job of fox baiting, we must support this fully, and Peter McNeill for attending SNELCC meetings and keeping us up to date. Lastly thankyou to all our members whose interest keeps us as one of the most active groups in NSW.

Bec Ballard our SNELCC coordinator attended the meeting and announced that 5 farms would receive \$38,000 for 2011 tree planting projects, from the Caring for Our Country Program. This includes money for planting the Ashfield hill below the three lanes overlooking Malford at Christmas.



# Community Project Planning in the Namoi

In the interest of supporting the Tablelands community within the Namoi catchment, and to ascertain community priorities and project ideas, a project joint venture between SNEL and the Namoi CMA was formalized in mid 2011.

To compile a list of project ideas, SNEL coordinated two community workshops.

## The Woolbrook Community Workshop

This workshop was held on Friday September 23rd at the Woolbrook Hall. To coincide with International Rivers Day and community interest in the Macdonald River, the theme for the workshop was riparian management. The day started with introductions, after which the group headed outside to the banks of the Macdonald River to discuss riparian management with Anna Cronin from the Namoi CMA. Back in the hall, an overview of the CMA Catchment Action Plan and funding opportunities was given by CMA staff. Three groups then brainstormed project ideas with SNEL facilitators. Participants were encouraged to raise project ideas that can be further developed in cooperation with the CMA.

At the Woolbrook workshop, participants identified the following themes for future projects:

- To improve the Macdonald River recreation area at Woolbrook (including revegetation and visitor signage).
- To adopt coordinated weed and pest control programs.
- Projects relating to grazing management.
- Projects relating to community promotion.
- Opportunity for Woolbrook Public School students to learn about riparian ecosystems, native fauna, their habitat needs, pest species and control techniques.

## The Glen Morrison Community Workshop

This workshop was held at Branga Lodge, Walcha, Tuesday 8th November.

The theme for the workshop was vegetation management. The day started with a presentation on revegetation design (by NRM consultant Shane Andrews), after which the group walked down to the paddock scale revegetation site to discuss vegetation management. A fox scat and cattle dung were examined to observe dung beetle activity. Glen GRO Landcare member Wainie Robertson provided information on dung beetle habits and identification. Back at the house, participants put forth their areas of interest in NRM and an overview of the CMA Catchment Action Plan and funding opportunities was given by CMA staff. The group brainstormed community project ideas, then broke up to discuss individual property project ideas with staff.

The following themes for future projects were identified:

- To increase land area under native perennial vegetation.
- To increase dung beetle species diversity and abundance in the area.
- To adopt coordinated weed and pest control programs.
- To review the Glen GRO Landcare group's Action Plan (within the SNEL Regional Action Plan) and their Sub-Catchment Plan.
- To establish a school garden and kitchen at Niangala Public School.

The project ideas will be submitted to the CMA for potential inclusion in future programs, with funding subject to availability. Now that project ideas are down on paper, we are at an advantage when it comes to accessing assistance from the CMA and funding bodies. The generous assistance of the Namoi CMA in supporting the workshops is gratefully acknowledged. Two thumbs up

to the communities of Woolbrook, Bendemeer and Glen Morrison for such enthusiasm, creativity and dedication to sustainable land and water management on the Tablelands!



*Above: Woolbrook workshop participants.*

*Below: Glen Morrison workshop participants.*



# Malpas Catchment Project

## *what's been happening?*

**The Malpas Catchment Project aims to improve natural resource management resulting in sustainable and profitable land use, with an improvement in the water quality in the Malpas and Guyra Dams and Macleay Catchment.**

With changes to funding programs making it more difficult to instigate "group" level projects, Southern New England Landcare has been active in linking the aims and objectives identified by the Malpas Catchment Group into funding and resourcing from many sources and programs.

### **On ground works**

Urandangie Creek was identified as a major inflow source to the Malpas dam, and over the years a concerted effort to improve the management of the riparian zone has been underway. Under the High Country Urban Biodiversity Project, funded by the NSW Environmental Trust, the Malpas catchment has seen major earthworks implemented at the Urandangie creek with revetments, extensive tree planting and wetland creation projects, with the aim to improve the water quality entering the Malpas Dam.

### **Education & community involvement**

The Malpas Project also linked in with many educational activities undertaken in and around Guyra designed to promote improved land management and increase understanding of biodiversity, and the impact of threats such as weeds and rabbits.

The Guyra biodiversity project, funded

under the HiCUB project aims to identify the numerous local species present and threats to the landscape in which they are found. The project hopes to provide a strategy for effective and sustainable management of the bio-diverse landscapes located in and around the Guyra township and district.

### **South Guyra TSR**

In the beginning of the year a walk through the travelling stock route in South Guyra was organised featuring a spectacular show and tell from fauna ecologist Phil Spark that included local species of bats and reptiles trapped in the TSR the night before. There was an interpretive botanical walk with Dave Carr. The field trip ended with a barbecue lunch and some bush regeneration for the willing and able. A "Jewels in the Landscape" walk took place at this site recently and focussed on managing significant native vegetation remnants.

This part of the urban landscape is earmarked for an urban town walk to showcase the beautiful and threatened ecological community on the town's doorstep. Directional bollards have been provided and maps constructed of possible walks for the local community to consider. Part of HiCUB's involvement in this project is to develop interpretation signs for the TSR to enhance local understanding and appreciation of this biodiversity hotspot.

### **Woodland Week Celebrations in Ben Lomond**

Further up the Malpas catchment

some of the beautiful biodiversity in the Ben Lomond district was showcased as part of Woodland Week, with a wildflower walk along the railway cutting and a spotlight evening through the snow gums. Fauna ecologist Phil Spark attended both events, sharing his extensive knowledge with the enthusiastic locals in attendance. Dave Carr provided the botanical identification and inspiration in the afternoon wildflower walk. This event was well supported by the local Ben Lomond community and culminated with a delicious meal at the town hall and a chat around the bonfire at the conclusion of the spotlight walk. The HiCUB project aims to work with the Ben Lomond community to develop a walking trail to the top of "The Brothers" that will take in the spectacular views from the hills and showcase the spectacular snow gums ecological community to locals and visitors alike.

### **The Guyra Golf Course Project**

Involvement of the wider Guyra community has also been gained with a project supported by the members of the Guyra Golf Club. This has seen earthworks implemented at the Guyra Golf course to improve drainage of storm water into Mother of Ducks Lagoon from a dam on the eastern side of the golf course, not only benefiting the golf course, but reinstating some environmental flows so essential to the improved functioning of the wetland.

### **Local Schools and Community Involvement**

Local schools including Guyra Central



School, Bald Blair Public School, St Mary of the Angels Catholic School, Black Mountain Public School, Ben Lomond Public School and volunteers from the community took part in tree planting activities in November. Tree planting sites are located at Urandangie Creek, Mother of Ducks Lagoon, Guyra Scout Hall and Bushy Park in the village of Ben Lomond. The tree plantings activities are an opportunity for the children to learn about the integral role of biodiversity in sustaining our productive landscape.

Black Mountain Public School has also been involved in increasing the understanding about the threats to production and biodiversity posed by rabbits, by actively participating in a Rabbit control field day on a local Black Mountain property. Data was collected on this day and students entered data onto the Rabbitscan website. The school also presented their rabbit research and efforts to control local rabbit populations at the Frog Dreaming Environmental Conference for kids, hosted in Uralla this year.

## Landcare Adventure

This year the SNELCC team hosted the New England North West Regional Landcare Adventure in the township of Guyra. A successful couple of days were enjoyed by more than 150 participants with much learning and sharing of knowledge on a wide ranging array of topics designed to provide resource managers with the tools to build their resilience through a desire to experiment, recognise opportunities and to develop a knowledge and skill base to implement their ideas.

Some topics included carbon, carbon farming, improved grazing management, assessing pasture mass, livestock condition assessment, the importance and role of wetlands, eucalyptus identification, bushfire load assessment and risk management, compost and soil health, and diversification of enterprises at both the farm scale and regionally.

The SNELCC team pulled together a wide range of sponsors and supporters to provide this information packed two-day event held right in the heart of the Malpas Project area.

## Dung Beetles “Dirty Deeds done Dirt Cheap”

Early in November last year the New England North West presented a day on Dung beetles at Laurie Smith's property “Waringa”, where the benefits of these tireless tiny workers on improved nutrient cycling in the soil and the resultant improved water quality were highlighted, along with the further benefits of increasing soil carbon, improving water infiltration and soil aeration and reducing the breeding habitat for pest flies such as bush fly and buffalo fly, as well as dung beetle activity reducing the impact of Barbers Pole Worm.

