



## Koalas in Wapengo

***An exciting new study of the koala population in the Wapengo area is under way after a female Koala with a juvenile on its back was sighted in August in Mumbulla State Forest, Wapengo.***

A follow up survey in September located 19 koala fecal pellet sites (droppings), many of which were fresh. Chris Allen, Threatened Species Recovery Officer for National Parks and Wildlife Service provided the following assessment of the survey results:

- The distribution of the koala fecal pellet sites and relative ease of locating them suggests that more koalas are present in the wider area.
- The female is probably part of a breeding association. However, females are known to travel several kilometres to mate, so more viable habitat may be located around the Wapengo area.
- The high level of invertebrates feeding on the fecal pellets suggests that koalas have persisted in the general area for a considerable period.
- Given the rarity of koalas in the region and the results of this survey, the Wapengo area is clearly significant for the species.

As a result a trial of a koala survey and habitat modelling method developed by Biolink Ecological Consultants is underway in the region. Their approach has provided good, scientifically-based information about how koalas are using the landscape, population sizes and density, the location of their core areas and the characteristics of the habitat that sustains them.

Biolink is headed by koala ecologist, Steve Phillips, who has undertaken fauna survey work previously in the region. Steve's contribution to the south coast's understanding of koala ecology has been exceptional and we are privileged that he can once again contribute his skill and knowledge to gaining a better understanding of koalas in our region.

The core part of the field survey involves thoroughly searching for Koala fecal pellets in forest litter under approximately 4,000 trees at more than 100 plots. The plots will be spread over about 1500ha. The task sounds momentous so help from volunteers was vital to the success of the project.

This phase of the research program is now completed, but an extension of the program is now planned. If you'd like to know more or would like to be a part of the survey teams, stay tuned through this newsletter.

Anyone living in the Wapengo or surrounding area who may have seen or heard koalas is asked to contact Chris (details below). Koalas have a very unusual call and if you've never heard one you may not realise what they sound like. Check out [www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au) and type in 'Koala', you can listen to a call and read more about their habitat requirements.

Chris Allen  
Threatened Species Recovery Project  
6495 5008 [chris.allen@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:chris.allen@environment.nsw.gov.au)



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## Coordinators Column

Well there's a real buzz of excitement in the community with the recent Koala sighting in Mumbulla State Forest. We all realise that the less koala habitat, the less we'll see them so this sighting reinforces the great work done by you all in valuing your native vegetation. How many other native animals are benefiting from the vegetation on your property?

For those who are interested in collecting and propagating their own local species, we encourage you to join our 'Grow Your Own' series of workshops which are detailed on page 7. As well as learning a useful skill you'll meet others who share your interest and local support professionals who are there to help you.

We're constantly impressed with the experience and knowledge of CMN members and part of the network aim is to share and foster local understanding. If you'd like to contribute to this newsletter we'd love to hear from you. Call Dan or Vick first so we can chat about your ideas.

In case you're wondering if the CMN will have a Christmas gathering, we've decided not to bombard your already full diary and will have a social gathering at the end of summer to celebrate the great work done by you all – and have more delicious CMN catering!

Finally, those who've met us you may have noticed Vick's growing belly! We're pleased to let you know that our twin boys Max and Evan were born on September 25 in Canberra Hospital. They were full term and healthy weights so we were very pleased. We've passed that magic 6 week mark and seem to be finding our feet but don't be surprised if there is squawking in the background if you call to RSVP for an activity. This also might explain why issue three is a little late getting to you!

We hope to see you at an event soon.

Dan and Vick

## What is the FSCCMN

The Far South Coast Conservation Management Network supports landholders with native vegetation on their property. Native vegetation might range from a native grass paddock that you still graze to acres of uncleared bush. The CMN caters to all types of vegetation and all types of land holders.

The network will provide information and activities to help landholders decide the best way to manage their vegetation to get the outcomes they want. This includes:

- Field Days
- Workshops
- Web site at [www.fsccmn.com.au](http://www.fsccmn.com.au)
- A discussion group for email users
- A bi-monthly newsletter
- Display and trial sites



The FSCCMN is funded by the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.



