



BEACH to BUSH NEWS

A bi-monthly newsletter by Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Inc.

March-May 2001

No. 1

WELCOME

Welcome to our first newsletter in years! This newsletter is to be issued on a bi-monthly basis – just after our general meetings. It will be sent out to all volunteers, including those listed on the Registry of Volunteers. Group co-ordinators are to make sure this Registry is at our office. Your contribution is invited - find out how at the end of this newsletter.

Flash-back to Year 2000

During 2000, the Executive were busy consolidating our membership base, re-establishing contact with groups, and forming new ones. Also we have been looking at innovative ways to stimulate interest from within the groups. During 2000, we:

- » Introduced a “combined working bee” concept
- » had guest speakers at the combined general meetings addressing a special interest.
- » Made a huge effort for National Landcare Week by combining our “Coramba Day Out” group working bee with our own local Landcare awards.
- » Were represented at the Orara Valley Fair where “Garden Escapes & Weeds” was our theme
- » Participated last October in the Spring Festival at the C H Regional Botanic Gardens with a display and information stall, with Ulitarra Conservation Society.

All in all, a most successful year! We can only grow stronger in 2001! The new Support & Development Officer position should be advertised in March/April. Busy days ahead!

Dee Wallace, President

A DECADE OF LANDCARE

- from the Executive Summary,

The Australian Institute, Discussion Paper No.30, July 2000

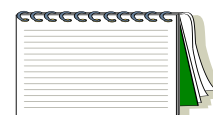
Phillip Toyne and Rick Farley were the architects of Landcare. When, on behalf of the ACF and NFF, they took their idea to Prime Minister Hawke in 1989, they asked for \$340 million over ten years. We now know that even a billion dollars would have fallen far short of what is required to address the appalling decline of the Australian landscape.

In the Discussion Paper, Phillip Toyne and Rick Farley look back on the achievements and failure of Landcare after ten years.

“In retrospect, the goal of Landcare to achieve ESD on all properties in ten years was hopelessly optimistic. If, however, the goal of Landcare were to move community norms and attitudes in the direction of

sustainability, it may be judged a success. An unexpected “spin-off” from the formation of Landcare

CALENDAR



- 4 March** Clean Up Australia Day – work with Jetty Dunecare Group.
- 21 March** Executive Meeting, 5 pm at DLWC Conference Room, AMP Building.
- 3 April** Marian Grove Bushcare Group and John Paul College students working at the Hostel - *planting, mulching.*
- 4 April** General Meeting, DLWC Conf. Room – 5:30 for 6 pm start
- 7 April to 23 June** Greening Australia Bushcare Workshops (*details on p.4*)



groups has been the creation of a new political force in the bush.

A clear deficiency with the policy environment of Landcare has been the failure to properly articulate its place in the bigger picture. Issues such as State government responsibilities, regional structures, service provision and incentives are disconnected from Landcare Policy. The Coalition’s Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) raised the funding for Landcare-related activities to over \$1 billion over 5 years and tried to take a more integrated approach. A deficiency arose in the funding of works on private land that encountered resistance within the Public Service, and particularly within Treasury, due to resistance to the idea that public funds should be used to generate private benefit.

There is a fundamental issue that must be addressed in any serious approach to Landcare in the future. What obligation will there be on land managers if they are to receive the billions needed for remediation, structural adjustment and other initiatives? Surely the concept of ‘mutual obligation’ must be extended beyond the welfare system to the much greater personal financial benefits to be received in future by land-holders. If a land manager is to receive a private benefit from public expenditure on the scale required, he or she must accept the goal of sustainable land use and accept independent verification of progress towards it.

Building on this principle we propose a ten-point plan to tackle Australia's land-use crisis. Such a plan must go beyond the comfort zone of the current debate, for progress is being prevented by platitudes. The points of the plan are:

1. There is a need to apply the concept of a 'Social Contract' between the community and land users as recipients of the vast amounts of public funding.
2. Landcare activities should be based on Regional Plans that would be given effect by legislation.
3. Commonwealth funding should be allocated on the basis of regional plans to encourage a whole-of-region approach. Project funding would be a regional responsibility with grants in accordance with the Regional Plan.
4. A process like the Resource Assessment Commission should be restored to provide Cabinet with a solid and independent base of fact upon which to make major resource decisions.
5. There should be a steady proportional increase in research funding in each Commonwealth and State budget.
6. A 1% National Landcare Tax should be imposed for the next ten years to raise funds in the order of \$30 billion.
7. Partnerships with business should be initiated to assist in the repair of Australia's lands and rivers, using mechanisms such as greenhouse emissions trading to drive commercial vegetation plantings, and water markets to bring full commercial value to water use.
8. This national initiative should commence with a meeting of stakeholders from across Australia to lay down the broad policy direction for its implementation.
9. There must be a 'tollgate' mechanism attached to policy development, integrated under the national natural resources management umbrella to ensure that policy objectives are achieved.
10. Indigenous people, issues and lands must be a core element of national and regional strategies."

SMALL PROJECT FUNDING

◆ BUSHCARE funding for the community

DLWC is now in a position to call for projects from the community to spend on **vegetation** projects. Guidelines state that each project is to be based on a dollar-for-dollar basis and should meet broad regional and specific local vegetation priorities. A maximum of around \$5,000 is allocation to any one project. There is no closing date. Application is by way of a *Native Vegetation Funding form* - available through your co-ordinator - and sent to the Regional Investment Manager of DLWC.

◆ SMALL GRANT FUNDING to community groups on the North Coast

The North Coast Regional Director of DLWC has decided to make small grants available to *incorporated* groups who show a real need for funding, and can indicate their project has a strong potential of success. Un-incorporated groups could approach an in-

corporated group to act as proponent on their behalf, and this should be clearly stated in the application.

No application forms necessary, just a simple **letter** (< 2 pages) will suffice, outlining: 1) the group name, 2) the proposed activity and its location, 3) the items requested, with comments, and 4) a postal and telephone contact address. Please send letter to Investment Manager, DLWC Locked Bag 10, Grafton, 2460.

Activities most likely to be **positively assessed** are where: 1) best management techniques are used and easy to implement, 2) the funding is vital for group viability, 3) requests are small (nearer \$500 or up to \$2000 in special circumstances, 4) a number of people are involved in a project with obvious wider benefit, 5) the support requested is small in relation to the overall input into the activity, and 6) when applicable, the activity and location are in a Board targeted natural resource management area.

The **principal** consideration by the assessors is that the group will have **difficulty in continuing to function without** this assistance, and the activity is technically **feasible** for the group. Applications will be assessed six times a year and groups will be informed of the decision within 2 weeks of the assessment. No further correspondence will be entered into. The process will be over-viewed by the Regional Director and a member of the appropriate Catchment Management Board. Periodic reports will be given to the Board on the operation of the funding investment.

- David Merrikin, Catchment Manager - CH



CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT BOARDS

Local natural resource management (NRM) is being reviewed by the newly-formed Upper North Coast Catchment Management Board (UNC CMB). The primary task of this 18-member group is to prepare a Catchment Plan within twelve months for the Bellinger, Coffs Harbour Waterways and Clarence catchments. This Board is one of 18 across NSW, and extends the planning previously done by the 3 local Catchment Management Committees.

The Catchment Plan will firstly set out the objectives, catchment and management targets in relation to specific landscapes (e.g. coastal, tablelands, ranges) within the Upper North Coast Board area. This acknowledges that different parts of the Board area have different needs for natural resource management.

The UNC CMB held its fourth meeting at Coffs Harbour on 15th and 16th February 2001. This meeting concentrated on the development of Catchment Targets relating to biodiversity, river health, land management and planning.

These Targets will guide the ultimate strategies and actions being developed within the Plan. The Catchment Management Plan will -

- * be a guide for natural resource development,
- * provide an inventory of natural resources,
- * facilitate a better integration of NR decisions,
- * provide for people and industry in the environment.

The Plan will also outline the amount of financial investment, co-operation from government and other institutions, and community involvement required to create long-term improvement in the condition of natural resources on the Upper North Coast region.

GLORY LILY THREATENS OUR COAST

Most people living on the coast are familiar with the yellow flowers and bright green leaves of the Bitou Bush that has invaded our coastal ecosystems in recent years. The weed suffocates native plants and ultimately decreases the biodiversity of our dunes.