## Funding Success!

Congratulations to the Malpas community for their successful grant application - see page 1.

Many thanks to Armidale Dumaresq Council and Guyra Shire Council for their continued funding and support of the Malpas Catchment Coordinator position.

## Future Activities for the Malpas Project

A recent focus group with some members of the Malpas Catchment group and others from the Guyra community identified the need to directly re-engage with more landholders on a one-to-one basis. Starting in February, the Malpas coordinator will be focussing two days per week on working with landholders and others in the Malpas, to provide training and project design for on-farm projects, that improve both on farm productivity and the water quality of the Malpas Catchment, which will be submitted to various funding opportunities as they arise.

# \$8 million for bush regeneration projects

Community groups are invited to apply for funding for large-scale bush regeneration projects under a new Environmental Trust program.

NSW Environment Minister Robyn Parker said the \$8 million Community Bush Regeneration Large Project Stream is offering grants of between \$200,000 and \$250,000 for projects which will run for up to six years.

“This new program fulfils our promise to provide additional funding to protect the natural environment and support local bush regeneration initiatives,”

“We understand that successful rehabilitation of degraded bushland requires a long-term approach with ongoing funding security.

“These new grants will resource local community organisations, like Landcare and bushcare groups, to deliver and maintain projects which protect, restore and enhance the natural environment,” Ms Parker said.

The new funding stream has been established, and will be administered, under the Trust's existing Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program.

Applications are invited for projects that:

Regenerate degraded natural areas, including bushland, riverbanks, degraded waterways and rare and endangered ecosystems.

Improve the ongoing health and improve resilience of important ecosystems and habitats of rare and endangered flora and fauna.

Improve ecological connectivity within and between natural areas.

Improve the capacity of, and resource local community groups to protect, restore and enhance the environment by strengthening local community organisations whose primary purpose is to undertake environmental works in their local area.

Applications for projects which include partnerships, collaboration, other funding sources and in-kind contributions are encouraged.

Applications close on 31 January 2012.

# *Rural Women* Adapting to Climate Change *Field Trip*

Rural women adapting to climate change through training, information, and innovation assessed farm systems in the Guyra region last week during a one day workshop and forum.

Funded under the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry program "Recognising Women Farmers" and supported by Southern New England Landcare Inc and Department of Primary Industries Armidale, the event was the second in a project series of five training events to promote rural womens' networking in the Southern New England region, and enhance women Farmers: knowledge of, and capacity to adapt to, the impacts of a changing climate.

Hosting landholders for the day, Leanne Savage and Fiona Smith, took participants on a tour of their respective properties in the Guyra region, highlighting the diversity of sustainable farm practices and natural resource management projects both families have initiated to help them to adapt to seasonal variances and remain productive and financially viable. Both Leanne and Fiona emphasised the involvement of all the family members in differing aspects of farm management.

"We want our property to be a lifestyle for ourselves and our children, and to pay its way," said Leanne.

Fiona's 26 year investment at the Guyra property with husband Derek and their children reflects a similar goal and with innovation they have diversified to include free range hens and egg production, crop growing, and cattle production.

Dr Sandra Eady, Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO Livestock Industries, led participants through a lunch time forum on carbon cycles and how they fit with agricultural systems, what makes a carbon footprint, and the challenges involved in reducing food carbon miles for resources and products while maintaining farm profitability and human health and nutrition.

[A special thanks to Claire Edwards and Dr Mahri Koch for organising such a great day! Ed.]

The third event in this project will take place in February 2012 with a focus on biodiversity and its role in both agricultural systems and landholder management of natural resources in a changing ecosystem. Those wishing to participate can call the Southern New England Landcare office on 6772 9123 to register.

## Get Well Soon Bec!

Bec Ballard, who is on leave for medical reasons, was due to return to work on the 5th December. Unfortunately Bec has had a few set-backs and won't be back until some time in the New Year. All our thoughts are with you, Bec. Get well soon!

## How Relevant is Southern New England Landcare to you?

Your thoughts are needed...

