

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 98, November - December 2013

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.

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



Diary Dates

Resource Centre Working Bee12 Dec.....
Christmas Party 12 Dec
SNELCC Meeting19 Feb 14

Christmas Period Office Hours

The office of Southern New England Landcare (3/119 Beardy Street) will be closed on Monday 16th December and re-open on Monday 13th January 2014 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.



Southern New England Landcare would like to thank our members and associates for your efforts and hard work during 2013. We wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and look forward to seeing you again in 2014.

RESOURCE CENTRE WORKING BEE & CHRISTMAS DRINKS

A working bee will be held from 2pm on Thursday 12th December 2013. 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 12th 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 RSVP by Tuesday 10th December

phone 6772 9123 or mail@snelcc.org.au

2013 Chairman's Report

2013 has been a year of great achievement but it has also brought many challenges to those associated in Landcare and natural resource management in the Southern New England region.

Urban Landcare activities have had a dedicated group of volunteers to continue to manage and build upon the work completed through the High Country Urban Biodiversity Project. The BOZO, Uralla River Care and Armidale Urban Rivercare groups' have continued to implement works in the townships of Walcha, Uralla and Armidale respectively during this past year.

Many agricultural based Landcare activities have slowed down due to one of the hardest seasons we have seen in recent years. Calving and lambing have been particularly difficult this spring and most have had to commence hand feeding livestock. Landcare supported projects, in particular improved grazing management techniques have helped with the severity of the season for rural landholders.

Both Federal and State governments have cut millions of dollars in funding from budgets. At State level the reforms to the Department of Primary Industries, Livestock Health and Pest Authorities and the Catchment Management Authorities to form the new Local Land Service (LLS), have been ongoing with the new entity starting on the 1st of January 2014. I would like to thank the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA for their continued partnership and support in the transition process to the new LLS.

The situation with the Federal government can only be regarded as a shambles. Over 100 million dollars of cuts made by the outgoing federal government in reaction to the transition from a carbon tax to an emission trading scheme coupled with a centralised bureaucracy, had led to a disappointing contraction in support for Landcare related activities. The new federal government made pre-election promises to support Landcare, but has had 10 million dollars taken already from the budget to go to drought aid.

These considerable changes will no doubt influence the level of Landcare activity throughout Australia. However, SNELCC will continue to support and service our groups, members, partners and the broader community into 2014.

I would like to thank the organisations that have supported SNELCC this year, including our 4 local government councils, the Northern Rivers, Namoi and Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA's, New England LHPA, New England Weeds Authority and the University of New England. I would also like to congratulate the Armidale Tree Group for the recent achievement of 30 years of service to the community.

2013 saw the NSW State Landcare forum held in Newcastle with the NSW State Landcare Awards function held as part of this

forum. The region did very well with the High Country Urban Biodiversity Project winning the Partnerships with Landcare Award, Frog Dreaming winning the Junior Landcare Team Award, Kath Wray, a finalist in the Individual Landcarer Award, and the Taylor family were highly commended in the Innovation in Sustainable Farm Practices category.

On behalf of the board I would like to thank the staff of our organisation for the wonderful support that they have given over the previous 12 months. We have sadly had four team members move on and we thank them for their efforts and contributions to SNELCC during their time with us. Nic Cobcroft left our office at the end of 2012 to move back to the coast. He worked on projects such as the High Country Urban Biodiversity Project which has been proven to be a highly regarded and beneficial project for the region. Project Officer and Malpas Coordinator, Emily Ingram finished up early 2013 after an opportunity for her family to work in the Torres Strait Islands arose. I would also like to thank Mahri Koch who resigned midyear - we greatly appreciated her service and tireless work over the last two years as a Community Support Officer (CSO). Dave Carr also finished up with Southern New England Landcare at 30 June 2013, after being the Project Director of the High Country Urban Biodiversity Project and projects officer for several other partnerships projects with local government. Sadly reduced ongoing funding for SNELCC has meant Dave has moved on to other endeavours, however he is still in regular contact with SNELCC. We wish all four of them well. I would also like to thank our ongoing team: Bec, Lucy, Sara, Sally, Ellen and Heather and would like to welcome Ruth Tremont and Des Anderson who joined the team earlier in the year. This year also saw our Executive Officer, Sonia Williams step back from duties with Southern New England Landcare as she has taken a secondment to Landcare NSW as their GM. She continues to act in a mentoring role to other staff.