But there is a new threat waiting in the wings - the Glory Lily. This plant, a native of tropical Asia and Africa, is fast becoming a more serious threat to our coastal ecosystems than Bitou Bush. The plant is an ornamental garden escapee that produces striking red/orange flowers at the end of Summer. Although the plant dies down in the Winter, it maintains and spreads itself underground through a system of fleshy roots. These shoot up new leaves and carpet the ground in early summer.

Glory Lily is able to colonise areas that are too shady for Bitou Bush but is equally happy growing in full sun on fore-dunes next to the sea. It is found on the coast between Scott's Head and the Sunshine Coast, with the highest density in our region.

Since last year, Glory Lily infestations have become significantly worse on the Bellinger Coastline and the weed has become well established at Tuckers Rock and Hungry Head. It is already a major problem in Bongil Bongil National Park with over 300 new shoots per square metre being recorded in trial plots.

What makes Glory Lily such a threat is that it is a far more difficult weed to control than Bitou. This is because it does not respond to low doses of herbicide and it breaks very easily when attempts are made to pull it out by hand, thus leaving the growing roots underground.

There is much we do not know about Glory Lily. An important gap in our understanding is how it is spread from place to place. It is thought that there must be an animal or bird that spreads seed, but the mystery agent has never been seen in action!

*-from Landcare News, Bellinger Care
Co-ordinating Committee*

MANAGING ROADSIDE VEGETATION

"For many of us, roads are a means to an end. They are long stretches of bitumen or more often gravel, taking us to a particular destination. Driving in Australia presents travellers with beautiful scenery and it is the road-sides that frame these landscapes. Between the car and the landscape is a world of living things. Roadside reserves are an important part of the environment around us and complement what is beyond.

Clearing the land for agriculture, development and other land use changes has meant the amount of natural habitat for native wildlife has been reduced, so roadsides with remnant native vegetation provide an important refuge for many threatened species.

Roadsides may also act as corridors for native birds and animals that are moving between one isolated remnant and another. Roads are not just for humans to travel to a destination, but also protect and encourage the movement of wildlife.

Landcare and environmental groups repairing damaged farmland are finding that roadsides are proving to be a vital source for seed collection activities undertaken as part of revegetation projects.

Where paddocks have been extensively cleared, the adjacent roadside vegetation can provide farm stock with shelter from freezing winds, frosts and blazing sun."
- from Australian Landcare, September 2000

VICTORIAN ROADSIDE SIGNS

"In Victoria, the Roadsides Conservation Advisory Committee (RCAC), together with VicRoads, has developed a signage system for use on all roads in the State, to indicate that a roadside is special in some way and needs to be carefully managed to maintain its locally significant features."

- from Australian Landcare, September 2000

ROADSIDE CONSERVATION

"Many groups are starting projects on public roadsides because of their high vegetation resources, as a way to stop them becoming weed hotspots and to influence councils to move towards better environmental management generally."

- from Australian Landcare, September 2000

WHY WILLOWS ARE A REASON FOR WEEPING

"Willows lining river and creek banks are responsible for a decline in water flow, water quality and aquatic life, according to a major Tasmanian study. And the denser the willow infestation, the bigger the impact.

Dr Martin Read, an ecologist from the Tasmanian Dept. of Primary Industries says "But willows may be better than no vegetation. Willows are a poor surrogate for native vegetation, but they can be better than nothing at all".

If farmers or Rivercare groups are keen to remove willows, then they need a revegetation plan in place.

Comparing the impact of willows with native riparian vegetation was surveyed during a three-year research project along 140 reaches on Tasmanian rivers.

"Many of the organisms that live in rivers and streams feed on the leaves and wood which fall into the water from the trees on the banks," Dr Read says. "Large pieces of woody debris are also important in providing habitat and breeding sites."

"Riverbank vegetation also acts as a buffer or filter for sediments running off farm land. The type of

riparian vegetation has a major bearing on the types of things living in a river."

The research found willows were having a massive impact on river health through shading, dropping leaves in autumn, changing stream flow and providing poor quality woody debris for fish and invertebrate habitat.

"Fish in rivers with native woody debris were twice the size of fish found in rivers lined with willows," Dr Read says.

"Native vegetation drops leaves all year round and these leaves break down slowly, providing a continuous food source - and more consistent water quality - for the things living in the waterway."

"The willow's ability to colonise riverbanks and choke watercourses exacerbated the shading problem, changed water flow patterns and channel structure and increased the risk of flooding", Dr Read says.

- from Australian Landcare, Sept 2000

THE PLATYPUS FACTOR

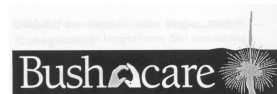
The platypus is a good indicator of the ecological health of a river system because of its dependence on both aquatic and riparian habitats.

To keep waterways platypus-friendly, people can:

- plant native plants alongside rivers and dams to protect banks and platypus burrows;
- leave rocks, logs and vegetation in watercourses to provide places for macro-invertebrate life (platypus food); and
- reduce run-off, such as chemicals, soil and rubbish into waterways.

The platypus sightings, and the reclamation of our waterways are a positive and encouraging sign that communities can, and do, make a difference!

- from Australian Landcare, Dec 2000



WORKSHOPS

April - June 2001

Greening Australia at Dorrigo is running a final series of free workshops under the Bushcare Support Program. The workshops are designed to run over one day (approx. from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm) and usually involve an indoor introductory or theoretical session in the morning followed by a field visit to a relevant site after lunch. Listed below is a range of *advisory* topics that is on offer -

- ♦ **Seed collection and plant propagation**
- ♦ **Plant identification & community ecology**
 - Rainforest
 - Ferns
 - Eucalypts
 - Grasses & grass-like plants
- ♦ **Restoration & Reconstruction of Native Veg'n**
 - Techniques for assessing & restoring (*rainforest, Wet Sclerophyll forest, dune communities*)
 - Reconstructive planting
 - Weed eradication

- ◆ **Farm Forestry**
Design & lay-out Species selection Preparation
- ◆ **Bush foods**

✍ If anyone is interested in participating in the workshop, please write down the topics you're interested in and send to our Support Co-ordinator ASAP.

R E P O R T S.....in brief



January - February 2001

- Boambee Bushcare - weed removal, plan to be worked on by CHCC.
- Coramba Landcare - weeding and revegetation of areas, fencing new area for planting, major river works coming up, Cats Claw work continuing but a new infestation discovered, Camphor Laurel control started, trees planted on "Coramba Day Out" not affected by floods!
- CROPO - new representative is Carolyn Elmes.
- Eastern Dorrigo Development League - had 2 floods.
- Emerald Beach Dunecare - No work over Christmas because of rain and heat. Snake infestation after creek rose during rains. Working bee coming up.
- Friends of Coffs Creek - weed control, trail bikes using track, vandalism to signs, doing track maintenance.
- Jetty Dunecare - work continues, waiting on grant re Work for The Dole team.
- Karangie Landcare - Well attended working bees, river restoration work continues, previous work coped with recent floods (February).
- Mullawarra Dunecare - planting out, snakes!
- North Sapphire Dunecare - not very active, need to 'drum-up' some new workers.
- Red Rock Dunecare - planting, weeding.
- Sawtell Bushcare - burnt car, motor bikes using area, SEPP26 application pending, Environmental Defender's office getting involved.
- Safety Beach Dunecare - mowing of bush continues, doing weed control and Aaron will attend and check out replacement tree matter.
- Safety Beach Landcare - Bush regeneration work continuing.
- Sawtell Dunecare - removing Glory Lily.
- Ulitarra Conservation Society - campaigning to save Koala habitat.
- Woolgoolga Community Nursery - Banksia, Pandanus, Crianum Lily, Tuckaroo plants available
- Woopi Back Beach Dunecare - planning ahead for working bees, maintenance of area.

For contributions...(adverts, photos, stories, poetry, or any interesting items you have found), **please send in to Julie via:**

FAX: 6652 3936
E-MAIL: jhicks@dlwc.nsw.gov.au
POST: P O Box 582, Coffs Harbour, 2450

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