## Candelo Local Link **Sept 07**

The CMN's Local Link program moved on to the Candelo district this time with around 30 locals gathering at Kameruka cricket oval. Our previous local link was at Brogo and there proved to be some very different issues for landholders in and around Candelo. Primarily issues were more concerned with grassland management and weed management in native and exotic pasture.

After a hearty warm lunch provided by the CMN everyone got together for a group discussion. Usually the thought of an open group chat can be a bit daunting so we started with a quick intro from everyone. This was a good chance for Candelo locals to get to know who their neighbours are and what their interests and skills are.

It turned out that there were some very different opinions and thoughts about managing native vegetation, in particular grasslands, but as one attendee said "it was good to let go of my views and consider that others have different techniques that work just as well if not better"

Part of the day's activity was to fill out a form that listed individual's previous native vegetation work, their skills and goals for the future. We will collate and circulate this around to all who attended to keep as a resource of skills and knowledge held in their local area. If you would like to add your details and receive the list contact the CMN facilitators Dan or Vickie.

Already the next Local Link isn't far off and came about from a Kalaru resident contacting us about his concerns for the development issues facing native vegetation in that area. If you're in the Kalaru area and haven't heard about this event give us a call ASAP



*Photo: Candelo residents enjoying CMN catering, at the recent Local Link gathering.*

## Fire as a Management Tool **Aug 07**

This field day demonstrated how fire can be used to manage and enhance native vegetation. It was a follow on from a series of 'Hotspots' workshops earlier this year.

During the two hour walk local botanist Jackie Miles showed the results of previous burns which improved the vitality of native herbs and grasses. As the weather conditions were favourable, those who attended were fortunate to see two small demonstration burns in native grasses.



*Photo: Attendees watch as a small patch of Blady Grass is burnt, noting how it burns much hotter than Kangaroo Grass!*

The information shared included details on when best to burn, the results of different fire intensities and factors contributing to intensity such as wind speed, temperature, humidity, slope, fuel load and the structure of the vegetation.

"Many native plants have evolved strategies to cope with fire", said Jackie. "As well as benefiting these species, fire can be used to reduce fuel load, manage weeds and protect property."

After the walk participants said they felt more comfortable attempting small 'cool' burns on their own property. The walk concluded with afternoon tea and a chance for everyone to chat and catch up.

If you're interested in learning more about using fire to manage native vegetation check out the Nature Conservation Council web site [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au) (look for 'Hotspots Fire Project' in the left hand column)

## Weeds and Climate Change

Current predictions for the future climate of Australia in the next 30+ years are for a general increase in mean temperatures with a larger increase in mean minimum temperatures as well as a reduction in frost days.

The characteristic of weeds to be able to respond rapidly to disturbances such as climate change, may give them a competitive advantage over less aggressive species. Climate change may turn some currently benign species into invasive species and may lead to 'sleeper weeds' becoming more active.

Sleeper weeds are plants that appear benign for many years, but which may suddenly spread rapidly following events such as flood, fire, drought, climate change, or change in land or water management. Although not always recognised as a significant problem the potential threat they pose to the environment may be very high.

Climate change is expected to increase weed invasion from neighbouring territories and favour weeds that have already established in Australia but are currently restricted in range. As climatic zones shift, weeds that are capable of rapid dispersal have the potential to invade new areas and increase their range.

Weeds may not only fill gaps left by more vulnerable native plants but may have a greater effect by altering the composition of ecosystems and their integrity.

As ever there is a need to keep our eyes out for new weed species not yet established in the Far South Coast. If you're not sure, report any findings to BVSC weeds Manager, Ann Herbert. 6499 2288  
aherbert@begavalley.nsw.gov.au

## Coastal Weeds Mapping

Help build a picture of weeds in your district

*A vital project has begun in the Bega Valley to map the extent of invasive weeds on the coastal strip and develop a comprehensive plan to sustainably deal with the issue.*

Weeds get a lot of attention agriculturally but often their threat to native habitat is under-rated and under-funded. This project is a good example of strategic environmental weed planning and is linked closely to community input and support.