At Board level there have been a couple of changes with the resignation of long term board members, Caroline Street and Richard Maclean, who was a past chair of the organisation. I would like to thank both Caroline and Richard for their support and service to Landcare over many years. I would like to welcome new board member, Glen Chapman to Southern New England Landcare knowing that he will make a sizable contribution to our organisation.

Finally, I would like to thank the community who have contributed to Landcare in our region. It is humbling to meet so many of you who have a commitment to a sustainable environment. With this kind of dedication and passion it is hopeful that our elected government representatives will assist Landcare to have a healthy future.



Chairman, Southern New England Landcare

JOHN WINTER-IRVING BURSARY 2012 TRAINING REPORT

JODY McNALLY

Jody is the inaugural winner of the John Winter-Irving Bursary Training Award. Jody presented details of her training experience at the recent SNEELCC meeting and has provided this report. The recipient of the 2013 award will be announced at the SNEEL Christmas party. The Board of Southern New England Landcare extends its thanks and appreciation to the family of John Winter-Irving.

I recently had the pleasure of doing a Permaculture Design Course at Milkwood Permaculture, Mudgee NSW, with the support of the John Winter-Irving Bursary. The course was 14 days of living and breathing sustainability. It was fantastic!! There were 30 students and most of us camped out on the banks of the Campbells Creek. A strong bonded community was formed and encouraged by way of sharing daily chores such as dishwashing, many group activities and group design teams.

Permaculture in its essence is about caring about the planet and being mindful about everything you do and your affect on all living things. Permaculture design is a way of designing or organising your backyard, your farm, community or life to maximise sustainability and minimise waste. It's a framework to design or redesign systems to be resilient and regenerative.

The Permaculture Design Course covered a huge range of topics, including climate and landform, water movement and capture, animal systems, food forest designs, aqua-ponics, soils, vegetable gardening, nutrient cycling, natural building and the list goes on!! We spent a lot of time drawing and designing an area of our own places as well as a group design project for a set area and client. In a nut shell the design process has three main parts; goal articulation, site assessment and analysis; and design. However, the design phase is never finished as it is an ever evolving process.

The goal articulation is where you really think about your values and what it is that you want from the area or design. This goal statement then sets the context for the whole design. Next is assessing the site from a holistic approach by looking at things like climate data, seasonal sun angles, predominant directions for hot and cold winds, topography of the land, access roads/paths and microclimates. After analysing the area you can then begin to design elements into it that suit the site, placing plants and/or animals where they are expected to thrive and survive.

For me the course helped me to understand how to pull together the different elements of our garden and farm in a really integrated way. It also inspired me to really walk the talk. I owe a huge thank you to Ona and family and SNEELC for this amazing opportunity. It was life changing and I hope that I will be able to help inspire other people to start looking at their lives this way. I would love to chat to anyone who wants to know more or just connect. Please email Jody on mcnally.kyeema@gmail.com.



AGMs were conducted for Southern New England

**Landcare Co-ordinating Committee Inc and Southern New England Landcare Ltd on
Wednesday, 20th November 2013.**

The following members were returned or elected as Executives and Directors respectively.

SNEELCC Inc

Executive Committee

Steve Harvey (Chair),
David Mailler (Deputy-Chair),
Bev Stubberfield (Treasurer),
Karen Zirkler (Secretary),
Jill Moore-Kashima, Tim Wright.

SNEEL Ltd Board Members

Steve Harvey (President),
David Mailler (Vice-President),
Karen Zirkler (Secretary),
Sally Wright, Bill Perrottet,
Glen Chapman, Peter Metcalfe,
Michael Taylor.

LANDCARE NETWORKS MOVING FORWARD WITH EMPHASIS ON TEAMWORK

With the dawn of the new Local Land Services era, there has been some uncertainty over where Landcare in its traditional role as on-ground service providers to landholders and the community, would be placed after the departmental shake-up. Southern New England Landcare has previously enjoyed a productive working relationship with our region's Catchment Management Authorities including Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA, Northern Rivers CMA and Namoi CMA. This partnership was established through the management of joint projects and shared objectives.

It is pleasing to acknowledge that while many of our historic funding streams have been significantly trimmed, our new LLS which becomes active on January 1st 2014, has been working to retain and enhance this partnership.

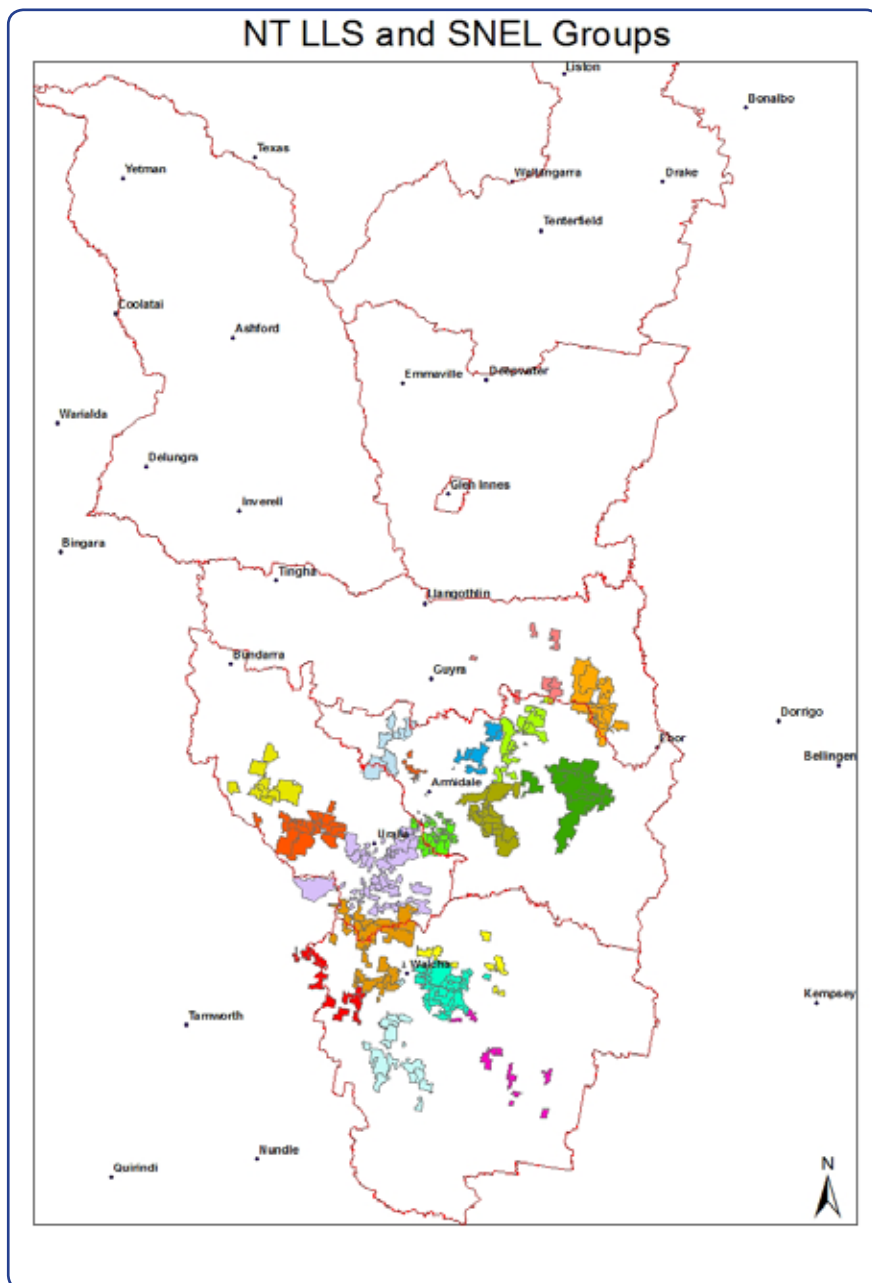
The new Northern Tablelands Local Land Service (NTLLS) will be unique in that it will cover an area which was historically covered by the Border Rivers - Gwydir, Northern Rivers and Namoi CMA networks. This is a result of LLS boundaries being demographically based on Local Government Areas (LGAs) rather than the geographic or catchment boundaries of the CMA regions. From a management point of view, this simplifies Southern New England's Partnership with the Northern Tablelands LLS as it reduces the number of co-operative partnerships to one. It also brings the added advantage of working with our region's three other Landcare networks that fall within the LLS boundary. Unfortunately we will have some of our local groups located within the Tamworth LGA, move into the North West LLS region. The LLS and SNEL group map shows the seven LGA's that comprise the NT LLS with SNELCC groups included.

What does this mean for Southern New England Landcare into the future? Firstly, while the LLS is a new department that aims to bring together the invested knowledge of the CMAs as well as Primary Industries and Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, many of the previous staff remain. These are the people familiar to both SNEL and our members and those who we have worked with in the past.

Secondly, there is a unique opportunity for the region's Landcare networks, including Southern New England (Armidale), GWYMAC (Inverell) GLENRAC (Glen Innes) and Granite Borders (Tenterfield) to advance our member needs through increased co-operation and common targets shared with our LLS.

Finally and most importantly, we hope that you as members will find that the restructuring of the LLS brings more direct benefits to you as Landcare members. Landcare will continue to service your agricultural, environmental and social concerns but also hopes to have more involvement in delivering CMA and other regionally co-ordinated programs directly to landholders. An example of the benefits of regionally co-ordinated projects that have successfully engaged stakeholder and agency co-operation can be seen with the creation of the Northern Inland Pest Animal Committee.

We hope that we can continue to improve our service delivery to you.



ARMIDALE'S NEWEST BUSHLAND RESERVE



This picture is of trees on Angophora Bushland Reserve, Armidale's newest little bush reserve on the topmost southwest ridge of South Hill. It is on the corner of Burgess Street and Bona Vista Road.

The hilltop was originally the furthest reach of the Bishops court grazing land. Tree species which were useful for furniture or firewood were removed, leaving mostly Angophora

trees scattered in a grass landscape (one Angophora tree, almost exactly in the centre, is hollow, making it a wildlife hotel). On the western side are some old apple and plum trees from a former orchard belonging to the next-door Lyons family's farmhouse. At the northern edge of the reserve are young Blakely's Red Gums. A triangular-shaped section on the north-western side is a trash-and-treasure place, containing Chinese Elm suckers and other woody weeds that will have to be cleared out, but also a eucalypt with hollows and a Kurrajong planted by neighbours.

The land was acquired from the Anglican Church by Armidale Council in 1977 as a public reserve for the Bishops court subdivision. It was let as a horse paddock for many years. The horses also acted as lawn mowers, and distractions for children going to Martins Gully School, and incidentally as protectors of the wildlife. Koalas are seen in the gum trees in spring and bird lovers have reported seeing over fifty different species of birds, including a Varied Sittella and a Rose Robin, and echidnas have been seen on the reserve and in neighbouring gardens.

On matters of maintenance and upkeep of the site, we had advice on ecological matters from three people who will be well-known to readers of Landchat: Ruth Tremont, Dave Carr and Angus Adair; and have offers of practical help from the Armidale Tree Group, the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (a subgroup of Southern New England Landcare), and Rotary North Armidale. It was the promised support of these groups that persuaded the Council to let us turn it into a managed bushland reserve.

2014 will be the year of most action. We intend to cut down the Pyracantha, Cotoneaster and other woody weeds in autumn (when the wildlife breeding season is over), plant in spring and eradicate blackberry, elm suckers etc. in November.

The reserve is not yet well known, so at our autumn working bee any member of SNEL or Armidale Tree Group is welcome for morning tea. We will be working on the western side of the reserve but would love to show off the beautiful mature Angophora trees on the eastern side. The date and time will be advertised in SNEL e-news.

INDIAN MYNA CONTROL PROGRAM TO COMMENCE

Over the past 6 months, Southern New England Landcare has been consulting and preparing to commence an integrated area program for the control of Indian Mynas. The control program will be carried out within the southern New England region and will initially depend largely on sightings and reportings of the birds.

As many people are aware, the Indian Myna is an introduced and highly aggressive bird which forms flocks of numerous individuals. The bird is often found in urban areas and increasingly in open farmland along the east coast and inland. Sightings have been reported as far west as Narrabri. The birds compete with native fauna (including birds and small mammals) for habitat, mostly resulting in the native species being driven away or killed. As shown in the picture, the Indian Myna can be distinguished from the native Noisy Myna by its brown plumage and white wing markings.

Effective control of this pest species will require a community based approach where everyone can have a part in the control program. Your assistance is necessary and welcome, and may occur through a range of activities, from reporting sightings to trapping and notifying SNELCC project staff when birds are captured. SNEL has had members express interest in offering their assistance which is an encouraging indicator for the success of the project.

Southern New England Landcare expects to have the trapping and control stage of the program in operation early next year. In the meantime, we strongly encourage everyone who would like to help with this program to complete and send an Expression of Interest form available at our website <http://snelcc.org.au/web3/> Remember to include the name of the project as 2014 Indian Myna and details on how you would like to help. Finally, if you would like more information on the project please email us at mail@snelcc.org.au.