- How relevant is Southern New England Landcare to your needs or the needs of your farming business?
- How important are the services we offer? What services could we offer into the future?
- What changes would most improve our organisation?

Southern New England Landcare is currently in high demand from the many organisations and individuals who value our member network in order to offer information, education, research, or incentives to achieve environmental outcomes.

As always, Southern New England Landcare's primary goal is to provide valued and relevant services to our MEMBERS, and to this end we are seeking YOUR opinion on how services could be improved.

We are asking members to complete a short survey questionnaire online at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/SNELCCMemberSurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SNELCCMemberSurvey)



# Southern New England Landcare Updates

Southern New England Landcare Ltd held its AGM on Thursday, 10th November 2011. The Board welcomes new directors David Mailler and Bill Perrottet.

On the Board of Southern New England Landcare Ltd are Steve Harvey (President), David Mailler (Vice-President), Caroline Street (Treasurer), Karen Zirkler (Secretary), Sally Wright, Richard Maclean, Michael Taylor, Bill Perrottet and Executive Officer, Sonia Williams.

## Christmas Period Office Hours

The office of Southern New England Landcare (3/119 Beardy Street) will be closed on Monday 19th December and re-open on Monday 9th January 2012 with staff on leave over the Christmas New Year period. For urgent matters please leave a message on the answering machine as it will be checked from time to time.

We wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and wish you a safe and happy 2012. We look forward to working with you all in the new year.

## 2011 Southern New England Landcare Ltd President's Report

*I am delivering this report due to the sad loss our chairman, Mr John Winter-Irving. John was a dedicated and well respected member of landcare and the Southern New England Landcare Board. He will be sadly missed.*

*Southern New England Landcare again was involved in a large number of programs throughout 2010-11, partnering the community, private service providers and different levels of government to achieve outcomes in education, and natural resource management. Southern New England Landcare hosted the Regional Landcare Adventure in April, which brought people from all over the region to Guyra for two days of education, network building, and regional awards. Landcarers of our region were well represented at the NSW State Landcare Awards, as part of the state landcare forum held in Parkes in September. Special recognition should be given to the Balala- Brushgrove landcare group who took out the state Community Group Award.*

*The landcare community resource centre has become an invaluable asset to landcare in our region. The centre which has been made possible with the financial assistance of Armidale Dumaresq Council is home to our dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Thank you needs to be given to our office manager Lucy Chapman, and CSC's Bec Ballard and Alice Devlin for their tireless commitment throughout the year.*

*Much of Southern New England Landcare's focus has been on the Urban Sustainability Project (USP) covering the four local government area of the region. The project is nearing the end of its three year term and has been extremely beneficial in the planning and implementation of several natural resource projects within the urban areas of these four communities. Thank you to Dave Carr, project manager, and his staff – Nick Colcroft, Brenda Shepherd and Ellen Nyberg, and the volunteers which have made this project possible.*

*I would also like to acknowledge our Board, and our Executive Officer Sonia Williams for their time and commitment in overseeing the operations of the organisation. Their passion and commitment to landcare has made Southern New England Landcare the successful organisation which it is today.*

*Landcare has always been seen as a grassroots community organisation, so a special thanks must go to the members and volunteers that make the organisation and its outcomes an important part of our landscape and community.*

*Steve Harvey (Acting President)*

## Resource Centre Working Bee & Christmas Drinks

A working bee will be held at 2 pm on Thursday 15th December 2011. The Landcare Resource Centre sees a steady stream of users, ranging from community groups usage for meetings, students for work experience and the general public looking for information.

Your help in general cleaning, various handyman jobs, and putting up display information will all help make our Landcare Resource Centre even more user friendly. Bring along your tools and enthusiasm and then join us for Christmas Drinks!

Drinks commence at 5 pm with the official part of the evening (presentations etc) at 6 pm. Drinks and light snacks will be served – its our way of saying thanks to all who have participated and helped throughout the year - we look forward to seeing you!

For catering purposes would you kindly contact us if you are coming, phone 6772 9123 or mail@snelcc.org.au.

## Landcare equipment for hire/borrow

SNELCC has number of items you may find useful if you are running an event or doing some planting. Please contact the office, 02 6772 9123, to discuss your needs. Equipment includes:

Field day items: Ice boxes, BBQs, Mugs, Marquee.

