



lithgow region landcare news

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Spring/Summer 2008

From the Community Support Officer...

Peter Evans

With a slow start to winter, the second half really made up for it with August being one of the coldest in recent years. Spring is now here and we are hopeful of some good rains throughout the catchment.

There is a number of groups that have been active over the winter months with some great activities being undertaken. It is hoped that with some warm weather and some good rains the landscape will reap the benefit of the winter plantings that have been undertaken.

The bi annual Landcare survey has gone out to all groups in the last couple of weeks, and I am looking forward to receiving them back in the office in the coming weeks. Information collected from our 2006 Landcare Survey told us that 110 groups across the catchment contributed 68,000 voluntary hours of work that was valued at \$2 million and the groups obtained \$1million in funding for a wide range of projects. A total contribution of over \$3million of environmental restoration. If your group hasn't yet received your survey please contact me in the Lithgow office.

With a new federal government in Canberra there has been a change in the name of their environmental/natural resource management program. The program will now be known as Caring for our Country There have also been some changes in the focus of what their priorities are and consequently where their funding goes.

For the past 10 years or so the *Natural Heritage Trust Programs* (1 & 2) have been the main source of funding for environmental improvements across the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment.

The new program *Caring for our Country*, started in July this year and will be in place for the next 5 years. We also receive support and funding from the NSW Government & they have a new program too called *Catchment Action NSW*. Initial indications were that there would be a reduction in HNCMA's budget and therefore our programs that we assist the community with, but now it appears funding for '08-'09 will be similar to last year. Consequently the HNCMA will maintain most of the programs & staff in the 4 offices across the catchment.

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National Landcare Week

National Landcare Week will be held this year between 1-7 September 2008. the theme for this year is 'landcare heroes'. The campaign this year will promote the huge positive impact Landcarers have across the country. Now in its 13th year, Landcare Week is an initiative of Landcare Australia that aims to 'grow' the landcare movement by recruiting new volunteers and rewarding groups' hard work.

Research conducted by Landcare Australia earlier this year shows that **40% of Australians are worried enough to want to volunteer on local environment projects.** Landcare Week provides the perfect opportunity for existing groups to hold an event and get these people involved.

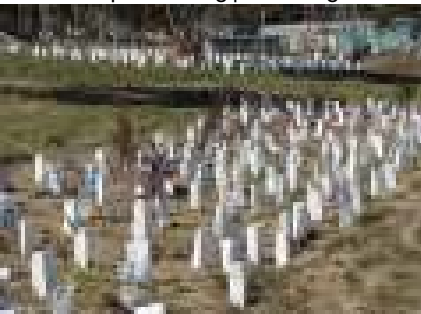
Around the Groups

Lithgow and Districts Landcare group

In July the Lithgow and District Landcare Group, played host to approximately 40 Swedish pilgrims as part of the World Youth Day celebrations. The Landcare group organised a planting day at Lake Pillans in Lithgow where the group has been working for a number of years.

The Swedes felt right at home as Lithgow put on some of its coldest winter weather. The group was particularly diverse, with some of the occupations being, Translators, Students, Horticulturalists, as well as Priests .

Overall the day was a great success with over 1500 plants being put in the ground.



Some of the 1500 Plants planted

Lithgow and District Landcare group has also built up a partnership with Lithgow TAFE over the past number of years to host a session with the outdoor recreation students. In June 14 students participated in restoration works in the riparian zone of Farmers Creek in the Saywell Park reserve. More groups have been pencilled in for the coming months.

Friends of the Colo

Willow work on the Wolgan

An enthusiastic band of volunteers has been turning its attention to invasive willow species in the Wolgan and Capertee valleys.

Friends of the Colo (FoC) is a

community based conservation group, formed back in 2000 to treat and eradicate willows from the Colo River within Wollemi National Park. The Colo River is one of the last remaining free-flowing streams in NSW and the last unpolluted river running into the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system. It is formed where the Wolgan and Capertee Rivers meet, and flows for approximately 60 km through dramatic gorges.

When it was realised that the source of the willows was outside the Park, FoC became a Landcare group committed to eradicating willows everywhere within the Colo River catchment. This includes both public and privately owned land (with landowner permission).

Outstanding success has been achieved controlling Black Willow (*Salix nigra*) downstream from the Park. This was the dominant willow species invading the Colo.

Recently, attention has been paid to the Wolgan and Capertee Rivers. A variety of willow species has been found on the Capertee, while in the Wolgan the main issue is Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*). Originating upstream from Newnes, these have invaded the Park for many kilometres downstream.

The combined efforts of private contractors and FoC have made substantial progress in the Wolgan, and it is hoped that forthcoming activities will complete the primary control.

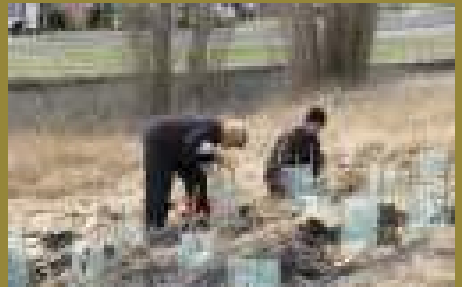


Attacking a Wolgan Willow

Lithgow Tidy Towns

Lithgow locals have come out to celebrate and help promote National Tree Day. More than 20 people attended the planting day in Sandford Avenue which was organised by Lithgow Tidy Towns as part of their Greening Lithgow project. Over 200 trees and shrubs were planted behind Marjorie Jackson Oval.

A Representatives from a range of local groups and organisations united as one for the benefit of the environment. Some of these included the Lithgow Environment Group, Lithgow Garden club, Quota International, Uniting Care and Lithgow Oberon Landcare Association. Lithgow Major, Neville Castle also got his hands dirty to help plant the trees.



National Tree Day in Sandford Ave

Lithgow Community Nursery News

Staff and volunteers at the Lithgow community nursery have been busy preparing to sow native seed to produce up to 50 000 native plants again this year.

The nursery is open to the public for sales on Monday and Fridays. The Lithgow Community Nursery is located in Coalbrook St. For information regarding available plants phone 6353 1126

Dung Beetles - Nature's organic farmers

Dung beetles are Australia's natural organic farmers. Dung beetles feed on dung and on a variety of things, including decomposing leaves and other rotting matter, serving a number of very important ecological functions.

Dung beetles are members of the scarab family (Scarabaeidae). There are thousands of species and they occur wherever dung is found. Some species roll the dung into a ball. The eggs are then laid in the ball, and when the larvae hatch they have a ready food supply. Other species dig burrows under or near the dung, and drag dung down into the burrows as needed.

Australia's native dung beetles are not well suited to breaking down dung from ruminates such as cattle. For this reason the CSIRO Dung Beetle Project (1969-1993) introduced to Australia about 50 species of beetles from Africa, Turkey, France and Spain in an attempt to reduce the number of bush fly and buffalo fly breeding in dung and to improve dung burial.

Benefits of dung beetles

Dung beetles disperse dung. Ball rollers do this by removing pieces of the pad and rolling it away – it may then be anchored to pieces of vegetation or buried. Tunnellers bury the dung in the ground at depths of between a few centimetres to 1 metre.

This activity serves to:

- Increase soil fertility by returning organic matter and nutrients to the soil
- Nutrients are then available to soil micro-organisms
- Increase soil aeration by creating tunnels into the soil both when burying dung and on emergence of new beetles
- Increase water infiltration into the soil
- Reduce pasture fouling

- Reduce water contamination and algal blooms
- Reduce nutrient run off into dams, streams and waterways
- Reduce bush and buffalo fly numbers - rapid burial of dung pads removes the fly breeding habitat
- Reduce parasite loads by interrupting the life cycle of some internal parasites

Identifying Dung Beetles

Mr John Feehan a former pioneer with the dung beetle project now provides specialist support in spreading dung beetles across Australia. His services include:

- Free identification of dung beetles present on farms
- Supplying winter and summer active dung beetles

The following is the procedure for collecting beetles for identification

- Select dung pads with a margin of fresh soil
- Walk up quietly because they quickly crash dive down into their tunnels
- Use a long handled shovel to scoop up the dung and 2cm of soil underneath the cow pad
- Place soil, grass and dung into bucket
- Tip soil and dung into a bucket of cold water stirring gently
- Collect beetles as they float to the surface
- Kill beetles in hot water
- Dry beetles for 2 days on news paper. Place into a matchbox without cotton wool or sticky tape
- Include a stamp, self addressed enveloped for the return of information
- Post to John Feehan, 3 Prell Place Hackett ACT 2602

Dung Beetle Fast Facts

1. They are good fliers and they collect on fresh cow droppings. They collect the dung and roll it into balls. Then they lay their eggs in the dung and bury the balls under the ground.
2. A pile of elephant dung of 1.5 kg had 16 000 dung beetles. The dung disappeared in two hours!
3. 30 pairs of introduced African beetles can bury a cow pad in 2 days
- 4 Dung beetles help to fertilize soil.
5. Marsupials have hard, dry dung. This is why Australian dung beetles could not attack cow dung



If you are interested in attending a field day to hear John Feehan speak about dung beetles please contact Peter Evans to register your interest

What's on

National Landcare Week Activities

- **Vale of Clywdd Workday—Monday 1 September**
Along the creek behind the vale hall, All welcome all tools and training will be supplied Time 1-4pm

Static Display Lithgow Library—1 –7 September
Main St Lithgow

Lithgow Community Nursery Open Day Friday 5 September

Tour of the nursery commencing at 11.00am followed by lunch and a short workshop on the threatened Purple Copper Butterfly. Come and see what your local community nursery has to offer.

For more information regarding these events contact Peter Evans 6350 3111

Lithgow & Districts Landcare Group

- **Lithgow & Districts Landcare group monthly work day—4th Sunday of the month**
The group meets at Lake Pillans on the 4th Sunday of the month. All tools and training is supplied

For more information contact Peter Evans 6350 3111

Friends of Colo

- **Willow weeding in the Wolgan FoC—13-14 September.**
FoC will be weeding willows on the Wolgan upstream from Newnes. Anyone is welcome to join in, and no experience is necessary.
- **Remote Wolgan Work—15-17 September**
Those with bushwalking experience, some more remote Wolgan work is planned
- **Remote Capertee Work—4-6 October**
Those with bushwalking experience, some remote work is also planned for the Capertee

Anyone interested in the above activities, or in FoC's activities in general, is invited to contact Andy Macqueen at andymacqueen@gmail.com or 47571083.

Capertee Valley Catchment Group Meeting

- **Capertee Valley Catchment Group meeting—9 September**
The quarterly Meeting will be held at the Glen Alice hall commencing at 10.00am followed by a BBQ lunch—All welcome

For more information contact Peter Evans 6350 3111

Schools Week of Action

- **The Schools week of Action—14-16 October**
The schools week of action will take place at Lake Wallace Wallerawang—volunteers welcome

Anyone wishing to volunteer their services, please contact Peter Evans 6350 3111



Reducing our paper usage.

If you have received this newsletter in a paper format and would like to receive it electronically please email me at peter.evans@cma.nsw.gov.au The newsletter will be emailed to you in a PDF format as well as a link that you can access from the HNCMA website.

I am also able to email you with relevant activities and events that may be in your area. I am conscious not to bombard you with a huge number of emails with large attachments.

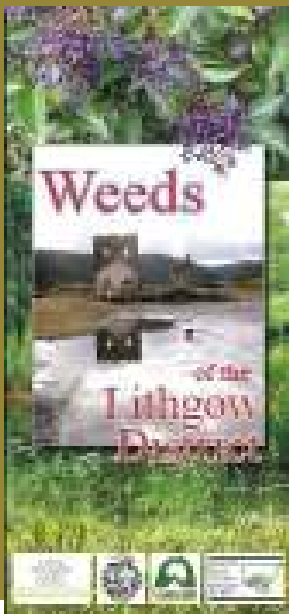
HNCMA website

Have you checked out the Hawkesbury Nepean CMA website?

www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au

Weeds of the Lithgow District

I have a number of weeds booklets in the Landcare office that are available. If you would like a copy please contact me



Jenolan Caves Weed Weekend

Landcare is running a series of weed control weekends focusing on the identification and control of Sycamore, a significant weed in the Jenolan Caves Reserve. A successful weekend was held at Jenolan Caves in May this year and a repeat weekend is planned for later in the year. Training will be provided no experience is necessary but be prepared for some physical work.

Dates: To Be Confirmed

Keep your eye out for the notices. If you would like more information regarding this proposed weekend please contact me.

Lithgow and Blue Mountains join forces to save wetlands

The unique natural values of the Lithgow area have again become the focus of NSW state government environmental programs with funding being allocated to restore significant local wetlands. The Lithgow region contains some of the westernmost distribution of the federally listed endangered Temperate Peat Swamps on Sandstone swamp communities and is home to the endangered Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamp ecological community.

Following last years successful collaboration on the Upland Swamps Rehabilitation project, Lithgow City Council has once again joined forces with Blue Mountains City Council to seek funding to protect these endangered Swamp communities that occur across both local government areas.

The two councils are working in partnership on the "Saving our Swamps" (S.O.S) project which will receive \$250,000 over three years from the NSW government's

Watch out for the following workshops and activities in your area

Seed Collecting

Weed identification

Prograze

Landscan

Fencing techniques

Blue Heliotrope field—Capertee Valley

Salinity field day

Dung Beetle field days.

Carbon trading/Carbon sequestration

If you have any ideas for Landcare activities/workshops or would like more information on the proposed activities please contact me

Environmental Trust Urban Sustainability program to rehabilitate degraded temperate peat swamp systems in the Lithgow and Blue Mountains areas which includes the Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamp, Montane Peatlands and Blue Mountains Swamp communities.

The money will be used for weed control works and the restoration of hydrological function in degraded swamps using soft engineering rehabilitation techniques. In addition the project will run a community awareness raising campaign about these significant vegetation communities. The project will operate on both public and private lands and includes a private landholder incentive program and a school education program.

For further information please contact Save our Swamps project officer Michael Hensen on 4780 5471

Contributions for the Newsletter

If you have items that you wish to share I am more than happy to include them in the newsletter. Phone or email me and I will do my best to include your article, notice or story.

FUNDING AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

CMA Funding River Health Project

This project helps landholders protect and restore creek and river banks throughout the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment.

Landholders can apply for grants up to \$20,000 to:

- Control invasive weeds (including willows) along waterways
- Plant local native species to improve vegetation links and biodiversity
- Fence creek and river banks to protect native vegetation
- Provide off-river stock watering systems

Bushland Conservation Project

The project offers funding to landholders within the rural local government areas of the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment. The Bushland Conservation Project offers funding to landholders to:

- Fence remnant (original) native vegetation to protect it from stock
- Plant local native trees and shrubs to connect or improve remnant vegetation
- Control weeds in remnant vegetation

As part of the project, a free site visit is undertaken by a CMA officer and a site report is prepared.

Wetlands Management Program

This project aims to restore and protect wetlands on private property as well as Wetlands of National Importance in the catchment.

Funding on landholder properties in the Hawkesbury Nepean will target floodplain wetlands, peat swamps and isolated mountain swamps.

Funding is available to landholders to:

- Fence wetlands to restrict stock access
- Install alternative stock watering systems, such as pumps, pipes and troughs
- Carry out bush regeneration
- Replant wetland species if necessary

- Carry out approved remedial works to recreate wetland function.

The CMA's Wetland Project Officer is available to visit properties and provide advice on how best to conserve or rehabilitate wetlands



Funds from other sources

Australia Post Community Development Grant

Community groups can apply for yearly grants of up to \$3,300 (including GST) to help improve their local community and environment, through the Australia Post Landcare Community Development Grant. Round 2 closes 19th September 2008
Contact

roger@landcareaustralia.com.au

Sydney Catchment Authority Incentives Programs

Catchment Protection and Improvement Grants. Grants for community groups of up to \$8,000 (plus \$2,000 for equipment hire) available for protecting and improving water quality through riparian and environmental restoration and for educating catchment communities about protecting catchments and water quality. Riparian Management and Assistance Programs. Assistance for property owners to protect and conserve riparian zones along the following creeks and associated streams and gullies: Upper Werriberri Creek, Brogers Creek, Barrengarry Creek, Paddy's River, Uringalla Creek, Long

Swamp Creek, Cullenbenbong Creek, Ganbenang Creek, Galong Creek, Coxs River (from Kanimbla Valley to Blue Mountains National Park Boundary).

Closing Dates for both of these programs are 1 October 2008. For further information contact the Sydney Catchment Authority on 1300 722 468 or go to the SCA website

<http://www.sca.nsw.gov.au/catchments/funding.html>

CVA Community Groups Workshops

Conservation Volunteers Australia, in partnership with Toyota Australia, is delivering a series of free workshops to assist community groups. Each workshop runs for half a day and there is a choice of topics - Change Management in Community Groups, Motivated Volunteers, Team Development for Community Groups and Project Development in Community Groups. The workshops will be held at a number of locations across Australia between Sep-Nov. Details of the workshop program can be accessed at www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/toyota-communityworkshops/index.html

The Australian Rural Leadership Program

A unique opportunity for selected rural and regional leaders to undertake a program of personal growth and develop the skills, knowledge and networks needed to be effective in regional, state, national and international arenas. The program is for the development of the men and women who will lead rural and regional Australia well into the 21st century. It comprises a part time course of some 60 days, conducted over 20 months. Applications are now being called for the course to commence in May 2009. For more information phone 0262810680 or email info@arlp.net.au.