FROG DREAMING

People, Place, Storytelling

A 2-day inspirational journey for children into sustainable land management

FROG 2013 OVERVIEW;

This year we have had many successes with "Frog", starting with national recognition as a finalist in the United Nations Environment Day awards then onto the State Landcare conference for a presentation & award for Junior Landcare and then topped off with 100 smiling faces at the conference held in September at 'The Hill' Kentucky.

The 6th Frog Dreaming conference welcomed students from Uralla, Kentucky, Drummond, Kingstown and Armidale High School.

There were many highlights; the student led tour of Kentucky School's Stephanie Alexander **kitchen garden** where visiting students had an experience feeding chooks, sampling herbs/vegetables from the garden & getting dirty planting out seedlings... The **outstanding tribal performances** led by our student mentors and their gurus....the silence following **Severn Suzuki's**



6 minute speech Bec Smith beating the **earth drum beat** Kentucky P&F's **excellent service & menu** The fun had by all **camping** by the light of the full moon **Biodiversity walkabout** with Ruth Tremont **Insect hotels** with Chris Riley **Aboriginal Heritage & boomerang throwing** with Harry, Ivan, Elsie & Laurie.... **Wildlife at 'The Hill'** with UNE's Dr Karl Vernes **Fighting Ferals** with our own Bec Ballard and who could forget **native revegetation** with Michael Taylor, who also shared with us his amazing family property/playground to explore, create, wonder and have fun in.

A special mention and a big thank you goes to the Gurus (the same inspiring people that volunteer their time year after year) - they are Matt McKenzie (Thalgarah), Stacey Winkel (Uralla Shire Council), Carina Johnson (BRG CMA), Ruth Tremont (SNELCC), Helen Schwarz (Herbert Park Landcare), Chris Riley (Biodynamics guru) and Bec Smith (AHS Ag teacher & frog founder).

And lastly we could not have done it without the **on-going support of our sponsors** (logos below).. Especially BRG CMA, USC & NIRW.

FROG CALENDAR 2014

- Frog Dreaming **17-18 September**
- Armidale Autumn Parade & Thunderbolts Festival
- Finalist National Landcare Conference
- National Tree Day & Martins Gully planting activities

CONTACT:

Sara Schmude

"Frog Dreaming provides an important experiential learning opportunity for students to engage with their passion for the natural environment and Aboriginal culture. This event is making a real difference to the level of understanding and engagement young people have with pressing environmental needs and opportunities."

Adam Blakester, Starfish Enterprises + Frog Dreaming Guru



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



northern inland regional waste NIRW



Catchment Management Authority Border Rivers-Gwydir



HIGHLY COMMENDED AWARD RECOGNISES THE WORK OF URALLA RIVERCARE GROUP

On Friday November 8, The Uralla Rivercare Group (URG) won a Highly Commended award in the Tourism/Leisure and services category for the Uralla Creeklands Walk project. The honour was received at the Northern Inland Innovation Awards and comes as a result of the outstanding efforts by the group to restore the natural ecology of Uralla creek through the Uralla urban area.

The Uralla Creeklands Walk provides an educational and artistic public amenity which encourages community members to walk along the creek and become aware of the ecology of the creek and its riparian corridor. As a result of the ongoing work by this community based organisation, the Uralla Creeklands walk has become popular place that encourages visitors and local alike to take a walk and enjoy the natural surrounds. The area has also become a popular venue for community gatherings where parkland areas are created from the floodplains and terraces of Uralla Creek.

The Uralla Rivercare Group formed in January 2000 with the aim of addressing degradation issues and to remediate the Uralla & Rocky River Creeks into an aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly community asset. The group was made up of interested local residents and landowners who reside along the creeks. Together with the assistance of the former Department of Land & Water Conservation and later with Southern New England Landcare, the group has developed a river restoration plan to guide rehabilitation efforts for 3 kilometres of Uralla Creek.

Throughout the planning process, issues at specific sites were identified and recorded on an aerial photographic plan. The severity of each issue was then ranked to help prioritise the works. The management criteria and recommended actions for each site were provided in detail by the plan for URG to implement. After more than ten years of grants and volunteer works, the establishment of the walk started to emerge and now includes 10 totem poles depicting river wildlife, platypus, water dragon, water birds, frogs and the iconic native Water Rat. The Uralla Creeklands walk also showcases a 4 metre by

2 metre aboriginal artwork depicting the local Anaiwan people's connection to the land and water.