Tree Planting/maintenance: Pottiputki tree planters, Dome sprayer, Moulder (has own trailer), Weed spray tank (has own trailer), Planting tools trailer.

Miscellaneous: Rabbit traps (soft jaw), Indian Myna bird traps, Library/Resources.

We also have many publications on a variety of topics, if you need information on weeds, soils, vegetation etc, contact us, we may have just what you need.

***Southern New England  
Landcare Members are  
invited to attend a....***

# **Joint CMA and Landcare Catchment Action Plan Workshop**



**Monday 5th December 2011**

**11.00 am - 2.30 at the Wicklow Hotel (Cnr Marsh & Dumaresq Sts Armidale)**

***Would you like to have input into the  
next 10 years of Natural Resource  
management in the  
Border Rivers - Gwydir and  
Northern Rivers Catchments?***



***At this workshop, you will have the  
opportunity to:***

- Be updated about both CMA's planning process and have direct input into its development
- Provide feedback to the CMA's on how we can involve our partners
- Raise areas of concern that should be considered in the Catchment Action Plan's
- Identify areas where CMA and Landcare plans and strategies align
- Develop joint understanding of each others planning processes, programs and projects.



**RSVP by Thursday 1st December**

***Lunch will be provided***

***To RSVP please call Southern New England  
Landcare on 6772 9123 or***

***Liz Blair from the Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA  
on 6728 8028.***





# Developing regenerative farming systems

As farming systems across the world change to address the challenge of feeding a growing population with less available land, there seems to be differing approaches. Some are focused on the technology of GM plants, genetics and genome mapping of animals and new fertiliser regimes and improved pastures and crops.

Another approach is developing regenerative farming systems based on healthy, biologically balanced and functioning soils and bio-diverse production systems. They are building systems that focus on working with nature to improve both the productivity and the nutritious value of the product.

One highly sought-after expert and practitioner in these new food systems is Jerry Brunetti from the USA. Jerry is a regular speaker at the ACRES conference discussing the links between human health and the role of natural farming systems. With a farming and animal nutrition background, in 1999 Jerry chose a holistic approach of nutrition, detoxification, immune modulation and practices similar to ecological restoration of livestock health to cure himself of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He had been given only six months to live without aggressive chemotherapy, and 12 years later he continues to walk his talk, passionate about sharing his knowledge.

Also working with farmers to improve the health of their soils, plants and animals, is Patrick MacManaway. Patrick takes an individual and landscape approach, assessing and remedying geopathic stress. This stress deals with the energy within the

landscape and its impacts on plants and animals in positive and negative ways. The practice of manipulating these energies has been around since ancient times with practices such as Fung Shui and the use of standing stones all based on the knowledge of these energies.

Animals are sensitive to these subtle energies and show significant losses in productivity and lower health when occupying geopathic stress areas. There are often improvements in both health and productivity when their energetic environment is balanced. Results that Patrick has seen when working with dairy herds have included a reduction in calf mortality, 50% reduction in mastitis in herds and increased protein and fat content in milk.

Crops and pastures are also sensitive to different patterns of energy, and typically show improved vitality, frost and pest resistance and increased yield when grown in optimal conditions. Research into improving the geopathic environment for crops has shown increased potato yields of up to 10% and increased wheat yields of 20%.

Next year in May a group of Australian farmers are flying to the USA and travelling with Jerry Brunetti and Patrick MacManaway to see firsthand the farms and communities that are applying these sustainable and regenerative principles.

For more information on the tour program call 1300 301 128.

Jerry Brunetti - [www.agri-dynamics.com/](http://www.agri-dynamics.com/)

Patrick MacManaway - [patrickmacmanaway.com/](http://patrickmacmanaway.com/)

## WANTED:

### sites to assess impact of organic amendments on SOIL CARBON

Researchers from the University of New England are seeking suitable sites to assess the impact on soil carbon from adding manure, compost or microbial enhancing treatments.

We are looking for sites on granite soils, on the Tablelands and on the northern slopes. Organic treatments need to have been applied for the past 5 years or longer, to make sure that the measured soil carbon levels reflect current rather than previous management.

Farmers will receive results for their site, and the regional averages. The data will be used to assess the potential to increase soil carbon by changing management practices.