Many agencies and community groups are spending considerable time and effort on coastal weed control, however a coordinated, strategic approach is lacking. Establishing clear regional priorities and actions will help community groups and landholders make the most effective use of their time and resources.

The main aims of the project are to develop a situation report of current infestations across the coastal strip, identify priority areas and support the community to develop weed control action plans tailored to their area.

The situation report, "State of environmental coastal weeds in the Bega Valley Shire" will be based on field work (most of which has been completed) and community feedback. The report will also identify a "watch list" of potential weed species and location threats which will be distributed throughout the community.

This project will build on the successful model of the Bega Valley Shire Weeds Strategy, which will involve targeting species and areas for on-ground works that will be tailored to the weed threats and priorities as identified by the four coastal communities; Bermagui, Tathra, Merimbula/Pambula & Eden.

This information will be used as the basis for a series of facilitated meetings that will help to develop clear priorities and actions for each of the four coastal communities. Two meetings have already been held in Bermagui and Tathra and two more to come are listed below. If you have missed any of these you can still contribute by contacting Ann Herbert, Bega Valley Shire Council's Noxious Weeds Manager.

**MERIMBULA:** Sat 17 Nov, 10am – 12pm, Scout Hall, Main St

**EDEN:** Sat 24 Nov, 10.am – 12.pm, Log Cabin, Bass Street

Funding for the program is supported by Bega Valley Shire Council, Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (SRCMA), the Far South Coast Landcare Association and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Contacts for further information:

Ann Herbert, Bega Valley Shire Council Noxious Weeds Manager 6499 2288

Helen Davies, Coast and Marine Officer, SRCMA 6491 8203



Photo: Myrtle-leaf Milkwort (*Polygala myrtifolia*), a significant weed in coastal bushland

## Weed Management Toolbox - Grazing

By Andrew Taylor

Natural Resource Management Facilitator - Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority

*There is a general feeling that there are few effective strategies to counter the dominance of Fireweed or Lovegrass in our native and exotic pastures yet some landholders have managed to minimise the impact of these weeds using various techniques such as grazing and pasture management (for example, manipulating timing of grazing, grazing intensity, length of grazing, using sheep and goats in combination with cattle). Such weed infestations have significant impacts on both the financial viability of agriculture and the biodiversity value of native grasslands.*



*Photo: Fireweed reduction in pasture through integrating sheep with cattle*

A new project is about to start that will trial many of the different weed management techniques in a local setting with the aim of compiling best practice information for Bega Valley and Eurobodalla farmers and native vegetation managers. One particular aspect of these trials will involve the use of grazing livestock as an integrated and important tool in the weed management toolbox.

The project will focus on weed and grazing management in both exotic and native pastures, the latter being a widespread and important component of overall biodiversity in the Bega Valley and the Eurobodalla. Along with overgrazing, African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*) and Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) pose some of the greatest threats to the health and viability of native grasslands. Often landholders are hesitant to use herbicides in their native pasture so selective grazing at strategic times could prove a good option.

Lack of information is a critical gap in the adoption of integrated weed management principles on the south coast of NSW. With the support of local and state government, landholders and industry partners, this project will test and demonstrate a range of integrated approaches to minimise the economic, environmental and social impact of pasture and grassland weeds on the South Coast of NSW. It will focus on African Lovegrass and Fireweed with benefits for a suite of other weeds. Participation by landholders in on-farm study sites and in learning groups will provide the basis for generating and sharing experiences, information and skills gained in the project.

Best practise management literature will be produced and an awareness raising program established to maximise adoption of integrated weed management on the South Coast of NSW.

The project will :

- Collate existing information (scientific, anecdotal, conventional and innovative)
- Trial and demonstrate techniques and formulate a suite of effective and sustainable management options to better deal with these weeds
- Develop best practise guidelines applicable to a diverse range of enterprise and landscape types
- Develop an awareness raising extension program to ensure a better uptake of techniques.

For more information about the results or participating in the trials contact Andrew Taylor, Natural Resource Management Facilitator, SRCMA.

Ph: 6491 8212

email: Andrew.Taylor@cma.nsw.gov.au

## Wallaga Lake Project 'Land to Lake'

*People around Cobargo will by now have received "An Invitation From Landcare" in their mail telling them of a Far South Coast Landcare initiative called Land to Lake.*

This project aims to slow the flow of sediment and nutrients into Wallaga Lake. To make the project manageable, the 225 sq km Catchment has been broken down into eight sub-catchments. This sub-catchment approach is also a way of getting back to grass roots Landcare with neighbours being encouraged to work together locally to identify sediment and nutrient sources and try to stop the flow into the local waterways, and eventually Wallaga Lake.

John Carter has been engaged, on a part-time basis, by Far South Coast Landcare to coordinate the activities and chase up funds to pay for much of the work. No time limit has been placed on Land to Lake, it is seen as a long-term project and activity will continue for as long as funding is available.

Although the main focus of the work is on protecting the waterways, a range of solutions will be tried, and some of these will have benefits such as reducing farm costs, improving pastures and increasing biodiversity in the catchment. As well as using standard techniques like fencing waterways and minimising gully erosion, there will be an emphasis on increasing the water retention of soils and revegetating gullies and slopes to slow the rate of run-off during rain events. Techniques such as grazing management will also be investigated as a way of improving ground cover, especially during periods of drought.

Land to Lake will try to involve both private and public land managers and will also call on people in urban settlements like Wallaga Lake and Bermagui to help with monitoring of water quality and other factors such as native seed collection, weeding and re-vegetation. Early feedback from groups will be used to identify topics which can be featured in a series of information days in Cobargo. These days will combine information from both the scientific community and farmers who have found workable solutions to the sorts of problems facing people in the Wallaga Catchment. Land to Lake provides an opportunity to improve your land and care for the Wallaga Lake Catchment.

Enquiries can be directed to John Carter  
johnc@iimetro.com.au – 6493 3416

## Wood in Australian Streams

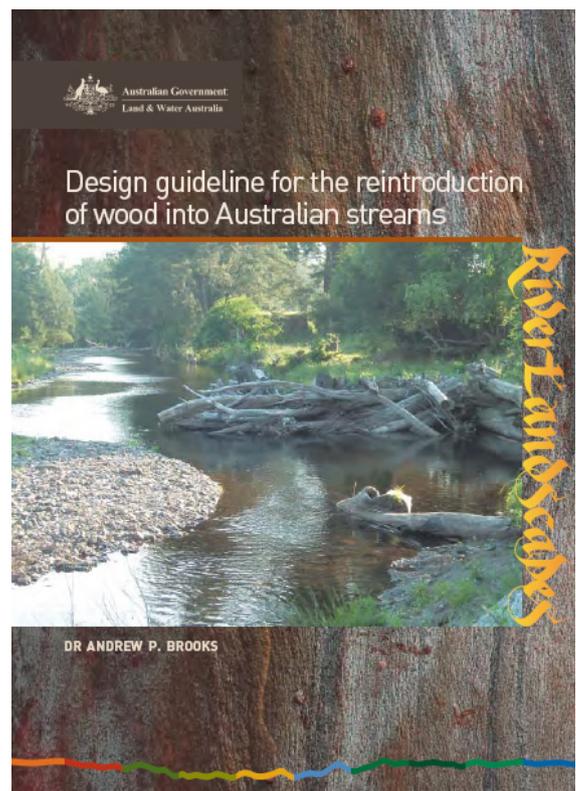
Online report available at [www.rivers.gov.au](http://www.rivers.gov.au)

Community perceptions regarding the benefits of both retaining and reintroducing wood into rivers and streams have fundamentally changed since the early 1990's. This has largely been brought about by a raft of research into the role that trees and branches falling into our rivers play in aquatic ecosystem health and river channel dynamics. We now know that in many respects wood in rivers is akin to the coral reefs in our oceans, as it provides complex habitat that supports a wide range of aquatic species.

A new guideline by Dr Andrew Brooks, provides some step by step design principles for reintroducing wood into different types of Australian rivers. Information about the research projects that have been undertaken in Australia are provided, with plenty of case study examples, practical tips, diagrams and photographs clearly explaining the different strategies available for using wood to restore river habitat.

This is a free document provided by Land & Water Australia, through their 'River Landscapes' web site [www.rivers.gov.au](http://www.rivers.gov.au). These guidelines are one of many free publications and fact sheets related to river rehabilitation and health.

River Landscapes web site is a great resource if your property is bordered by or has a waterway running through it. Also worth checking out is Land & Water Australia's web site [www.lwa.gov.au](http://www.lwa.gov.au) which has more info related to native vegetation and landscape management.



## Landcare Events

### Landcare Magical Mystery Tour!

Saturday 24 November 2007

Leaving 9:30am (Woolworths carpark Bega) returning 3:30pm - vote in Cobargo on the way!



Come along and see what's been happening in Landcare in the north or our region - the Land to Lake project, Wallaga Lake, Cuttage Beach weed control, and the Wapengo Catchment project. All food provided - bring a water bottle and sun smart clothes.

### The 2007 Far South Coast Landcare Dinner and Golden Wombat Awards

Friday 14 December 2007

6:30pm in Bermagui - venue TBA

Proudly supported by the Southern Rivers CMA

For bookings or more info contact:

David Newell - Far South Coast Landcare Coordinator

Phone: 6491 8204 email: david.newell@cma.nsw.gov.au

## Trial sites

Part of the CMN's commitment to supporting landholders in managing their native vegetation is to set up and monitor trials in innovative management.

We'd like to hear from you if you've been contemplating an interesting or unheard of method in your native veg management. Some examples might be new ways to tackle invasive weeds, propagation methods, feral pest control or fire management.

The CMN will support you with the planning as well as sourcing funding and technical advice. We'll also be able to pull in extra hands to do the real work. You may just be able to find a solution to a problem and help others along the way.

## Local Links

Don't forget about the CMN Local Links. If you'd like to get a gathering of locals together to discuss issues about managing native vegetation relevant to your area then a Local Link is the go. We provide food, facilities and promotion all you need to do is drop us a line. Check out the CMN web site for reviews of previous Local Links. There is no set format so lets be creative. Blakfellows Lake residents are about to have a evening BBQ followed by a twilight spotlight walk.

## Upcoming Events

### Native seed collecting workshop November 17th 9:30am-3pm

*Not too late..... call now for bookings*

Part one in a series of workshops helping landholders to collect, grow and plant their own native vegetation.

This workshop will focus on principles and practices of seed collection for revegetation and rehabilitation including how to handle, store and record details accurately. Includes theory, take home notes and field trip to collect your own seed.

Lunch is provided so RSVP is essential, call or email Dan and Vick (details pg 2.) to register.

Colombo Park, Bemboka Sports Oval



### 'Treevia' - Trivia night

**Late February - early March 08**

### CMN event of the year!

Who ever said increasing your native vegetation knowledge had to be boring? Join us for a night of give-aways, guest speakers, unthinkable plant names and flora fun.

In the balmy late summer, the CMN will host 'Treevia' - a native veg trivia night with all the usual CMN trimmings of good catering, social interaction and fun!

This is an early call for those of you with a trivial mind to pull out those fascinating facts and send them in. The more local knowledge we can build and share the better we all become at managing our native vegetation. The more you send in the more answers you are likely to know!!!! Send trivia to [info@fscmn.com.au](mailto:info@fscmn.com.au)