Over the course of the walk, eleven directional bollards assist with connecting the main urban area to the shopping centre and to the existing Alma Park/ Mt Mutton Walks. Artworks can also be found where Tortoise stencilling adorns pathways and support columns of the Uralla Shire Council building. A main sign has been installed near the Uralla Visitors Centre containing a map and details of the walk. The Uralla Creeklands Walk brochure is also available at the Visitors Centre.

At present, the Uralla Rivercare Group is completing a series of government funded projects with follow up work to ensure that the improved condition of the creek is maintained. These projects include extensive removal and control of environmental weeds such as willow, privet and honeysuckle, removal of rubbish within the creek, installation of gross pollutant traps, the construction of a rock ramp in the creek to stop bed lowering and to restore pool riffle habitats for aquatic fauna in the stream, bank stabilisation works and planting of native trees, shrubs and grasses to help restore the creek's natural ecology. The Uralla Rivercare Group hopes to continue seeking funding for projects for these works to continue into the future.



Member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall presents a Highly Commended Award to Bev & Bruce Stubberfield, Uralla Rivercare.

SLASH, SPRAY AND BURN

REMOVING WEEDS ALONG TILBUSTER CREEK

The aim of the Herbert Park Landcare Group's Tilbuster Ponds project is to remove invasive woody weeds from the banks along part of Tilbuster Ponds Creek, south of Rockvale Road near Armidale.

Considerable effort has been put into felling, injecting and spraying Silver Poplars, Privet and Blackberries on the western side of the creek (see Landchat March-April, p. 8). While progress has been made since Winter 2012, follow up control is needed during the 2013-14 season, particularly on the Privet.



Re-shooting Privet
To be sprayed before native
plantings occur.
(Photo: Helen Schwarz)

During 2013 the Herbert Park Landcare Group and supporting stakeholders such as NSW Forests and the Armidale Tree Group have also made significant progress controlling Blackberry on the eastern creek bank. The large bushes were sprayed by NSW Forests staff in late February, then pushed up in June and burnt in September. State Forests are to be commended for the efficient use of their machinery time allocated to Armidale State Forests and for their thoroughness in researching the needs of a threatened frog before approving and undertaking the Landcare Group's request to burn the grassy area on the eastern side of the creek.

Luckily there was enough dry grass to carry the fire along the eastern bank of the project area, not only burning the stands

of sprayed Blackberry but also the phalaris, fescue and African Lovegrass.



African Lovegrass on the east bank of Tilbuster Ponds Creek - before burning (left), 29 July 2013 and after burning (right), 12 September 2013 (Photos: Ruth Trémont).

Now, as the growing season progresses, Armidale Tree Group staff will treat the burnt grassy areas with herbicide - to further control the grassy (as well as woody) weeds. African Lovegrass is a noxious weed in New England, and Phalaris and Fescue are very competitive species which challenge the establishment of native riparian species. Several herbicide applications will reduce mature grass tussocks as they reshoot, and kill new seedlings as they establish after burning.

While future floods will undoubtedly deposit more African Lovegrass seed on the creek bank, dense plantings of Creek Tea Tree, Bottlebrushes and Mat-rush will help shade out and reduce the establishment of new grass populations. An ongoing program of grass slashing and blackberry and privet management will be needed at the site, beyond the life of the current project.

LANDHOLDERS, TAKE ACTION ON WEEDS

The Minister for Primary Industries has requested the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to undertake an independent evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of weed management arrangements in NSW, with the view of informing the further development of the proposed NSW Biosecurity Act, and other relevant strategies under the NSW Biosecurity Strategy. The review will focus on existing good practice, opportunities and barriers that exist within current arrangements and ways to overcome barriers to inform the recommendations (NSW Natural Resources Commission, October 2013).

The Issues paper represents the opportunity to be involved in the planning process for weeds management in NSW for the immediate future. The timing of the paper is notable in that it has come at a time of increasing concerns of landholders regarding the current and ineffective management of weeds between authorities and stakeholders, as reflected by the feedback from recent weeds field days, hosted by the New England Weeds Authority and the Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA, throughout our local area. It also follows an increasing interest from landholders looking to combat the spread of invasive weeds along roadsides and through properties.

The paper is available for viewing and comment until the 6th December which is the key consultation phase of the process. If you would like to review the paper and/or make a submission please follow the link at <http://engage.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/weed-management-review>

WEEDS IN FOCUS

Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*)

Serrated Tussock is **a noxious weed** in the control area of the New England Weeds Authority. This means that according to NSW legislation it must be controlled or managed. Serrated Tussock is also a **grassy weed of National Significance**. There are 32 weeds which the Australian Government has identified as being of national significance because of the weeds' invasiveness, potential for spread, and possible environmental, social and economic impacts.

Serrated Tussock **is a perennial drought-tolerant tussock-grass native to South American countries** including Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay. It is a weed in New Zealand, South African and Australia. Serrated Tussock came to Australia around 1900 and was identified in NSW in 1935, near the Yass River. It was proclaimed a noxious weed on the Southern and Central Tablelands and Monaro in 1938. Since then the size of areas it infests have increased and it has spread to the Victorian border and small areas on the New England Tablelands.

Serrated Tussock **grows** on a variety of soils – and infertile or shallow soils do not deter it. However, it doesn't grow in wet, heavily shaded or saline areas. Serrated Tussock plants need cool conditions for growth and survival, with 10°C – 15°C being optimal and can tolerate drought. In early stages of infestation it is often found on hilltops or against fences, as seeds and seed heads are light and dispersed by wind, although animals, machinery, human activities and movement of water, soil and fodder also spread the grass.

Serrated Tussock grows best during cooler months, flowers in summer and sets seed within 8-10 weeks. Tens of thousands of tiny seeds are produced and most germinate during autumn, readily invading areas of bare ground. However, seedlings are slow-growing and vulnerable to competition by other more vigorous species. In addition, seed viability reduces quickly in the soil so without additional seed the seed bank declines rapidly.

Serrated Tussock **is a threat because** it:

- seeds prolifically, can cause heavy infestations and reduce carrying capacity to only 1 sheep/2 ha;
- is highly adaptable and difficult to control;
- crowds out useful pasture and become a monoculture within a few years;
- is indigestible and animals forced to graze it die; and
- threatens the biodiversity of native pastures and native grasslands and woodlands.

Identifying features of Serrated Tussock include its:

- Lime-green tussocks in late winter/early spring, with narrow leaves (similar to Snow/Poa Tussock);
- Prolific seeding in November/December, with purplish flowering stems bent over like a 'horse's mane';
- Rough serrations can be felt on the leaf stem when it is drawn between the fingers; and
- ligule (on the inside of the leaf where it meets the leaf stem), which is a small white hairless flap about 1mm long.

Serrated Tussock **management** requires:

- herbicide treatment (or chipping) to kill established plants and new seedlings
- prevention of seed set
- establishment and maintenance of competitive pasture to out-compete new germinations or re-infestation.



Serrated Tussock - Photos - NSW DPI

For more information on Serrated Tussock go to

http://www.weeds.org.au/WoNS/serratedtussock/docs/ST_8pp_Brochurev5.pdf

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/profiles/serrated-tussock>

<http://www.newa.com.au/noxious-weeds-list> ;

or phone New England Weeds Authority at

Armidale (Head Office) – 6772 3602, 0428 211 314, 0419 418 036

Guyra – 6770 7117, 0439 711 701

Uralla – 0488 711 012

Walcha – 6774 2595, 0427 711 729.

LOOK AFTER YOUR COW'S FAT SCORE AND SHE WILL LOOK AFTER YOU!



**Catchment Management
Authority**
Border Rivers-Gwydir

Given the current dry seasonal conditions (even though we've just had a drop), CMA Senior Land Services Officers, Jason Siddell and Brett Littler, are urging cattle producers to start planning now for next year's calves.

The decisions farmers make today will affect their calving percentages next year, particularly the number of cows that end up getting in calf when the bulls go out. Decisions now will also affect how long it will take for all of the cows in a herd to calve, and therefore will have a compounding effect on the financial bottom line.

It's long been known that the amount of fat on your cows has a huge influence on conception rates and this has been confirmed by anecdotal evidence and research findings from the Beef CRC Maternal Efficiency Program.

"Reflecting on some of these results one thing that stands out is that producers who monitor and manage their cows to maintain high fat scores of 2 or more (a minimum of 5mm of fat on the rump) get more calves on the ground and achieve a more condensed calving pattern. Once cows fall below 5mm of fat on the rump they start to mobilise muscle tissue and fertility drops," said Brett Littler.

Fat score of cows and the percentage cycling after calving

Fat Score at Calving	Days after calving, % on heat		
	50 days	70 days	90 days
1 - 2 (0-6mm P8)	34%	55%	66%
3 - 4 (7-22mm P8)	45%	79%	91%
4 - 5 (23mm + P8)	42%	96%	100%

Age of cows and the percentage cycling after calving

Cow age	Days after Calving						
	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
> 5years (%)	55	70	80	90	90	95	100
2 - 3 years (%)	15	30	40	65	80	80	90

Heifers are much slower to return to oestrus (fertility cycle) than older cows. To reduce the calving spread, Jason Siddell advises joining heifers 3 weeks before the main cow herd.

TIPS FOR INCREASING FAT SCORE AND IMPROVING FERTILITY:

1. Supply extra feed: Unfortunately it's very hard for cows to put on weight/fat while they're nurturing a calf. Supplying feed while a cow is lactating is really only useful for maintaining a cow's current fat score or for minimising weight loss. Feeding a protein meal or lupins at joining has shown a benefit in increasing conception rates but it's no silver bullet.

2. Early wean calves: By early weaning calves you can drop a cow's feed requirement by nearly half. The cow can then get by on feed of poorer quality and has the capacity to gain weight and increase fat score. Weaning off a calf will also trigger cycling in cattle in borderline condition (Fat score 2).

3. False weaning/temporary calf removal: This technique can be used to increase conception rates by 6-8% in cows which are borderline in condition. If you are conducting an AI program the increase in conception rates could be as much as 10-12%.

False weaning involves removing calves from cows for a period of time (ideally 48 hours) with the calves being yarded with access to good quality legume/cereal hay, clean water and shade.

"Ideally, false weaning should be conducted once joining has commenced (21 days after the bulls are put in when cows are starting their second cycle) and on cows with calves at least 40 days of age," said Jason Siddell.

According to Jason Siddell the key point cattle producers need to be thinking about during this dry spell, is that by assessing and managing fat score they can increase the number of calves born, and reduce the length of the calving period.

The end results will be an increase in the average weaning weight of calves and overall herd profitability.

For free advice and information on livestock management contact Jason Siddell at the Glen Innes Agriculture & Advisory Station on 02 6730 1900 or email: Jason.Siddell@cma.nsw.gov.au



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What's happened with the Expression of Interest form I sent in?

- The information from your form has been entered into the SNELCC database.
- If you haven't heard anything from us then your Expression of Interest (EOI) is still current and active – feel free to ring and check if you want to be sure. In September this year, letters were sent to people who had submitted an EOI to bring them up to date with the progress of their EOI.
- Where relevant funding programs have been available SNELCC has applied for money to fund your and similar projects. Before we applied for funding we would have contacted you to see if you were still interested. If we are successful or unsuccessful with our funding bid we will let you know. If you haven't heard from us since we spoke to you about applying for money, then the funding application is still being processed.
- The time between your submitting an EOI and getting funding can be a long time, sometimes years. Two of the main reasons are that grants suitable for your project are not always available and that it can take a long time (months) for funding bodies to announce successful applications. Your patience is appreciated.
- If you have lodged an EOI with us and your circumstances have changed (e.g. you commenced the work in the meantime or you no longer wish to keep your proposal on file) then please take a moment to let us know.
- Whilst we do everything we can to support your project proposal, submitting an EOI is no guarantee of obtaining funding.

What should we do about our tree planting next month if it doesn't rain?

- Wait until there is good soil moisture before planting.
- Check in with SNELCC so we can ensure there is a variation applied to your funding agreement.
- Also, you need to check with the plant nursery, that it's OK for them to hold your seedling order.

Where do I find out what native tree species suit my location?

- If you are doing a native planting as part of a SNELCC project, species selection should be discussed at the initial site visit for your project and a species list can be included in your Land Management Agreement.
- If you are not part of a funded SNELCC project, information can be obtained from the SNELCC office, native plant nurseries (e.g. Armidale Tree Group, Black Mountain Nursery, Cedar Nursery, Field's Native Nursery, Kentucky Tree Nursery, Mole Station Nursery) or private consultants (e.g. Dave Carr, Peter Metcalfe, Ruth Trémont).

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact Southern New England Landcare on 6772 9123. We will include your questions answered in each Landchat edition and will select and publish the most popular and/or relevant topics.



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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 & AGM

SNELCC Inc & SNEL Ltd

6.30pm Wednesday 19th February 2014

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 18th February 2014 for catering purposes.

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www.snelandcare.org.au



CARING
FOR
OUR
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