This research is part of the national Soil Carbon Research Program (SCaRP), which is a collaborative research program funded by DAFF, GRDC, and regional partner organisations.

If you are interested in participating in this research project and think your farm may be suitable, please contact Annette Cowie: [annette.cowie@une.edu.au](mailto:annette.cowie@une.edu.au).



## Sustainable Farming Tour to the USA

Two weeks exclusive access to some of the most advanced, sustainable and regenerative agriculture practitioners in the US. Visit Rodale Institute for organics, working farms, learn about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), conception to consumption marketing and more. The tour will be accompanied by Jerry Brunetti of Agri-Dynamics, and Patrick MacManaway, a leading practitioner of subtle energy.

This tour is for those serious about expanding their knowledge on sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The tour will be accompanied by Jerry Brunetti and Patrick MacManaway to allow you to learn from these leading consultants and will provide you with exclusive access to consultants, researchers and practitioners at the many visits on the tour.

This is an educational tour which aims to take participants to a range of sustainable, artisan, bio-diverse and economically viable farming operations in the US, from small scale to large.

The tour will take in visits to the Rodale Institute - the world's oldest organic farming research facility, as well as Polyface Farm in Virginia. It will also visit Amish farms, Community Supported Agriculture organisations and distribution cooperatives

**Fully Escorted 17 Day tour - 11th to 27th May 2012**

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# What's new & happening?

## Dung Beetles, Buffalo Fly & Pestivirus

Livestock producers have a unique opportunity to access the latest information on three of the current hot topics on cattle production at field days to be held in the region on 2nd December. These events will look at the positive benefits of dung beetles and the challenges presented by buffalo fly and the emerging major issue of Pestivirus.

Pestivirus is the disease on every cattle producers mind at the moment, with many concerned about the possible impacts on their herd. LHPA Veterinarians will present the facts on Pestivirus and talk about how cattle producers can begin to look at tackling the problem.

Dung beetles have generated a lot of interest in relation to the benefits that they bring to primary production systems including improving nutrient cycling in the soil, increasing soil carbon, improving water infiltration and soil aeration, and reducing the breeding habitat for pest flies such as bush fly and buffalo fly. Once thought to be a coastal problem, buffalo fly have

increased their range in recent years causing issues for producers across the New England North West.

Dung beetle expert Dr Bernard Doube from South Australia will be the key speaker on dung beetles and will have a range of display materials on hand to show dung beetle tunnelling, the range of species currently in Australia, and some exciting new species. As Principal Research Scientist with CSIRO for 29 years, Dr Doube has had extensive international research experience with dung beetles including 7 years in South Africa. Bernard is also an international expert on earthworms and the biological basis of soil health and has co-edited a number of books.

Funded through an Australian Government Community Action Grant and supported by New England North West Landcare, New England and North West LHPAs and the Regional Landcare Facilitator program, the field days will be held at Woolbrook and Wollomombi.

For more information about these events, times and locations, contact Southern New England Landcare office on 02 6772 9123.

## Dung Beetles, Buffalo Fly & Pestivirus: the GOOD, the BAD and the UGLY!

Dr Bernard Doube, Dung Beetle Solutions and former CSIRO Principal Research Scientist, will highlight the benefits of dung beetles to livestock producers through improvements in soil health, nutrient cycling and reduced parasite breeding - THE GOOD.

Livestock Health and Pest Authority District Veterinarians, in conjunction with Dr Doube, will talk about buffalo fly identification, control and management - THE BAD.

Pestivirus is causing serious issues in cattle herds across the region and is the question on everyone's lips, LHPA District Vets will present the facts about this disease - THE UGLY.

Two events will be held:

1. Woolbrook 8.30am to 12.30pm Friday, 2nd December 2011 at Neville Henry's "The Tops".
2. Wollomombi 1.30pm to 5.30pm Friday, 2nd December 2011 at David Moen's "Chandler".

FREE. Smoko provided. Bring a chair, hat, reading glasses. RSVP to 6772 9123.

## Dollars to Manage Upland Wetlands?

What is an upland wetland? How should they be cared for? How can I access funding to do so?

If you live in the Namoi Catchment, you may be able to access financial assistance to conserve and manage these areas on your farm.

The Namoi CMA has funding available to conserve and manage upland wetlands of a moderate to high condition.

Upland wetlands are a unique type of wetland that are found primarily above elevations of 700m. They are mostly found on private land around Nundle, Walcha, Bendemeer and towards Kingstown and Retreat. They are normally groundwater fed and can drain into rivers and streams. Upland wetlands occur either as areas of open "grassy" or "heathy" vegetation and can range from temporary bogs and water bodies to relatively permanent lagoons occupying small areas (0.25ha to 10ha).

Upland wetlands support a wide range of native plants and animals; they provide significant habitat for a range of bird species as well as habitat for frogs, turtles and eels.

Many of the upland wetlands no longer exist due to past land uses and ongoing threats, such as clearing and draining, grazing and damage caused by feral animals such as pigs.

There are a range of benefits associated with improved management of upland wetlands. These include the filtering of sediment and nutrients for improved water quality, the protection of stock from hazardous bog areas, as well as increased biodiversity on farm.

## Field Day in December

Southern New England Landcare will be holding a field day in mid December to answer all your questions.

Dates and venues are yet to be finalized so keep an eye on the e-news, [www.snelandcare.org.au](http://www.snelandcare.org.au), or contact the SNELCC office on 6772 9123.



## Southern New England Weeds Safari

This FREE BUS TOUR will identify environmental weeds, water weeds, pasture weeds, and Weeds of National Significance such as Serrated Tussock. The latest management techniques will be explained by experts from New England Weeds Authority and Department of Primary Industries.

Wednesday 7th December 2011, 9am – 2.30pm. Meet at the Armidale Visitors Information Centre carpark. The day includes Bus and BBQ lunch. Bring a hat and water bottle. Please RSVP to Southern New England Landcare on 6772 9123.

This event is sponsored by New England Weeds Authority, NSW Industry & Investment and Border Rivers Gwydir CMA.



## Women's Business 2012

Women's Business is a gathering for Rural Women focussing on connection to country, networking, finding balance, discussing the BIG issues for women on the land and sharing knowledge and real life stories of ordinary women achieving amazing things.

We also intend to have a great deal of fun with great food, wine and entertainment. We will be celebrating the incredible role that rural women play in their communities and strengthening our ability to go on leading inspirational lives.

The conference will run over three days from January 20-22, 2012 and will be hosted at the beautiful "Wattleridge", Wards Mistake. This is a property owned by the Banbai people who will be sharing their story and knowledge with all who care to join us for an amazing weekend of inspiration and fun.

Some of the workshops planned include yoga, meditation, aboriginal traditional plant use, understanding and nurturing your 'real self', clay sculpture, using technology, small business and financial empowerment to name a few.

Cost: \$165 for the whole weekend, \$110 for Saturday only.

Accommodation: Participants arrange own accommodation. Camping permitted at Wattleridge BYO Tent/swag, or accommodation in Guyra (bus may be available to run between venues).

Food: Catering provided (please indicate dietary requirements when booking).

For more information contact Rebecca Smith at SNELCC on 67729123 or 0428792037. Registrations close December 20th 2011 and can be made at [www.snelandcare.org.au](http://www.snelandcare.org.au).



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## New England Rural Women's Gathering - Guyra

20-22 January 2012



A weekend of learning, laughter, networking and  
inspiration for rural women.

- Hands on Workshops
- Guest Speakers
- Great Food and Wine
- Networking
- Relaxing and enjoying the beautiful landscape
- Finding balance in a hectic world

For more information please contact:

Rebecca Smith at Southern New England Landcare (SNELCC)  
ph 6772 9123 or 0428 792 037



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Landchat  
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# Landchat

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Landchat presents a forum for the expression of a range of opinions.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of Southern New England Landcare or its employees.

While every effort is made to publish accurate information, Southern New England Landcare and its employees do not accept responsibility for statements made and opinions expressed in this newsletter.



## General Meeting

**6:30 pm Thursday 9th February 2011**

Uralla Community Centre (cnr Hill & Maitland St)

All members are invited.

Please contact your group's SNECC Representative if you wish to accompany them to the meeting.

Dinner will be provided for a small charge.

**Please RSVP by**

**Tuesday 7th February 2011**

**for catering purposes.**

Tel 6772 9123 • mail@snelandcare.org.au  
www.snelandcare.org.au



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY