

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 92, November - December 2012

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.



Landchat is bought to you by



CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS OFFICE HOURS

*The office of Southern New England Landcare
(3/119 Beardy Street) will be closed on
Monday 17th December 2012
and re-open
on Monday 14th January 2013.*

Diary Dates

Resource Centre Working Bee	13 Dec
Christmas Party	13 Dec
SNELCC Meeting	20 Feb
Sustainable Farming Tour, USA	May 2013

MARTINS GULLY PROJECT

Martins Gully, a tributary to Dumaresq Creek located on the south western side of Armidale, presents a unique opportunity for the local community to restore a connective corridor of native plants in an effort to create a healthy habitat and improve soil condition and water quality.



AHS and Martins Gully students with Bec Smith (AHS Ag Teacher), Lyall Cameron (NEGS groundsman), and Ian Reeves (Martins Gully Principal) conducting monitoring data collection at the NEGS & TSR site.

Our first planting will occur within a laneway and fenced off area of the Travelling Stock Route on Bundarra Road (bounded by the Golf Course, Industrial zone and the Saleyards). Late November to early December will see a series of planting sessions with PLC, AHS, Martins Gully PS, Waldorf and NEGS - we expect over 200 students to take part in planting, staking, mulching & watering over 1600 trees, shrubs, grasses & wildflowers endemic to the area.

Further works are to occur upstream within the NEGS agricultural area where the removal of woody weeds in March 2013 will be followed by a school-sized effort to revegetate the riparian zone.

The New England Weeds Authority (NEWA) have already started their assault on Coolatai grass, Pyracantha & Hawthorn bush along the roads adjacent to the gully, with continued weed management scheduled each year for 5 years.

The Martins Gully project received funding from the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and has valuable support from NEGS, NEWA, LHPA and SNEL.

**Further information or offers of help
can be directed to
Sara Schmude,
0419697651 or sara@snelcc.org.au**

ST KILDA FISHING CLUB CREATE FISH HABITAT AT MALPAS

Long time members of the St Kilda Fishing Club, Ray and Gwenda Williams have been working away on pontoons which will soon be installed to float at Malpas Dam, as part of the Malpas Catchment Sustainable Farms project.



Gwenda & Ray Williams discussing plantings for pontoons with Nic Cobcroft

These pontoons are designed to provide fish and waterbird habitat at the dam, as they float on the surface of the water and are planted with native water plants. The roots growing down through the cloth covering will help with the uptake of nutrients from the water, and provide vital shade and structure for fish to shelter beneath.

Each pontoon will be anchored to a site close to the shore line and as the waterplants establish and grow they will provide safe roosting and nesting sites for a variety of waterbirds.



Nic Cobcroft tries out the pontoons

More works are planned around the Dam over summer and include enhancing a rock wall structure in front of the clubhouse that is designed to provide structure for small fish and crustaceans to breed, plus shrub and tree plantings in key areas surrounding the dam.

These pontoons are part of an overall plan to improve water quality and habitat at Malpas Dam, and is supported by Armidale Dumaresq Council, the Malpas Aquatic Association, and Southern New England Landcare through financial support from Armidale Dumaresq Council and the Australian Federal Government Caring for Country Grant.



Emily Ingram with Gwenda & Ray Williams

**For more information
please contact
Emily Ingram
Malpas Catchment
Coordinator on
emily@snelcc.org.au**

URALLA CREEK WALK



SANCTUARY

The Uralla Rivercare Group have released a colourful and informative brochure detailing an environmental walk along Uralla Creek sanctuary as part of the group's restoration and rehabilitation plan for the urban stretch of the creek. Copies are available from the Uralla Visitors' Centre and Southern New England Landcare office.

Christmas Period Office Hours

The office of Southern New England Landcare (3/119 Beardy Street) will be closed on Monday 17th December and re-open on Monday 14th January 2013 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 2013. We look forward to working with you all in the New Year.

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 Updates

AGMs were conducted for Southern New England Landcare Co-ordinating Committee Inc and Southern New England Landcare Ltd on Wednesday 14th November 2012. The following members were returned as Executives and Directors respectively.

SNELCC Inc Executive Committee

Steve Harvey (Chair),
David Mailler (Deputy-Chair),
Caroline Street (Treasurer),
Karen Zirkler (Secretary),
Jill Moore-Kashima, and
Richard Maclean

SNEL Ltd Board Members

Steve Harvey (President),
David Mailler (Vice-President),
Caroline Street (Treasurer),
Karen Zirkler (Secretary),
Sally Wright, Richard Maclean,
Bill Perrottet and
Michael Taylor.



RESOURCE CENTRE WORKING BEE & CHRISTMAS DRINKS

A working bee will be held from 2pm on Thursday 13th December 2012. 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!

WHEN: Thursday 13th December

WHERE: SNELCC Office, 3/119 Beardy St, Armidale

TIME: 2pm - Working Bee

5pm - Christmas Party commences

6pm - Official welcome and presentations

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

2012 President's Report

Southern New England Landcare has seen great achievements in the execution of natural resource management in the region. The focus continues to be on the work of many volunteers to implement projects throughout the community.

Landcare's vital link between natural ecosystems and the coexistence of humans can serve the community now and into the future. Our landcarers have been active in urban and agricultural landscapes. Their work has encompassed education, extension, project design and project management. Many thanks to all the organisations partnering with Southern New England Landcare over the past three years (their logos can be seen on the front and back cover).



Twenty twelve has seen the completion of the High Country Urban Biodiversity (HiCUB) Project where Southern New England Landcare partnered with four Local Government organisations and the University of New England in a project funded by the NSW Environmental Trust. Here we saw the successful collaboration of project partners and many community volunteers to complete the many tasks involved. Great preparation by our Partnership Officer Jackie Bowe, and hard work by the HiCUB team, managed by Dave Carr, and including Ellen Nyberg, Brenda Shepherd, and Nic Cobcroft, the project was a great success.

The Landcare Community Resource Centre, which has been made possible with financial assistance from Armidale Dumaresq Council, is home to our dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Credit for much of our success over many years must go to our Executive Officer Sonia Williams, for her tireless contributions – not only to our organisation, but also to Landcare and natural resource management across NSW. Thank you to our Office Administrator Lucy Chapman, and Community Support Officers Bec Ballard and Mahri Koch for their tireless commitment throughout the year. And thank you to our part-time staff including Sara Schmude (Schools Program), Heather Apps (Administration), Sally Taylor and Emily Ingram (Project Administration), and Ruth Tremont (Site Inspections). Thanks to the many others who have made a contribution to the management of our projects.

This year we have been working to improve our relationship with the three Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) within our region. This will enable more effective joint planning and implementation of future projects. Northern Rivers CMA and Border Rivers Gwydir CMA are also looking at a more coordinated effort in project delivery in our region where the two CMAs meet.

Landcarers from our region were well represented at the National Landcare Awards in September 2012, with Balala-Brushgrove Landcare Group a national finalist after taking out the NSW Community Group Award in 2011.

Well done to all who have been part of the achievements seen in this part of our region.

I would like to acknowledge the time taken by Southern New England Landcare's Board members in overseeing the operations of our organisation. Their ongoing commitment demonstrates a passion that will enable landcare to prosper into the future.

Landcare is a grassroots community organisation, so special thanks must go to the members and volunteers who make up our organisation and ensure its outcomes. They are an important part of our landscape and our community.

Steve Harvey, President.

2009-2012 Review Document



At the recent AGM a review document covering Southern New England Landcare's achievements over the past three years was launched. This will be available shortly on the SNELCC web page and shows the range and scope of the type of activities our members have been involved with across the three year reporting period of 2009/10, to 2011/12. Our operating base has grown and across the three year period we accessed over \$3.5million for projects by our groups, our members and our partners.

In addition to the grants and a further \$570,000 in cash resources received by our organization, we also receive significant in-kind contributions from our members, partner organizations and the wider community. Whilst the value of this can be somewhat subjective Southern New England conservatively estimates that this is in the order of at least \$2.5million.

Thus for the 2009-2012 period \$6.6million worth of community based natural resource management on ground works and education was achieved in the Southern New England region!

Some highlights of this activity include:

The High Country Urban Biodiversity project which was funded from the NSW Environmental Trust, provided the resourcing to better support the urban community to be involved in "Landcare" type activities, and the project has many legacies which will allow support to continue into the future.

We also successfully adapted to the changing of focus from local and regional targets to federal targets under the Caring for Our Country program. However this meant that we were unable to work "from the ground up" in meeting members needs and much thought and effort was expended in developing ways in which we could meld and mesh top down targets to local needs. We have established an Expression of Interest process whereby shelf projects are developed with landholders, that can be quickly developed into a Grant applications by our Project Officers as and when appropriate resourcing becomes available.

Southern New England Landcare has been proactive in giving its members a voice by "influencing those with influence", - hosting site visits for the likes of Major General Jefferies, Ross Garnaut, as well as speaking before the Parliamentary Committee into the Role of Government in assisting Farmers Adapt to Climate Change.

Via our involvement with the regional New England North West Landcare Network Chairs we have been instrumental in supporting the reinstatement of the Regional Landcare Facilitator Program across the area, and provides input to Landcare NSW and the National Landcare Network in an effort to ensure the grass roots nature of Landcare is supported.

The reinstatement of Landcare group funding in the form of federally funded Community Action Grants, is an example of what this lobbying can achieve, - these group scale grants have been a great boon to re-establishing group activity - helping Landcare to return to group led action and learning.

Sonia Williams, Executive Officer.

Financial Statements 2011-2012

Audited Financial Statements were presented at the AGMs and copies are provided on the SNELCC Website www.snelandcare.org.au

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BUSINESS SUCCESSION AND ESTATE PLANNING

If you were hit by the proverbial 'bus' tomorrow - what would happen to your estate? It's a confronting and complex question to answer and, as a result, one that many people put off until 'another day'. Our experience is that primary producers are often burdened with added complexities. This two-part article addresses some of the issues facing primary producers in the context of both business succession planning (Part I below) and estate planning (Part II in the February edition).

Primary production

Where farming land has been in the family for many years, farmers will often consider themselves custodians of the land for future generations. As a result some families are reluctant to split the land between beneficiaries, especially if one or more are not interested in continuing to farm the property.

Why do you need a business succession plan?

The strategies included in your estate plan will influence the succession plan you put in place. For this reason your succession and estate plans should be developed simultaneously.

If you feel you do not need a business succession plan, consider the following questions:

- If you are unable to work, will your spouse be willing and able to carry on the farming business?
- Do you intend to work and live on the farm indefinitely or retire 'in town'?
- Do your spouse & children understand your plans for retirement?
- Are any of your children or other family members interested in taking over the farm? If more than one, are they capable of working together and can the farm support multiple families?
- How much money do you need to retire? Do you have sufficient 'off-farm assets' to generate your desired retirement income?
- What assets do you hold in super? Do you have a self-managed super fund? If so, could it be better utilised?

If you can't clearly answer the questions above perhaps it's time for you to revisit your succession plan.

Some contrasting family succession scenarios are outlined below.

Many children interested in the farm

Some families have a number of children with an interest in farming however the farm is not readily divisible or is only large enough to support one family. This can lead to difficulties in deciding on the most appropriate successor or result in dividing a finite parcel of land or resources between several siblings. As difficult as these discussions may be it is clearly preferable to have a clear succession plan agreed and implemented so that you can take advantage of any tax and other restructuring opportunities.

No family successor

Other families have the opposite problem: with no interested children or children in a suitable financial situation to take over the farm. The most appropriate succession plan may be a sale to a third party and advice should be sought on possible pre-sale tax planning or post sale financial advice.

Clear and agreed family successor

Some families may have a clear successor who has already invested considerable time and effort into the family farming business. In these instances, the succession plan may include a staggered transition of ownership to the successor. It may be possible to access small business capital gains tax concessions and/or stamp duty relief on transfers of land (or control of entities holding that land) to a child that has worked on the farm. This needs to be balanced against a common concern that assets, which have been held in the family for decades, may be at risk in the event of relationship breakdown or exposed to creditors.

Planning opportunities

There are a number of tax and superannuation strategies that could be utilised in the transition to your retirement. Depending on your age and other circumstances, you may consider transferring some or all of the farm land into your self-managed super fund. Farm rent derived from the farming business operator could be received by the super fund tax free to help fund your retirement. The earlier you develop and implement your business succession plan, the greater the scope to explore such opportunities.

Peace of mind

As the old saying goes, **“Failing to plan is planning to fail.”**

You've worked hard to develop and look after your property. If you want peace of mind about your future financial security take the time to talk to a qualified adviser that understands the challenges you face on the land.

Australia's ageing population means there is a significant amount of wealth held or controlled by “baby boomers” of or approaching retirement age. At Roberts & Morrow we see business succession & estate planning as an area of need for our clients as many of them approach retirement. To review these needs we have a Specialist Tax & Estate Planning division that provides an ideal blend of accounting, tax and legal skills headed by our Tax Counsel. For further information or assistance with your business succession or estate planning needs, contact Paul Williams, Tax Counsel on (02) 6774 8400.

What's on Your Farm Exploration Evening

A gorgeous New England night made the spotlighting at Kyabra on 14th November very special. The exploration evening was run in partnership with Namoi CMA and Southern New England Landcare and the audience were treated to a fabulous display of live frogs, lizards, micro bats and a docile python collected in the area by Phil Spark, renowned fauna expert. The spotlighting revealed sugargliders and possums, very noisy frogs and some owls watching over us.

Jamie Love of the Office of Environmental and Heritage presented the results of recent mapping and modelling, which showed how wildlife move through the landscape and the importance for animals to have vegetation as stepping stones to food and shelter.

Nic Cobroft of SNELCC spoke about different types of upland wetlands found in the region and how to best manage these areas. Upland wetlands are classified as an Endangered Ecological Community, providing a unique habitat for many species of frogs, turtles and invertebrates as well as many unique vegetation communities. Bec Ballard from SNELCC gave an update of current and upcoming funding and training opportunities for landholders and encouraged landholders to fill out an Expression of Interest (EOI) form for any project they wanted to apply for funding. Applications are kept on file and matched to funding when it becomes available.

Anna Cronin from Namoi CMA talked about landholder opportunities within the present funding guidelines, although the CMA will be restructured and funding may change after June 2013.

Thank you to the Lytton-Hitchins family who provided a healthy dinner and an ideal venue to showcase their Upland Wetland Project and their love of the environment was a fine example to all who attended.

This workshop was supported by the Australian Governments Caring for Our Country Program.



Mapping Pest Animals Online

Pest animals in Australia cause hundreds of millions of dollars damage to agricultural production each year, and impact on our environment, native animals, people, communities and our cultural icons.

In response to increasing pest animal problems across Australia, the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre and NSW Department of Primary Industries in collaboration with many partners have launched the FeralScan community website to help people map pest animals and the problems they cause.

The FERALSAN website at www.feralscan.org.au is a new website that can be used by anybody to:

- Map sightings of pest animals in their local area
- Map the damage or problems pest animals are causing
- Map where control is occurring
- Print maps containing the latest data
- Access resources and best-practice information
- Share local knowledge and learn from others.

Farmers, local councils, community groups, NRM organisations and pest controllers look to benefit from FeralScan, and better maps of pest animals.

Information recorded in FeralScan is vital for pest management at the local scale, and recording information from

your area can help you, local authorities and neighbouring landholders to prioritise areas for pest control.

The more information entered in FeralScan, the more useful it will become.

Trends in pest animals are becoming clearer, and we have seen some community groups really get behind FeralScan, mapping data regularly to help track pest animals in their local patch.

The Feralscan website currently hosts RabbitScan, CamelScan, FoxScan, MynaScan, ToadScan and FeralPigScan, and will soon include feral goats, deer, wild dogs, starlings and feral fish.

The project has received overwhelming community participation so far with nearly 9,000 records entered by 4,500 participants Australia-wide since it was launched in January last year.

The next steps for FeralScan will be to make it more readily accessible via Phone Apps and identify key regions where pest animal problems are rapidly growing.

If you have pest animals in your area, we encourage you to map them in FeralScan.

For further information visit www.feralscan.org.au or contact Peter West at feralscan@feralscan.org.au.

Below: the latest map of rabbit distribution across Australia.



Local Land Services - have your say !!

Since the NSW Government announced a change in the way service delivery from NSW Ag, CMAs and LHPA will be delivered, there has been much activity from many camps. There are various ways you can be a part of the discussion. Southern New England Landcare encourages you to provide input to the process. Below are some links to providing feedback.

NSW Landcare

NSW Landcare invites landcarers to complete survey about the possible impacts on Landcare.

<http://landcarensw.blogspot.com.au/2012/11/landcare-nsw-local-land-services-survey.html>

NSW Farmers

Visit the website for NSW Farmers and complete their survey on the proposed changes <http://www.nswfarmers.org.au/>

Reference Panel calls for feedback on draft LLS boundaries

Stakeholders and community groups are invited to have their say on draft regional boundaries for the new LLS by Friday 7 December 2012. (follow link below to see map)

Have Your Say at

<http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/locallandservices>

"These boundaries are an important building block for the establishment of the new model and it is important that farmers, landowners, our key partners and the wider community have the opportunity to provide feedback on what we've proposed" said Dr John Keniry, Chair of the Local Land Services Stakeholder Reference Panel.

**Do you have Yellow Box,
Redgum or
New England Peppermint
on your place?**

Northern Rivers CMA is once again supporting landholders across the New England region in improving the condition, extent and connectivity of Yellow Box, Blakeley's Redgum Woodland and Peppermint Woodland.

Subsidies are offered to landholders for tree planting and fencing. Last year participating landholders constructed 12.48 km of fencing and planted 22,255 native seedlings in association with this project.

***If you have Yellow Box,
Redgum or Peppermint
on your place and you are
interested in participating in
this year's project please fill
out and return the expression
of interest form opposite.***

This funding is provided in partnership with the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country Program.



Are you developing a great future for agriculture?

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Visit **Polyface Farm**, Virginia and spend the morning with **Joel Salatin**

Learn about **Rodale Institute's** organic research farm with **Jeff Moyer** in Pennsylvania

Visit leading research institutes including the University of Vermont, **Sustainable Agriculture Centre** who are working with the **Vermont Grass Farmers**.

Visit **Hardwick Vermont** & tour the privately owned **Centre for Agriculture Economy** rebuilding the local food system.

Local & gourmet food tours in New York & San Francisco

See **Amish land management & production** techniques in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and experience their hospitality staying overnight with a local family.

Visit beef, lamb and dairy producers in California, New York and Pennsylvania, including **Don Watson's Woolly Weeders** who started his sheep career in Australia

See how **Community Supported Agriculture** is working and expanding in the US and see some **different Supermarket models** providing real choice to consumers.

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Expression of Interest Form

The NRCMA is supporting landholders in improving the condition, extent & connectivity of:

- Yellow Box/Blakely's Redgum Woodland and
- New England Peppermint Woodland

1) Indicate the eligible activity/s you wish to undertake (please tick);

<input type="checkbox"/> Planting among existing trees (ha.....)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fencing around new trees (ha.....)
<input type="checkbox"/> New planting (ha.....)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fencing to protect existing trees (ha.....)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Other.....

2) Please provide your personal and property details;

Name of applicant:			
Mailing Address:			
E-mail		Telephone:	
Mobile:		LGA:	
Landowners Name/s (Please list all)			
Property Name:			
Property Address:			
Lot(s)//DP on which the project is located (this is so we can create a map of the project area):	//.....,//.....//.....,//.....	

3) We are looking for Yellow Box/Blakelys Redgum and New England Peppermint Woodland.

Does your project area have Peppermint, Redgum or Yellow Box trees in it or are there some nearby? (please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
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4) Please describe your project:

5) Copy of Rates Notice

Have you attached a copy of the upper section of your Rates Notice to this form? Only those applications with rates details attached will be considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
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6) Applicants Signature (sign here) (date).....

For more information, please contact: Stacey Winckel 02 6771 3450 stacey.winckel@cma.nsw.gov.au	Please return this form to: NRCMA PO Box 739 ARMIDALE NSW 2350.
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We will contact you to talk about your project in the near future.



These funds are provided by the Australian Government's Caring For Our Country Program.



2012-2013



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Resourcing Landcare in our region



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Print Post Approved
PP 255003/09214

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Roberts and Morrow is gratefully acknowledged for their support in the production and distribution of this newsletter.

Southern New England Landcare appreciates generous support from Caring for Our Country, Armidale Dumaresq Council, NSW Environmental Trust, the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA, and the Northern Rivers CMA, and is sponsored by Landmark (Armidale) and Wesfarmers Federation Insurance.

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.



Catchment Management Authority
Border Rivers-Gwydir



Catchment Management Authority
Northern Rivers



Catchment Management Authority
Namoi

General Meeting

6.30pm Wednesday 20th February 2013.

Uralla Community Centre (cnr Hill & Maitland St)

All members are invited.

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

Dinner will be provided for a small charge.

Please RSVP by

Tuesday 19th February 2013

for catering purposes.

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



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY